

## Papdiamantis and the European Romantic Tradition

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Contemporary Greek criticism, following the direction of Costis Palamas, continues to set the chronological limits of Greek Romanticism as being from 1830 to 1880. While some Greek critics have also taken note of the influence of European Romanticism upon the work of Solomos and the other Heptanesians, it is clear that they consider as Romanticists only the Phanariots and the authors of the so-called Athenian School, whose main representatives are the Soutsos Brothers, Zalocostas, Rangavis, and Paraschos.<sup>1</sup> This ordering of literary history, however, does not recognize that the contribution of Greek literature to the current of European Romanticism is actually far broader and deeper. In an earlier study I argued that the Romanticist poet *par excellence* of the Greek world is Dionysios Solomos. I also argued that Greek Romanticism, far from stopping with the Athenian School, stretches into the twentieth century and includes a major part of the work of Palamas, Drosinis, Eftaliotis, Porfyras, and others.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that the stories of

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<sup>1</sup>For example, Palamas (1972: 506-7); Dimaras (1982: 167-8); Politis (1979: 170-4); Mastrodimitris (1983: 130-8); Savides (1981: 279-329).

<sup>2</sup>See Constantinides (1985: 121-33).



Papadiamantis in a variety of ways display the main characteristics of European Romanticism. Although Papadiamantis is usually classified as a realist and a regionalist, there are contemporary critics who are not satisfied with this categorization and who call attention to the poetic elements in his work, his powerful symbolism, his metaphysical dimension, and his "avoidance of simple narrative chronology."<sup>3</sup> Scholars have examined the presence of Romanticist elements in Papadiamantis's *novels*<sup>4</sup>, but of all his critics Dimitris Plakas alone examines Romanticist aspects of Papadiamantis's *stories* (1981). In this paper I shall carry out a further examination of Papadiamantis's stories from the viewpoint of Romanticism, which I contend is so important for a proper understanding of his work.

I first consider two themes that are often present in Papadiamantis's stories and that are widespread in the prose and poetry of European Romanticism. (By the term "European Romanticism" I refer to the first major flowering of the Romantic Movement in the late 18th century and the first decades of the 19th century.) These themes are first, the predominant role of Nature in human existence, and second, unfulfilled love.

When we speak about the predominant role of Nature in Romanticist literature we do not mean only the love for landscape or the feeling of well being and the aesthetic satisfaction aroused by external nature. The major Romanticist writers of England, France, and above all, Germany, developed specific philosophical positions about the relationship of Man to Nature. One of the most important of these positions is the notion of the fundamental unity of all being, or, as Shelley put it, "the Spirit of all things that live," which unifies all separable entities in the physical world.<sup>5</sup> Since all Nature, including Man, is ideally one whole, Man's estrangement from Nature creates extreme unhappiness, an excruciating desire to regain the lost unity – a conception that parallels the Christian belief in the Fall of Man and its consequences. The small child, innocent, free from obligations in society, ignorant of death, led by feeling and not by logic, lives inti-

<sup>3</sup>See the contemporary studies: Elytis (n.d.), Politou Marmarinou (1987: 49-58). The quoted phrase "avoidance of...narrative chronology" is from Politou-Marmarinou.

<sup>4</sup>For the novels see, for example, Sachines (1980: 115-30); Terzakis (1941: 54-5).

<sup>5</sup>Shelley, "Prologue" to *Hellas*, line 167; cf "one living spirit," line 119.

mately with Nature and participates instinctively in her mysteries. The adult, most notably the poet, can also at rare moments rid himself of the feeling of separation from Nature and experience the untold joy of a (transient) union with the cosmos. The belief in the Unity of All leads to a theory of the Analogy of All Being, of all levels of existence in both the animate and the inanimate worlds. A similar analogous relation exists between the inner (moral) and outer (physical) worlds. These universal analogies supply the theoretical underpinning that establishes the validity of symbolic relationships that we find so frequently in Romanticist literature, prose as well as poetry.

More specifically: Goethe repeatedly expressed the human desire to be absorbed by the universal spirit ("Weltgeist," he sometimes terms it). An example is his poem bearing the significant title "Eins und Alles." Several examples can be found in the novel that established Goethe's fame, where his young hero Werther expresses this same desire for absorption in the whole in his ecstatic description of surrounding nature (1949: 4.384). We find a statement of this idea in Goethe's younger contemporary Friedrich Schlegel: "Nur wer einig ist mit der Welt kann einig sein mit sich selbst." ("Only one who is at one with the world can be at one with himself.")<sup>6</sup> Or, to look to the English, we find Coleridge, in a letter to his friend Wordsworth, speaking of the "reconciliation from this Enmity with Nature."<sup>7</sup> Wordsworth himself in his autobiographical poem *The Prelude* speaks of the ecstatic but transitory moments when "in all things/I saw one life, and felt that it was joy" (1959: 66).

