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Editors' note

This second issue of *Κάμπος* follows essentially the same pattern as its predecessor. All the articles printed here were presented in lecture form to a Cambridge audience during the immediately preceding academic year (i.e. 1993-94); this prerequisite remains an essential feature of the enterprise. It is not our intention that *Κάμπος* should compete with established scholarly journals in the field of Modern Greek studies. We shall not therefore accept unsolicited contributions; we shall restrict ourselves to the publication of "Cambridge papers".

We firmly believe that publication of the edited texts of a selection of lectures, within months of their oral delivery, is not only of interest to a local public but also serves the needs of a wider community of students and scholars in the various disciplines associated with Modern Greek studies. We have already enlisted subscribers in other countries, and indeed other continents. We are most grateful for the support and encouragement we have received, but conscious that all such ventures need continuity and – not least – financial security if they are to survive their infancy. An increase in the number of subscribers will certainly facilitate our forward planning and help to ensure the economic viability of our publication. Given the support and interest of our readers and well-wishers, we shall continue to publish *Κάμπος* each October. To this end any offers of sponsorship (at present we have none) or donations will be gratefully received.



Byzantium in the poetry of Kostis Palamas and C. P. Cavafy*

Panagiotis A. Agapitos

The creation of an image common to and accepted by a specific society is a gradual process of multi-level complexity. The image of Byzantium after the eighteenth century is the result of just such a process involving political, religious and cultural factors. However, even though the presence of Byzantium as a cultural image in Modern Greece is evident, the development and impact of this image have only recently become the subject of closer study.¹ This neglect stems from the wavering attitude of Greek intellectuals towards Byzantium, which they admired for the glory it imparted to the history of Greece, but also abhorred because of its supposed medieval character.²

From where does this attitude come? The newly created Greek State found itself in the midst of European developments

* The following study is a revised version of a talk given at the Universities of Copenhagen (March 1992), Göteborg (April 1992) and Cambridge (October 1993). Thanks are due to Birgit Olsen, Ole L. Smith and David Holton for their warm hospitality and helpful suggestions. I am particularly indebted to Michalis Pieris for his sharp criticism and generous advice on many questions. Except where otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

¹ See indicatively G.P. Savvidis, "Cavafy, Gibbon and Byzantium (1966)", in id., *Μικρά Καβαφικά Α* (Athens 1985), pp. 91-9; Annita Panaretou, "Τὸ Βυζάντιο στὴ νεοελληνικὴ λογοτεχνία", *Βυζαντινὸς Δόμος* 1 (1987) 43-63; G. Kechagioglou, "Τύχες τῆς βυζαντινῆς ακριτικῆς ποίησης στὴ νεοελληνικὴ λογοτεχνία: σταθμοὶ καὶ χρήσεις", *Ἑλληνικά* 37 (1986) 83-109; Natalia G. Deligiannaki, "Ὁ Σικελιανὸς καὶ ἡ μεσαιωνικὴ παράδοση: Ὁ Θάνατος τοῦ Διγενῆ καὶ τὸ Ἀκριτικὸ Ἔπος", *Παλίμψηστον* 8 (1989) 125-49; Th. Detorakis, "Ὁ Νικηφόρος Φωκᾶς στὴν ἱστορία καὶ στὴ λογοτεχνία", *Παλίμψηστον* 9-10 (1989-90) 127-49.

² See, for example, D. Vikelas, *Περὶ Βυζαντινῶν* (London 1874, reprinted Athens 1971).

which had taken place since the eighteenth century. A peculiar situation had been created in this process. The Greek world, before the 1821 revolution, was a widespread community with wealthy and educated members in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as in the Ottoman Empire. With the formation of the State a division was created between those inside and those outside the small territory of Greece, a division conveniently termed Helladic and Hellenic. Whereas before the revolution only a Greek Nation existed, now the Greek State did not represent the entire Nation. A rivalry emerged that culminated, on one hand, in the demand of the Helladic State to absorb the Hellenic Nation and control it on its own terms and, on the other, in the Hellenic Nation's insistence on participating forcefully in the developments within the Helladic State. This demand and insistence was paralleled by the Greek society's vision of uniting Nation and State, the well-known political concept of the "Great Idea".

The Helladic State, in orienting itself towards the West in an attempt to dissociate itself from its Ottoman past, accepted among other things the western frame of cultural notions. This frame included two essential concepts: 1) the unquestioned admiration and idealization of Ancient Greek culture; 2) a peculiarly negative approach to the East, which was accepted only for its exotic value, namely as a source of inspiration for Westerners who needed to find an artistic escape in a world of dreams, languor and sensuality. This view of the East, the Orientalist perspective, dominated western society at the time and was assiduously appropriated by Helladic intellectuals.

Byzantium offered to the nineteenth century the ideal example of an oriental state in its fullest expression. Apparently full of intrigues, eunuchs, courtiers and infinite wealth, Byzantium was but the medieval version of the Ottoman Empire. This Orientalist view allowed the West to place the beginnings of the various European states in the Middle Ages along the lines of a nationalist model and to claim the inheritance of Ancient Greece via Rome and the Renaissance, thus establishing its cultural superiority.

The Greek answer to this historical model, first formulated by Spyridon Zambelios (1815-1881),³ was ultimately given by Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos (1815-1891) in his voluminous *History of the Greek Nation*, published between 1860 and 1877, and covering the time from Homer to the 1821 revolution. Paparrigopoulos formulated most forcefully the theory of Greek continuity through the survival of the Greek Nation, presenting Byzantium as the Christian realization of Ancient Greece and creating the paradox term "Hellenochristian" to describe this phase of Greek history. Thus, Byzantium as the "Medieval Greek State" became part of Medieval Europe, an equal, if not superior, inheritor of the ancient spirit. The Paparrigopoulou model did not mean, however, that Byzantine culture was in any way understood. Byzantine history, yes, was useful for the glorification of the Greek Nation, but other than that the negative image of a culturally sterile period remained unshaken.⁴

More concretely, a comparison of the image of Byzantium in the poetry of Palamas and Cavafy will give us the opportunity to see how two contemporary but wholly diverging artists treat this subject, why they do so and what is the result.

³ See now I. K. Oikonomidis, *Η ενότητα του Ελληνισμού κατά τον Σπ. Ζαμπέλιο* (Athens 1989), although the presentation of the material is uneven and the analysis superficial in parts.

⁴ For the conclusions presented summarily here see P. A. Agapitos, "Byzantine literature and Greek philologists in the nineteenth century", *Classica et Medievalia* 43 (1992) 231-60, where all the relevant bibliography can be found. One might mention here Elli Skopetea, *Τὸ "πρότυπο βασιλείο" καὶ ἡ Μεγάλη Ἰδέα. Ὁψεις τοῦ ἐθνικοῦ προβλήματος στὴν Ἑλλάδα 1830-1880* (Athens 1988) and Th. Veremis, "From the National State to the Stateless Nation 1821-1920", in M. Blinkhorn and Th. Veremis (edd.), *Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality* (Athens 1990), pp. 9-22 for the political aspects; K.Th. Dimaras, *Ἑλληνικὸς Ρωμαντισμὸς* [Νεοελληνικὰ Μελετήματα 7] (Athens 1985), pp. 325-404 and M. Bernal, *Black Athena. The Afroasiatic roots of Classical Civilization. I: The fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785-1985* (New Brunswick, N.J. 1987) for the cultural and intellectual background. See also A. Liakos, "Προς επισκευὴν ολομελείας καὶ ενότητας: Η δόμηση του εθνικού χρόνου", in T. Sklavenitis (ed.), *Επιστημονική συνάντηση στη μνήμη του Κ.Θ. Δημαρά* [K.B.E./E.I.E.] (Athens 1994), pp. 171-99.

Kostis Palamas (born 1859 in Patras, died 1943 in Athens) is one of Greece's most prolific poets. A towering figure in the demoticist movement of the late nineteenth century, he became the leader of the "New Athenian School", dictating for almost half a century the paths of Modern Greek poetic diction.⁵ We shall concern ourselves here with the 4269-verses-long epic-lyric poem *Ἡ Φλογέρα τοῦ Βασιλιᾶ*, which was composed mainly between the military defeat of 1897 and the beginning of the "Macedonian Struggle" in 1904. It was published in late 1910.⁶

The work, consisting of 12 Books and two prologues, has as its central subject the visit of Emperor Basil II (976-1025) to Athens after his final victory over the Bulgarians in 1014. This main theme is amplified by various episodes from Byzantine history, but also from ancient myth, the 1821 revolution and visions of the modern world. The final form was reached by means of a frame-story, developed in Books 1 and 12. Palamas's approach to his material is "synthetic", a term the full meaning of which will become apparent at the end of the analysis. The poet started his work by reading Paparrigopoulos, not only choosing the various

⁵ See R.A. Fletcher, *Kostes Palamas. A great Modern Greek poet: his life, his work and his struggle for demoticism* [The Kostes Palamas Institute 5] (Athens 1984) and K.Th. Dimaras, *Κωστής Παλαμάς. Ἡ πορεία του προς την τέχνη* (Athens ³1989) in conjunction with Venetia Apostolidou, "Το παλαμικό παράδειγμα στην Ιστορία της Νεοελληνικής Λογοτεχνίας", in Sklavenitis (as above n. 4), pp. 127-38.

⁶ For a brief history of the poem's stages of composition see the new edition by K.G. Kasinis, *Ἡ Φλογέρα τοῦ Βασιλιᾶ* [Ἰδρυμα Κώστα καὶ Ἑλένης Οὐράνη. Νεοελληνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη 6] (Athens 1989), pp. 7-11, whose study *Ἡ ἑλληνικὴ λογοτεχνικὴ παράδοση στὴ "Φλογέρα τοῦ Βασιλιᾶ". Συμβολὴ στὴν ἔρευνα τῶν πηγῶν* [Ἰδρυμα Κωστή Παλαμά 3] (Athens 1980) on the sources of the poem is a most important tool for a correct analysis of the *Flogera*. Book and verse numeration refer to Kasinis's edition. For an English translation of the poem see K. Palamas, *The King's Flute*. Translated by Th.Th. Stephanides and G.C. Katsimbales, preface by Ch. Diehl and introduction by E.P. Papanoutsos. Edited by D.P. Synadenos [Ἰδρυμα Κωστή Παλαμά 4] (Athens 1982).

incidents involved, but primarily taking up the idea of continuity.⁷

Continuity in the poem is expressed on three different levels: 1) the survival of the Greek Nation in history; 2) the survival of the Greek language; 3) Byzantium as the focal point where Antiquity and Modern Hellenism merge. It is this concept that dictated the choice of the main theme. The visit of a glorious Byzantine emperor, victor over the northern enemies of Modern Greece, to the most famous city of Classical Antiquity established the epic canvas. During this phase of composition Palamas thought of calling his poem "Byzantine Rhapsody",⁸ an indication of the work's episodic and seemingly improvisatory character, since the phrase is obviously equivalent to titles of well-known nineteenth-century musical works such as Brahms's "Hungarian rhapsody" or Bizet's "Spanish rhapsody".⁹ The appearance of the final volume of Gustave Schlumberger's *L'épopée byzantine* in 1905 and its immediate translation into Greek¹⁰ changed Palamas's perspective, for there he discovered a source that caught his poetic fancy and gave the *Flogera* its final title and form.¹¹

The poem's central theme is to be found in the *Chronography* of the eleventh-century historian Skylitzes, whom Palamas

⁷ For a succinct and sympathetic interpretation of the poem, especially of the issue of continuity, see E.P. Papanoutsos, *Παλαμάς-Καβάφης-Σικελιανός* (Athens ³1971), pp. 98-114.

⁸ Letter no. 123 to Penelope Delta (September 1910) in K. Palamas, *Ἀλληλογραφία. Τόμος Α': 1875-1915*. Εἰσαγωγή, φιλολογικὴ ἐπιμέλεια, σημειώσεις Κ.Γ. Κασίνη [Ἴδρυμα Κωστή Παλαμά 2.1] (Athens 1975), p. 197; see also Kasinis (ed.), p. 9 for further attestations of the subtitle.

⁹ The phrase "Byzantine rhapsody" is, in my opinion, not connected to the term *ραψωδία*, denoting the books of the Homeric poems, a term which Palamas used as a title to a short poem of "Homeric" content; see D. Ricks, *The Shade of Homer. A study in Modern Greek poetry* (Cambridge 1989), pp. 50-2.

¹⁰ G. Schlumberger, *L'épopée byzantine à la fin du Xe siècle* (Paris 1896-1905); the Greek translation by S.I. Voutyras and I. Lambridis (Athens 1904-5) was published in the prestigious series sponsored by Maraslis.

¹¹ For the whole context see Kasinis, *Παράδοση*, pp. 46-57, and esp. p. 50 n. 46.

knew as Kedrenos. A quotation from it figures as one of the poem's two mottoes. After the successful wars against the Bulgarians and the final victory at the Battle of Kleidion in the spring of 1014, Basil leaves his headquarters in Thessaloniki for Athens. Skylitzes does not give any explanation for this journey. It is not a military expedition, but possibly a survey of the lands that had suffered most heavily from the wars of the previous years. Skylitzes writes: "[Basil,] having arrived at Athens and having thanked the Theotokos for his victory and having adorned the church with splendid and luxurious offerings, returned to Constantinople."¹² This statement may be surprising to us in its compactness, but is typical of a Byzantine high functionary of the State. Athens was nothing but a brief stopping-place on the return to Constantinople, the Empire's absolute centre. The Parthenon, in which the church of the Virgin Mary was built, was of no interest because Skylitzes, like any other intellectual of the early Middle Ages, had no perception of history as archaeology.¹³ Moreover, the continuation of the passage, which Palamas omitted, makes it clear that the actual victory celebrations took place in the capital with a formal triumph.¹⁴

This Byzantine perspective has been radically transformed in the *Flogera*. In Book 3 Basil, contemplating his victory, is seized by a desire to crown his piety with a final jewel (3.114-32). He has a vision of the great cities of the world: they appear to him as beautiful women, but he falls in love with poor Athens (3.133-78). The image of Athens is immediately contrasted to that of Constantinople and its protectress, the Virgin Mary at Blachernai; Basil chooses the war-like Virgin of the Rock, as Palamas calls her, the incarnation of Pallas Athena (3.179-216). This is a first indication of the poet's Helladic ideology. The central aspect of Byzantine culture, namely the Constantinopolitan perspective, is undermined. Athens takes over the role as

¹² Skylitzes 364.80-83 (Thurn).

¹³ On this conceptual two-dimensionality see C. Mango, "Antique statuary and the Byzantine beholder", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (1963) 55-75 (reprinted in id., *Byzantium and its Image. History and Culture of the Byzantine Empire* [London 1984], art. no. V).

¹⁴ Skylitzes 364.89-365.91 (Thurn).

centre of Hellenism. We are already one step removed from a proper understanding of Byzantium.

The other motto of the poem comes from a short episode in the work of the late thirteenth-century historian Georgios Pachymeres. Pachymeres describes how, during the siege of Galata by Michael Palaiologos in the summer of 1260, a group of magnates makes an excursion to the empty fields that lie west of Constantinople's main walls. They reach the Hebdomon, which in older times was the central military camp of the capital, now a place of pasture. They wander through the ruins of the church of St John the Evangelist. Pachymeres writes:

Suddenly, they saw in the corner the remains of a man long dead, standing erect, complete with all his limbs, naked from head to toe. He had in his mouth the reed of a shepherd's flute, placed there in derision by some of those who were tending the flocks. As they saw it, they were amazed at the corpse's completeness and wondered to whom this earthen dust belonged, thus congealed and still shaped as a body; then, they observed to the right the empty tomb with verses engraved upon it, declaring who the buried man was. And he was, as the letters proclaimed, Basil the Bulgar-slayer.¹⁵

The description is sober. There is no mysticism involved in the discovery, while the funerary inscription, which the author does not report, discloses immediately the identity of the corpse. I would suggest that Pachymeres points to the power of the transmitted word, not as poetic diction but as archaeological discovery. We are 200 years later than Skylitzes. Byzantium has changed and its intellectuals are beginning to interpret the "historicity" of the objects around them.¹⁶

This is the scene that gave Palamas the title and frame-story to his poem. Book 1 of the *Flogera* opens with the description of the siege of Galata and the excursion to the Hebdomon. Palamas follows Pachymeres but expands the text, establishing a setting radically removed from the original (1.47ff.). In vv. 74-5 the "suddenly" of Pachymeres is picked up,

¹⁵ Pachymeres II.21 (I, 175.12-177.7 Failler).

¹⁶ On this change see H.-G. Beck, *Theodoros Metochites. Die Krise des byzantinischen Weltbildes im 14. Jahrhundert* (Munich 1952).

but the scene is transformed into a moment of mysterious encounter. Palamas describes the corpse of the emperor with the flute in his mouth as "complete; black and naked and incomparable and grand" (1.84), creating a sense of superhuman magnitude. Basil becomes a Nietzschean *Übermensch*, a concept that Palamas used consciously, as he later revealed.¹⁷ The poet then proceeds to quote the inscription with the interesting qualitative statement that the engraved letters were half-erased (I.101-2). The text Palamas presents as that of the inscription is not wholly his invention, because the inscription has, in fact, been preserved. Palamas knew it from Schlumberger's work. Naturally, he does not quote the actual text, but expands it, translates the archaic diction into his poetic idiom and once again incorporates Helladic ideology. He stresses that Basil chose a different place for his burial from the rulers of Constantinople (1.103-5, 108-10). However, the original states that "some previous emperors have variously prepared for their burial uncommon sites",¹⁸ which implies the existence of precedents for the choice of a highly irregular burial site. While the historical Basil simply excuses his personal preferences, the Basil of Palamas rejects Byzantium.

Moreover, it is not the half-erased text that becomes the gate to the other world, but the flute in the emperor's mouth: as soon as the leader of the group tries to remove it, the flute begins to speak in a human voice. The Byzantine perception of the written word as transmitter of wisdom has been subverted, while Byzantium is reduced to the minor *accidens* of poetic inspiration. Palamas reasserts through the voice of the flute the power of oral poetry and becomes himself the expounder of history. We

¹⁷ In yet another letter to Penelope Delta (no. 139, January 1912), Palamas underlined the general difference between her Basil and his: "Πόσο μὲ συγκίνησε - τί φαντάζεστε, ὁ ἥσυχος, Ὀλύμπιας ἀγαθοσύνης ἀνθρωπιμὸς τοῦ Βουλγαροκτόνου, κάτι ὅλως ἀντίθετο ἀπὸ τὸ νιτσιακὸ κάπως φάντασμα τῆς Φλογέρας τοῦ Βασιλιᾶ" (*Ἀλληλογραφία* I, 217.9-10 Kasinis). On the Nietzschean background of Palamas see B.-L. Eklund, *The Ideal and the Real. A study of the ideas in Kostis Palamas' "Ὁ Δωδεκάλογος τοῦ Γύφτου"* (Gothenburg 1972), pp. 20-39.

¹⁸ *Anth. Pal.* III, 216.1-2 (Cougny).

are confronted here with the image of the poet as prophet, the romantic perception of Homeric poetry. And it is no coincidence that Palamas dedicated the *Flogera* to Alexandros Pallis, who had translated the *Iliad* into the *dhimotiki* of the Psycharian school, in an attempt to transform it into a Modern Greek folk-song. It is exactly this intellectual climate that is reflected in the opening speech of the flute (1.166-99). The flute is the sister of the Muses, inspired by the Sibyl and the voice of Hecuba; it has heard the famous dialogue between the Mermaid and King Alexander, it has played for Maximo and Digenis, it is poetic Fancy herself, speaking in the voice of the bird that so often announces in Modern Greek folk-songs the fate of mortals. The passage presents the continuity of Greek poetic creativity through a rich, flowing, sensual language and a skilfully crafted fifteen-syllable verse.

This "Homeric" grandeur of Palamas's language and vision finds its full development in Book 4. Here the poet describes the army of Basil, as he takes the road for Athens and passes through glorious sites of the 1821 revolution. The book opens with a description of the famous weapon of the Byzantine fleet, known in Byzantine times as "liquid fire", but in the West as the "Greek fire" (*feu grégeois*). And it is this term that Palamas uses to describe the effect of the ελληνικὴ φωτιά on the enemies of Hellenism (4.29-50). Thus, the neutral term "liquid fire" becomes – in its new form as the nationally charged "Greek fire" – the symbol of the "Great Idea". Then the flute, as if in a vision, evokes the passing of the army. Palamas draws his poetic devices from Homer, combining two famous passages from the *Iliad*: in Book 2 the "catalogue of ships" enumerates all the participants in the war against Troy; in Book 3 Helen, in the *teichoskopia* scene, introduces from the walls of Troy the Achaean chieftains down in the fields. With a similar catalogue the flute describes from the top of Mount Parnassus the various contingents of the army as they pass by down in the valley (4.51-423). In the 400-verses-long passage a tremendous array of people march by in a huge panorama. One detail deserves attention. The main part of Basil's army consists of soldiers from the areas of Macedonia and south of it. Only in one passage are soldiers from the eastern parts of the Empire included. These are the *akrites*, the border-warriors, known to

all through the *Digenis Akritis* and the figure of Digenis in the folk-songs. Once again Palamas establishes his Helladic ideology, once again the reality of Byzantium is subverted.

A dominant trait of Basil's character in the *Flogera* is his ascetic way of life (9.336-57), the result of his utter rejection of the female sex (10.49-54), a rejection based on the female image typical of *fin-de-siècle* art and literature. It is an image in which the female is contrastingly defined by a simultaneous angelic and demonic nature. It is indicative that at the end of the nineteenth century artists concentrate on the depiction of the biblical triad Delilah, Salome and Judith.¹⁹ The three women apparently present some common characteristics: they are Middle-Easterners, they are sexually dominant and they kill the men who submit to their charms. This ideological construct appears fully developed in the *Flogera*, since the historical Empress Theophano, Basil's mother, furnishes all the necessary material for the depiction of the woman demon.²⁰ Book 2 takes place on the Princes' Islands, the traditional place of exile for fallen emperors at the time. The description of the scenery, where the oriental sun scorches the earth while the flowers encompass it with their heavy scent (2.48-55), signals the sensual eroticism of the East. From within this dim atmospheric setting appear the ghosts of Theophano and of the three men she has slain. Theophano is described as having this dual nature which destroys men: "Fury and Sphinx, you living flesh, dragoness, Aphrodite! ... You, sin and salvation, and resurrection and death" (2.212, 289).

This is for Palamas the erotic and decadent climate of Byzantium. When Basil, therefore, in Book 10, having rejected women, denies that he was born of a woman and suggests that his ancestors are the mythical Centaurs (10.55-8), the poet ultimately removes the ascetic emperor from his corrupt Oriental surroundings in which he has accidentally been found and gives him back to the pure Helladic culture to which he naturally belongs.

¹⁹ See B. Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity. Fantasies of feminine evil in fin-de-siècle culture* (New York-Oxford 1986), pp. 352-401.

²⁰ On the sources see Kasinis, *Παράδοση*, pp. 64-77.

We will conclude our discussion of the *Flogera* with a look at Palamas's attitude towards the texts which formed the sources of his poem. For one thing, except for the two mottoes, no other medieval text or author is ever mentioned in the poem, in contrast to ancient authors, like Homer and Hesiod. What we do find is a straight attack on Byzantine learned literature, an attack that reflects the prevailing opinion of the nineteenth century towards the main bulk of Byzantine literary production. In Book 10 Basil himself accuses the orators and philosophers of his day as people of sterile imagination writing in a dead language. This is juxtaposed to the vigorous language of the workers and the people, the language of the folk-song, which is closest to the emperor's heart (10.59-94).²¹ We have here a projection of the language debate back to the Byzantine world. Interestingly enough, the material for this attack is furnished by Michael Psellos (1018-1079) in his *Chronography*. In a passage from the chapter on Basil, the Byzantine chief minister criticizes the emperor for not cultivating education at his court, for not using the written laws, but judging according to his personal will.²² Basil, writes Psellos, "was not a fluent speaker. The phrases were not rounded off, nor were they lengthened into periods. In fact, he clipped his words, with little pauses between them, more like a peasant than a man of good education."²³ This is heavy criticism by an intellectual and politician who considered education and learning as *the* means for governing the State and upholding its image. Palamas, in reversing Psellos's criticism to praise, produces the final removal of "his" Byzantium from the conventions of the age that he purportedly describes, while simultaneously introducing the Helladic ideal of *dhimotiki*, which contrasts with the Phanariot tradition of *katharevousa*.