The child's direct, instinctive, passionate communication with Nature is a recurring theme in Wordsworth's poetry. For editions of his collected works he gave the title "Poems Referring to the Period of Childhood" for a whole series of poems. In his celebrated "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" the delight of the child in Nature is itself a proof that "Heaven lies about us in our infancy." This "splendor in the grass" and "the glory in the flower" that the child sees diminishes gradually with the passage of time and leaves only a faint memory in the soul of the adult. Similarly the child for the German poet Hölderlin is a "divine being"

<sup>6</sup>1954: 104. All translations from languages other than Greek are by Athena Coronis.

<sup>7</sup>Coleridge, cit. Abrams, 1984: 97.



("Ein göttlich Wesen ist das Kind..."). In "An die Natur" he speaks about his childhood when he was consumed by the total beauty of the world and could communicate with all beings: "Da der Jugend goldne Träume starben,/Starb für mich die freundliche Natur;" ("When Youth's golden dreams died, then friendly Nature died for me")<sup>8</sup>.

Numerous writers of the Romanticist period were captivated by the theory of analogy, the symbolic relationships between disparate things, for which they variously used the terms *Analogie, correspondences, embleme, affinities, signatura*. In his celebrated poem "Correspondences" Baudelaire expresses the principle of hidden connections between all things, connections discernible preeminently by the poet. I cite further examples from Hugo, Constant, Balzac, and Wordsworth:

La nature materielle offre quelquefois des symbolismes singuliers. (Material nature sometimes offers singular symbolisms.) *Hugo*

Une grande correspondance existe entre tous les etres moraux et physiques. (A great correspondence exists between all moral and physical beings.) *Constant*

Tout est dans tout.... Tout dans la nature est une analogie. (Everything is contained in everything. Everything in nature is an analogy.) *Balzac*

From deep analogies by thought supplied  
Or consciousnesses not to be subdued,  
To every natural form, rock, fruit, or flower,  
Even the loose stones that cover the high-way,  
I gave a moral life, I saw them feel,  
Or linked them to some feeling... *Wordsworth*<sup>9</sup>

Let us now turn to Papadiamantis and examine the presence in his stories of this major theme of European Romanticism. Nature, or rather Man's relation to Nature, of course plays an important role in his work. He himself explicitly declared in "Lambriatiko Psalti" ("Easter

<sup>8</sup>Hölderlin, 1970: I, 177-8. The phrase "göttlich Wesen" comes from Hölderlin's novel *Hyperion*, 1970: I, 584.

<sup>9</sup>Hugo and Constant, cit. Moreau, 1965: 17, 30; Balzac, cit. Evans, 1951: 210; Wordsworth, 1959: 78.

Cantor") that one of his three artistic aims was to celebrate in his work, as he phrased it, "Nature with Eros" (2.517).<sup>10</sup> (The other two aims were the celebration of Christ and the loving description of folk traditions.) Whenever Papadiamantis deals with this "Nature with Eros," the intensity of his Romanticism becomes especially prominent.

For instance, in "Oneiro sto Kyma" ("A Dream among the Waters") Papadiamantis makes it clear that Man is happy as long as he dwells in Nature, but this happiness is lost when he leaves the countryside behind and locks himself in an office in the city, a slave to the daily routine of clerical work. In this tale we have the Romanticist theme of the happiness of the natural man untouched by education and his consequent loss of innocence once he is educated. The tale also presents the nineteenth century European figure of the urban petty clerk of dulled spirits, a figure appearing, for instance, in Herman Melville's well known tale, "Bartleby the Scrivener."

Papadiamantis's narrator, an eighteen-year-old illiterate shepherd, loves the beautiful Moschoula with a love that is innocent and idealistic, though the element of sensuality is not absent. He is a "child of Nature," who considers the entire mountain where he watches his herd as his own domain (3.261; *Tales* 85). In this idyllic environment the youth is able one evening to realize his yearning to become one with Nature. Swimming in the sea he "felt a tenderness, an inexplicable magic; [he] thought that [he] was one with the waves, sharing their essence – liquid, cool, and salty" (3.267; *Tales* 89).

In "Aeriko sto Dentro" ("The Spirit in the Tree") the author describes the untold joy of small children in their natural environment: they roll in the grass, play in the shade of the tree, near "the clear current whose audible whisper purled deep in the soul, while the gentle breeze was mystically swaying the dark green bushes" (4.211). These offspring of peasants and shepherds are presented in contract to the city boys, whose behavior is unruly and vicious. In this tale Papadiamantis presents three stages in human life: the small child, the adolescent, and the adult. He artfully depicts the prevalence of

<sup>10</sup>All references to Papadiamantis are to *Apanta*, ed. Triantafyllopoulos, 1981-85. References indicated by *Tales* are to the translations by Constantinides, 1987. All other translations from Papadiamantis are by Athena Coronis.



evil in the human soul – that is, in Christian terms, the effect of Original Sin. This religious view of things is in accord with the Christian character of the entire story: the time is Easter eve; there is a liturgy at a nearby chapel.

The theme of the Child of Nature is found in Papadiamantis not only against a Christian background but also in stories suffused with the pagan tradition. In “Ypo ten Vassiliki Dryn” (“Underneath the Majestic Oak”) the narrator describes the feeling that would overcome him in childhood whenever he saw a certain large, imposing oak tree. One day, while he lay beneath the branches of his “beloved,” the “desired forest bride,” as he called the tree, he felt “a secret happiness, a dream-like delight” (3.329; 330). Falling asleep, he saw in a dream the tree transformed into a woman, that is into a dryad. (The atmosphere of this tale is more pagan than Christian despite all the references to the liturgy and saints’ feasts.) The boy awakens and leaves the scene, disturbed by the dream wherein his bride had begged that she not be chopped down. Years later the narrator finds out that a farmer has indeed chopped down the oak tree, and ever since has not had an untroubled moment: eventually the farmer “fell sick, and in a few days he died” (3:331). We observe that in this story as well as in “Oneiro sto Kyma” (“A Dream among the Waters”) this intimacy with Nature is directly related to the love of a woman.

This brings us to another significant characteristic that places Papadiamantis in the company of the European Romanticists: the way he treats love. The popular understanding of Romantic literature as centrally focused on love is only incomplete, not wrong. The stories, novels, poems of the period do dwell on the lover’s agony and his internal upheaval, as well as on love as something that cannot be fulfilled or realized. In Romanticist novels, plays, and poems we find an unending list of heroes and heroines who suffer anguish from unhappy love.<sup>11</sup> At least ten of Papadiamantis’s tales deal with the theme of unfulfilled love. As in the European writers, the lovers’ hopes prove false for a variety of reasons. In “Eros-Iros” (“Eros – Hero”) the be-

<sup>11</sup>Some well-known examples: Musset’s Rollo; Lucy in Scott’s *The Bride of Lammermoor*; Quasimodo and Esmeralda in Hugo’s *Notre Dame de Paris*; George Sand’s Lelia; Tatiana and Onegin in Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin*; and the suicides Werther (Goethe), Jacopo Ortis (Foscolo), and Atala (Chateaubriand). For the influence of many of these writers upon 19th-century Greek novelists see Sahinis, 1980: 29-32.

loved marries another; in “I Nostalgos” (“The Homesick Wife”) the beloved is already married; in “Ologyra sti Limni” (“Around the Lake”) the hero is very young, younger even than the shepherd-narrator in “Oneiro sto Kyma” and in “Eros sta Hionia” (“Eros in the Snow”) the advanced age of the hero and the circumstances of his life become insurmountable obstacles to his happiness. In the story “Gia tin Perifaneia” (“Because of Pride”) both mother and daughter refuse to accept an arranged marriage. Semadiakos in the story of that name is teased by the woman who arouses love in him, and in “Apolausis sti Geitonia” (“Pleasure in the Neighborhood”) – one of the few stories Papadiamantis set in Athens – a man commits suicide because he is rejected by the woman he loves. In a number of other stories – “Eros-Iros,” “Eros sta Hionia,” “Pharmakolytria” (“The Curer of Spells”), and in “Rodin’ Akroyialia” (“Rosy Seashores”) – we find the characteristic Romanticist description of agony and despair of the lover who does not find requital. Love as a cause of unhappiness or even death also appears in the stories “Ermi sta Xena” (“Alone in a Foreign Land”), “To Nissi tis Ouranitsas” (“Ouranitsa Island”), “O Alivanistos” (“The Man who Blasphemed”), and in “Gia tin Perifaneia” (“Because of Pride”).