And it is with *katharevousa* as a stylistic medium that we can start our analysis of Cavafy's Byzantium. It is indicative of the rivalry and lack of understanding between Helladic and

²¹ See also the attack on Byzantine rhetoric in 9.102-107.

²² Psell. *Chron.* I.29 (I, 40-42 Impellizzeri).

²³ Psell. *Chron.* I.36.21-24 (I, 52-54 Impellizzeri). Translation by E.R.A. Sewter, *Michael Psellus. Fourteen Byzantine rulers* (Harmondsworth 1966), p. 49.

Hellenic intellectuals at the turn of the century that Palamas criticized Cavafy for his very use of *katharevousa*, which for him was false to the traditions of the Greek language and therefore unpoetic.²⁴

But Cavafy (born 1863 and died 1933 in Alexandria) did not belong to the main stream of Greek literary production, not out of lack of knowledge of developments there, but out of lack of cultural affinity. His is the world of Hellenic Hellenism; cosmopolitan, restrained, profoundly sensitive to history as a continuous context rather than as a conscious evoking, educated and fluent in other languages, he has no inclination or need to define himself as a "Hellene" of "Hellas".²⁵ His choice of subjects, therefore, appears at least understandable within his Alexandrian context.²⁶

One obvious difference between Palamas and Cavafy is the latter's approach to composition. His poems are always short, individual scenes, firmly focused on one episode, one person or one feeling. In contrast to Palamas who, inspired by one episode, uses it as a nucleus to a huge canvas, Cavafy, inspired by a scene of

²⁴ See, indicatively, K. Palamas, *Ἄπαντα*, XII (Athens 1960), p. 175 (on the problems of Cavafy's λόγος and στίχος) and p. 356 (Cavafy's problematic γλώσσα). For an overt attack see Psycharis's short but brutal comment of 1924 (reprinted in *Νέα Ἔστία* 74 [1963] 1404).

²⁵ Note Cavafy's comment "Ἔϊμαι καὶ ἐγὼ Ἑλληνικός. Προσοχή, ὄχι Ἑλλην, οὔτε Ἑλληνίζων, ἀλλὰ Ἑλληνικός", remembered by G. Hatziaandreas, i.e. Stratis Tsirkas, and reported by T. Malanos, *Ὁ ποιητὴς Κ.Π. Καβάφης. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ τὸ ἔργο του* (Athens ³1957), p. 235.

²⁶ For a comprehensive analysis of Cavafy's poetics with substantial bibliography see M. Pieris, *Χῶρος, Φῶς καὶ Λόγος. Ἡ διαλεκτικὴ τοῦ "μέσα-ἔξω" στὴν ποίηση τοῦ Καβάφη* (Athens 1992). For the documentation of Cavafy's relation to Byzantium, his historical readings and comments see the profound study by Diana Haas, *Le problème religieux dans l'oeuvre de Cavafy. Les années de formation [1882-1905]* (Diss. Paris IV-Sorbonne 1987), which is about to appear in the monograph series of the French Institute at Athens. The study by B. F. Christidis, *Ὁ Καβάφης καὶ τὸ Βυζάντιο* (Athens 1958), is useless since it is marred by errors concerning Byzantium, its history and culture, while the discussion of the poems is wholly subjective and for the most part undocumented.

the past, takes it over as a whole. Subject and poet stand on equal terms. Cavafy does not assume the role of the prophet; he is the individual reader responding to a given text that moved him deeply.²⁷

I would like to demonstrate how this approach functions with one example, while pointing also to what I believe is a major theme in his poetry, particularly so in the Byzantine poems.²⁸ The poem in question, which has nothing to do with Byzantium, is "Ο Βασιλεὺς Δημήτριος" (1900).²⁹ In it the poet describes the escape of King Demetrios of Macedonia in 287 B.C. after he had been defeated by King Pyrrhos of Epirus. Cavafy prefixes a motto to the poem. It comes from Plutarch's *Demetrios*. Plutarch narrates how Demetrios fled: "And entering his tent, he – like an actor and not like a king – changes into a brown tunic instead of that tragic one, and slipping away he escaped."³⁰ In contrast to Plutarch's negative image of the king as actor,³¹ Cavafy separates the two. In escaping in disguise Demetrios did not behave like a king. But his exit resembles that of an actor, who, as soon as his job is finished, changes costume and goes

²⁷ On the question of the poet as reader see D.N. Maronitis, "Κ.Π. Καβάφης: ἕνας ποιητῆς ἀναγνώστης", in: *Κύκλος Καβάφη* [Βιβλιοθήκη Γενικῆς Παιδείας] (Athens 1984), pp. 53-80.

²⁸ When referring to Cavafy's "Byzantine" poems, I exclude all poems whose subject matter can be dated before the Justinianic era because of their strong focus on the "liminal" world of Late Antiquity (see Savvidis's classification in *Μικρὰ Καβαφικά Α*, p. 98 n. 5). For an analysis of Cavafy's *anekdota* on Emperor Julian see G.W. Bowersock, "The Julian Poems of C.P. Cavafy", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 7 (1981) 89-104; for the published text with further bibliography see Renata Lavagnini, "Sette nuove poesie bizantine di Constantino Kavafis", *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici* N.S. 25 (1988) 217-81.

²⁹ Κ.Π. Καβάφη, *Τὰ ποιήματα (1897-1918/1919-1933)*. Νέα ἔκδοση τοῦ Γ.Π. Σαββίδη (Athens 21991), I, p. 33. The dates given in parentheses refer to each poem's date of composition and not of its publication.

³⁰ Plut. *Dem.* 44.9 (*Vitae Parallelae* III, 50 Ziegler).

³¹ The negative image of the theatre is a key motif in Plutarch's *Demetrios* (e.g. 18.5, 28.1, 41.5-8, 44.9, 53.1, 53.10) and its famous counterpart *Antony*. On the whole issue see Plutarch, *Life of Antony*. Edited by C.B.R. Pelling (Cambridge 1988), pp. 21-2.

home. The theatrical image, therefore, is not negative but merely explicative. Cavafy as reader of Plutarch takes over the specific scene, he even incorporates an inconspicuous reference to the ancient author,³² but shifts the imagery slightly to create a varied effect. His approach is not synthetic, like Palamas's, but analytic and mimetic. As a technique of textual reception it stands much closer to the rhetorical theory of Late Antiquity and Byzantium than to contemporary practices.³³ Moreover, through the use of the theatrical imagery, he imports the notion of illusion: what appears to be is not what is. The reader Cavafy is fully aware of history as a stage. This early poem is the first to address the question of theatre and illusion in so clear a manner.³⁴

It is this change of roles that is most powerfully conveyed in our first example from the Byzantine poems. "Μανουήλ Κομνηνός" (1905)³⁵ takes as its theme the death of Emperor Manuel I Komnenos in September of 1180. The source of the scene is the late twelfth-century historian Niketas Choniates.³⁶ Choniates describes the whole episode in a highly critical manner. Manuel, who was a fervent admirer of astrology, was suffering from a serious disease, but believed that he would live for another fourteen years. The astrologers around him were announcing blatant falsehoods. Finally, recognizing that he had no hope of living, he gave the patriarch a document rejecting astrology and asked for a monastic habit. But there was none to be found in the imperial apartments, so a black cloak was brought, which he put on. Niketas adds that the cloak was short and did not cover the emperor's legs. Everybody wept,

³² "They say" in v. 4 is obviously Plutarch.

³³ On Byzantium see H. Hunger, "On the Imitation (μίμησις) of Antiquity in Byzantine literature", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23-24 (1969-70) 17-38.

³⁴ Helen Catsaouni, "Cavafy and the Theatrical Representation of History", *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 10 (1983) 105-16, is concerned with the "theatricality" of Cavafy's poems rather than "theatrical illusion" as both ideological construct and poetical device. See also G.P. Savvidis, "Ο Καβάφης περί ἐκκλησίας καὶ θεάτρου (1963)", in id., *Μικρά Καβαφικά Β* (Athens 1987), pp. 31-48 on Cavafy's opinions about the theatre and his "dramatic" sensitivity.

³⁵ Savvidis (2nd ed.) I, p. 51.

³⁶ Nik. Chon. *Chron. Dieg.* 220.10-222.64 (van Dieten).

contemplating the ugliness of the human body at the hour of death and the vanity of human affairs.³⁷

Cavafy condenses the scene. The critical statements of Choniates have been removed. The emperor remembers the pious customs of his youth and asks for the monastic habit, which is brought to him. He is content "ποῦ δείχνει ἰὸψι σεμνὴν ἱερέως ἢ καλογῆρου" (vv. 10-11). The statement at the end of the poem encapsulates the image of illusion created by the monastic habit. Manuel believes and ends his life in piety, but for himself. The poet leaves it to the reader to decide which role – emperor or monk – is the true one. What Cavafy does not do is to antagonize Choniates. The dramatic condensing and shift of imagery, while serving the purpose of the poet, does not cancel the Byzantine source.³⁸

In contrast to Palamas's rejection of Byzantine literature, Cavafy takes this very issue as the subject of his poem "Βυζαντινὸς Ἄρχων, ἐξόριστος, στιχουργῶν" (1921).³⁹ The poem is a monologue by a fictional dignitary of the State.⁴⁰ The official excuses his composition of mythological epigrams on account of boredom in his place of banishment, following the machinations of Eirene Doukaina, wife of Emperor Alexios I Komnenos who usurped the throne in 1081, since the speaker was a trusted counsellor of the fallen Emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates. He defends his compositions by insisting that a) he has an excellent knowledge of the Bible and patristic literature, thus pre-empting any suspicion about his faith, and b) he is a skilled metrician, which is probably the reason for his punish-

³⁷ On Choniates's criticism of emperors in general see F.H. Tinnfeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik in der byzantinischen Historiographie von Prokop bis Niketas Choniates* (Munich 1971), pp. 158-79 and on Manuel in particular see P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143-1180* (Cambridge 1993), pp. 477-88; neither of them discusses the specific episode.

³⁸ For a full analysis of the poem and its motivic connection to "Ὁ Βασιλεὺς Δημήτριος" see Haas, *Problème religieux*, pp. 434-58.

³⁹ Savvidis (2nd ed.) II, p. 27.

⁴⁰ Mavrogordato's suggestion (C.P. Cavafy, *Poems*. Translated by J. Mavrogordato with an introduction by R. Warner [London 1951], p. 127) that the protagonist is Emperor Michael VII (1071-1078) is not supported by the poem's internal evidence (see Savvidis [2nd ed.] II, p. 113).

ment. At first sight the poem appears clear: a somewhat antiquated and probably silly gentleman has involved himself in some stupid political affair which ended with his banishment. He thinks that he is a poet but actually produces bad verse, and Cavafy is being ironic.

I would suggest that Cavafy stages here his theatre of illusions. The play is at the expense of the reader who cannot decode the text unless he is aware of Byzantine culture.⁴¹ Four points make the text incomprehensible: 1) an understanding of the poem's historical frame is unthinkable without a good knowledge of late eleventh-century history; 2) the excuses of the speaker make no sense if the reader is not aware of the dangers involved in an accusation of paganism; 3) the reader does not understand why an intellectual in the eleventh century should compose poems on mythological subjects; 4) the reader cannot believe that quality of verse can be a reason for punishment.

Now, Cavafy himself was very much aware of these things, not only because of his extensive reading of modern historians, but because of his interest in Byzantine literature, poetry in particular.⁴² This is most obviously manifested by an article he wrote in 1892 entitled "Οἱ Βυζαντινοὶ Ποιηταί", where he presents Karl Krumbacher's *History of Byzantine Literature* to the Alexandrian public.⁴³ It is not accidental that Cavafy focused on the figure of Christophoros Mytilenaios, one of the best epigram poets of the late eleventh century and a high official of State. But to return to the poem. First of all, there is no question that the spatial distinction "place of exile"/"Constantinople" is in favour of the latter. The banished official wishes very much to return to the capital. But above all, the fact

⁴¹ It is the trap into which G. Jusdanis (*The Poetics of Cavafy. Textuality, Eroticism, History* [Princeton 1987], pp. 55-7) has fallen in his interpretation of the poem.

⁴² See the instructive remarks of Diana Haas, "Στον ένδοξό μας Βυζαντινισμό': σημειώσεις για ένα στίχο του Καβάφη", *Διαβάζω* 78 (1983) 76-81 and ead., *Problème religieux*, pp. 95-137.

⁴³ "Οἱ Βυζαντινοὶ Ποιηταί", *Τηλέγραφος Ἀλεξανδρείας* 11/25-4-1892, reprinted in Κ.Π. Καβάφη, *Πεζά. Σχόλια Γ.Α. Παπουτσάκη* (Athens 1963), pp. 43-50. On this article and its context see Haas, *Problème religieux*, pp. 72-94.

that he insists on writing verses on subjects highly problematic at the time – it is exactly during these years that the philosopher Ioannes Italos is banished from the capital under the accusation of paganism⁴⁴ – and that these verses are recapturing the world of the past, is indicative of Cavafy's own aesthetic approach. To a certain degree the Hellenic intellectual identifies with the Byzantine administrator-poet (and Cavafy was himself poet and civil servant), who feels a stranger to the new intellectual trends prevailing around him. Byzantium becomes the curtain which hides or reveals the stage of the poet's thoughts. Here we detect yet another difference from Palamas, who minimalized the historical frame within an expanded concept, while Cavafy minimalizes his poetry in front of the historical background. Moreover, it becomes obvious that the irony of the poem's last verse (Αὐτὴ ἡ ὀρθότης, πιθανόν, εἶν' ἢ αἰτία τῆς μομφῆς) is not only directed by the poet towards the speaker, but through the speaker (*qua* poet) to the reader.

But how does Cavafy approach an actual text? In the poem "Ἄννα Κομνηνὴ" (1917),⁴⁵ Cavafy presents us with princess Anna Komnene, daughter of Emperor Alexios I and wife of Caesar Nikephoros Bryennios. Komnene, sometime after 1138, wrote a historical biography of her father, entitled *Alexiad*. The poem opens with a reference to the prologue of the *Alexiad*, where the princess painfully remembers the death of her husband. Cavafy actually quotes the text, merging it beautifully with his verse and style. Then he reveals that what Komnene is really mourning is the loss of kingship, which her brother managed to take away from her. Once again, Cavafy only indicates the events without a knowledge of which the reader cannot fully comprehend the situation.

Cavafy here, in contrast to our previous examples, makes the text the centre of his poem. A first thought is to go to the original. And indeed, in the last chapter of the prologue⁴⁶ we find the passages in question and also some expressions which

⁴⁴ L. Clucas, *The trial of John Italos and the crisis of intellectual values in Byzantium in the eleventh century* [Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia 26] (Munich 1981).

⁴⁵ Savvidis (2nd ed.) II, p. 26.

⁴⁶ Komn. *proem.* IV (I, 7-9 Leib).

are paraphrased. The obvious inference is that Cavafy read the *Alexiad* and, inspired by the reading, composed the poem. But this inference is wrong. Cavafy leads us to believe this by means of the quotations and the poem's focusing. But the actual source of his inspiration is a passage from Paparrigopoulos, whom Cavafy had read extensively.⁴⁷ Paparrigopoulos, at the end of his analysis of Alexios's reign, comes to speak about Anna and her younger brother Ioannes.⁴⁸ The historian criticizes Anna for intriguing to have her husband crowned, an intrigue for which she found support from her mother, the very Eirene Doukaina who had banished our poet-administrator. What strikes the eye of the reader are two words used by Paparrigopoulos: φιλαρχία for Anna's desire of kingship and προπετής for Ioannes's slanderous characterization by his mother.⁴⁹ They are also the key-words in the poem's third part. Cavafy has created a synthesis in which Anna's text is interpreted and "corrected" by the modern historian.

This triangular relationship of poet/medieval author/modern historian forms the basis of our last example, which represents the final synthesis of memory, mimesis and melancholy in Cavafy's Byzantine world. "Ἀπὸ ὑαλῖ χρωματιστὸ" (1925)⁵⁰ is one of the two Byzantine poems whose title does not reveal its Byzantine subject.⁵¹ The speaker begins by saying that he is strongly moved by a detail in the coronation of Ioannes and Eirene Kantakouzenos in May of 1347. They had only a few jewels left and so used artificial ones. Coloured pieces of glass adorned their crowns. These are, in the speaker's opinion, a pro-

⁴⁷ See Diana Haas, "Cavafy's reading notes on Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall'", *Folia Neohellenica* 4 (1982) 25-96; on Paparrigopoulos in particular *ibid.* p. 27.

⁴⁸ K. Paparrigopoulos, *Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Ἔθνους ἀπὸ τῶν ἀρχαιοτάτων χρόνων μέχρι τῶν νεωτέρων* (Athens 21885-7), IV, pp. 510-11. Paparrigopoulos closely follows the remarks on Anna and Ioannes by Choniates (*Chron. Dieg.* 4-6 van Dieten).

⁴⁹ The adjective προπετής is used by Choniates (*Chron. Dieg.* 5.92-3 van Dieten), a point seen by Mavrogordato (see his translation p. 115), but not φιλαρχία or φίλαρχος for Anna.

⁵⁰ Savvidis (2nd ed.) II, p. 50. 1925 is the date of publication; the date of composition is unknown (see Savvidis [2nd ed.] II, p. 129).

⁵¹ The other one is "Ἴμενος" (1915).

test against the unjust wretchedness of the royal couple; they are the symbols of what they should have had at their coronation.

The speaker is consistent in distancing himself as reader from his unnamed source and in placing himself within the context of the Byzantine State, thus distancing himself from us as well. The immediate source for this "detail" is a passage from *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* by Edward Gibbon.⁵² Cavafy had a copy of the voluminous work in his library and had annotated it extensively.⁵³ Gibbon maliciously describes the disgrace of the Roman Empire. In a footnote, he reveals his source and quotes from it a line about the pieces of glass. This source is the historian Nikephoros Gregoras from the mid-fourteenth century.⁵⁴ He describes the coronation of the imperial couple at the Blachernai Church. Nikephoros was a close associate of Kantakouzenos. He concludes the scene with the statement: "Thus did flow away and were erased and brought low the matters concerning the ancient happiness and splendour of the Roman State; so that I cannot narrate them but with a sense of shame."

Cavafy as reader proceeded in two phases: he read Gibbon, his inspiration was caught by the scene, he went to Gregoras and, merging medieval and modern historian into one, contradicted them by changing the very object of the theatrical illusion into the symbol of truth instead of falsehood. What is, unquestionably, remarkable in the poem is the speaker's intervention about the poverty of "our wretched state" (v. 5 τοῦ ταλαιπώρου κράτους μας ἦταν μεγάλ' ἡ πτώχεια). I believe that, as in the case of the banished administrator, the speaker is partly Cavafy. Such a statement, concealed under the cloak of the historical setting, is the expression of Hellenic ideology, aware

⁵² E. Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Edited by J.B. Bury (London 1898), VI, p. 503. This was already detected by Mavrogordato, p. 145.

⁵³ See Savvidis (as above n. 1) and Haas (as above n. 47) *passim*.

⁵⁴ Nik. Greg. *Rhom. Hist.* XV.11.3 (II, 788.15-789.8 Bonn). See also the analysis of the scene in Nikephoros Gregoras, *Rhomäische Geschichte*. Übersetzt und erläutert von J.L. van Dieten. Dritter Teil: Kapitel XII-XVII [Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur 24] (Stuttgart 1988), pp. 170-1.

of the futility of an ecumenical dream and intent on preserving through *mimesis* the cultural heritage of the past.

Cavafy's understated image of Byzantium is thus far more Byzantine in concept and expression than Palamas's grandiose and orientalist *Byzantine Rhapsody* about the Helladic "Great Idea". It was, however, this latter image that defined the reception of Byzantium in twentieth-century Greek literature, as numerous works by N. Kazantzakis, A. Terzakis, A. Vlachos, K. Kyriazis and others only too clearly demonstrate.

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Making a world: political exiles in 1930s Greece

Margaret E. Kenna

Social Utopias and concentration camps are examples on a continuum of extreme social situations: at one end there is an attempt to create a perfect society; at the other, the imposition of the most severely constraining structure possible. In between lie slave societies, prisons, boarding schools and hospitals, and many other examples of "total institutions". The situations I have in mind may well vary in the "degrees of freedom" which are allowed, or tolerated. By this I mean that those involved may be free in some sense to organize their own daily lives, or they may have some sort of order imposed on them. In some, the age and gender distribution is totally "skewed" (adult men only, for example, in prisoner-of-war camps), in others (refugee camps, perhaps) those involved are a cross-section of the total social group (men and women of all ages, with babies and children too).

In this paper I want to discuss a case in which people tried to set up a Utopia under conditions of constraint. They were Greek political exiles (exiled, that is, within Greece) during the Dictatorship of Metaxas (often known as "the Regime of the Fourth of August" from the date in 1936 when Metaxas seized power). Many of them were still in exile when Greece was occupied by German and Italian forces but space does not allow an account of exile under Occupation.

Although these exiles were nearly all men, women were imprisoned and exiled as political dissidents too. Although they were sent to women's prisons, they were not exiled separately but along with men. Some women had babies and small children with them. We have here a rather unusual example of the social organization of life in an extreme situation, because the composition of the exile group was neither entirely single-sex nor entirely adult. As I will detail below, these exiles were more or less allowed, if not constrained by circumstances, to organize

their lives within the broad general constraints of living in exile, rather than having a mode of organization imposed on them. A parallel is, perhaps, the life of political exiles in Siberia (Kennan 1958 [1891]: ch. 5).

I am here concerned with one particular group of exiles, those on the Cycladic island of Anafi, about whom a considerable body of material has now been collected. I have published some preliminary findings (Kenna 1991, 1992) and here wish to bring these up to date as I have now been able to interview some former exiles and to locate further published and unpublished sources. Let me set the scene by explaining how I came to be interested in this topic.

Research and the researcher

I have carried out research as a social anthropologist on Anafi over the course of twenty-five years: in 1966-67 for my doctoral thesis I investigated inheritance, dowry and ritual obligations (Kenna 1976); in 1973 migration from the island to Athens and elsewhere (Kenna 1983), and in 1987-88, the role of returned migrants in tourism (Kenna 1993). At the end of that piece of research, an island family I had known for over twenty-five years showed me a box containing over one hundred and fifty glass and celluloid negatives showing the lives of the Ομάδα Συμβίωσης Πολιτικών Εξορίστων Ανάφης (Collective Life Group [Commune] of Political Exiles of Anafi). This box had been found in an abandoned house in the 1950s by the man who had been my landlord in 1966-67, Thanasis Vafeiadhes. He had first come to the island in 1935 as an exile and later married an Anafiot woman and returned with her to the island at the end of the Civil War. This woman, a widow since 1975, allowed me to make copies of the photo-archive, and to publish them with the results of my researches into the history of the Anafiot political exiles.

Initially my interest in the negatives stemmed from researches on Anafi itself and among its migrants; hence my concern was to establish what influence the presence of so many exiles over several decades had exerted on islanders' ideas and activities, particularly their political perceptions. As the research continued, and I began to trace people who had been

exiles on the island, I became interested in the social organization of exile in its own right.

Internal exile in the Greek legal system

Internal exile was used by successive Greek governments from the beginning of the twentieth century onward as a punishment additional to a prison sentence, and sometimes as an alternative. The categories of people for whom exile was considered an appropriate punishment included not only "politicals", but also those convicted of animal theft and animal killing (ζωοκλοπή and ζωοκτονία), and various kinds of "low-lifers" such as drug addicts and dealers.

The places selected for exile included inhabited islands, with reasonably regular steamer connections to the mainland (e.g. Naxos, Idhra), more remote and less populated islands (Kimolos, Anafi), and uninhabited islands such as Gavdhos and Ai Strati (see Woodhouse 1985: 33). Mainland villages were also used as places of exile: Sarafis was sent to Gytheion in 1920 (and to Milos later), Theodorakis was exiled to the village of Zatouna in Arkadhia. The punishment of internal exile is a double one: removal from one's familiar surroundings, and an enforced domicile in a strange place, among Greeks with whom there is no personal connection.