All these stories except “Apolausis sti Geitonia” are related from the point of view of a man. In general, like most of the Romanticist writers, including Solomos, Papadiamantis idealizes the young female and so does not describe the erotic passions of women. (It is not the purpose of this study to examine Papadiamantis’s stories from a biographical or psychological approach. What is of interest here is the similarities between Papadiamantis’s work and the writings of the European Romanticists.)

Most of the time the girls in his stories are depicted as ethereal creatures, graceful, innocent, and at the same time attractive. Their innocence is underlined by their tender age. Some examples are: the fifteen-year-old Mati in “Theros-Eros” (“Love the Harvester: A May day Idyll”), Polymnia in “Ologyra sti Limni” (“Around the Lake”), the sixteen-year-old maiden in “Asteraki” (“The Little Star”), the group of girls in “Vassanakia” (“Minor Troubles”), and all those young girls that are condemned to a premature death in the stories “Mia Psyche” (“One Soul”), “Tragoudia tou Theou” (“The Songs of God”), and “Nekranthima” (“Obituary”). We should note that the death of a tender maiden is another frequent motif in Romanticist literature. These



tragically early deaths of young girls in Papadiamantis are reminiscent of those of Diotima in Hölderlin's novel *Hyperion*, Fantine in Hugo's *Les Misérables*, Mignon in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, and Eleonora in Poe's story of that title. Poe himself stated that "the death of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical subject in the world" (1984: 19).

There are, to be sure, love stories in Papadiamantis's work, but few of them have the happy endings of "I Vlahopoula" ("The Peasant Girl"), "Theros-Eros" and "O Amerikanos" ("The American"). The last two stories present reworkings of ancient myth: "Theros-Eros" draws on Hellenistic idylls of Theocritus and Longus; "O Amerikanos" parodies the second half of Homer's *Odyssey*.<sup>12</sup> In both of these stories Papadiamantis chose not to alter the ending of the ancient myth.

"Pharmakolytria" and "Rodin' Akroyialia" ("Rosy Seashores") are replete with Romanticist elements. In "Pharmakolytria" we find two love-smitten characters: the son of the narrator's cousin and the narrator himself. All hopes of marriage for the son are dashed by his mother and by his beloved as well. The narrator himself is constantly tortured by powerful erotic passions, which, however, remain mysterious and vague. In this story Papadiamantis's description of the landscape and the remnants of an ancient temple, a little church virtually demolished, and his depiction of the moon and the chill of the night are thoroughly in the Romanticist tradition. And then when one adds the important role played by memories, dreams, and visions, the subjectivity and the rebellion of the narrator, and finally the air of mystery that suffuses the whole tale, we have the very essence of a Romanticist story.<sup>13</sup>

As in "Pharmakolytria," so too in "Rodin' Akroyialia" the first-

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Constantinides, 1989. I agree with Professor G. Farinou Malamatari that in "Theros-Eros" there are parallels with Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener." 1987: 41-2).

<sup>13</sup>Three recent detailed studies of "Pharmakolytria" concern themselves with the analogical relationship between external nature and the narrator's psychological situation. Cf. Rozanis, 1981: 327-46; K. Stergiopoulos, n.d. 59-67, esp. note 3; Saunier, 1989-90: 141-55. Saunier underlines "the puzzling character" of the story which, in his opinion, deals with the "undeclared" love of the narrator for his mother and sets forth his struggle with his sin.

person narrator is a victim of love. He recounts his own experiences and those of others' as well, all displaying the old familiar notion that happiness is unattainable in amorous relations. In the prologue the narrator sees, or expect to see, his beloved at the window. This is presented in an unclear, irrational manner, the overflow of an excessive romantic sensibility – *Schwärmerei* the Germans would call it. In the main part of the story the narrator is seized by a form of *Weltschmerz* ("A long time ago life began to disappoint me." 4.232). He sets off in his boat and sails aimlessly about, here and there. He makes a half-hearted attempt to take his life by drowning, but he is fortunate enough to be seen by an acquaintance who pulls him from the sea. Eventually the youth's mood improves, he recovers from his psychological crisis, and rejects, at least on the surface, his romantic self. "Rodin' Akroyialia," with its interwoven narratives, its references to personal experiences of the author, and its allusions to his other writings, is one of Papadiamantis's most complex tales.<sup>14</sup> The story is characterized by a kind of irony that clashes with the main narrator's romantic mood. Its ending is ambiguous. The question remains: does the narrator repudiate his romanticism or does he merely decide to conceal it from the rest of the world?