As far as I know, the first people to be sent into internal exile for political reasons were two members of the workers' movement of Salonika, who participated in the general strike of March 1914, Avraam Benaroyias and Ghionas, exiled to Naxos. Monarchists were also exiled: indeed, the first woman exiled was the monarchist Kalliroï Parren, sent to Idhra in 1917 under the government of Venizelos (Kostopoulos et al. 1993; see also Pikros 1978; Flountzis 1979: 109).

Some accounts of exile are contemporary with the conditions they describe and perhaps need to be treated with caution for that very reason. For example, articles in the newspaper *Ριζοσπάστης* (the Radical) were written by journalists who visited exiles to collect first-hand information (see Pikros 1978) and it is possible that the harshness of conditions may have been exaggerated in order to influence public opinion. On the other hand, accounts and memoirs written much later, sometimes decades after the events described, in some cases after further

periods of prison and exile post-war, or after years in Eastern Europe and the USSR, may well over-emphasize solidarity and forget disagreements and factionalism within exile communes.

Another method by which to assess the accounts of political exiles is to compare them with descriptions of the conditions under which other categories of exile were held. I have not as yet come across memoirs of any exiled animal thieves, but the autobiography of Michalis Yenitsaris gives an account of drug-addicts exiled to Ios (1992: ch. 7).

Sources

One of the most important published memoirs about the commune on Anafi is the second volume of a three-part work of several thousand pages, covering the period 1935-1950, by Kostas Birkas. Although individual chapters in the rest of the work refer to the Anafi commune, most of the second volume (itself published in two parts) is about Birkas's period of exile on Anafi, and is extremely detailed, with long passages quoted from letters and reminiscences of fellow exiles.¹ Birkas was still in exile on Anafi when the Italian garrison arrived in May 1941, as was Kostas Tzamaloukas (1897-1969), whose short book records his period of exile from September 1940 to September 1942 (Tzamaloukas 1975). Another source is the account of Vasilis Bartziotas (b. 1909), who was on Anafi for 14 months from October 1937 to late December 1938 (Bartziotas 1978) when he and six others were sent to Akronafplia. I have also been able to use the Anafi section of the diary of Kostas Gavrielidhes (covering the period 11 August-23 December 1936), from which only a small excerpt has been published in a book by his daughter (Gavrielidhou

¹ Birkas refers to his "καλό αρχείο από καμιά 200αριά φωτογραφίες απ' όλους τους τομείς και τις εκδηλώσεις της Ομάδας" ("fine archive of about 200 photographs of all the sectors and manifestations of the [Anafi] Commune", Birkas 1966: 325), an archive he gave to other exiles when he was transferred because of illness from Anafi to Santorini, and which he feared had been lost: "Τι κρίμα αλήθεια να μη σωθούν αυτά τα αθάνατα κειμήλια" ("truly what a pity that these immortal relics were not saved", *ibid.*). The negatives I was shown on Anafi in 1988 are, I believe, the remains of Birkas's archive.

1988: 52-3).² In addition, I have consulted Antonis Flountzis's book about the men's prison camp at Akronafplia (1979).

The fullest source in English is by the Australian communist Bert Birtles. The long middle section (chs 11-20) of *Exiles in the Aegean* is an account of a visit to Anafi which Birtles and his wife Dora made in January and February 1936, that is, before the events of 4 August. (Birtles later visited the exiles on Gavdhos; see ch. 28.)

A source which overlaps with Birtles is Yannis Khatzidhimou's account of trades-unionists in exile on Anafi and their hunger-strike, in which he took part, in December 1935. Khatzidhimou left Anafi on 26 January 1936 after one year's exile; some of the names he refers to as fellow-exiles are also mentioned by Birtles (Khatzidhimou, ch. 9: 145; Birtles 1938: 137).

In addition to these published sources I have begun to collect accounts by Anafiot islanders who remember the 1930s and 1940s, and I have notes from 1966 of conversations with Thanasis Vafeiadhes about the time when he was an exile, as well as notes of more recent conversations with members of his family recalling what he told them about that time. In the spring of 1992 I was able to interview people, now in their seventies and eighties, who were able to identify themselves, and others, in some of the photos, and to share their personal reminiscences of Anafi.³

Background

Metaxas seized power on 4 August 1936 because of what he said was a "communist threat" to Greece, and immediately ordered the arrest of all known communists, trades-unionists, and left-wing adherents or sympathisers. Most of them were sentenced to exile, usually on Aegean islands. Hence only some of these

² Nitsa Gavrielidhou very kindly allowed me to copy her typescript of the whole diary, to which she added portions from her father's other unpublished writings, and from which she omitted some sections which she felt inappropriate for readers outside her family.

³ I have incorporated into this paper the information given to me by several former exiles on Anafi, including Demos Nelhis, Eirini Skalidhou, and Alekos Zachariadhes, all of whom I thank for their help.

political exiles, mostly men but also women, were people who were actually communists in the sense of being members of the Κομμουνιστικό Κόμμα Ελλάδος, Communist Party of Greece, known by its initials as KKE. Others were arrested on suspicion. A number of those exiled were Jewish Greeks from Salonika,⁴ mostly involved in trades-unions.

The exiles sent to the Aegean islands were thus not only varied politically, they were from a mix of social and educational backgrounds, as well as from different parts of Greece. Once in exile, they were left to their own devices, apart from reporting daily to the police, and were thus able to create almost any form of organization for themselves that they wished. They set up "collective life groups". People lived in close proximity who would otherwise never have met or shared such binding experiences (compared with the situation Carlo Levi describes in *Christ stopped at Eboli*, where Italian internal exiles were not allowed to associate with one another). The Greek authorities seem to have tacitly accepted the way in which the exiles organized themselves and to have worked through each commune's representatives and committees. The patterns of organization of commune life, handed on from experienced exiles to those more recently arrived, persisted over several decades. The commune founded on Anafi appears to have worked so well that it continued its existence throughout the Metaxas dictatorship and during the Occupation (for comparative material, see Scott 1990).

The island

Anafi is a small mountainous island (45 sq. kms), the most remote and south-easterly of the Cyclades, and used as a place of exile

⁴ Salonika, with its thriving port and tobacco industry, was one of the first places in Greece in which trades-union activity developed, and had a large number of Jewish inhabitants (in 1900 the population of 173,000 consisted of 80,000 Jews, 60,000 Muslims and 30,000 Christians; see Stavroulakis 1993). Many of those who came to Greece in 1922 as refugees from Asia Minor settled in Salonika. An examination of the names and places of origin of exiles (see the biographical material in Birkas 1966: 960-92) reveals a very high proportion from Salonika and the surrounding area.

since Roman times. In the twentieth century, exiles were sent to the island almost continuously: monarchists in 1918 (Pikros 1978: 15-26), communists during the dictatorship of Pangalos (1925), and "από τότε το νησί δεν έμεινε δίχως κομμουνιστές" ("from then on the island was never without communists", Tzamaloukas 1975: 22; see also O'Connor 1929: 212ff, and Birkas 1966: 48). Other categories of exile were sent there too. Tzamaloukas mentions that during his period of exile there were "μερικοί ζωοκλέπτες και διάφοροι άλλοι του κοινού ποινικού δικαίου" ("several animal thieves and various others [exiled under] the common penal law", 1975: 24). Until the late 1980s Anafi had no harbour or jetty, and visiting steamers had to off-load cargo or passengers into small boats which rowed out from the beach. The inhabitants had a subsistence economy based on agriculture and livestock supplemented by remittances from migrants. In recent years islanders and returned migrants have been exploiting a new source of income: tourism.

Kousoulas in his history of the KKE talks of exile "for a few months with living expenses paid by the Government, to one of the sunny, though lonely Aegean islands" (1965: 17). Many exiles remained on Anafi for years and were hardly living in the lap of luxury. Those who got to know the island describe its beauties (see, for example, Glinos's letters, 1946: 173-9), but also the winter winds and cold, and the isolation when the weekly boat could not be reached by dinghy.

Numbers of exiles

The number of Metaxas exiles on Anafi fluctuated, with newly sentenced people arriving and others leaving, either at the end of their term or being transferred elsewhere (for example, to the prison-camp at Akronafplia, see Flountzis 1979). Shortly after the regime of 4 August began, there were 300 exiles on Anafi (Glinos 1946: 173), then 500 (Linardhatos 1966: 426). At its peak the total was 750 (Bartziotas 1978: 108; Flountzis 1979: 77, Birkas 1966: 38), many more than the indigenous population. In April 1941, just prior to the arrival of an Italian garrison on the island, the number of exiles was 220 (KKE 1978: 154; see also Kolodny 1974: 446, citing Kedros 1966: 87). These figures give some idea of the organizational problems involved in housing

and provisioning such large numbers of people in such an inaccessible place.

In addition there were problems of maintaining health and treating illness and long-term conditions. Tzamaloukas (1975: 27) describes how each new arrival was given a change of clothes and told to wash thoroughly in a tiny shower-room before joining the commune, to prevent the spread of disease and lice picked up in prison or on the journey. Flountzis, writing of Akronafplia (1979: ch. 7), refers to the considerable health risks posed by the numbers of people living at close quarters, particularly when some of them were suffering from tuberculosis. In the caption to a photograph in which some men are wearing white cloths around their coatsleeves, Khatzidhimou notes that TB sufferers wore these armbands (n.d.: 158). Health problems were exacerbated by poor diet; many exiles were weakened by chronic or recurrent illnesses. Islanders, and, it seems, police, often called in the exile-doctor, who played an important role in forging links between the commune and the villagers.

The social organization of exile

The first exiles began to arrive on Anafi within a week of Metaxas seizing power on 4 August (Gavrielidhes arrived on 11 August, for example). They were sent by steamer on the *άγονος γραμμή* (the "profitless route" because of the small number of passengers to such poor islands), and then jumped down into small boats to be rowed ashore. Once there, the only obligation was to report to the police station twice a day. The police also censored the incoming mail and informed the commune who had received letters, money-orders or parcels which could be collected.

Unless the authorities considered an exile to be from a well-off family, who would be assumed willing and able to send living expenses to the place of exile (though many such families refused to do so), exiles were given ten drachmas allowance per day from the state for all expenses and left to fend for themselves. This is presumably what Kousoulas means, in the phrase quoted above, by "living expenses paid by the government" (1965: 17). Often the allowances were late, delayed, or reduced. Yenitsaris mentions books of ten-drachma coupons which the exiles on Ios exchanged for provisions or food (1992:

55); no such coupon system is mentioned for the political exiles on Anafi, but it may be that the Ios exiles, mostly drug-addicts, were not trusted with cash.

As responsibility for providing food and shelter was transferred by the state to individuals, political exiles were able to group together to organize a system of communal living. Bartziotas and Birkas argue that it was the communists who took the initiative in the organization of the Anafi commune, although in a minority, because their political philosophy and training gave them the theoretical and practical basis on which to organize several hundred people. But they had to do this with the agreement of all the others. They had to create and maintain a group identity, organize daily life, and establish order and control over a collection of people, two-thirds of whom were from a range of varied political and non-political backgrounds.⁵ Bartziotas claims that the reason for creating an ομάδα (commune) on Anafi rather than the "γνωστή μας κολλεκτίβα" ("our familiar collective"), was precisely because communist members were not in a majority (1978: 108). It is interesting to note here that Birtles, in his account of the visit to Anafi in early 1936, prior to the Metaxas dictatorship, refers to the small group of exiles he and Dora found there (presumably hard-line Marxists?) as "The Collective" (Birtles 1938: ch. 12). Gavrielidhes's diary entry for Thursday 17 September 1936 may refer to these people: "Τέσσεροι αρχαιομαρξισταί (sic) μέλη της ομάδας μάς έστειλαν επιστολή όπου γράφουν ότι δια λόγους πολιτικούς υποχωρούν από την ομάδα" ("four old-style Marxist members of the commune sent us [i.e. Gavrielidhes and the other ten members of the committee] a letter in which they wrote that for political reasons they were splitting off from the commune"; n.d. typescript addendum to p. 28). This splinter commune seems not only to have survived separately for several years but even to have increased in size (see below, and Tzamaloukas 1975: 24).

⁵ Including παλαισημερολογίτες (Old Calendarists, who would not accept the Gregorian calendar adopted by Greece in 1923; see Tzamaloukas 1975: 24).

Committees and sub-groups

While the group of exiles is thus referred to as the ομάδα (the commune) and the exiles are designated σύντροφοι (comrades, companions, literally "mess-mates") or συνεξόριστοι (fellow exiles), a number of other terms and distinctions are used. The word συνθαλαμίτες (room-mates) designates those who shared a house or dormitory, between ten and twenty people. Exiles who received food-parcels or other items were expected to share with their room-mates the half which they were allowed to keep, after giving one half to the commune. Often the men assigned to a particular dormitory were from the same region or town. Birkas mentions sub-groupings based on place of origin, using the phrase "οι υπεύθυνοι των διαφόρων εθνικοτοπικών συλλόγων (Μωραίτες, Αθηναίοι, Μακεδόνες κλπ.)" ("those in charge of the different local national/racial associations, people from the Morea, Athenians, Macedonians, etc.", 1966: 78), implying a very strong bond of cultural identity which appears to have flourished under imprisonment as well as exile. Flountzis has a photo captioned "the first Roumeliots in Akronafplia, 1937" (1979: opposite p. 112), and also photos of "Mytileniots", "Kephalonians", etc. Food-parcels were also often shared with members of one's regional association (Birkas 1966: 87), who also took it in turns to organize excursions to beaches or seaside areas. Such use of regional patriotism to strengthen bonds of fellowship is interesting, because in some circumstances it might have led to factionalism. However, the strength of the group unity established in the commune is evidenced by the fact that when those who had been exiled were transferred elsewhere, or finished their sentences, they still referred to themselves and each other as "Anafiots".

When a particular category or section within the commune requires clear specification, terms such as τα μέλη του Κόμματος (members of the Party, i.e. the KKE) or η κομματική φράξια (the Party section) are used (see Bartziotas 1978: 109, where he claims that Party members made up a third of the total of political exiles, then [October 1937] numbering 350). Both Bartziotas and Birkas claim that Party members were in all the key positions in the organization of the commune, but in such memoirs departures from the rule might not be mentioned. While some sources refer to individuals being "chosen" or "elected" to

particular posts, it is not clear how democratic the selection procedure was (see, for example, Kousoulas 1965: 129). Gavrielidhes's Anafi diary refers to the usual monthly meeting of the commune on 6 September (i.e. the first such after the arrival of those exiled by the Metaxas dictatorship), in which "εξελέγη γραφείο από 11 μέλη" ("a bureau of eleven members was elected", typescript p. 28 iii), of which he was one.

These posts were offices linked to a series of committees which controlled almost every aspect of commune life: subsistence, health, education, etc. The Γενική Επιτροπή (General Committee) was usually called the Γραφείο της Ομάδας (Office of the Commune, Birkas 1966: 77); in addition there was a Γραφείο της Καθοδήγησης (Office of Political Indoctrination, 1966: 120), and a Μορφωτική Επιτροπή (Education Committee). The Οικονομική Επιτροπή (Economic Committee, 1966: 78, 88) worked out, for example, the costs of buying provisions locally or importing them. At the time Bartziotas arrived on the island (late 1937), he says that the then leaders of the commune were eating separately from the other members, and providing themselves with better quality food. This corresponds with my landlord's story (in 1966) that, during his period of exile, he cooked for a small number of exiles (he named Siantos, Porfiroyennis, Glinos, Sofianopoulos and Gavrielidhes⁶). There may possibly be some confusion here between separate menus for the leaders and the special diets which were provided for those who were ill, or suffering from permanent or semi-permanent conditions: tuberculosis, ulcers, etc., particularly when the two categories overlapped.

⁶ Gavrielidhes, in the final entry to his Anafi diary on Tuesday 22 December, just before he left for Athens to undergo an operation for a stomach ulcer, mentions being ready in good time thanks to the help of a fellow exile: "Ο Θανάσης μού τα ετοίμασε και πάλι όλα. Πόσο με υποχρέωσε το παιδί αυτό. Σ' όλο το διάστημα της αρρώστειας μου, στάθηκε σαν παραγματικός φίλος δίπλα μου..." ("Thanasis got everything ready for me. How much I owe to this lad. In all the time of my illness he stood by me like a real friend..." n.d. typescript p. 39). As already mentioned, my landlord's first name was Thanasis, and photographic evidence supports the supposition that he was the person to whom Gavrielidhes is referring.

One other important sub-group within the commune was the Youth Section, the Κόμμα Νεολαίας, made up entirely, it seems, of young men (all the women exiles were of mature age). From references to their activities carrying brushwood, sweeping the village streets, etc., it seems that they were frequently used for tasks involving heavy physical labour.

Life outside the commune

Although any political exile had the right to join the commune set up in any place of exile, some chose not to, or left the commune after disagreements. Tzamaloukas, for example, refers to "10 εξόριστοι αρχαιομαρξιστές (sic) που είχαν τη δική τους ομαδική ζωή" ("ten old-style Marxists who had their own commune", 1975: 24; this was presumably the splinter-commune referred to by Gavrielidhes, see above). Some members of the commune were expelled for serious infringements of its rules. Unable, or unwilling, to live apart from the commune, they signed δηλώσεις μετανοίας (literally, declarations of repentance, confessions renouncing Communism, whether or not they had actually been communists), and were released from exile.

Pressure from various quarters was often put on political exiles to sign such confessions. Letters from home and family, with details of privations, illness, etc., begging the husband or son, as main bread-winner, to return, or mentioning the possibility of divorce, seem possibly to have been more instrumental in persuading exiles to sign such "confessions" than the privations and ill-treatment received in exile (although Birkas suggests that some of these letters from home were forged, or written under duress from the authorities).⁷ Names of those who signed

⁷ Published sources and photos, for example the plate captioned "Τσαμουνταλίδης, με τη μάνα του επισκέπτρια", "Tsamoundalidhes with his mother on a visit" (see Bartziotas 1978: 157), indicate that exiles were allowed visits, particularly by women. It is possible that the authorities permitted these if the visitor promised to try and persuade the exile to sign a "confession". Often these visitors acted as couriers, bringing left-wing newspapers, letters, and other information. Barziotas's wife and daughter visited him for a month, his wife bringing news and instructions from party headquarters (ibid.: 122); Alekos Zachariades told me that his

such confessions were published in newspapers of every political hue.

Setting up the commune

The exiles to Anafi in August 1936 pooled their resources and set up a commune. The sources I have consulted are unanimous in saying that it would otherwise have been impossible for them to live. Yet we know from Yenitsaris's account of exile on Ios that he and a friend managed to live independently for a year (1992: 58). We have also noted that it was possible for those in political disagreement with the majority in the main commune to move out and live separately, albeit in a mini-commune of their own.

Birkas, quoting the diary of Kostopanayiotis, mentions that when the first wave of exiles arrived on Anafi, they found "twelve old exiles, there under the same law, 4229" (1966: 38). These exiles from earlier regimes presumably helped establish the Metaxas exiles (just as, in the post-Occupation period, and under the Colonels, when there were further waves of exiles to the islands, those who had previous experience helped set up a form of organization).⁸ Because of migration from the island there were empty houses for the exiles to rent.

Once they had rented about twenty barrel-vaulted houses in the village, they had to furnish them either as dormitories or for particular use: as a kitchen, dining-room, meeting-place, a doctor's and dentist's surgery, a pharmacy, a recreation room and a library (Birkas 1966: 80; Tzamaloukas 1975: 40).⁹ They made beds out of canes, stools and benches out of wooden packing cases and bamboo, and other furniture, and presumably imported large cauldrons for cooking and the plates, bowls and cutlery necessary for feeding several hundred people. Within six weeks of the first exiles arriving (i.e. by mid-September 1936) all the arrangements for the supply and cooking of food, for accommodation, for making and mending clothes, repairing shoes, supplying sheets

wife Vasso arranged an escape attempt for him and other exiles during her visit to Anafi.

⁸ Personal communication from Nitsa Gavrielidhou.

⁹ Exiles carried out building as well as repair work: additional rooms were built on to the house used as "Government House" (Birkas 1966: 81).

and blankets, and for the organization of an educational programme were in place (Birkas 1966: 38-9).

The dormitories held between ten and twenty people, under a three-person *γραφείο*, a committee consisting of a cashier, an "educational and cultural officer" and an overall supervisor (Tzamaloukas 1975: 44).¹⁰ While some people were assigned duties on a rota "for the commune" (e.g. collecting water for cooking and washing up), there were also rotas of "room duties". Donkeys and mules were hired on long-term loan for carrying water and other goods.¹¹ Most houses in the village stored rain water in *στέρνες*, cisterns. Presumably the large numbers of exiles meant that the cisterns of the houses they rented would very soon have run dry; hence recourse to the nearest fresh water source to the village. Birkas mentions that the exiles had a flock of sheep and goats; the commune's shepherds (presumably these were permanent positions) grazed them on land rented from islanders; they themselves lived in a cave (1966: 454). Milk was reserved for tuberculosis sufferers and patients in the sick bay as well as for any children in the commune.

The exiles on Anafi also rented farming and garden land, olive trees, and, it seems, fishing boats (see photo in Birkas 1966: 104). They acquired goods "in kind", oil and grain for example, from exchanges with, or labouring jobs for, islanders and bought provisions (often on credit from village grocers) and fresh produce such as eggs and cheese. They bought piglets and rabbits to rear (one exile who bought two rabbits which he hoped to breed found that he had been duped into buying two males). They negotiated with locals for the use of flour-mills and olive-

¹⁰ Recent information about the organization of the tobacco industry in Salonika (with committees of three in charge of each building) throws new light on this pattern for organizing life in exile. The model may not after all be drawn directly from communist manuals, but from workers' practical experience.

¹¹ These hired donkeys were named Hitler, Mussolini and Goering (Birtles 1938: 138). An illustration in Birkas (1966: 83) shows Svolos taking his turn as *νερούλας* (water-carrier) with two of the donkeys. The commune also acquired dogs, as several memoirs mention. Bartziotas (1978: 108) says the commune's dog was called Goebbels, while one of my informants remembers the name as "Dolfus"; Gavrielidhes describes Dolfus's "singing".

presses with which to process what they had grown or picked. By common consent the commune also bought cigarettes, which were given to those carrying out particular rota jobs (bread-making and baking, or making four copies of the day's lessons) in eighths, quarters, halves, etc.

Fuel was a problem on an island which had so few trees. Bartziotas (1978: 117) refers to an incident when "τα στελέχη του Κόμματος και της Κομ. Νεολαίας" ("the cadres of the Party and the Youth Section") set an example to the others by rising early and going out to collect *χινοπόδια*, brushwood, for fuel, returning to the kitchen with bundles weighing 15 to 20 okas (about 25 kilos or 50lbs) just as the others were drinking their breakfast tea.

Exiles also shared their skills (doctor, fisherman, baker, teacher, shepherd, tanner, brickmaker, etc.). Some of these specialist skills helped the exiles establish mutually advantageous relationships with locals; the tannery set up by exiles took the skins of locally slaughtered animals, cured them, and sold them back to villagers or exchanged them for local produce. The exiles' doctor was also used by villagers, Greek police, and later by the Italian garrison.

Besides a kitchen run for commune members serving breakfast, as well as a midday and an evening meal, there was a commune café, and a *καντίνα*, a sort of "tuck-shop", which sold cigarettes, eggs, and additional oil for food by the 50-lepta (half a drachma) and one-drachma spoonful. Incidentally, when small change or actual cash was short, the exiles made their own currency out of cardboard (Birkas 1966: 58, 88); the use of this *εσωτερικό νόμισμα*, internal currency, spread to the islanders and police.

For all members of the commune, even for the minority of already committed communists, it was a completely new experience to live communally, and on such a scale, for such a long period of time. As one of the women interviewed by Hart said, speaking of women's prison life during the Occupation, "in jail we had a kind of socialism..." (Hart 1990: 108). It must have been a unique experience to carry out all the tasks of everyday life in turn on a rota, without the usual classification of "men's or

women's work",¹² and to discuss and decide the arrangement of their own daily life.¹³ Most tasks appear to have been "ungendered" but very heavy physical work and boat duty were carried out by men only (boat duty required rowing out to the steamer and unloading people and parcels: some of the men doing this stripped naked to prevent their one set of clothes from getting wet).¹⁴ The difference from their previous way of life may well have been greater for women than for men, because domestic tasks could not be allocated solely to women by reason of their very small numbers and the very large numbers of men. There were probably never more than ten women in the Anafi commune at any one time, and usually far fewer. There was certainly only one "women's house", which is said to have been small (Bartziotas 1978: 110). The presence of a few women in an overwhelmingly male group caused some organizational problems;¹⁵ in addition, the presence of children required special arrangements for suitable food, and for care.

¹² In prison conditions, of course, there was no choice, for men or for women; Flountzis has a photo showing a prisoner at Akronafplia (Patlakas) sitting cross-legged and darning socks (1975: fifth plate between pp. 225 and 226), just as post-war women prisoners had to learn how to mend shoes (Nitsa Gavrielidhou, personal communication).

¹³ Mikis Theodorakis commented thus on his period on a prison island: "We were permitted to organize our own little society. Illiterate prisoners learned to read and write. There were gymnastic classes. I learned English and I taught solfeggio. There were even some police officers in my classes. Boring and backbreaking jobs like washing dishes and scrubbing floors were rotated. In its rather unhappy way it was an ideal society" (Zwerin 1991).

¹⁴ Boat duty was, in addition, potentially very dangerous; on one occasion in March 1939, two small boats with ten exiles and one policeman were overturned at Prassa (an inlet on the north-west coast of the island used when the harbour on the south coast was inaccessible by reason of prevailing winds). This was the period when weather conditions prevented dinghies from reaching five successive steamers and the island was cut off for 35 days (Birkas 1966: 107-8). Glinos, in a letter dated January 1937, vividly describes the difficulties for exiles and islanders alike when wind and weather conditions interfered with the usual steamer schedule (1946: 175).

¹⁵ Women exiles also experienced difficulties with local men. There were no latrines for either sex, but male exiles were able to walk out of the

The communards as colonisers

The numbers in the commune often equalled or outstripped the numbers of local residents. Although they lived in the village, members of the commune, through its rules, were restricted in their contact with locals. Only designated officers of the commune were allowed to have contact with the police, post-office staff, grocers, and those renting out houses or land. Birkas tells us that before the Occupation one exile was allowed by the police to go to the only village café which had a radio in order to listen to the news and report back to the commune (1966: 130-1).¹⁶ Named individuals in the commune were instructed to visit village houses to buy spare eggs or other additional items for commune use. The expression of any opinion which seemed critical of local custom was strictly forbidden. Theft from locals was severely punished. The exiles' dependence on the goodwill of the Anafiots is said to have necessitated such strictness, and various authors recount stories of the islanders' respect for the honesty of the commune. Living in the village, but in some senses separately from it, the commune moulded the immediate environment in its own terms.

Buildings, and rooms within them, were given names (see Tzamaloukas 1975: 27; Birkas 1966: 79); according to Birtles (1938: 124) the House of Stalin was used as a school, the House of Engels for cooking and eating and the Clara Zetkin House for guests, where Birtles and his wife Dora stayed in the Dimitrov room (1938: 122). Other house names were: Marx, Lenin, Telman,

village to find somewhere to relieve themselves. Women found themselves spied on by local men. Bartziotas organized a work detail to build a latrine next to the women's house to overcome these difficulties (1978: 117). Gavrielidhes says of the commune's rules regarding male exiles and local women: "και η απλή στραβοματιά τιμωρείται αυστηρά" ("even a simple sideways glance is severely punished"; Gavrielidhes n.d. typescript p. 27). Discipline cannot have been quite as strict as this in practice, or my landlord, and others, would never have been able to marry island women. Bartziotas mentions problems (which he also claims to have solved) concerning sexual relationships between male and female exiles and between male exiles and a local woman.

¹⁶ Exiles may possibly have had secret radios; my landlord described to me putting batteries in cooling-down ovens after bread-making to try to get a bit more life out of them.

Ligdhopoulos, Miliaresis, Laskaridhes, Maltezos, Stavridhes (Birkas 1966: 79). Bartziotas mentions the problems which arose when those in whose honour houses had been named signed "confessions" or were otherwise discredited; it was resolved to give places the names of dead heroes only (1978: 110). Birtles also says that the exiles' houses were decorated with the hammer and sickle as "coat of arms" (1938: 124).

Exiles put up their own personal mottoes, too. Glinos describes pasting up in his room the saying "φέρειν δὲ ὅ,τι ἂν ἡ ζωὴ δῶ γενναίως" ("to bear nobly whatever life gives") (1946: 174; quoted also by Linardhatos 1966: 432); my landlord still had in his café in 1966 the piece of cardboard on which he had calligraphed "καὶ αὐτό θα περάσει" ("this too shall pass"), during his time of exile. The room which I rented at that time was decorated with murals painted by one of the exiles. They were still in good condition in 1988.

A newspaper source (*Ἐθνικός Κήρυξ* [*National Herald*] 29 December 1949: 4, column 8), publishing excerpts from the *μυστικό αρχεῖο του Μανιαδάκη*, the secret archive of Maniadhakis (Metaxas's Chief of Police),¹⁷ also suggests that exiles on Anafi named streets in the village publicly: "οἱ λίγοι δρόμοι που υπήρχαν ἔφεραν τὰς ἐξῆς ἐπιγραφείας (sic): οδὸς Στάλιν, οδὸς Πασιονάρια, οδὸς Δημητρώφ" ("the few streets which existed bore the following signs 'Stalin Street', 'Passionaria Street', 'Dimitrov Street'"). This source claims that the reason for this was the *ἀφθονα χρήματα* (limitless funds) of the communist exiles which enabled them to "predominate" in the communal and political life of the islands. Memoirs of exiles do not confirm this claim of limitless funds; my informants also denied that exiles were able to put up street names, thinking it more likely that names were given to various village paths in a joking fashion. Gavrielidhes refers to the flat area just outside the eastern end of the village, where the exiles used to go for a daily walk, as "κόκκινη πλατεία" (Red Square; Gavrielidhes n.d. typescript p. 28).

¹⁷ I owe this reference to the kindness of Dr David Close of Flinders University, Australia.

Education and leisure

Under the direction of the Μορφωτική Επιτροπή (Educational Committee) those with little or no schooling were taught literacy and numeracy. For more advanced students language classes in French, English, German and Russian were put on (Birkas 1966: 55, 78; Tzamaloukas 1975: 43). Discussions, debates, and lectures were scheduled. As well as a general educational programme there was a three-stage "party-political" educational programme (Birkas 1966: 54). Public speaking and debating skills were also taught and practised. Because of the shortage of books, the day's lessons were copied out by a team working with four sheets of paper plus carbons (*ibid.*: 57). Eventually the commune acquired an επίπεδος πολυγράφος, literally a flat/level multicopier, "like the sort used in restaurants for copying menus" (*ibid.*: 56). Lessons were marked, examinations set and medals and diplomas awarded: "βράβευση των καλύτερων μαθητών" ("[the commune] gave certificates to the best pupils"; Birkas 1966: 54). Handwritten wall newspapers were produced, containing serious articles, critical reviews and humour (Bartziotas 1978: 115). Linardhatos refers to a number of such newspapers: *Εξόρμηση* (*The Charge*, as in a military engagement), *Νεολαία* (*Youth*), *Επιθεώρηση* (*The Review*), *Αντιφασίστας* (*Anti-Fascist*) and *Το Ζαλόγγο* (literally "The Grove", but also the name of a dance, made famous during the War of Independence when a line of women with their children danced on top of a cliff and one by one danced off the edge rather than be taken captive by the Turks; Linardhatos 1966: 432). Birkas says that these newspapers were publications of the various regional associations, *Πρωτοπορεία* (*Vanguard*) for the Macedonians, *Ζαλόγγο* for the Epirots, *Γκαζέτα* for the Pontian-Karamanlians, and *Αθηναϊκή Δροσιά* (*Athenian Freshness*) for the Athenian-Peiraiots (1966: 57).

Leisure activities included putting on plays (one photo in Flountzis shows seven people in quite elaborate costumes, plate 2 between pp. 128 and 129). My landlord showed me in the 1960s the shadow puppets he made during his period of exile. The puppets have been preserved by his family, along with his sketches for scenery. He told me that he put on shows in the village school to an audience of exiles and villagers (see Kenna 1991: 73). Other leisure activities included running a raffle (in

which Birkas once won a leather bag, 1966: 76), recitals, and excursions outside the village (presumably with police permission) for picnics and sea-bathing. There was a commune choir, and a group of musicians with instruments including guitars, mandolins, and a saxophone.

Before the Occupation, the exiles celebrated every boat day (when letters, parcels and money-orders arrived) by holding a dance at which the male exiles took turns to be "καβαλλιέρο και ντάμα" ("squire and lady"). The commune celebrated national holidays and "political" holidays such as the day of the three L's (Lenin, Limberg, Luxemburg), Red Army Day, and the October Revolution (Birkas 1966: 92).

Independence Day 1941

The celebrations on Anafi on 25 March 1941 (the Feast of the Annunciation and the day on which the start of the Greek War of Independence of 1821 is celebrated as a national holiday) marked a turning point for the members of the commune. Metaxas was dead (in January of that year), the Occupation of Greece was under way, but the island had not yet been occupied by an Italian garrison (which arrived on 4 May 1941). A detailed programme for the day was arranged, which was to include the islanders as well as the members of the commune (Tzamaloukas (1975: 72-6): popular songs from the commune choir, poetry recitations and a performance of the play *Πήγας ο Βελεστινλής* by Vasilis Rotas, about Rigas Ferraios, an early proponent of revolution against the Turks. The choice of this particular work may well have been significant; the police officer in charge was surnamed Rigas.

Representatives of the commune attended the church service. When the service was over, the musicians and choir performed the national anthem. Next, a member of the commune, Zisakis, described as συνδικαλιστής καπνεργάτης (a tobacco-workers' trade-unionist) from Serres, made a speech which related the War of Independence to the situation faced by Greece at that moment. The speaker urged that political differences be put aside in the face of a common enemy and shared patriotism. He ended with the plea for members of the commune to be released immediately, without making "confessions", to fight in the first line at the front. On other islands, exiles were released by the police, and in some cases, went with them in the same boats to

Crete to join the Resistance. Not so for the "Anafiot" exiles. The police-chief refused to let them go.

As Birkas comments, at this point, the Anafi commune had been in existence for five full years, and its members were all seasoned exiles. Some of them had been in prison and exile continuously for as long as ten years, having been "inside" before the Metaxas dictatorship, during the regimes of Kondylis, Tsaldaris, and Venizelos, passing from one communal form of organization in prison, to a commune on one island, and thence to another, building up strong personal friendships as well as loyalties to particular communes, and to commune life in general. It was these bonds, built up over the previous years, which enabled the commune to continue in existence under Occupation for another eighteen months.

Once the Italian garrison arrived, the status of the exiles changed from "απλοί πολιτικοί εξόριστοι" to "αιχμάλωτοι-όμηροι του κατακτητή" (Birkas 1966: 177): they were no longer "simple political exiles", that is prisoners of the Greek state, but "captive-hostages of the conqueror", the occupying forces. Conditions worsened; allowances were stopped, land renting arrangements terminated and other restrictions imposed. The life of the commune under Occupation requires a paper in its own right, and there is not space here to deal adequately with the rest of the story. In brief: the exile commune suffered terrible privations and several members died during the starvation winter of 1941-42 (see Kenna 1991, 1992). By September 1942 the members of the commune were dispersed to prison camps on other islands and the mainland. Many were shot in reprisals for resistance activities, many died of disease and ill-treatment; a few escaped to fight in the Resistance (see lists in Bartziotas 1978: 131-6; Birkas 1966: 960-92). Only about 30 of the 220 in the commune at the start of Occupation were alive at the time Birkas wrote his memoir (1966: 438-9).

Conclusion

The gist of my argument has been that on Anafi, before the Occupation, the exiles had, ironically, the freedom in exile to create the ideal society that the "real world" was not able to give them. They reordered their environment to fit their world-view, and organized their everyday work and leisure time

accordingly. In addition they were forced to become agricultural workers, an experience which may well have affected their political philosophy later when, as guerrilla fighters and resistance leaders, they had to deal with rural people and provision small bands of fighters. Whether anything more far-reaching might have come of their experiences in exile is difficult to say, as so few of them survived to help build post-war Greece.

Commune life profoundly affected the exiles; the way of life of the islanders themselves barely impinged on them. And yet, although certain contractual relationships with locals were necessary (from which financial gains were certainly made), individual and personal ones did develop, whether of antipathy, humanitarian feeling, or mutual attraction. Islanders were only able to witness the communal life of the exiles from the outside, and to glimpse its inner workings very occasionally. They may have admired the exiles' way of life in so far as it affected the exiles' behaviour towards themselves; it was not a life-style they wished to emulate. The experiment in Utopia was a closed system.

The long sequence of exiles on Anafi affected the islanders profoundly by demonstrating to them the state's power over dissidents and indicating its view that the island was fit only to be an "open prison". Even in the 1970s Anafiots expressed the view that it was state policy to leave their island undeveloped because of its possible use as a place of exile. They saw the place where they lived through the eyes of those in the centre who regarded it as *μακριά απ' το Θεό* (literally, far from God, god-forsaken). The irony of this account of Utopia at the edge is that exile provided an opportunity for the exiles, as well as being a punishment; and while it offered opportunities for the locals, it was a punishment for them as well.

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The return of the Muses: some aspects of revivalism in Greek literature, 1760-1840

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A recurrent image in Greek writing of the early nineteenth century is that of the Muses, who, having been banished to Europe by the barbarian Turkish occupier, were now returning to their liberated homeland and were thus bringing about a new flourishing of the arts and sciences, which had for centuries been absent from Greece. This image is typical of the literary fashion for Classical Greek allusion among Greek intellectuals of the time, and it acted as a convenient metaphor for the rebirth of high culture in Greece to which they earnestly looked forward. The re-establishment of the arts and sciences, especially literature, among the Greeks was felt by the Greek intellectual leaders both before and after the establishment of the Greek state to be a precondition for modern Greece's recognition by the West as a nation worthy of respect and sympathy.

The aim of this paper is to use literary evidence in order to examine the changing attitudes of the Greeks and other Orthodox Christians of the Balkans to the relationship between themselves and the Greek past during the period leading up to the Greek War of Independence in 1821 and its immediate aftermath. Despite the existence of a number of conflicting social, economic, and cultural interests and orientations within the Greek-speaking world at the time, we can easily observe the progressively increasing intensity of a fashion for intellectuals to appeal to ancient Hellas in order to legitimate their activities in the eyes of both their compatriots and the Europeans. This fashion was of course encouraged by Neo-classical and Romantic Hellenism in Europe.

For the Balkans the eighteenth century was the period of what the historian Paschalis Kitromilides has called the "*pax*

ottomanica".¹ At this time the external borders of the Ottoman Empire became stabilized, while the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople was consolidating its control over the Balkans by appointing a large number of Greek bishops even in areas where Greek was not normally spoken; indeed, in the late eighteenth century the Patriarch's jurisdiction covered a larger number of people than during the Byzantine period, the *Millet-i Rum* comprising not only Greek-speakers but persons who had Albanian, Vlach, Romanian, and various Slavonic dialects as their native tongue. But the fact that the liturgy was in Greek meant that those who entered the Church as priests or monks needed to learn Greek, while many bishops and other churchmen attempted to persuade the non-Greek-speaking Orthodox populations in their areas to adopt Greek as their spoken language.² At the same time the Ottoman Empire had been obliged under pressure from Russia to allow the two provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia (which more or less make up present-day Romania) to be governed on behalf of the Empire by Christian princes. Most of these were drawn from a small number of Constantinopolitan Greek families who regularly filled high positions in the Patriarchate, although there were some princes of native Romanian families too. The hospodars of Wallachia and Moldavia conducted their administration in Greek, and education in the principalities was similarly carried out in Greek. Thus in the late eighteenth century the use of the Greek language became more widespread and prestigious than at any time since the height of the Byzantine Empire; the Balkans had become politically and

¹ P.M. Kitromilides, "Orthodox culture and collective identity in the Ottoman Balkans during the eighteenth century", in: C. Heywood and K. Fleet (eds.), *The Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century*, Cambridge (forthcoming [1994]).

² For instance Kosmas the Aetolian (d. 1779), who discouraged the speaking of Albanian (Kosmas o Aitolos, *Διδαχές*, Athens n.d., p. 207); the Vlach Daniel of Moschopolis, who urged Albanians, Vlachs and Bulgarians to take up Greek (*Εισαγωγική διδασκαλία*, n.p. [Constantinople?] 1802, preface); and Neophytos Doukas (see P.M. Kitromilides, "'Imagined communities' and the origins of the national question in the Balkans", *European Historical Quarterly* 19 (1989) 156-7).

ecclesiastically united, with a marked absence of national divisions and ethnic conflicts.³

It is no accident that, as far as I know, the first appearance of the image of the returning Muses coincides chronologically with the beginning of the so-called Greek Enlightenment, a movement, influenced by the Enlightenment in Europe, whose aim was to educate the Greek nation in modern western learning and whose ultimate consequence (though many of its exponents were not fully aware of this at the time) was the establishment of an independent Greek state at the expense of both the Ottoman Empire and the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The background of the first writer to use this image of the Muses, Iosipos Moisiodax, is indicative that the Greek Enlightenment was a pan-Balkan affair. His very surname was an explicit statement of his non-Greek origin, for by calling himself Moisiodax (a Moesian Dacian) he tells us that he was a Vlach from Bulgaria.

In 1761 Moisiodax published at Venice a Greek translation of Muratori's *Moral Philosophy*. In the preface to this volume he wrote that "When Greece lived in freedom and was governed with autonomy," the arts and sciences flourished. "But finally, whether because of the multitudinous sins of the people, or on account of the sluggish rule of the Emperors of Constantinople, the barbarian nations flooded in" and the Muses were forced to seek refuge at Constantinople; but when this too was overrun, the Muses were replaced by "ignorance, boorishness, wretchedness". But now, in his own time, Moisiodax goes on, all this had changed:

Politeness, decency, and love of learning seem again to have revived... In truth, schools multiply, general education flourishes, philosophy is taught, mathematics is heard, teachers increase in number. The whole of Greece should respect those who are striving to recall the Muses to their native Helicon.⁴

³ P.M. Kitromilides, "'Balkan mentality': history, legend, imagination", Communication to the Seventh International Congress of South-East European Studies, Thessaloniki, 28 August-4 September 1994.

⁴ Iosipos Moisiodax (tr.), *Ηθική φιλοσοφία* (Venice 1761). The preface is reprinted in P.M. Kitromilides, *Ι. Μοισιόδαξ*, Athens 1985, pp. 323ff.

There are several points here that deserve comment. As a monk, Moisioudax was obliged to consider the possibility that the benighted period during which the Muses were exiled from Greece was sent by God as a punishment for the sins of the Greeks. It should be noted, though, that even as an Orthodox Christian he looks back with nostalgia to the time when "Greece lived in freedom and was governed with autonomy", by which he can only be referring to the Golden Age of ancient Greece; moreover, he has no hesitation in considering the possibility of another cause for the Greeks' misery, namely the "sluggish rule" of the Orthodox Christian Emperors of Constantinople. He does not number the Vlachs among the "barbarian nations" that overran the Balkans; indeed, despite the fact that Vlach was his mother tongue, he considered himself to be as Greek as any other Orthodox Christian who partook of Greek *paideia*. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that Moisioudax was actually looking forward to a future of political independence for Greece.

The return of the Muses, whether expressed as a pious hope or as a deliberate aim, continued to be a recurrent metaphor in Greek writings during the following decades, gathering momentum especially during the 1810s, at a time when the prospect of an independent Greece was beginning to be viewed by a number of intellectuals as a practical possibility. The use of the metaphor tends to be accompanied by other references to the revival, or at least the imitation or emulation, of ancient Greek culture. It also typically forms part of an orientation towards modern western Europe, where many of the Greek intellectuals had been educated in the Classics. A frequently formulated scenario, symbolizing this process, was that the Muses, having been exiled from Greece, had sought refuge in western Europe, which had nurtured them during the centuries of Greek captivity and which was now ready to hand them back; some writers before 1821 stated that the Muses were already on their way home and were staying temporarily in the Danubian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia until such time as Greece herself was ready to take them back.

See also R. Clogg, "Elite and popular culture in Greece under Turkish rule", *Indiana Social Studies Quarterly* 32 (1979) 72.

I want now, however, to turn my attention to literature itself and to concentrate on the cases of a number of individuals and trends that will help to chart the changing function of literature during the period. "Literature" is a difficult concept to define, especially for the early part of the period under discussion when the various genres had not yet been distinguished and defined; but we can at least classify any work in *verse* as literary because of the artistry required of the versifier.

Few Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire in 1761 would have shared the views of Moisioudax that I have quoted. One writer who presents attitudes more typical of the time is Kaisarios Dapondes, probably the most prolific Greek writer of the eighteenth century, who was born in 1714 on the Aegean island of Skopelos. Like many bright young men of his time, he went off to Constantinople to find his fortune and soon obtained a position as secretary to members of the Phanariot aristocracy, for whom he worked for some years both in the imperial capital and in the Danubian principalities. He appears to have met with considerable success and to have amassed a certain wealth, but his life was changed by a series of personal misfortunes. He was briefly imprisoned in Constantinople; shortly after his release he got married, but his wife died in childbirth together with their first child. Struck by remorse, he decided to atone for his sins by becoming a monk, and eventually went to take up residence at the Xeropotamou Monastery on Mount Athos. No sooner had he arrived there, however, than the other monks decided to take advantage of the presence in their brotherhood of a much-travelled man of the world by despatching him on an eight-year peregrination of the Greek Orthodox world, accompanied by a fragment of the True Cross, with the aim of collecting alms for the monastery. After his return he set about writing a number of works on history and geography as well as books of moral edification. But his most interesting work is his long account of his peregrination with the holy relic entitled *The Garden of Graces* and containing a wealth of autobiographical information and long digressions which reveal his outlook on the world.⁵

⁵ Kaisarios Dapondes, "Κήπος χαρίτων" (written 1768), in E. Legrand, *Bibliothèque grecque vulgaire*, vol. 3, Paris 1881, pp. 1-232.

The Garden of Graces presents a clear image of the Greek Orthodox world-view before the formation of a new Greek consciousness under the influence of the Greek Enlightenment with its orientation towards modern Europe and ancient Greece. As Paschalis Kitromilides points out, Dapondes's conceptual world possessed two cores which gave him his sense of identity: an outer core represented his consciousness of living in the Ottoman Empire, while an inner core represented his consciousness of being an Orthodox Christian.⁶ Each of these cores was orientated towards Constantinople, which continued to be the seat of secular and religious authority, as it had been during the Byzantine Empire; indeed, the Ottoman Empire, as a theocratic state, recognized no distinction between religious and secular authority. Dapondes's writings show no sense either of a national homeland or of ethnic conflict between Greek and non-Greek Orthodox Christians within the Ottoman Empire.⁷ Although his writings include a geography of Europe (which for the most part concerns places he had never visited), his own experience *excludes* western Europe. When he wishes to place his experiences in a historical context, he does so by specifying who occupied the thrones of the Ottoman Empire, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and the Danubian Principalities. The idea of the divine right of rulers and of the hereditary nature of authority (though not of course in the case of *celibate* Patriarchs!) is deeply engrained in Dapondes's world-view, as no doubt was the belief, repeatedly expressed by representatives and supporters of the Church from the Ottoman conquest to the eve of the Greek War of Independence, that the Turks had been sent by God to protect the Orthodox from the schismatics of the Church of Rome.