Besides these two major Romanticist themes of Nature and love, there is another feature Papadiamantis shares with the Europeans, especially the Germans: his use of irony, or more properly, "Romantic Irony," to use Friedrich Schlegel's term for that specific form.<sup>15</sup> It may

<sup>14</sup>The use of the interwoven narrative is examined in Farinou Malamatari, 1987: 27-28; 32-33. References to Papadiamantis's personal experiences in "Rodin' Akroyialia": Stamatis the "Atairiastos," the narrator's friend, asks him if a love poem that had been previously published in the newspaper serial *Ephemeris* was his own or a translation (see also 4.288-89, where other love poems by the narrator are found). We know that in his youth Papadiamantis published love poems (see 5.17-18, 23-24, and Triantaphyllopoulos's commentary 5.357 ff.; also Papadiamantis, 1989: 46, 85-86, and also Dimtrakopoulos's commentary on Papadiamantis's long-term relationship with *Ephemeris*, where he worked as a translator until 1882. The character Stamatis speaks of "Erota sta Hionia" ("Love in the Snow"), words Papadiamantis used as title of one of his stories. One of the characters in "Rodin' Akroyialia," Diamantis Agallos, belongs to a family of millers that are called the "alafroiskiotoi" (literally, "fairyseers"); this family is described by Papadiamantis in the story bearing that title (4.245-46).

<sup>15</sup>For Schlegel and Romantic Irony see Wellek 1955, 14 ff.



be defined as a mode of expression in which the author intentionally and abruptly overturns the lofty, serious mood he has established. Schlegel's contemporary, the novelist Jean Paul, jocularly called this procedure "hot baths of sentiment followed by cold showers of irony."<sup>16</sup> Romantic Irony arises from the disjunction between Appearance and Reality, between the Ideal and the Real; the German Romanticist philosophers and writers viewed this form of irony as a means of expressing the contradictions that arise in the moral sphere.

The authorial interruptions and digressions that are so characteristic of Papadiamantis's narrative are quite clearly used for the objectives of this German "Romantic Irony." A clear instance is the ironic insertion that interrupts the description of Matthios's passion in "I Nostalgos" We are told: "A sharp knife tore into the youth's heart.... What a great fire was burning inside him!" (3.59; *Tales* 32) Then at this point the author abruptly addresses the reader: he tells us that his literary conscience does not allow him to create a tragic scene of the "romantic" sort, with Matthios plunging a dagger into the heroine's heart or a drowning in the moonlight. After this "cold shower of irony" (in Jean Paul's phrase), Matthios in fact recovers from his temporary despair and continues his voyage with Lialio.

In "Vlachopoula" ("The Peasant Girl") Panos Dimoulis, a student, goes for a walk in the countryside on a spring day and lies down in the grass to enjoy the natural scene about him. Taken by the beauty of the landscape and charmed by the graceful movements of a pretty girl tending her herd off in the distance, he wonders to himself: "Is she a Christian? Or a pagan? Which is she?" At this point the author makes an ironic intervention: "Neither of these: she was a peasant girl" (2.370). Not only was she a peasant girl, but she had a swain, and this swain now makes his appearance. Papadiamantis continues: "Ah, for Panos Dimoulis the peasant girl has suddenly lost all her poetry" (2.371). Along with Dimoulis the reader is jolted back to reality.

In "Ologyra sti Limni" ("All around the Lake") a youth dreams of a happy life with his beloved in a beautiful house with a garden. Two of Papadiamantis's authorial interventions undermine the youth's romantic and sentimental imagination, as it is described by the narrator:

<sup>16</sup>cit. Walzel, 1918: 63; Walzel has a brief, clear exposition of the subject "Romantic Irony" pp. 56-67. A more recent, important study is: Strohschneider-Kohrs, 1960.

the youth's dream-like state is interrupted by Papadiamantis's ironic comments, which bring us back to reality and show that all those desirable things the youth dreams of come only at the expense of hard work and sweat:

To live with your beloved in that little white house (whose dazzling snowy color is due to the interminable whitewashing of Aunt Siniora) would produce romantic sentiments if you were to spend your days with your beloved in the midst of the perfumed, lush garden... with all kinds of choice plants and flowers (which are due, however, to the assiduous exertions of Uncle Constantis)... (2.381).