It is indicative that *The Garden of Graces*, written in 1768 in Dapondes's habitual fifteen-syllable rhymed couplets, is dedicated and ostensibly addressed to the fourteen-year-old son of Dapondes's late patron, a Phanariot hospodar of Moldavia; the son too was later to become ruler of the same province. Much of the Greek literary activity from the middle of the eighteenth century to 1821 had some connection with the Danubian

⁶ Kitromilides, "Balkan mentality" (see note 3 above).

⁷ *ibid.*

principalities, whether because the author had studied there, or because he had been employed there as a teacher, a secretary, or an official, or because one of the princes was the dedicatee and/or financier of the publication. The principalities, situated within the Orthodox world but on the margins of the Ottoman Empire, and governed by Orthodox princes of Greek culture who were crowned at Constantinople according to rituals reminiscent of Byzantine ceremonial, were the meeting point of political and cultural currents flowing from the Ottoman Empire, the Balkans, Russia, the Hapsburg Empire, and western Europe. But, beyond his dedicatee, the young Alexandros Mavrokordatos, Dapontes is addressing any Greek-speaking Orthodox Christian who cares to read him. *The Garden of Graces* is a compendium of instruction in the ways of God and the world (in particular the life of the Orthodox Christians in various parts of the Empire), a book of moral edification, but also a work of entertainment, and its style is chatty, the addressee being constantly present in the poet's discourse.

In *The Garden of Graces* Dapontes's attitude to the Ottomans is ambivalent, a combination of regret with resigned acceptance of Ottoman rule. At one point he talks of a dream in which he saw Sultan Ahmet, father "του βασιλέως μας του πολυχρομένου" ["of our king – long may he reign"], who had ruled his Empire well with the assistance of Ibrahim, "the famed vizir" and friend of the Christians.⁸ In Dapontes's dream Sultan Ahmet had foretold that the peace, law, and order which had prevailed till his time would disappear at his death; and Dapontes comments that indeed he has seen the state of the world grow worse since the days of his youth. Elsewhere, however, when describing his tour of the Aegean islands, he laments that they are "under the slavish yoke of a slave-woman, Hagar the Egyptian",⁹ referring to the legend that the Moslems are descended from Abraham's concubine Hagar rather than from his lawful wife Sarah.

If the state of his homeland under *Moslem* rule is unsatisfactory, how does he view the time of the Christian emperors of

⁸ Dapontes, op. cit., ch. XII, ll. 132-6.

⁹ *ibid.*, ch. XI, ll. 379-80.

Constantinople and the pagan Hellenes who preceded them? In chapter XI he describes an ancient fortress on Samos, whose every tower and wall is "ανδρείας της ελληνικής καθρέφτης" ["mirror of Hellenic courage"], and goes on to extol "our old forefathers", in comparison with whom his contemporaries are "ανθρωπάκια, πίθηκες, μασκαράδες" ["mannikins, apes, and buffoons"].¹⁰ He justifies this invidious comparison by pointing to the enduring nature of ancient buildings in contrast with modern ones which so readily collapse: ancient builders were divine heroes, "true men, unbelievers but yet pious in soul and manners".¹¹ In particular, Pythagoras, Democritus and Heraclitus are said to have been more saintly than any man alive today.¹² Then Dapondes goes on to the wonders built by the Byzantine emperors, which he calls "relics of our own erstwhile authority" and "ornaments of our sacred imperial throne".¹³ He also has a vision of "our Byzantium in its golden age and in our dreams".¹⁴ Elsewhere in his poem Dapondes can't resist telling stories of metamorphosis based on Ovid and having a good laugh with his addressee at the sexual exploits of the ancient gods, whom he depicts with irreverent familiarity and racy language: Zeus, for instance, is described as "γαμνιάς διαβολεμμένος" [a "devilish bonker"] and Hermes as his "ρουφιάνος" ["pimp"].¹⁵ He concludes that, while we can thank God we have escaped from the "abominable religion" of the ancient Greeks, we can still learn from their stories.¹⁶ In the same way, in another work, Dapondes feels free to retell the stories of Nasreddin Hodja, which were so popular throughout the Balkans and the Middle East. The religion practised by the inventor of a tale was clearly no obstacle when it came to drawing a lesson of moral conduct from it. But such a flippant treatment of the ancient Greek heritage would become unfashionable fifty years later, in the run-up to the War of

¹⁰ *ibid.*, ll. 40-3. This and the quotations that follow indicate Dapondes's ambivalent attitude to his "Hellenic" (i.e. pagan) forefathers.

¹¹ *ibid.*, ll. 84-5.

¹² *ibid.*, ll. 263-306.

¹³ *ibid.*, ll. 111-13.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, ll. 31-2.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, ch. XV, ll. 263-4.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, ch. XV, ll. 395-410.

Independence, when any reference to ancient Greek culture was likely to be made in tones of portentous reverence.

Perhaps the most popular form of literature written and read by members of the Greek-speaking Orthodox communities that enjoyed the privilege of relative freedom at the princely courts of Bucharest and Jassy between about 1770 and 1821 were the usually anonymous verses that found their way into manuscript anthologies known as *mismayés* (from the Arabic and Turkish word *mecmua* meaning collection or miscellany).¹⁷ Apart from their wide circulation in manuscript, many of these poems, which were generally composed in order to be sung to Ottoman melodies, were also published in a number of books which appeared in two batches of two each, the first in the early 1790s and the second in the late 1810s;¹⁸ this kind of poem continued to enjoy an afterlife in anthologies published even after the establishment of the Greek state.

These verses, which seem to combine Ottoman with French influences, had two chief themes: love and the vicissitudes of fate. The love-poems are usually addressed by a male lover to an unwilling mistress, and one can imagine that they were frequently employed by young men-about-town in Constantinople, Bucharest and Jassy in their efforts to woo their sweethearts. The poems on the vicissitudes of fate contain two conflicting messages: the more cynical view that you should neither nurture false hopes nor trust good fortune, since you can rely on nothing and trust no one; and the more hopeful view that as long as you show patience and endurance, happiness will be your reward. The cynical message – that one has to make one's own fate – seems especially suitable for those who were part of the Phanariot administration, while the hopeful one is perhaps a consolation

¹⁷ A collection of poems from these anthologies has been published in a new edition by Andia Frantzi, *Μισμαγιά: ανθολόγιο φαναριώτικης ποίησης κατά την έκδοση Δαούτη (1818)*, Athens 1993.

¹⁸ Rigas Velestinlis (tr.), *Σχολείον των ντελικάτων εραστών*, Vienna 1790 (new ed. by P.S. Pistas, Athens 1971); *Έρωτος αποτελέσματα ήτοι ιστορία ηθικοερωτική με πολιτικά τραγούδια*, Vienna 1792 (new ed. by Mario Vitti, Athens 1989, omitting some of the songs); Zisis Daoutis (ed.), *Διάφορα ηθικά, και αστεία στιχουργήματα*, Vienna 1818; Dionysios Fotinos, *Νέος Ερωτόκριτος*, Vienna 1818.

for those who had to suffer under it; but both have presumably emerged from the experience of a community that was ultimately subject to a capricious sultan who might raise someone to a princely throne one day, then the next day have him beheaded for some imagined misdemeanour.

Phanariot poetry is often characterized by its formalism and playfulness: it is an art of insincerity. The most accomplished poet to have emerged from this tradition was Athanasios Christopoulos, who was born in Macedonia in 1772 and settled in Bucharest, where he became an official at the princely court. His collection *Lyrika* was published in 1811,¹⁹ but there are indications that the poems were written even before the turn of the century. The collection is chiefly divided into sections entitled "Erotika", which includes playful love-poems containing recurrent references to Aphrodite and her blind son, and "Vacchika", which are poems in praise of drinking. The collection ends with a longer and more ambitious poem in fifteen-syllable rhymed couplets, entitled "The Apology of Eros", in which Eros claims to be sole master of the world. These poems, written in imitation of the "Anacreontic" poems that were in vogue in the West in the Renaissance and then again in the eighteenth century, display a complete absence of an Orthodox Christian outlook without however taking their Classical references seriously either. The *Lyrika* is also an important sampler of what can be done by a skilful versifier who uses an urbane spoken modern Greek and tries his hand at a wide variety of metrical and rhyming schemes. As we shall see later, Christopoulos was to become the target of contemptuous criticism from the poets who set out to glorify the exploits of the Greek warriors in the War of Independence, namely Kalvos and Solomos. Yet an indication of the popularity and prestige that these poems continued to enjoy is that the first book ever to be printed in Athens was an edition of Christopoulos's *Lyrika*; this was in 1825, when the Turks were still occupying the Acropolis and were beginning their year-long siege of Missolonghi.

Yet even Christopoulos, after the composition of his *Lyrika* but before their first edition, published a neoclassical "heroic

¹⁹ Athanasios Christopoulos, *Λυρικά*, n.p. [Vienna] 1811.

drama", variously titled *Achilles* and *The Death of Patroclus*, in 1805.²⁰ For metamorphoses in Greek literary and ideological fashions had already been happening for some time. It is interesting to observe such metamorphoses taking place within individual writers. Such a metamorphosis took place very early in Rigas, a writer of Vlach origin born in the village of Velestino in Thessaly around 1757. He too made his way to the Danubian principalities, where he apparently amassed a substantial fortune through commerce. His first book, entitled *The School of Delicate Lovers* and published at Vienna in 1790, consisted of translations of selected short stories from the book *Les Contemporaines* by the French writer Rétif de la Bretonne. These stories, with which he took occasional liberties in order to render their settings and situations more familiar to his Phanariot readers, are also interspersed with Phanariot love-poems such as are to be found in the *mismayés*. Rigas's book was followed two years later, in 1792, by an anonymous collection of short stories entitled *The Consequences of Love*. This book consists of what appear to be original stories set in Constantinople and other areas familiar to the Phanariots, and it too includes a number of Phanariot love-songs; it is thus both the first collection of modern Greek short stories ever to be published and the first printed anthology of modern Greek verse by various hands for almost a century.²¹ *The Consequences of Love* is an indication of the popularity of the trend that Rigas had begun.

Rigas was printing his sentimental stories for sensitive lovers the year after the French Revolution. But once the revolutionary message reached him, he must have undergone a profound ideological change, for seven years later, in 1797, he published a revolutionary manifesto consisting of patriotic proclamations and war-songs, a declaration of the rights of man, and a provisional constitution for a republic which would cover the whole of the

²⁰ Athanasios Christopoulos, *Δράμα ηρωικόν εις την αιολοδωρικὴν διάλεκτον*, n.p., n.d. [Vienna 1805]. Christopoulos's drama (together with the collection of comedies by Georgios Soutzos, *Πονήματα τινα δραματικά*, which appeared in Venice in the same year) was apparently the first new original play in Greek to have been published since *Βασιλεύς ο Ροδολίνος* by the Cretan Ioannis-Andreas Troilos in 1647.

²¹ That is, since *Ἄνθη ευλαβείας*, Venice 1708.

Balkans and Asia Minor and have Greek as its language of administration. He also published a military manual for distribution among Greek fighting-men and a map of Greece indicating the ancient and modern names of each location, sites of battles against the barbarians, reproductions of ancient coins, lists of Byzantine emperors, and a plan of Constantinople. It was while he was in the process of despatching these documents to his contacts in the Ottoman Empire that he was arrested by the Austrian police and handed over to the Ottoman authorities, who executed him in 1798 for incitement to sedition.

Rigas's metamorphosis into a Greek patriot was perhaps the earliest and most violent that we can find in this period. A more gradual – and more peaceful – instance is that of Iakovakis Rizos Neroulos, born at Constantinople in 1778. Attaching himself to a succession of Phanariot princes, he rose to become Grand Postelnic or chief minister of the principality of Wallachia about 1814 (such appointments, grand as they may have been in name, were made for one year only). In 1818 he was appointed secretary and translator in the interpreting service of the Sublime Porte and in the following year became Grand Postelnic of Moldavia. Neroulos was the dedicatee of the first edition of Christopoulos's *Lyrika*. In 1816 he published a mock-heroic poem entitled *The theft of the turkey* (there is no pun in the Greek original!) which provides a charming, humorous, but affectionate portrait of a frivolous young Phanariot aristocrat who loses the prize turkey-hen that he has been fattening up for a feast.²²

Rizos Neroulos is perhaps most famous for the *Korakistika*, or "language of the ravens" (published in 1813), a light-hearted satire, in dramatic form, directed against the language reforms proposed by Adamandios Korais, in which a deranged pedant who insists on speaking "corrected" Greek even to his children and servants, almost chokes to death during a meal while trying to pronounce an eighteen-syllable word (ελαδιοξιδιοαλατολαχανοκαρύκευμα) which he has concocted out of ancient Greek roots in order to avoid pronouncing the barbaric "λαχανοσαλάτα", until his children persuade him to utter the everyday word and

²² Iakovakis Rizos Neroulos, *Κούρκας αρπαγή, ποίημα ηρωικοκωμικόν*, Vienna 1816.

he is cured.²³ Neroulos's attack on pedantry and linguistic archaism was not however intended to defend the spoken language of the common people, but rather to promote the "ennobled" language cultivated by the Phanariot aristocracy over the generations at the expense of the new-fangled reforms proposed by Korais, who was an inveterate opponent of what he viewed as the inherited but undeserved privileges and ill-gotten wealth of a clique that prospered by collaborating with Oriental despots in keeping the greater part of the Greek population in ignorance and moral degradation.

But Neroulos too was affected by the neoclassical fashion that was gathering momentum, and he produced a pair of tragedies on ancient Greek themes to suit the mood of the times, *Aspasia* and *Polyxena* (published in 1813 and 1814 respectively).²⁴ Both these works are sentimental rather than patriotic. The first concentrates on Aspasia's grief at the death of Pericles, while the second is a family drama revolving rather incongruously around the rivalry between Polyxena and Cassandra for the hand of Achilles. Neroulos's tragic turn is symptomatic of a literature that was turning away from wit and charm in order to espouse an earnest but bloodless and humourless spirit of neo-classical virtue.

Later, after the expulsion of the Phanariots from the Danubian principalities with the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence in 1821, Neroulos found himself in Geneva, where in 1826 he took it upon himself to deliver and publish a *Cours de littérature grecque moderne* – the first work to provide a substantial survey of Greek writing (not confined to what we would now call "literary") since 1700 and to attempt to define the

²³ Iakovos Rizos, *Κορακιστικά, ή διόρθωσις της ρωμαϊκής γλώσσας. Κωμωδία εις τρεις Πράξεις διαιρεμένη*, n.p. [Vienna] 1813 (new ed. with French translation by P.A. Lascaris: Rizos Néroulos, *Les Korakistiques*, Paris 1928). The title, as well as a pun on Korais's name, is a reference to the conspiratorial jargon used by adults so as not to be understood by children, and vice versa. Birds – and eating – appear to have held a special fascination for Neroulos!

²⁴ Iakovos Rizos, *Ασπασία, τραγωδία*, Vienna 1813; Iakovakis Rizos Neroulos, *Πολυξένη, τραγωδία εις πέντε πράξεις διηρημένη*, Vienna 1814.

concept "modern Greek literature" – in which he claims, among other things, that his *Aspasia* was the first tragedy in Modern Greek to observe the rule of the three unities. A few years later, in 1833, in 1834 and again in 1841, Neroulos was to serve briefly – as briefly as he had been Grand Postelnic of Wallachia and Moldavia – as Minister of Cults and Public Instruction in the Kingdom of Greece.

I like to imagine Neroulos, like many other Greeks of his time and from a similar background, changing his political views and his language as readily as he changed his clothes: in 1821, abandoning the elaborate Oriental costume of a Phanariot courtier, he would have donned a frock coat to give his course of lectures in Geneva, and presumably retained it when he arrived in Greece.²⁵ At the same time he exchanged his urbane and reactionary outlook and his colloquial language for the noble ideals of a Greek patriot expressing himself in the staid "corrected" Greek of Korais. Geographically speaking, Neroulos's life came full circle, for he died in 1850 while serving as Greek ambassador at Constantinople. I don't know what clothes he wore in that capacity.

The taste for drama was in fact one of the chief ways in which the fashion for Classical themes and references manifested itself, and in the few years preceding the outbreak of the War of Independence the theatre provided an important forum for the dissemination of patriotic sentiments. Amateur productions of tragedies were staged not only at Bucharest but at Odessa, which was more or less a Greek city, and at Corfu. Among the first plays to be performed in Modern Greek outside Venetian-occupied Crete and the Ionian Islands was an anonymous

²⁵ Coincidentally Alexis Politis (*Ρομαντικά χρόνια*, Athens 1993, pp. 119-23), writes about dress as a sign of "mentality" (I would rather say ideology) among the Greeks in the early nineteenth century. Especially germane is what he writes about one of the leaders of the Greek revolution, Alexandros Mavrokordatos, the dedicatee of Shelley's "Hellas" – not to be confused with his namesake, the dedicatee of Dapondes's *Garden of Graces* – who wore oriental dress in Pisa but went to Greece in 1821 wearing European dress as a sign of his European liberal views.

translation of Metastasio's *Themistocles* at Odessa in 1814.²⁶ Although the play was written by the court poet to the Austrian emperor, its suitably Classical setting and noble patriotic sentiments – Themistocles refuses to collaborate with the Persians while he is in exile – were suited to the mood of the times, and this drama was frequently revived. One of its performances in Odessa in 1816 was followed by the staging of an anonymous playlet accompanied by music and dancing whose title, "The Souliots at Yannina", indicates that it could only have been of an overtly patriotic nature, given that the Souliots had successfully resisted incorporation into the Ottoman state for longer than any other section of the Greek people.²⁷ A performance of a modern Greek prose adaptation of Sophocles's *Philoctetes* by the Hellenized Bulgarian Vlach Nikolaos Pikkolos at Odessa in February 1818²⁸ – the first performance of an ancient Greek tragedy in the modern Greek theatre – inspired a poem, recited after the performance, that is indicative of the way such events were received: the poem is placed in the mouth of the Patris, who welcomes the return of the gods and the old Greek heroes to life and calls upon the young "lovers of Melpomene" to ensure that she too is brought back in her turn.²⁹

The first full-length openly patriotic drama to be performed in Greek seems to have been the tragedy *The Death of Demosthenes* by Pikkolos, performed at Odessa in September 1818. The long notice of this play in the journal *Ermes o Logios* makes it clear that the play was allegorical, and that the Macedonians whom Demosthenes resisted were intended to represent the Turks; before taking poison Demosthenes urges the

²⁶ See Anna Tambaki, "Το ελληνικό θέατρο στην Οδησό (1814-1818): αθηναίριστα αρχεία", *Ερανιστής* 16 (1980) 229-38.

²⁷ For the intriguingly scant information available on this play see Angeliki Fenerli-Panayotopoulou, "Το θεατρικό έργο 'Σουλιώτες'", *Ερανιστής* 3 (1965) 157-69.

²⁸ On Pikkolos's *Φιλοκτήτης*, including the text of the play, see Dimitris Spathis, *Ο Διαφωτισμός και το ελληνικό θέατρο*, Thessaloniki 1986, pp. 145-98. Pikkolos appears to have been the author of an earlier play *Ο Λεωνίδας εν Θερμοπύλαις*, published anonymously in 1816: see Spathis, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-4.

²⁹ The poem was published in *Ερμής ο Λόγιος* 1818, 195-6.

Athenians to choose between "freedom or death", which was the watch-word of the secret Friendly Society that was preparing the Revolution and was to become the battle-cry of the War of Independence; Demosthenes goes on to state that he has no wish to live except as the citizen of a free homeland.³⁰ This performance was also followed by a performance of the "Souliots" ballet. So that there might be no misunderstanding, when *The Death of Demosthenes* was revived in 1819, it was preceded by a brief one-act play by Georgios Lassanis entitled "Greece and the Foreigner".³¹

In addition to the translation and performance of stern neoclassical tragedies by Metastasio, Voltaire, and Alfieri, and the production of original dramas of a similar type, as well as adaptations (though not performances) of comedies by Molière to local settings, there was much critical discussion about the importance of drama for the improvement of morals and the resurgence of Greece in the decade preceding the War of Independence. The theatre was repeatedly talked about as being, together with the church and the school, an institution where the Greeks would learn to mend their morals by learning to love virtue, honour, and courage and to shun vice.

In the 1810s there was a great deal of discussion not only of drama but of literature in general and its contribution to the improvement of morals and the development of patriotic sentiments. In 1811 there appeared the first Greek literary and scholarly journal *Ermes o Logios*, which lasted until the outbreak of the War of Independence and whose initial publishing history indicates the way in which Greeks from widely separated geographical areas and from varying ideological backgrounds were able to collaborate in a common patriotic cause. It was founded in Vienna by an archimandrite from the village of Milies on Mount Pelion, Anthimos Gazis, with the encouragement of Korais, who had been born in Smyrna but whose family was from Chios and who had been living for many years in Paris, and with financial help from two Phanariot princes and a merchant (Ioannis Varvakis) from the island of Psara, who was making a

³⁰ *Ερμής ο Λόγιος* 1818, 576-82.

³¹ *Ερμής ο Λόγιος* 1819, 360; see also Spathis, op. cit., pp. 44-5.

vast fortune as an exporter of caviar, first in Astrakhan on the Volga near the Caspian Sea, then from 1815 at Taganrog on the Sea of Azov. It is significant that in its first year *Ermes o Logios* contained an article by Korais's friend Alexandros Vasiliou, a merchant from Argyrokastro in Northern Epirus settled in Trieste, where he served as Ottoman consul, concerning the name that the modern Greeks should use for themselves; it is indicative that, rejecting the normal term *Romaioi/Romioi* he does not adopt *Hellenes* (which still tended to refer to the ancient pagans) but *Graikoi*.³² *Ermes o Logios* remained the chief mouthpiece of Korais's ideas on language, education, and culture, yet maintained good relations with some at least of the Phanariot establishment in the Danubian principalities. Other journals were soon being published in Vienna and Paris, each of them taking either a broadly pro-Korais or a broadly anti-Korais stand. These journals circulated among the Greek diaspora, if not in large numbers then at least across a vast area from Paris to Moscow, from Pisa to Taganrog, and from Budapest to Alexandria.

The literary debates that were conducted in the columns of these journals were ultimately aimed at the formation of a Greek national literature such as Neroulos was able to define in his *Cours* of 1826. It was widely felt that if the Greeks were to enter the chorus of modern nations, they had to be able to present, both to themselves and to outsiders, a body of literature that would ensure their self-respect and the respect of others. This is shown in a statement by the editors of *Ermes o Logios* in 1819 that their journal had established the modern Greeks as a "φιλολογικόν γένος" ["literary nation"] in the eyes of the world.³³ Throughout this project of reviving Greek culture the image that the Greek intellectuals wished to present to the West was always of the greatest importance.

Clearly the debate on the language was central to this discussion. The chief issue of course was the radical disagreement between those who wished to espouse the spoken language as the basis of literature, and those who felt they should make

³² *Ερμής ο Λόγιος* 1818, 143.

³³ *Ερμής ο Λόγιος* 1819, 401.

some use of ancient Greek grammar and vocabulary, the extent of this borrowing from ancient Greek being a matter for further debate. Whatever their differences of principle and practice, however, most Greek intellectuals were of the opinion that spoken Greek was not a modern language as such, but either a simplified continuation of ancient Greek or even a dialect of it; several scholars even attempted to prove that many of the deviations from ancient Attic that can be observed in modern demotic are to be found in the ancient Aeolic and Doric dialects, while it is only by accident that other modern forms are not attested in the ancient sources.

On a smaller scale there were frequent debates about the relative importance of verse and prose and about the technicalities of metre and rhyme. It was a frequently expressed eighteenth-century view in Europe that prose was a more developed and sophisticated medium than verse. Winkelmann had argued that poetry plays a less significant role in advanced societies than in primitive ones, while Vico had written that literatures begin with poetry and go on to prose because sentiment precedes reason. Whereas at the beginning of the Enlightenment period Evgenios Voulgaris had translated Voltaire's prose-tale *Memnon* – not one of Voltaire's more radical works – into Greek *verse* in 1766,³⁴ presenting it in such a way that a man-about-town in the Ottoman and Phanariot world could imagine it taking place close to home, after the turn of the century it came to be frequently said, for instance by Korais, that Greeks should now be writing in *prose* to show the progress they had made in the acquisition of culture.

Others however argued that *verse* was the best way to correct the modern language, since people would be more able to learn by heart passages of good writing if they were put into metrical form.³⁵ In addition, in preparation for what was expected to be a flowering of sublime poetry, Greek intellectuals attempted to lay down principles of poetics; the fullest example of this effort is the book published in 1819 by Charisios Megdanis under the fashionable title *The Homecoming of Calliope, or On Poetic*

³⁴ First published in Momars senior, *Βοσπορομαχία*, Leipzig 1766; the text is reprinted in Frantzi, *Μισμαγιά*, pp. 51-73.

³⁵ *Ερμής ο Λόγιος* 1811, 307-10.

*Method.*³⁶ Most of what was written about poetry and poetics tended to concern versification rather than broader issues such as the purpose and function of poetry; it was assumed that it should be either didactic or decorative and entertaining – or all of these at the same time. There were those who would have liked to revive or imitate ancient Greek metres, but the exclusive use of accentual rather than quantitative metres in modern Greek poetry precluded such a project unless the Greeks were to change their pronunciation by reintroducing the distinction between short and long vowels – something which the grammarian and rhetorician Konstantinos Oikonomos hoped would eventually happen, although there was little prospect of it occurring at present.³⁷ Nevertheless, some writers managed to discover trochaic lines in Aeschylus which, when read in the modern pronunciation, could be scanned as being identical to the iambic fifteen-syllable verse,³⁸ which was the most commonly found line in Greek poetry from the twelfth century onwards.

At a time when intellectuals were attempting to legitimate as many aspects of contemporary Greek culture as possible by tracing them back to ancient Greek, it was important to try to find what appeared, at least, to be Classical precedents for modern literary phenomena. (I can't resist quoting as evidence of the Greeks' sense of their own belatedness the fashion for seeking modern counterparts for ancient literary figures: thus Rigas was often referred to as "the new Tyrtaeus", Christopoulos as "the new Anacreon", and Kalvos as "the new Pindar". No one, as far as I know, was dubbed a new Aeschylus, Sophocles or Euripides, which perhaps indicates the Greeks' sense of proportion; Oikonomos called Neroulos "our new Agathon",³⁹ which was safe enough since none of Agathon's tragedies is available for comparison.)

In 1818 Ioannis Zambelios published a patriotic tragedy against tyranny, entitled *Timoleon* and inspired by Alfieri's

³⁶ Charisios Megdanis, *Καλλιόπη παλιννοστούσα ή περί ποιητικής μεθόδου*, Vienna 1819.

³⁷ Konstantinos Oikonomos, *Γραμματικών ή εγκυκλίων παιδευμάτων βιβλία Δ΄*, vol. 1, Vienna 1817, p. 149.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 443.

tragedy of the same name.⁴⁰ Zambelios's play was composed in unrhymed hendecasyllables, and he defended his choice of verse-form by arguing that this was the nearest that one could get in modern Greek to the metre of ancient tragedy. The prevalence of rhyme in contemporary poetry presented another problem, since it was not employed in ancient poetry and was clearly a foreign import. Many writers of the period, including Korais, counselled the avoidance of rhyme as a decadent feature ill-befitting the descendants of the ancient Greeks.⁴¹

The importance of modern Greek folk poetry was less frequently discussed, even though it could have offered useful ammunition for those who argued for the unsuitability of rhyme, since most modern Greek folk poetry was composed in *unrhymed* fifteen-syllable lines. But although a contributor to *Ermes o Logios* in 1816 followed Herder in proposing that a nation's folk poetry revealed the characteristics of the national mentality,⁴² the fact that most of the Greek intellectuals were living outside the Greek-speaking heartlands and were therefore out of touch with the oral tradition of the Greek rural population meant that they would have found difficulty in studying it, especially since no collection of Greek folk poetry was published until after 1821. If the rich tradition of oral poetry had been more widely known among the alienated intellectuals of the diaspora, more of them might perhaps have found the confidence to employ the spoken language as the basis of the language of literature.

In the meantime even those Orthodox Christians who opposed the spread of modern secular ideas emanating from the West and who supported the leading role of the Church in the Ottoman Empire were not impervious to the fashion for Classical allusion. The Patriarchate of Constantinople saw itself as an integral part of the Ottoman Empire and therefore felt that any attempt to subvert the status quo would result not only in a diminution of its own authority but in the mortal danger of Ottoman reprisals against the Church leaders in Constantinople; this fear proved to be justified when Patriarch Gregory V was executed in 1821 for having failed to ensure the loyalty of his

⁴⁰ Ioannis Zambelios, *Τιμολέων, τραγωδία*, Vienna 1818.

⁴¹ See, e.g., *Ερμής ο Λόγιος* 1812, 633-44.

⁴² *Ερμής ο Λόγιος* 1816, 401.

Christian flock to the Sublime Porte. Patriarch Gregory may have been behind the *Didaskalia patriki*, which was published under the name of Patriarch Anthimos of Jerusalem in 1798 and which expressed the view, frequently reiterated by Greek prelates since the fall of Constantinople, that God had sent the Ottomans as a means of salvation for the Orthodox, protecting them from the Latin heresy and its offshoots, among which the author included ideas of freedom and democracy.⁴³ This document was intended to turn the Orthodox faithful away from the secular orientation of the French Enlightenment, which had inevitably led to the French Revolution. But in 1819, over twenty years later, when Patriarch Gregory published another document against the espousal and dissemination of modern western secular ideas, he himself had taken on board much of the fashionable rhetoric of Classical allusion.⁴⁴ By now even the Patriarch was welcoming the return of the Muses to Greece and counselling the study of ancient Greek for its own sake. Thus he appeared to be aligning himself with the Classical Enlighteners; yet he probably believed that a thorough study of ancient Greek *grammar* would divert students' minds from the desire for modern secular learning.

In the following year, 1820, the Patriarchate expanded the activities of its own printing press in Constantinople, renaming it the Public Printing Press of the Nation in the hope that its own publications would check the spread of revolutionary ideas. In a florid proclamation announcing the expansion of the Patriarchal Press, its director, the monk Ilarion of Sinai, after a page-long encomium of Sultan Mahmud II, who has deigned to permit the Greeks to have a printing press, invokes the Muses and the Graces (not, it should be noted, Divine Grace!) and claims that the

⁴³ Anthimos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, *Διδασκαλία πατρική*, Constantinople 1798. For an English translation see R. Clogg, *The Movement for Greek Independence, 1770-1821*, London 1976, pp. 56-64. For a summary of the various views on the authorship of the *Διδασκαλία πατρική*, see N.E. Skiadas, *Χρονικό της ελληνικής τυπογραφίας*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, Athens 1982, pp. 185-9.

⁴⁴ The text was published in the journal *Μέλισσα* (Paris) 1820, 219-29 (now in K.T. Dimaras, *Ο Κοραΐς και η εποχή του*, Athens 1953, pp. 299-304). For an abridged English translation see Clogg, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-8.

present epoch of the Hellenes rivals the ancestral splendour.⁴⁵ This last-ditch attempt to hijack the Greek Enlightenment and forestall the movement for independence by adopting the fashion for invoking the ancients failed to fool the Greek secularists around Korais in Paris, who were quick to condemn what they called the "Persian eloquence" of Ilarion's "Byzantine pamphlet" and the "ασιατικά ανδράποδα" ["servile Asiatic wretches"] and "sluggish Asiatics" who were responsible for its production – meaning the Sultan, the Patriarchate, and the Phanariots, whom they likened to Philip and his Macedonians.⁴⁶

But this debate was overtaken by events, and after 1821 a new Greek literature emerged, inspired by the outbreak of the War of Independence. Both Dionysios Solomos, in his *Hymn to Liberty* written in 1823, and Andreas Kalvos, in his two sets of Odes published in 1824 and 1826, implicitly attack the frivolous Anacreontic verse of Christopoulos, with its praise of wine, women, and song, as being a type of poetry unworthy of a noble nation struggling for liberty against an Asiatic tyrant; instead they align themselves with Pindar in their encomium of Greek heroism and their celebration of the national liberation struggle. In the introduction to his second book of Odes, which appeared in a seemingly incongruous bilingual edition in Greek and French together with Christopoulos's *Lyrika*, Kalvos – or his French translator – castigates the "poésie légère" of Christopoulos, who "vivait à la table des riches, et des grands"; now, given the sufferings that Greece is going through, it is time for "chants moins frivoles".⁴⁷ G.P. Savidis has recently pointed out that Kalvos published his poems together with those of Christopoulos so as to point to the contrast between their two kinds of poetry.⁴⁸

Kalvos and Solomos were from a different part of the Greek world, namely the Ionian Islands, which had not been subject to a long Ottoman occupation. These two poets had no connection with

⁴⁵ The text is published in *Μέλισσα* 1821, 250-62.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 263-73.

⁴⁷ *Odes nouvelles de Kalvos de Zante suivies d'un choix de poésies de Chrestopoulo*, Paris 1826, pp. v-vii.

⁴⁸ G.P. Savidis, "Κάλβος και Χριστόπουλος (μια παράδοξη εκδοτική συννοικεσία)", *Περίπλους*, vol. 9, no. 34-35 (1993) 126-37.

the Danubian principalities, the northern mainland of Greece, and the cultural and publishing centre of Vienna, which between them had dominated Greek literary culture during the previous decades. Their orientation was totally western (if I may be forgiven the oxymoron), and chiefly Italian. Moreover, the Greece they generally looked to was the southern part of the mainland and the islands, which were the first areas to be liberated from the Turks.

Yet Kalvos still adhered to the pre-1821 fashion for Classical allusion, and his Odes are full of references to ancient Greek mythology. While the Romantic side of his poetic nature was attracted by the Greek folk songs, his neoclassical side could not resist the temptation to write an ode "To the Muses",⁴⁹ which makes extended use of the image of the Muses returning to Greece and thus sums up the attitude of many Greek writers of the time to the rebirth of Greece.

Kalvos followed Korais and others in expressing his distaste both for rhyme and for so-called vulgarity in language. In this he followed the example of his mentor Ugo Foscolo, whose poem *Le Grazie* seems to have been one of Kalvos's models for his ode "To the Muses". While Foscolo "follows the Graces in their journey through Greece and then their migration to Renaissance Italy after the Turkish invasion of their homeland",⁵⁰ Kalvos too presents a potted history of the Muses, but is able to end his story by bringing them back to their birthplace. Having invoked the Muses and called upon them to strike down tyrants with their thunderous war-songs, Kalvos goes on to summarize their career. They existed even when "the circles of the heavens heard only the harmonious divinely inspired song, and calmness held the air in immobility." Then Homer gave shelter to the Muses, and "the daughters of Zeus first placed honey on his lips."⁵¹ But later the "eternal bees" abandoned their hives in the divine trunk of the laurel –

⁴⁹ A. Kalvos Ioannidis, *Η λύρα*, Geneva 1824.

⁵⁰ Glauco Cambon, *Ugo Foscolo, poet of exile*, Princeton 1980, p. 200.

⁵¹ In Foscolo's poem bees are "narratively allegorized as the material carriers of poetry's honey from the Ionian to the Tyrrhenian shores" (Cambon, op. cit., p. 201).

when the din of the Arabian hooves came from the ends of the earth to wretched Greece. Then to the baths where the Hours wash the coats of Phoebus's horses [i.e. the West!] you justly fled, o Pierides. But now you are bringing your long exile to a close. A time of joy has returned, and the Delphic mountain now shines free. Hippocrene's silver flows limpidly; today Greece is summoning you back, not as strangers but as daughters.

Here we notice, first, the idea that Greece is taking back what the Europeans have been holding in trust for her against the day when she should become free, and, secondly, the gaping chronological hiatus between ancient Greece and the arrival of the "Arabian hooves", which can be taken to allude to the Fall of Constantinople in 1453. This convenient neglect of the whole Byzantine period is typical of the neoclassical outlook of many Greeks of this period.

Finally, we come to Solomos. His early *Hymn to Liberty* depicts Liberty as "emerging from the sacred bones of the Hellenes" – by which the poet means the ancient Greeks – and contains references to Leonidas and the "last of the Greeks", Philopoemen. In his more mature works, however, Solomos avoided almost any reference to ancient Greece at all. For him, the heroic struggles of the Greek freedom-fighters during the War of Independence, and especially the sacrifice of the people of Missolonghi at the end of the siege of 1825-6, seemed to be the manifestation of such absolute dedication to an ideal combining Christian faith and fortitude with devotion to the protection of their native soil that to compare these heroes with anyone else – even with the timeless exemplars of ancient Greek history and mythology – would have demeaned them. For Solomos the actions of the Greeks in the War of Independence had demonstrated their worthiness to be free, irrespective of whether they were descended – racially or culturally – from the ancient Greeks. In his Greek poetry he deliberately avoided the rich rhymes and technical games that he had employed in his earlier Italian verse, perhaps because he wanted to distance himself also from the deliberately frivolous verse of the Phanariots. He adopted the spoken language of the Greek people and gradually and painfully developed his own poetics based on the Greek folk song. In his mature poetry he made exclusive use of the fifteen-

syllable folk-song line, which he transformed for his own purposes, although he did not abandon rhyme altogether till his last Greek poems.

It is significant that at the beginning of his third and last attempt to write his great unfinished poem inspired by the fall of Missolonghi, "The Free Besieged", Solomos should have invoked a Muse to come to his aid in his desperate attempt to make contact with the spirit that drove the besieged heroes of Missolonghi and to embody it in language. Yet she is not explicitly called a Muse, nor does she bear any resemblance to the Pierian sisters who dance through the verses of so many of Solomos's contemporaries. The divine female figure whom Solomos beseeches to inspire him is the "Great Mother", an amalgam of the Virgin Mary, Liberty, and Greece. She is the protectress and inspirer of the people of Missolonghi, and he implores her to reveal herself to him so that he can write his poem, which will in turn inspire the Greeks to continue the struggle for spiritual freedom. Even though Solomos failed to complete the "The Free Besieged", he realized that in order to write sublime poetry it was not enough to invoke or depict the ancient Muses, nor to dress one's poetry in the merely decorative linguistic, historical, and mythological trappings of Classical allusion. Previous Greek poets had hardly gone beyond elegant but superficial versifying; Solomos had to reject all recent Greek poetry and make a new start.

But the time was not right. In the new political centre of Athens, chosen as the capital of the Greek state because of its Classical associations rather than any contemporary importance, a period of entropy set in, during which writers of largely Phanariot background produced poetry and prose in a language that imitated the form, but not the spirit, of ancient Greek. Greek poetry had to wait till the end of the nineteenth century before it could find a more viable and fruitful relationship with the ancients in the work of Kostis Palamas, which paved the way for later poets such as C.P. Cavafy, George Seferis, Yannis Ritsos, and others. But that is another story.



The presentation of place and space in the poetry of Yiannis Ritsos, 1934-1947

Christopher Robinson

In an article on "Greece and the Poetry of Place, 1880-1945", I argued that evocation of place in Greek poetry of that period relies on a number of stylised elements, developed differently according to the poetics of the writer concerned, but used in set ways which have more to do with cultural identity than spatial reality.¹ What I want to do in this paper is to examine the early poetry of Ritsos in the light of these conclusions, to see how far he continues the same tradition and how far he departs from it. Critics are agreed that place, and the pictorial representation of place, are important elements in Ritsos's work, but they are neither specific nor coherent in their treatment of the issue, which is sometimes incorporated under the general label of Ritsos's *realism* and sometimes handled independently of it. Thus Crescenzo Sangiglio talks of the first phase of Ritsos's work – i.e. up to 1955 – as having a purely lyrical element "worked with a concentrated realism", but also claims that it is only in *Romiosyni* (written 1945-47) that "for the first time in Ritsos the landscape appears, clearly, in all its naked open-handedness".² Sangiglio sees *The Lady of the Vines*, written at the same period, as displaying a "much broader scene-setting presentation". Indeed, a propos of this poem, Sangiglio goes so far as to say that the poet's inspiration "is identified with the landscape, takes its lines and colours, its cadenzas and rests [...]". The critic's images here are drawn from art and music, but he also stresses the *temporal* function of Ritsos's place references, maintaining that the poet underlines the "geographical historicity of the landscape". Place, it would seem, is essentially a

¹ See *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 2.2 (1992) 183-95.

² Originally in Italian, *Ritsos*, Florence: La Nuova Italia 1975, but I translate from the Greek edition, *Μύθος και ποίηση στον Ρίτσο*, *Μελέτες για τον Γιάννη Ρίτσο* 2, Athens: Kedros 1978.

pictorial element, and yet space and time are being joined together *through* place. Peter Bien appears to concur in the view that the pictorial predominates, when he acknowledges the importance of a pictorial realism in Ritsos, which he defines initially as "an album of snapshots, not so much of things especially photogenic as of people, places, and events that are completely ordinary and prosaic [...]", an approach he later endorses in the phrase "many of the poems are graphic scenes from Hellenic life". But Bien then radically reconsiders his photographic metaphor:

I called them "snapshots" earlier, but they are much more like paintings than photographs because Ritsos's language adds texture, and because he is able to arrange line and colour to suit his own aesthetic needs, his aim never being simply to reproduce external reality as such.³

Representations of place are therefore representations of the *personal perception* of place, for purposes *other* than the purely pictorial. They are in fact part of what Bien calls a system of "visual metaphors", using physical reality to suggest something beyond itself. A third critical approach, that of Prevelakis, acknowledges the degree to which Ritsos's poetic language delights in "naming" – equatable with Sangiglio's reference to realism – but claims that the language itself is the meeting point between physical reality and the special perceptions of the individual. Ritsos's descriptions of place are therefore more important as *language* than as *representation*.⁴

Now, these three approaches clearly overlap. I wish to show that, while all three have some validity, there is a way of describing and accounting for the representation of place in Ritsos's work which gives a more efficient account of the main lines of these individual approaches within a *single* inter-

³ See his introduction to *Yannis Ritsos: Selected Poems*, translated by Nikos Stangos, Athens: Efstathiadis 1981, pp.12 and 15. Bien is referring to a selection of poems mostly written post-1960, and therefore after the period of the work which interests us here, but his remarks reflect a view of Ritsos's technique as a whole.

⁴ Pandelis Prevelakis, *Ο ποιητής Γιάννης Ρίτσος: Συνολική θεώρηση του έργου του*, Athens: Kedros 1981.

pretation. Much play has been made critically with the co-existence of two types of writing within Ritsos's *oeuvre*: short lapidary poems and long lyrical outpourings, or what have been rather crudely seen as poems within the respective poetic traditions of Cavafy and Palamas.⁵ This stylistic division is a superficial manifestation of a phenomenon which I think to be fundamental in Ritsos's early poetry, and nowhere more so than in his representation/use of place. This phenomenon I would define as *dialogue with the existing literary traditions*. I hope to demonstrate that, across a period of time, Ritsos constructs a dialogue with three ways of representing place: a) Cavafy, Karyotakis and the representation of private space and interiors; b) Seferis and the representation of space as time and time as space; and c) Palamas and the way in which he represents place on three levels in his "three lyricisms" – as relating to the "I" or private space, to the "We" or public space, and as conveying something abstract ("the totality") which synthesises both the personal and the public. Ritsos constructs this dialogue through his use of, and implicit reference to, the various literary traditions, and to the language of place associated with each. For him, place in any pictorial manifestation is not so much representational, or even a vehicle of evocation or metaphor, as part of a system of reference through which inner and outer realities can be linked. In that sense Ritsos's technique of place reference, and its play with the opposition private/public, can be tied in with his whole theory of language as a meeting point between the subjective and the material world. The opposition functions on three levels which overlap but are not simple equivalents: a) literally – private space = interiors (houses, rooms) as opposed to public space = exteriors (landscapes); b) metaphorically – private space = memory, as opposed to public space = history, politics; c) culturally – private space = an individual poet's literary practice, as opposed to public space = a/the literary tradition.

⁵ The interesting essay by Massimo Peri, "Καβάφης/Ρίτσος", in *Αφιέρωμα στον Γιάννη Ρίτσο*, Athens: Kedros 1980, pp. 258-75, makes the initial wrong assumption that there is a simple basic antithesis between Cavafy = solitariness, brevity of expression and Ritsos = public concern, verbal profusion.

The earliest Ritsos poems make little use of a sense of place of any sort. Those that do, give it a limited symbolic significance. Thus, the last three poems of *Tractor*, i.e. "ΕΣΣΔ" (Soviet Union), "Γερμανία" and "Επίλογος", invoke geographical references for political purposes. These poems provide good, if crude, examples of the invocation of place as "public space" for metaphorical purposes (here, political):

Ράγες των τραίνων φεύγουνε στη Σιβηρία. Την
 ανθρωπιά,
 φορτίο λαμπρό, με τα βαγόνια στέλνεις στα λευκά
 σου
 τοπία, που χιόνι τάβαβεν, ω ΕΣΣΔ, και δένει τώρα
 πια
 δίχτυ φιλίας το Λένινγκραντ με τα όρη του
 Καυκάσου.⁶

The individuality of Siberia, Leningrad and the Caucasus is not mobilised poetically – the names stand for fixed values as emblems of Soviet geography, history and society combined. In the following collection, *Pyramids*, we begin to find, in "Φυγή" and "Ανάμνηση", examples of place as an ostensible function of memory – in the former, childhood memory of village life, in the latter a world remembered through a filter of classical images. In each case it is easy to see that we are dealing with a "literary" reminiscence – the world of demotic song and the world of Palamas respectively, though as yet Ritsos is doing little to develop or personalise either tradition. In *Επιτάφιος* section XV, however, Ritsos actually articulates the issue of the relationship between private and public space, as the picture of the room is translated into an image of a ship, such that the death of the son/steersman leaves the mother to drown in the wreck of her house/ship. The metaphor explicitly unfolds in the third and fourth couplets:

⁶ Throughout this paper I give fairly literal translations for the major quotations, indicating by an oblique the approximate points at which line-breaks fall. This passage is from "ΕΣΣΔ", st. 5: "Train tracks leave for Siberia. You send/ a bright cargo of civilisation off in the train carriages to your white places,/ buried in snow, o USSR, and now at last it links/ Leningrad with the Caucasus mountains in a network of friendship."

Κ' είταν το παραθύρι μας η θύρα όλου του κόσμου
κ' έβγαζε στον παράδεισο που τ' άστρα ανθίζαν,
φως μου.

Κι ως στέκοσουν και κοίταζες το λιόγερμα ν' ανάβει,
σαν τιμονιέρης φάνταζες κ' η κάμαρα καράβι.⁷

This unfolding of private space into a wider image is, of course, essential to a poem whose message is social, private grief standing for public loss. But it is not until *Spring symphony* (1938), *The march-tune of Ocean* (1940) and *Old mazurka to a rhythm of rain* (1943) that we meet any important developments as far as the treatment of *private* space is concerned. Across these three long poems we can identify a perceptible progression.

In *Spring symphony* a stylised landscape, built mainly around the elements of land and sea, is presented as the idealised landscape of childhood memory. But this landscape is also the internal landscape of the adolescent heart, transformed by its first experiences of love, such that the creativity of spring, the creativity of sexual awakening and the creativity of artistic awakening are all part of the same experience. The final section of the poem (XXVII) articulates a Cavafean view, the justification of the past by its contribution to the aesthetic creation of the present:

Φεύγει το θέρος
μα το τραγούδι μένει.⁸

Ritsos articulates the moral dilemma passed over by Cavafy: that it is only the artist who can find some justification for life through art:

Όμως εσύ που δεν έχεις φωνή
πού θα σταθείς ν' απαγγιάσεις;

7 "And our window was the door of the whole world/ and, o my light, it opened onto paradise where the stars bloom./ And as you stood and watched the glow of sunset/ you seemed like a steersman and the room like a ship."

8 "Summer goes/ but the song remains."