The reality of the farmers' labors clashes with the imaginary world of the youth, who lives in a pre-lapsarian state of bliss. That a major part of Papadiamantis's work refers to the preternatural dimension of things is one of the main focuses of Elytis's study *I Magia tou Papadiamanti* (*The Magic of Papadiamantis*). Elytis stresses the correspondence that exists between the material and the spiritual worlds in Papadiamantis and explains his symbolism by using the Romanticist terms to which I have already referred. He avers that the analogy between the author's own psyche and his native land is such that one does not know whether Skiathos gave birth to Papadiamantis or whether Papadiamantis gave birth to Skiathos (n.d. 22). More specifically, Elytis believes that if "the natural elements" do not reflect the author's own imagination, "it is a feeling of justice that he projects from himself to the totality, and from the totality to the divine elements" (n.d. 33). He cites as an example the ending of *I Fonissa* (*The Murderess*), when the rocks rise up like living beings, hunting the murderess and stoning her as if they constituted a vengeful hand. Then finally Elytis observes: "the vines and the waves, the winds and the ships that pervade [Papadiamantis's] stories are not used simply as background for his heroes. They are specifically analogous to his feelings; they participate in the development and in the final analysis they appear as bearers of moral values" (n.d. 43).

The use of symbolism is recognized as one of the hallmarks of European Romanticism.<sup>17</sup> Let us examine a few examples of Papadiamantis's richly symbolic language. In his stories we find the

<sup>17</sup>Wellek 1963: 161.



typical, almost commonplace, correlations between external nature and the inner self. Woman's skin resembles a lily (Mati), she is a bright star (Poulia), she has the mysterious depth and discretion of the sea (Lialio). But even in these cases the comparison is not merely decorative. The sensual description of Mati in "Eros-Theros" ("Love the Harvester"): "...her abundant blond hair descending to her waist in two thick braids, like stalactites of gold.... The swelling flesh...a store of pale lilies, dewy and freshly cut, with veins the color of a white rose...her hair...resembled a reddish-gold cloud...her eyebrows shaded her deep blue eyes like a pale mist that hovers in the morning over the sparkling shoreline..." (*Tales* 104-105). All this emphasizes the correspondence (in the technical, Baudelairean sense of that word) between the seventeen-year-old girl at the height of her beauty and the brightness of the spring when nature's abundance is at its most sensual.

In "Asteraki" ("The Little Star") the narrator, Master Alexis – a name that calls attention to the autobiographical aspect of the story – is completely charmed by the beauty, flair, and domestic virtues of the sixteen-year-old Poulia. Early every evening, from the cafe across from her house, Master Alexis used to observe the beautiful girl busy at her household chores. One evening, however, he did not see the girl but for the first time he noticed that there was a star hanging down from the ceiling inside her house. A "matter-of-fact, realistic man" (4.307), would assume that this was an optical illusion caused by a hole in the roof but the narrator does not accept this explanation. For him, the little star was Poulia herself, who miraculously radiated her light in her father's modest house.

In "I Nostalgos" Lialio's aged husband considers women as mysterious beings endowed with the secrecy and the inconstancy of the sea. But Lialio herself also has direct and indirect relations with the sea. She is favored by "the nymphs of the night breezes ... and the nymphs of the sea currents" (3. 57; *Tales* 30). And again, it is "as if some Nereid of the sea currents" were benevolently directing her boat. (3.58; *Tales* 31). At a crucial point in the story Lialio removes her white "overdress" and gives it to Mathios so he can use it as a sail (3.52; *Tales* 26). We may consider this scene as echoing an episode in the Odyssey, when Leucothea gives her veil to the shipwrecked Odysseus.

Mathios sees Lialio as a "sorceress" (3.60; *Tales* 33), and for a woman she has unusual strength and vigor. In the mystery of the night, beneath the moon, surrounded by the elements, Lialio seems to have, like the goddesses of ancient myth, power over natural phenomena.