Πώς θα σμίξεις το φως με το χύμα,⁹

But the poem offers no solution to the problem, simply ending on a re-assertion of the kind of landscape details on which it has fed throughout, but in a form which suggests the boundless possibilities of *future* creative experience, in terms reminiscent of early Elytis:

Νίβομαι στο φως
βγαίνω στον εξώστη
γυμνός
ν' αναπνεύσω βαθιά
τον αιώνιο αγέρα
με τ' αδρά μύρα
του νοτισμένου δάσους
με την αλμύρα
της απέραντης θάλασσας.¹⁰

The march-tune of Ocean moves out of the timescale of personal reminiscence and the evocation of the family home to which it is tied, and explores the same land-and-seascape in a "historical" or mythical perspective explicitly established by the references to Homer created by images of the sirens, of "the girls/ who got engaged to Odysseus" and of the moon secretly painting "scenes from Troy on the Greek earthenware pitchers". But just as the preceding poem seems to refer not so much to a specific sense of place as to a Cavafean view of the relationship between memory and art and to an Elytean assertion of the need to continue to find creative inspiration in the experience of the physical world, so *The march-tune of Ocean* seems to play with a *Seferean* representation of place and time, rejecting Seferis's notion that the voyage will go nowhere, and asserting the validity of the experience for both the physical and the creative future. Ritsos specifically contrasts the "old sailors"

⁹ "But you who have no voice/ where will you stand to shelter from the wind?/ How will you mix light with earth?"

¹⁰ "I wash myself in the light/ I come out onto the balcony/ naked/ to breathe in deeply/ the eternal air/ with the plentiful scents/ of the damp forest/ with the saltiness/ of the boundless sea."

who merely sit on the rocks "and smoke in their pipes/ journeys shadow and repentance" with the speaker and his world:

Όμως εμείς δεν ξέρουμε τίποτε
απ' τη στάχτη στη γεύση του ταξιδιού.
Ξέρουμε το ταξίδι
και το γλαυκό ημικύκλιο του ορίζοντα
πούναι σαν τ' άγριο φρύδι
θαλασσινού θεού.¹¹

The poem then moves from its base in a Seferean "geographical historicity" to a closing series of images similar in effect to those of *Spring symphony*. Invoking light (the sun) and sea again, the poet offers himself naked as a primal creative force:

γυμνός προσφέρομαι στη φλόγα σου
να φωτίσω τα μάτια των ανθρώπων.¹²

Because he has rooted his exploration of his powers in *collective* experience (the myth) this time, he is able to present himself more specifically as a voice of, and for, the collectivity:

Αδέλφια μου
ακούστε τη φωνή σας, τη φωνή μου
ακούστε το τραγούδι του ήλιου και της θάλασσας.¹³

The third poem to which I referred, *Old mazurka to a rhythm of rain*, is actually subtitled "Distant period of adolescence", and dedicated to the poet's mother. Prevelakis makes plentiful connection between *Old mazurka* and painting, but the parallel is not entirely helpful. Pictures *fix*, above all things, our sense of place: the pictorial in *Old mazurka*, in contrast, is essentially fragmentary, not least because it deals

¹¹ "But we experience nothing/ of the dust in the taste of the journey/ We know the journey/ and the blue-green semicircle of the horizon/ which is like the wild eyebrow/ of a sea-god."

¹² "Naked I offer myself to your [i.e. the sun's] flame/ that I may bring light to the eyes of men."

¹³ "My brothers and sisters/ listen to your voice, my voice/ listen to the song of the sun and the sea."

with psychological time and its refraction through memory. At one level the technique is particularly reminiscent of Jules Laforgue's *Derniers vers* in this respect.¹⁴ Take the opening eight lines. They revolve around three physical elements: *place* – the muddy road, the walls; *sound* – the piano, the voices, the barrel-organ; and *sunset*. The use of "θαμπή" (indistinct) and "σκοτισμένη" (dusty) to qualify *mazurka* links the music to the "λασπωμένο δρόμο", transferring to the sound a greater degree of tangibility. The description of the evening as "rusty" ("σκουριασμένο") prepares for the theme of rain already mentioned in the title. And the natural and human worlds – here equivalent to public and private space respectively – are linked through the image of evening closing the day with double doors and a golden padlock. When we look at the descriptive elements in these lines, we can see that they are entirely subordinated to mood functions. Dust, mud, rain, rust, dying light, a piano dully played, a barrel-organ, the same song sung every evening – these are Laforguean images of *ennui* of the sort which some of the Greek symbolists – Chatzopoulos for example – use, and which carry over into the work of Karyotakis.¹⁵ The poem thus inserts

¹⁴ I use Laforgue, the quintessence of the French decadent tradition, which influenced many of the poets whom the young Ritsos particularly admired, to make the point that this cannot be a genuine definition of an exclusively Greek space, when it is borrowed from a foreign literary tradition. For further details, see note 15 below. Yiorgos Veloudis, in his essay "Ο Καβαφικός Ρίτσος" in *Αφιέρωμα στον Γιάννη Ρίτσο* (see note 5 above), pp. 173-94, lists the first influences on Ritsos (in the period 1924-28) as Polemis, Porphyras and Agras, the second influences (1930-36) as Palamas, Karyotakis and Varnalis.

¹⁵ Laforgue's *Complaintes* use barrel-organs and pianos dully played as symbols of *ennui*, along with references to sunsets and dying light. In the first of the *Derniers vers* alone, there are references to rain, wind, dead leaves, dying light, rust and telegraph wires, all of which Ritsos also uses symbolically to convey the same sort of mood. Similar motifs abound in the Greek symbolists. They are also present in Karyotakis, but what is more important in his case, as in Cavafy's, is the treatment of private space itself: for example, the equation established between empty enclosed space and the cancellation of the private past in "Όλα τα πράγματα μου έμειναν..." (*Elegies*). We can compare the memories of enclosed spaces in Cavafy, where interiorisation of the past within the memory and thence

itself into the "public space" of this literary tradition, while employing its images of *private* space, the metaphorical language of moods on which the tradition relies.

To approach tradition in this way is to risk a loss of creative identity. The dangers of obliteration of the individual poetic voice consequent upon this poetic method are articulated in lines 24-28 of *Old mazurka*. There are two ways to read these lines, but they converge in significance. In the first, the second person singular verb forms have no clear referent: later in the poem they may become attachable to the mother figure who is directly addressed there, but in these early lines they are equally valid as an address to the *self*:

Αποστηθίσαμε όλα τα ποιήματα. Ποιός τόπε αυτό;
 Ποιά είναι τώρα η δική σου φωνή;
 Ανάμεσα στις φωνές της βραδιάς ποιός είσαι;
 Το πιάνο κ' η μαζούρκα. Ο λασπωμένος δρόμος, θέ
 μου.¹⁶

Read like this, the lines suggest that the voice which has absorbed existing literature loses its own identity, and becomes identified instead with the emblems of monotony. The second reading treats the second person forms as an address to the mother throughout. The poem then represents the cancellation of the poet's individuality of memory by the *language* of the literary tradition. His mother (who belongs to private space), in "becoming" the piano etc., becomes the language and images of the tradition (i.e. is incorporated into public space). In an attempt to escape the danger of losing his individuality/identity implicit in either reading, the poet activates his memory to provide greater pictorial detail: "We had a flowerpot and a sunset in a window". But the detail of childhood Christmases easily reverts to images rooted in the Decadent tradition – dull purple clouds in the west suggesting the setting

within the poem is parallel to the necessary enclosure of private acts *within* the rooms – necessary, that is, in order to exclude a disapproving society.

¹⁶ "We learnt all the poems by heart. Who said that? / Which is now your voice? / Who are you amid the voices of evening? / The piano and the mazurka. The muddy road, by god."

sun, the distant voices of children compared to cracked mouth-organs, the closed bedroom doors. Note again how private space is linked to public through simile and metaphor too: e.g. the mother's eyes are "two distant harbours without caiques". In all this, private space is too readily swallowed up by the public space of literary tradition or absorbed into public space via metaphor.

From here on, the poem continues to unwind through a series of pictorial fragments which coalesce around childhood scenes, but what is constructed is neither a narrative nor a coherent exploration of space and time, but an exploration of *memory* as the place in which, through the use of psychological time, public and private space, both literal and metaphorical, can be synthesised. The initial images of piano, dust, rain etc. are interwoven with a recurring set of motifs – the wind, swans, the grandfather with his encyclopaedia – with whole phrases returning to underline the sense of repetition of experience. At the end of the poem, the determination to go down into the city, and the representation of doors as "τα μεγάλα εικονίσματα του δρόμου", signify a passing from private to public space in a *political* sense (doors are "the pictures of poverty") and, concurrently, in an *emotional* sense (doors are also "the pictures of goodness or of grief, anger or fear"). The poet has come to terms with his memories, can express his responses to them without self-censoring: "At last we learnt to read/ and even to write with fewer *points de suspension* or even none at all" – in the same way that he has mastered the influence of existing literature and can free his own individual voice to explore the world around him.

The same treatment of public and private space can be found in a roughly contemporary poem, "Άνεμοι στα δειλινά προάστια" (1941),¹⁷ but with a much more explicit attention to the function of poetry. The poem begins on an image of rejection – rejection of public space in favour of private:

Κλειστήκαμε νωρίς στο σπίτι. Βουίζουν οι διαδρόμοι
των ανέμων.
Όπου και νάναι θ' ακουστεί στα προάστια

¹⁷ From the collection *Ordeal*. The title means "Winds in the suburbs by evening".

το βήμα της βροχής. Μαντατοφόροι
φτάνουν απ' το νοτιά. Βρίσκουν κλειστές όλες τις
πόρτες.¹⁸

The Laforguean context – suburbs in the rain – is confirmed in the second paragraph of the first section, with its wind, rotting leaves, telegraph wires, the "corpses" of paper kites (cf. the boys who have no paper kites in lines 6-8 of *Old mazurka*), dead birds, empty baskets. These images of *ennui* are continued in the opening lines of section II, where the wind brings down the last of the dead leaves and slams the shutters. As in *Old mazurka*, Ritsos is not offering pictures, so much as inserting the reader into the Decadent-Karyotakis tradition. Having achieved this "insertion", in section III he embroiders upon that tradition with a detailed vignette of run-down closed cafés (note the generalising plurals), where the absence of the human element is emphasised precisely by the personification of dawn:

σ' αυτά τα τζάμια που προχτές κοιτάζονταν η αυγή
για να φτιάξει χωρίστρα τα μαλλιά της.¹⁹

Section IV continues the ornamentation of the theme with fragments of childhood memory. And then, in section V, Ritsos consciously explores the identification of memory with private space²⁰ through parallel images: "Because it is very cold in the

¹⁸ "We shut ourselves up early in the house. The corridors of the winds give out a dull roar./ Anytime now in the suburbs the footsteps/ of rain will be heard. Messengers/ arrive from the south. They find all the doors closed."

¹⁹ "in these window-panes where, the day before yesterday, dawn was looking at herself/ to straighten the parting in her hair."

²⁰ It is interesting to compare and contrast Cavafy's use of both affective and physical detail in the context of the power of memory in "Ο ήλιος του απογεύματος". Veloudis, who is looking at influence in a narrowly verbal way, identifies the first "echo" of Cavafy in Ritsos's work as the line "There is no smoke or Ithaca" in *The march-tune of Ocean* (1939-40). But he thinks that Ritsos was only influenced significantly by Cavafy *after* his own poetic technique had been formed, namely in the second series of *Testimonies* (see Veloudis, op. cit. pp. 189-90). This stylistic argument has nothing to do with the point I am making: that there is a way of conceiving

rooms/ very cold in the memory and in the hands", and through the application of the language of place (the image of unlocking) to a past which is preserved through memory: "whenever you unlock your childhood years". The physical images of sections I-IV are turned into symbols/ideas (memory, childhood etc.) in section V, which is constructed around a running image of preserving both literal and metaphorical embodiments of the past in mothballs, the whole image serving to define the process of internalising the experiences of private space in the internal space of the memory. Sections VI and VII question how mothballing the past in this way can have relevance – how will the past survive or help the poet to survive in the face of an alien future. And here Ritsos turns the poem back on itself, in section VII stanza 3, by restating the opening scenario – the wind banging at the doors and shutters of a closed house. Here Ritsos affirms the need to come *out* of one's private space into *public* space:

Δεν είναι τρόπος να μείνεις κλειδωμένος.

[...]

Παράτα το σακκάκι σου. Έβγα γυμνός στον άνεμο.²¹

Note how nakedness in the wind gives an image parallel to that of nakedness in the sun at the end of *Spring symphony*:

Νίβομαι στο φως
βγαίνω στον εξώστη
γυμνός²²

and again at the end of *The march-tune of Ocean*:

Ήλιε, Ήλιε
που βάφεις μ' αίμα τη θάλασσα

of, and treating, place/space, much of which is in fact common to Cavafy and Karyotakis, and that this conception/ treatment is one which Ritsos and his readers could instinctively recognise as part of a particular Greek tradition, and which Ritsos then harnesses for his own purposes.

²¹ "There is no way to stay shut in /[...]/ Abandon your jacket. Come out naked into the wind."

²² "I wash myself in the light/ I come out onto the balcony/ naked."

γυμνός προσφέρομαι στη φλόγα σου
να φωτίσω τα μάτια των ανθρώπων.²³

The nudity, a stripping of the limitations which private space imposes on us, does not necessarily seem to involve a complete rejection of the private self. Read as indicating the exposure of the individual poetic self to the public space of literary tradition, the image seems even more an assertion of the importance of the private and individual elements in the creative process. Hence section IX, the final section of the poem, asks wistfully for a drug to ensure the dual preservation of internal space and public space, and of the poetry which can be the vehicle for that preservation:

Ω, ένα φάρμακο δεν είναι και για τ' όνειρο
ένα φάρμακο για τη δόξα για το θάνατο
ένα φάρμακο για να μην πεθάνει ο ήλιος
να μην πεθάνει ο ήλιος πάνου από τη νιότη μας
να μην πεθάνει το τραγούδι κάτου από τον ήλιο
μας;²⁴

We can see in this poem quite clearly how the sense of place which critics label "realism" in Ritsos is used not pictorially but to reflect different sorts of *poetic practice*. Ritsos uses the Decadent tradition to evoke private concerns, as against traditional public/generalising images of the sort to be found in Seferis or indeed Elytis. By the end of the poem the death of the private *and* public experience of Greekness is being cautiously subordinated to the necessity of the survival of poetry/the poem. In pursuit of an answer to the question: "how is the poetic voice to survive as both individual and public voice?" Ritsos harnesses the so-called "realist" or "pictorial" elements as parts of an appeal to his reader for sensitivity to different aspects of the Greek poetic tradition.

²³ Sun, Sun/ who dyes the sea with blood/ I offer myself naked to your flame/ to bring light to the eyes of men."

²⁴ Oh, is there no drug for dreaming/ a drug for glory for death/ a drug to stop the sun dying/ to stop the sun dying over our youth/ to stop the song dying beneath our sun?"

How does the approach to place/space which I have been developing apply to poetry with a more evidently *public* message? Up to now I have been dealing with poems which are unashamedly personal/autobiographical in tone, drawing through memory on images of childhood and adolescence. This type of poetry predominates in the pre-*Romiosyni* period, the only notable exception being *Επιτάφιος*. If I have had little to say about this latter poem, it is because, for my purposes, it has little of relevance. The fifteenth section is the only one which deals with images of space, and this section, as I said earlier, by its expansion from private space (the room) into public space (the room becomes a ship, the window becomes "the door of the whole world"), mirrors the poem's dual function as a vehicle for images of private grief and public/political sorrow. To this I want only to add that by casting the poem in fifteen-syllable couplets and thus inserting it very obviously into the public space of the folk-song tradition, an insertion strengthened by some of the poem's diction, Ritsos wants to underline at a formal level this passage from the private to the public.

It is really only with *Romiosyni* that Ritsos tackles a long poem whose *primary* focus is non-autobiographical. It is customary to cite lines 5-8 of the opening section to show that the poem is firmly placed in a Greek setting:

Ετούτο το τοπίο είναι σκληρό σαν τη σιωπή,
σφίγγει στον κόρφο του τα πυρωμένα του λιθάρια,
σφίγγει στο φως τις ορφανές ελιές του και
τ' αμπέλια του,
σφίγγει τα δόντια. Δεν υπάρχει νερό. Μονάχα φως.²⁵

Interestingly, Prevelakis, who does just that,²⁶ and goes on to describe the setting as "a Greek landscape", qualifies this with: "but also Mediterranean, such as we come across not only in Italy, Spain and Provence, but also in the poetry of those regions (Salvatore Quasimodo, Jorge Guillén, Paul Valéry, Seferis and

²⁵ "This place is harsh like silence,/ it clasps its burning-hot stones to its breast,/ it clasps its orphan olive trees and its vines to the light,/ it clenches its teeth. There is no water. Only light."

²⁶ *op. cit.* p. 137.

others)". The landscape is not so much Greek (or indeed Mediterranean) as *literary*; to a Greek reader it suggests the barrenness, light, heat, stoniness, dryness of a *Seferean* landscape. Yet at the same time it departs quite clearly from Seferean landscapes in its personification (representation in terms of the human body), in its choice of detail (olives and wine rather than pines), in the detail of its language (e.g. "πυρωμένα" for "καμμένα"); and unlike Seferis or Elytis, it makes no mention of the sea (though sea references do appear later in the poem). The initial landscape is conceptually Seferean in its *basis*, and the use of the repetitions and parallel syntax to emphasise the repetitiousness within the scene evoked is a recognisably Seferean technique too. But the deliberate humanisation via the choice of the verb σφίγγει, the references to breast and teeth, and the adjective "orphan" help to establish a relationship between man and landscape which will be strengthened in lines 15-16 by the reverse process of applying a natural simile to a description of the inhabitants:

μια βαθειά χαρακιά σφηνωμένη ανάμεσα στα φρύδια
τους
σαν ένα κυπαρίσσι ανάμεσα σε δυο βουνά το
λιόγεμα.²⁷

Thus, while keeping a margin of individuality (the function of which I shall consider shortly) the poem offers just enough Seferean reference in the initial landscape to transfer the reader into the world of geographical historicity, of space as time, which characterises Seferis's presentation of place; and there are later Seferean motifs and echoes to enhance the effect: e.g. in section II: "κι ο ναύτης πίνει πικροθάλασσα στην κούπα του Οδυσσέα", and in section V: "Δυο κουπιά καρφωμένα στον άμμο τα χαράματα με τη φουρτούνα", the latter recalling the pictorial image in the fourth section of *Mythistorema*: "Their oars/ mark the place on the shore where they sleep". One can also identify a recognisably Seferean vocabulary in the detail – references to whitewash, burnt houses, marble – references, that

²⁷ "a deep groove carved between their eyebrows/ like a cypress between two mountains at sunset."

is, which suggest Seferis because they come in the context of heat, dryness etc., e.g. (section VI): "Burnt houses which look from afar, their eyes removed, at the marble sea". But whilst this reference to a Seferean world brings with it the concept of a Greece in which different levels of time co-exist, the identification which Bien sees:

...this tribute sees the men who fought against the Germans and afterwards in the first Civil War as national heroes easily equated with the free besieged of Missolonghi during the War of Independence; with that legendary stalwart of medieval times, Digenis Akritas; or with the epic giants celebrated in folk song...²⁸

is emphatically *not* achieved through a Seferean co-existence of levels of time reference within a given unit of poetry (i.e. within any one of the seven sections in which *Romiosyni* is constructed). At best it is a highly implicit comparison of references in *different* sections, and of references to *literary traditions* rather than to temporal moments as such. Thus the references to the War of Independence are in practice references a) to the folk song tradition and to kleptic ballad, through mention of Liakoura (section III) and in the lines (section V):

Μέσα στ' αλώνι όπου δειπνήσαν μια νυχτιά τα
παλληκάρια
μένουνε τα λιοκούκουτσα και το αίμα το ξερό του
φεγγαριού
κι ο δεκαπεντασύλλαβος απ' τ' άρματα τους.²⁹

where the invoking of fifteen-syllable metre makes the literary connection more overt, and b) to Solomos's *Free Besieged* (particularly fragment 7 of the second draft), in the combined image of women feeding starving children and of warlike determination (section III):

²⁸ op. cit. pp. 28-9.

²⁹ "In the threshing-floor where the lads dined one night/ there remain the olive-stones and the dried blood of the moon and the fifteen-syllable verse of their weapons."

κι αργά κατηφοράνε να ταΐσουνε τα εγγόνια τους με
το μεσολογγίτικο μπαρούτι.³⁰

And, of course, reference to Digenes Akrites (whether the epic or the Acritic songs) is by definition literary, as in section II: "στ' Αλώνια τα ίδια αντάμωσαν το Διγενή και στρώθηκαν στο δείπνο". In the light of this I think that we should conclude that Ritsos's presentation of place in *Romiosyni* is not as such Seferean. He is making a reference to Seferis, and to his view of Greece, alongside references to other aspects of Greek literature. I would suggest that, in the context of a poem celebrating heroic resistance, the point of the reference is to *challenge* the Seferean picture of a modern world without heroes, just as the title *Romiosyni* is a challenge to the traditional exemplary status of *Ancient Greece*. The landscape of the poem may be identifiable with that of *Mythistorema* in significant respects, but it is one peopled by the heroes of epic, of folk song, of Solomos. The humanising of it, through metaphors, is another aspect of this revaluation, a stressing that, culturally, the land is its people. Consequently, both the values of the poem and the techniques of evocation of place which contribute to their expression, are distinctly personal to Ritsos himself.

What does this mean in practical terms as far as the issues of private and public space are concerned? In *Romiosyni*, images of private space are annulled – houses burnt, doors torn down, prickly pears growing within the walls of the "kastro", "the ruined house of the governor patched with sky" (section VI). Indeed, public space has invaded private space to the point where people are expelled from it and forced to become part of the landscape: "και τριγυρνάνε έξω απ' τα τείχη της πατρίδας τους ψάχνοντας τόπο να ριζώσουνε στη νύχτα."³¹ At the same time, public space is given a degree of intimacy, brought down in some sense to a more human dimension, by enclosing it in images drawn from private space: "night as big as the big round baking-tin on the tinker's wall". Furthermore, neither sort of

³⁰ "And slowly they [i.e. the old women] go down to feed their grandchildren with the Misolonghi gun-powder."

³¹ "and they wander around outside the walls of their fatherland seeking a place to take root in the night."

place is presented through description in any strict pictorial sense: a sense of place is compounded out of fragmented details, many of them metaphorical. Where a sequence of lines does appear to create a particular place and moment, its details in fact fracture that focus by referring outward to other levels of place and time. Take for example, in section III:

Όταν ξεφτάει απόμακρα η μινωική τοιχογραφία της
 δύσης
 και σβήνει η πυρκαϊά στον αχερώνα της ακρογιαλιάς
 ανηφορίζουν ως εδώ οι γριές απ' τα σκαμμένα στο
 βράχο σκαλοπάτια
 κάθονται στη Μεγάλη Πέτρα γνέθοντας με τα μάτια
 τη θάλασσα
 κάθονται και μετράν τ' αστέρια ως να μετράνε τα
 προγονικά ασημένια τους κουταλοπήρουνα
 κι αργά κατηφοράνε να ταΐσουνε τα εγγόνια τους με
 το μεσολογγίτικο μπαρούτι.³²

In these lines the place/picture is not in fact the focal point, but the *base* from which geographical references (Crete, Misolonghi) which are also temporal references (pre-Homeric civilisation, the War of Independence) are developed to extend the theme of heroism (implicit in the reference to "Misolonghi gunpowder"), all of this being linked back by motifs of weaving ("γνέθοντας", "ξεφτάει") and stars to a passage in section II:

Α, τι μπρισίμι αστέρι ακόμα θα χρειαστεί
 για να κεντήσουν οι πευκοβελόνες στην καψαλισμένη
 μάντρα του καλοκαιριού «κι αυτό θα περάσει»
 πόσο θα στίψει ακόμα η μάνα την καρδιά της πάνου
 απ' τα εφτά σφαγμένα παλληκάρια της

³² "When the Minoan fresco of sunset begins to unravel in the distance/
 and the fire dies out in the grain-store of the shore/
 the old women climb up here by the steps carved in the rock/
 they sit on the Great Rock spinning the sea with their eyes/
 they sit and measure the stars as if measuring their ancestral silver spoons and forks/
 and slowly go down to feed their grandchildren with the Misolonghi gun-powder."