The sea plays a prominent role in Papdiamantis's symbolism. Sometimes it is connected with eroticism ("Oneiro sto Kyma," "Eros-Iros"), sometimes with divine punishment (*I Fonissa*, "Apsaltos" ("Unsung"), "Eniausimon Thyma" ("The Annual Victim"), "Navayion Navayia" ("The Shipwreck"). In the story "O Necros Taxidiotis" ("The Dead Traveler") the role of the sea is even more complex. On the one hand, the sea drowns a man, while on the other hand, it cares for his corpse, protecting it and placing it...with the Virgin Mary's assistance – in the beloved fatherland, as if it were a "foundling," ready for eternal life.<sup>18</sup>

In the stories "Anthos tou Yialou" ("Flower of the Seashore") and "Mavromantilou" ("The Woman with the Black Scarf") we have a complex use of signs and correspondences. In the first story there are two symbols: the flower of the seashore and the melancholy light that appears off the opening of the harbor during the night and remains for hours on the surface of the sea. This light is visible only to a young fisherman, Manos, but when he attempts to reach it with a friend by boat, the light gradually diminishes and finally disappears. An explanation is given by a man of another generation who has heard the story from old women: the light is the soul of a prince who disappeared in a war in olden times and returns to keep his vow to his beloved, Louloudo. She herself wept so much that her tears caused an invisible flower to grow on the seashore. In times gone by the "katharoi" ("pure ones") were able to see the light. Nowadays only the "alafroiskiotoi" (the "fairy-seers") can see the light (4.156). The elusive light ("asyllipton" 4.153) could be interpreted as an unrealized ideal of the youth – only Manos sees it – or as a metaphysical yearning, the *Sehnsucht* of the German Romanticists. But within this tale, however, the mysterious light acquires a more specific meaning, namely the love that surpasses death.

In "Mavromantilou" the Baudelairean correspondences assume cosmic dimensions which underline the harmony of the universe. Papdiamantis describes Yiannios's garden in highly unusual terms.

<sup>18</sup>See Constantinides 1988.



It was "mysterious, bright, vast, imposing": the plants therein had existed "since the creation of the world;" they form "a fluttering surface [mirroring] the dome of heaven; ...the evening star was bathing sensually in its spring" (2.154). For all others the garden was a closed book, but for Yiannios it was a book that was "clear, lucid, and easy to read" (2.155). In this expansive, almost surrealistic description garden, earth, sea, animals, people (the princess), priestly books – all are drawn together in a larger unity which can be perceived only by Yiannios, the gardener, the man close to Nature who can feel it and understand it. The seemingly impenetrable hieroglyphics of the physical world are metaphors that for the European Romanticists betokened the presence of the Numinous, which man must decode from the circumambient cosmic symbolism.

In the second correspondence in this story Yiannios himself is connected with Mavromantilou, a black rock in the sea, close to the shore. According to the tradition, Mavromantilou was a mother who, like Niobe, lost all her children and because of her inconsolable grief turned into a rock. There was a special relationship between Yiannios and Mavromantilou. When fishing, he always sailed close by her and she would once more mourn, this time for Yiannios. At the end of the story, however, Mavromantilou becomes his savior and symbolically, his wife. At one point Yiannios must cling to the rock to keep from drowning. He embraces it – her – and they become "one soul in two bodies" (2.166). The only one ever to accept Yiannios's embrace was the rock that was really a soul, the virginal maiden, the inexperienced widow. This union of the mother bereft of her children, the man lacking a wife and children, and of the rock, eternally beaten by the waves of the sea, emphasizes the common characteristics of all three: sterility, life without warmth, hard and unbending fate, but also unyielding endurance.

Of all the European Romanticists the one most akin to Papadiamantis is Wordsworth. The English poet made it his artistic mission to describe the lives of common folk, especially the peasants of his native soil, the mountainous Lake Country of northern England. To Wordsworth might be equally applied the term customarily applied to the Skiathiot, *ethographos*. The affinities between the two writers will be evident to any reader of Papadiamantis from even a brief scrutiny of three characteristic Wordsworth poems depicting the

lives of the humble, "Michael," "Resolution and Independence," and "The Cumberland Beggar."

The aged shepherd Michael lives peacefully with his wife and only son on a piece of land acquired by dint of hard work. He is forced to send his son to the city temporarily in order to earn money to pay off a relative's debt. But once in the corrupting city, the son disintegrates morally and never returns to his father's home, leaving Michael inconsolable.

"Resolution and Independence" presents a wretchedly poor old man – "the oldest man he seemed that ever wore gray hairs" – who with stoicism and perseverance supports himself by gathering leeches to sell. "The Old Cumberland Beggar," far from being useless, benefits the villagers merely by his presence, the cause of their almsgiving.

One who knows the Skiathiot's tales will easily see that any of these personages could have stepped out of a Papadiamantis story. They can stand in the company of Papadiamantis's Yiannios (in "Mavromantilou"), the porter Kakomi (in "Ftohos Agios," "The Poor Saint"), and many other men and women who despite their wretched material circumstances show kindness and justify their mean existence by their spiritual worth. And the beautiful peasant girls we have noted in Papadiamantis have their counterparts in such Wordsworthian poems as "Lucy Gray" and "To a Highland Girl." The pathos of a feeble-minded boy and his mother in "The Idiot Boy" find a parallel in "Stringla Manna" ("A Shrew of a Mother"). The harsh sufferings of the poor depicted in "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" are found in "O Politismos eis to Horion" ("Civilization in the Village"), and the evil incantation of Wordsworth's poem in "Aeriko sto Dentro."

Both writers share a fondness for the philosophical, meditative recollection of the past. Many Wordsworthian poems take their impetus from the return of the poet to a specific place, as in "Tintern Abbey," "To Joanna," and "Yarrow Revisited." This return to a once-visited place that gives rise to a reflective mood finds its equivalent in Papadiamantis's more autobiographical tales, such as "Ologyra sti Limni," "Flora i Lavra" ("Flora or Lavra"), "I Pharmakolytria," "Amartias Fantasma" ("The Specter of the Sin").

Of all the major writers of European Romanticism it is indeed Wordsworth who is most akin to Papadiamantis in subject matter and in outlook.



In conclusion, I would like to stress that there are no irreconcilable oppositions between Realism, Romanticism, and the depiction of folkways (*ethographia*), three strains present in the writings of Papadiamantis. Conventional literary terms are often deemed inadequate to define the variety of modes found in European Romanticism. Are not such "Realists" as Manzoni, Merimee, and Stendhal Romanticists as well? Many contemporary critics consider Realism as a major component of the Romantic Movement, one which came to assume a dominant role in prose writing during the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>19</sup> In Germany a distinguished group of prose writers of the period roughly 1830-1880, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, Adalbert Stifter, Gottfried Keller, Theodor Storm, and Jeremias Gotthelf, wrote stories (*Novellen*) characterized by diffused romanticism and also that very quality we call in Greek *ethographia*. In Storm, for example, the landscape of his Northern homeland, Schleswig-Holstein, becomes the setting for his melancholy and the backdrop for the tragic dramas he relates, the unfulfilled love in "Immensee," the constant struggle with the unrelenting sea in "Der Schimmelreiter," and the devotion of the good father to his worthless son in "Carsten Curator." The Germans call this mixture of Romanticism and Realism *Poetischer Realismus*, and this is a term that we might well appropriate to describe the work of Alexandros Papadiamantis as well.

<sup>19</sup>Barzun 1961: 99: "the first phase of romanticism is one of extraordinary, unremitting, 'unspecialized' production in all fields.... Romanticism sounds all the themes of the century in its first movement. The next three movements develop one theme each. The next three movements are: Realism, Symbolism, Naturalism." Peyre, 1971: 221-28, speaks of the Romanticism in the works of Leconte de Lisle, Flaubert, and Zola, and other writers of the second half of the nineteenth century. Harold Bloom expresses the judgment that English Romanticism covers the entire nineteenth century (Kermode (ed.) n.d.: 1177).

## Mikis Theodorakis: Music, Culture, and the Creative Process

SPYROS D. ORFANOS

Music helped poetry to become necessary,  
necessary to man like bread and wine.

*Yannis Ritsos*

Understanding the evocative and expressive power of music by reading about it is not possible. The musical experience defies verbal organization even when the critic is a talented one. Music we know gives us a great deal of information - aesthetic, emotional, historical, and even philosophical. Thus, it is clear that writing about music is a difficult task. Understanding the creative power and impact of Greece's premier composer, Mikis Theodorakis, is an even more formidable task. The songs and music of this seventy-three-year-old year old composer have been both innovative and traditional at the same time. He has had an astonishing popularity in Greece, Europe, the United States, and South America. He is a complex artist and an activist with a disposition that can best be described as a unique combination of sensitivity, imagination, independence, and radicalism. While highly intellectual, Theodorakis is able to communicate passions and ideas even under physical and psychological conditions of extraordinary stress. His profound concerns for social and political justice are rooted in his personal history and his leftist ideology. While often idealized, he is not without controversy.

During the period of 1960 to 1975, when Theodorakis was at the height of his popularity, he may have been one of the most influential figures on the Greek psyche. From 1975 to the present, Theodorakis has continued to compose music of great beauty and artistic integrity and to be a participant in the cultural and political currents of Greece.