ώσπου να βρει το φως το δρόμο του στην ανηφόρα
της ψυχής της.³³

In that passage, the outer world/public space is being enclosed in images which customarily belong to private space/the domestic world – the stars as a silk thread, the singed enclosing wall of summer, the light finding an upward path into the mother's soul. The original passage, as we saw, works in a precisely parallel way. There, the domestic world – a wall painting, a barn for straw, steps, weaving, spoons and forks – has been appropriated by the outer world : sunset, the shore, the sea, the stars. At the same time, in a mirror image of this process, the poet has "appropriated" the public space of existing literary tradition (at least as far as the representation of place is concerned), in this case the implicit reference to Solomos's *Free Besieged*, and has woven it into a personal expression of public issues.

*

If I am correct in arguing that, in his early poetry at least, place is not of interest to Ritsos *in itself*, but that it stands for him as representation of vital aspects of the Greek literary tradition which need synthesising in his own work if it is to express what is valid both personally and publically, then why, you might ask, is some of the evocation of place so vivid in its detail. Look, for example, at "Κλειδωμένα πόρτα", the seventh section of *Guard duty by the light of the evening star*, written 1941-2. At a certain level the poem has the detail of a genre-painting, with its barrel-organ on the corner, of a Saturday evening, the muddy road, then the lamps with mauve cords, the adults talking in a dining-room with a patch of light under the door, though the poem overlaps exterior and interior scenes and uses sub-scenes in its metaphors, e.g. the wet clogs in the corridor of the refugee shack, and the tiny hands of the child buried alive and pushing

³³ "Ah, what silk-thread star will be needed/ for the pine-needles to embroider 'this too will pass' on the singed wall of summer?/ How much more will the mother squeeze out her heart onto the bodies of her seven slain heroes,/ before the light finds its way onto the upward slope of her soul?"

against its coffin lid. Elements of public space – the details of the neighbourhood – have been blended with elements of private space – references to interiors in their own right and in metaphors. *Some* of the description refers to the public space of literary tradition (barrel-organ, muddy road, sunset, the relentless passage of time marked by the old clock). All of this has been filtered into one vision through the private space of memory, and this then forms the basis for a poem in which the idea of enclosure/isolation is emphatically rejected in favour of a unity/community which breaks down private space in favour of group values:

Πρέπει να σπάσουμε την πόρτα. Θα τα καταφέρουμε.
Γιατί η αγάπη μας είναι πιο πολλή απ' τη μοναξιά
μας.³⁴

The vividness of detail is necessary to the tangibility of the experience. Both private and public space need to suggest the *reality* of lived experience if they are also to have the full metaphorical power to suggest the kinds of abstract notion with which Ritsos is playing.

To get at the "theory" behind the practice, I want to conclude by juxtaposing two poems, "Μια νύχτα" from *Testimonies 1* (1963) and "Το νόημα της απλότητας", the opening poem of *Parentheses* (written 1946-47). The first I see as itself a metaphor for Ritsos's perception of the meaning of place in literary representation; the second is acknowledged as a central statement of Ritsos's view of the nature of language and the relationship between text and reader.³⁵ In "Μια νύχτα" Ritsos treats the house as an example of space as a limited specific reality, its decay reflecting its absence, or loss, of meaning, in that *empty* space is deprived of its potential for private meaning. The

³⁴ "We must break down the door. We shall achieve it./ For our love is greater than our loneliness."

³⁵ Edmund Keeley, in "Ο Γιάννης Ρίτσος μέσα σε παρενθέσεις" in *Αφιέρωμα στον Γιάννη Ρίτσο* (see note 5 above), pp. 469-84, sees the poem as simply expressing the desire for the reader to find the poet who is "hidden" in his words. This oversimplifies the image at the centre of the poem.

illumination of the second floor, with its eight uncurtained windows and two open balcony doors, restores this space to a potential public reality, but it cannot confer on it any greater degree of signification. What does *that* is the antique mirror –

[...] ένας γερός, παλαιϊκός καθρέφτης,
με κορνίζα βαρειά, από μαύρο ξύλο σκαλιστό, κα-
θρεφτίζοντας
ως ένα απίθανο βάθος τις σάπιες, συγκλίνουσες σα-
νίδες του πατώματος³⁶

– which turns the same space into a limitless general reality, by making it an unrestrained metaphor for itself. The mirror, like literature or the poet or language itself, turns the space into a perspective, and thus creates a potential for meaning out of it. The recording of place/space is thus for Ritsos the creation of a private perspective out of space, which can be viewed inwardly (as private space) or outwardly (as public space). This is, I think, the equivalent of Palamas's "three lyricisms", with the mirror of literature/language performing the function of the generalising "lyricism of the totality".

This interpretation sits neatly with the ideas expressed in the second poem I referred to above, "Το νόημα της απλότητας". This short poem promotes, in its first stanza, the idea that the poetic self is "behind" things/objects. The reader, in making contact with objects "touched" by the poet, achieves a degree of communication with him – "the traces of our hands will mingle". The second stanza exemplifies this process with a brief description which contains elements of both the external and the internal world:

Το αυγουστιάτικο φεγγάρι γυαλίζει στην κουζίνα
σα γανωμένο τεντζέρι [...]
φωτίζει τ' άδειο σπίτι και τη γονατισμένη σιωπή του
σπιτιού –

³⁶ "an old mirror, tilted at an angle/ with a heavy frame, of carved black wood, mirroring/ to an incredible depth the rotten converging floorboards."

πάντα η σιωπή μένει γονατισμένη.³⁷

The third stanza glosses the function of language – every word is a "way out" towards a meeting between poet and reader, even if that meeting is not necessarily achieved. The "truth" of such poetic language lies in its power to suggest such a meeting. The word can take the reader to a perception of an *inner*, psychological truth or can lead outward to what Bien calls "an external reality validated by the poet's touch".³⁸ The process is mirrored in the passage from public to private space – from moon to empty kitchen in stanza 2 of this poem, from lit windows outward in "Μια νύχτα", or from mirror to rotting floorboards. Descriptions are both fragments of place and symbols of public realities, and the interrelation of fragments of description of public and private space forms a mutual commentary between the two dimensions. But in so far as those descriptions are also references to existing literary conventions/traditions, they create a passage between private and public space at the stylistic level too. Indeed, it is through his dialogue with tradition, as we have seen, that Ritsos is able, by the late 1940s, to integrate his different levels of vision within a poetic voice which is both his own and yet recognisably related to the "public" space of twentieth-century Greek poetry as a whole.

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³⁷ "The august moon shines in the kitchen/ like a tin-plated cooking-pot [...] it lights up the empty house and the kneeling silence of the house/ – silence always stays kneeling."

³⁸ *op. cit.* p. 18.

Heteroglossia and the defeat of regionalism in Greece

Dimitris Tziouvas

Although heteroglossia is a term of Greek origin and therefore those familiar with Greek must more or less understand its meaning, I feel that I should explain what Mikhail Bakhtin, who first introduced it, meant by that term. For him all national languages are internally stratified into what he calls different "social speech types", that is to say, in his own words: "social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific sociopolitical purposes of the day, even of the hour."¹ This multiple construction of language does not imply a relationship of harmony between these different speech types, but instead a relationship of conflict. For Bakhtin the basic forces which regulate this discursive conflict are two, which he calls *centripetal* and *centrifugal*.

He refers to the tendency towards unification and centralization as "centripetal force" and to the tendency for heterology and decentralization as "centrifugal force"; the conflict of these two opposing tendencies constitutes a perpetual dialogic struggle which manifests itself more clearly in the realm of language:

At any given moment of its evolution, language is stratified not only into linguistic dialects in the strict sense of the word (according to formal linguistic markers, especially phonetic), but also – and for us this is the essential point – into languages that are socio-ideological: languages of social groups, "professional"

¹ M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, Austin: University of Texas Press 1981, pp. 262-3.

and "generic" languages, languages of generations and so forth. From this point of view, literary language itself is only one of these heteroglot languages – and in turn is also stratified into languages (generic, period-bound and others). And this stratification and heteroglossia, once realized, is not only a static invariant of linguistic life, but also what insures its dynamics: stratification and heteroglossia widen and deepen as long as language is alive and developing. Alongside the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces of language carry on their uninterrupted work; alongside verbal-ideological centralization and unification, the uninterrupted processes of decentralization and disunification go forward.²

In short, the centripetal forces in language seek to undermine linguistic plurality and establish a unitary language whereas the centrifugal forces resist linguistic unity.

After these preliminary remarks about heteroglossia, I must now turn my attention to the question of regionalism in Greece which has so far received little attention,³ although it eloquently illustrates the triumph of nationalism and the ideology of the national centre. It has been subsumed under the more widely used dichotomy between centre and periphery, where the latter tends to represent more the diaspora rather than the regions. Regionalism provides us with a perspective by which we can understand the connection between nationalism, identity and the formation of a national culture as an outcome of the tension between centrifugal and centripetal forces (to return to Bakhtin's terms). Nationalism can be seen as a centripetal force while regionalism stands as its centrifugal opposition.

The conflict of these two trends can be observed as a striking feature of modern Greek history, which involves a paradox since nationalism is expressed by the centralizing state and regionalism by the concept of a non-contained nation. The fundamental problem in modern Greek history has been the establishment of

² *ibid.*, pp. 271-2.

³ One of the most comprehensive studies on regionalism in Greece and Cyprus is still the proceedings of the conference organized and edited by Muriel Dimen and Ernestine Friedl: "Regional variation in modern Greece and Cyprus: Toward a perspective on the ethnography of Greece", *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 268 (February 1976).

the former and its expansion in order to embrace the latter. Before the War of Independence, a Greek state was not of course in existence nor ever had been. The Greek nation, on the other hand, was geographically dispersed from Wallachia and Anatolia to the Greek communities in Europe. After the successful outcome of the Greek War of Independence and the establishment of the Greek state, the problem which emerged was the incompatibility of the state and the nation. Hence, the subsequent political, military and cultural history of Greece, at least up to 1922, can be considered as an attempt to expand the state so that it would coincide with the nation.

Since the mid-eighteenth century the Greek nation has been defined and differentiated linguistically, thus thwarting the older ecumenical community of Balkan Orthodoxy. Greek-speaking populations acquiring national consciousness through language separated themselves from the Bulgarians, the Albanians or the Vlachs, who were treated as outsiders in terms of language, although welcome to join the Greek nation eventually, provided that they adopt its language and culture. An invitation to the non-Greek-speaking Orthodox to hellenize themselves linguistically and culturally is offered by Daniel of Moschopolis in his opening remarks to a Greek-Vlach-Bulgarian-Albanian glossary published in 1802. Similar messages were sent by other Greek intellectuals, such as Neophytos Doukas, either to the Greek leaders, or to the other Balkan peoples – not, however, to all of them but to marginal and less cohesive social groups.⁴ This perhaps explains why they do not talk about the assimilation of Serbs while they do talk about the assimilation of Albanians, Vlachs and Bulgarians. This tendency towards cultural and linguistic hellenization demonstrates that the Greek nation was primarily perceived as a cultural and linguistic community. In place of the religious ecumenical community that Orthodoxy had put forward, nationalism projected the individuality and the uniqueness of linguistic communities. Apart from territorial

⁴ See Paschalis Kitromilides, "Imagined Communities' and the origins of the National Question in the Balkans", in: Martin Blinkhorn and Thanos Veremis (edd.) *Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality*, Athens: Sage-ELIAMEP 1990, pp. 23-66.

expansion, the other main preoccupation of Greek nationalism was the social, linguistic and ideological unity associated with the convergence of state and nation. The development, therefore, of nationalism in Greece and in the Balkans presupposes and at the same time promotes linguistic homogeneity with the enforcement of one language; a process which has been continued more effectively with the formation of a powerful state.

It has often been observed that during and after the War of Independence a conflict developed between the modernizing élites of the diaspora and the local oligarchies, which after Independence resulted in the highlighting of the cleavage between a society with pre-capitalistic structures and ethos and a state transplanted from the West. Thus, since the early nineteenth century a divergence between society and state came about which resulted in the continuing mistrust of the people towards the central authorities. On the one hand, the westernized state tried to rationalize and modernize the pre-capitalist Greek society from above and, on the other hand, the latter responded by undermining the former from below. This incongruence between the westernized state and the pre-capitalist social structure often took the form of an antithesis between urban and rural culture. According to N. Diamandouros, the failure of urban culture to gain wider acceptance and authority within society suggests once again the fundamental and unbridged cleavage between the state and society as well as the resilience of regionalism and its ultimately anti-urban character.⁵

What has not been considered so far is that one of the most serious attempts to bridge the gap I have just described was by means of language and the ideal of linguistic uniformity. Perhaps the language question overshadowed this systematic attempt in Greece by giving the impression that the cleavage had become wider instead of being bridged. Nevertheless, behind the language question lurked the ideal of linguistic unity and uniformity; the disagreement simply lay in the medium: whether the homogenizing medium was to be the demotic or

⁵ P. Nikiforos Diamandouros, "Greek political culture in transition: Historical origins, evolution, current trends", in: Richard Clogg (ed.), *Greece in the 1980s*, London: Macmillan 1983, p. 55.

katharevousa.⁶ Hence, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there was a colossal but quiet attempt to bring about the hellenization and linguistic uniformity of Greek territory including all the Greek-speaking and non-Greek-speaking populations.

According to P. Kitromilides, what happened in Greece and elsewhere in eastern Europe in the nineteenth century "was the gradual construction of the nations by the states."⁷ From its inception the basic objective of the Greek state was the overpowering of the local centrifugal tendencies and the establishment of a canonistic framework of national values with unity as the ultimate goal. This unity meant two things: first, unity in terms of time, under the notion of the historical continuity of Hellenism, a project undertaken by historians such as Paparrigopoulos; and, secondly, unity in territorial terms, which meant among other things the obliteration of linguistic and cultural heterogeneity as well as local differences. In this way the idea of the national centre is formed and various mechanisms of national homogeneity and cultural assimilation develop.

First of all, one such mechanism, as is portrayed in *Military Life in Greece* (1870), was the army, which, among other things, aimed at the hellenization of its recruits, some of whom did not have Greek as their native language, and at forging a national identity on the basis of common ideals and social experience. Another mechanism was the educational system with its spectacular expansion during the first fifty years following Independence, if we take into account that the 71 schools in 1830 had become 1,172 in 1879.⁸ In this respect, the role of the newly founded University of Athens was crucial too; one of its aims was

⁶ The lack of widely-recognized or standard Greek dictionaries (equivalent to the OED) and grammars suggests that the widespread linguistic standardization did not produce practical results, notwithstanding the language controversy, which impeded this process.

⁷ Kitromilides, *op. cit.*, p. 33. For an analysis of the ideological developments in Greece during the nineteenth century see also his study "Ιδεολογικά ρεύματα και πολιτικά αιτήματα προοπτικές από τὸν ἑλληνικὸ 19ο αἰώνα", in: D.G. Tsaousis (ed.), *Ώψεις τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Κοινωνίας τοῦ 19ου αἰώνα*, Athens: Estia 1984, pp. 23-38.

⁸ Kitromilides, "Imagined Communities", p. 37.

to prepare school-teachers who would contribute to the hellenization and the national indoctrination of populations outside the Greek kingdom. Additional evidence that the centripetal forces of the Greek state were gaining ground was the fact that the theological college at Chalki was increasingly supplanted by Athens University, the Rizaris Seminary and the Maraslis Teachers Training College as regards the training of educational personnel for the needs of the Greek communities in Asia Minor.

A third mechanism of social cohesion and state centralizing control was the judiciary. During a period when brigandage threatened law and order and defied the central authorities, the establishment of the penitentiary system and the credibility of justice, as eloquently portrayed in the novel *Thanos Vlekas* by the legal scholar and political thinker Pavlos Kalligas, was of primary importance for national unity, as well as for negating any local autonomies which potentially could lead to social unrest and anarchy

These three institutional mechanisms aimed at smoothing out social, linguistic and cultural differences within society and the strengthening of national unity. On the practical level they fostered state control and centralization, and on the ideological level this role was played by the Great Idea and its promise for a unity of autochthonous and heterochthonous Greeks within an enlarged Greek state. It should be borne in mind here that the concept of the Great Idea was introduced in 1844 by Ioannis Kolettis during a debate over the issue of autochthonous and heterochthonous members of the Greek state. Moreover, the declaration in 1833 by the Greek Church of its autocephaly from the Ecumenical Patriarchate represents another indication of the clash between the centripetal state and the centrifugal nation. The appropriation of the Church by the state was a cause for friction because it opposed the maintenance by the Patriarchate of the traditional supra-national and supra-state religious community in the Balkan area.

After the Anatolian catastrophe the Great Idea was reversed. Instead of expanding the state in order to cover the whole nation, now the nation had to be contained within the state. In other words, the centripetal force of homogeneity and unity (racial, geographical and linguistic) now gained

momentum in place of the centrifugal force of expansion which was dominant earlier. With the exchange of populations in 1923, Greece appears to be one of the most ethnically homogeneous states of Europe⁹ while at the same time the systematic enforcement of a uniform national culture through a highly centralized administrative system effaced any regional peculiarities. After 1922, with the definition of the Greek borders and the integration of the refugees, nation and state converge in a kind of forced symbiosis.¹⁰ This perhaps explains why before 1922 regionalism was allowed to manifest itself either linguistically or thematically even in literature, whereas afterwards the tendency for discipline and homogeneity prevails. One can argue that earlier literature expressed the nation and the diaspora, before it became the mouthpiece of the state and the metropolis. In turn, the allowances for heteroglossia were minimized.

In the early twentieth century a massive effort was made to achieve the linguistic unification of Greek territory, an effort closely linked with the Macedonian question. In 1916 Manolis Triantaphyllidis, in an article under the title "Our language in the schools of Macedonia", points out that "the Greek state has failed in the issue of hellenization"¹¹ and in the assimilation of non-native speakers, considering the fact that even near Athens there were Albanian-speaking villages. The linguistic antagonism, Triantaphyllidis says, was not reduced but intensified because of the various nationalisms; particularly in the recently liberated Macedonia, the hellenization of the non-Greek-speakers was essential (with demotic as the instrument): "The linguistic assimilation cannot be implemented except by means of the spoken language, which must be established in the schools of Macedonia and anywhere that foreign speakers exist, at least for the first four years of the elementary school."¹² He points out

⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 50-1.

¹⁰ Thanos Veremis, "Introduction" in: *Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality* (see n. 4 above), p. 8.

¹¹ M. Triantaphyllidis, "Η γλώσσα μας στα σχολεία της Μακεδονίας", *Άπαντα*, vol. 4, Thessaloniki: Institute of Modern Greek Studies 1963, p. 253.

¹² *ibid.*, p. 257.

that, in spite of the government's efforts in opening schools and sending out teachers, people in a number of places in Macedonia did not speak Greek but Bulgarian; he also attempts to strengthen his case by quoting from articles by teachers and the views of other people who had first-hand experience of the situation.

The linguistic situation in Macedonia was an additional factor in speeding up the policy of the Greek state for linguistic unification through education. State intervention, however, was not limited to the area of education, but spread into other areas with the hellenization of place-names and the endorsement of new military and marine terms and trade codes¹³ – an endorsement which highlights the widespread formalism of the Greek state and the anxiety about uniformity.

As I said earlier, up to the Anatolian catastrophe the polyphony and the multifaceted character of Greece were recognised and bolstered indirectly by nationalists such as Dragoumis who drew a distinction between Hellenes and Helladikoi: "The Greeks of Greece, let us call them Helladikoi, identified in their minds the Greek state, the Greek *Kingdom*, the small *Greece*, with the Greek *nation*. They forgot the Greek nation, Romiosyni and Hellenism."¹⁴ Dragoumis's theory about the re-establishment of an empire, together with his defence of the administrative system of the small communities, stems from the alleged incompatibility between state and nation, which he speaks of as follows: "Two trends originated from two different ideologies, one Helladic and the other Hellenic, one strictly statist and the other national and all-encompassing."¹⁵

The views of K.D. Karavidas, an associate of Dragoumis, on communalism suggest that there was ideological resistance to the centripetalism of the state. One of his articles, entitled "Learned tradition and Demoticism", first published in 1921 in Dragoumis's *Political Review*, later reprinted in 1945 in a pamphlet and then in the periodical *Platon* in 1961, is of

¹³ See the introduction of E.I. Moschonas in the edition of A. Pallis, *Μπροσός*, Athens: Ermis 1975, p. νβ.

¹⁴ I. Dragoumis, *Ὁ Ἑλληνισμός μου καὶ οἱ Ἕλληνες, 1903-1909*, Athens 1927, p. 108.

¹⁵ I. Dragoumis, *Ἑλληνικὸς πολιτισμὸς*, Athens 1927 (¹1913), p. 108.

particular interest.¹⁶ In this article, Karavidas singles out two theories/ideologies, as he calls them: the socialist and the hellenistic. The first is centripetal or according to him "dogmatic and canonistic", "submitting people once and for all to collective discipline", whereas the other, the hellenistic, is centrifugal, "stressing variety and non-uniformity in life". The socialist theory represents the state, the West and demoticism; the hellenistic, on the other hand, represents the community, the East and the learned tradition (not as letter but as spirit and orientation). Demoticism, according to Karavidas, must shy away from both socialism and parliamentary democracy, and look back to ancient Greece as the genuine manifestation of communal organization. Karavidas can be seen as the champion of regionalism in Greece during the inter-war period and one of the few who used the concept in a transliterated form, since there is no equivalent term in Greek and the concept is often expressed by reference to communalism (κοινοτισμός).¹⁷

Furthermore, the suppression of customary law in Greece can be linked to the defeat of regionalism and the increasing tendency towards standardization and centralization. Nikolaos Pantazopoulos has explored in detail this clash between local "customs" and western "law" during the early years of Independence and has illustrated the pivotal role of the Bavarian administrator and law professor Ludwig-Georg von Maurer.¹⁸ Although von Maurer stayed in Greece barely eighteen months (2 February 1833 - 31 July 1834), he was instrumental in the suppression of communalism and customary law. The division of Greek territory into *Demoi*, for example, did not aim,

¹⁶ K.D. Karavidas, "Η Λογία Παράδοσις καὶ ὁ Δημοτικισμός", *Πλάτων* 13, no. 25/26 (1961) 138-64.

¹⁷ See K.D. Karavidas, *Άγροτικά* (1931), repr. Athens: Papazisis 1977, and "Η τοπικὴ αὐτοδιοίκησης καὶ ὁ ἰδιότυπος παρ' ἡμῶν οἰκονομικὸς ρεζιοναλισμός" (1936), reprinted in *Γεωοικονομία καὶ Κοινοτισμός*, Athens: Agricultural Bank of Greece 1980 and *Τὸ Πρόβλημα τῆς Αὐτονομίας*, Athens: Papazisis 1981.

¹⁸ See N.I. Pantazopoulos, *Georg Ludwig von Maurer. Ἡ πρὸς εὐρωπαϊκὰ πρότυπα ὀλοκληρωτικὴ στροφὴ τῆς Νεοελληνικῆς νομοθεσίας*, Thessaloniki 1968, and *Ὁ Ἑλληνικὸς Κοινοτισμὸς καὶ ἡ Νεοελληνικὴ Κοινοτικὴ Παράδοση*, Athens: Parousia 1993.

according to Pantazopoulos, at the revival of the communal ethos and support for regional independence, but at reinforcing the authority of the state and making its control over the communities more effective. The control of "custom" by "western law" was supported by von Maurer's preconception that only foreigners (especially the Germans) could teach the Greeks to be civilized.¹⁹

The "Europeanization" of Greek law, representing modernization and standardization, invites us to see the conflict between "law" and "custom" as a legal parallel to the linguistic controversy between *katharevousa* and demotic. M. Herzfeld, discussing the analogy, argues that "as with 'katharevousa', the 'law' is something which the villager regards as a standard set by the State."²⁰ In this way we return to the fundamental opposition during the nineteenth century between centripetal propensities, identified with the State, which represented modernization, Europeanization and standardization, and the centrifugal forces associated with customary law, communalism, regionalism and linguistic plurality.

During the nineteenth century, however, it is difficult to talk about or define Greek regionalism. There is more talk about sectionalism than regionalism.²¹ Social cleavages and local

¹⁹ John Anthony Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft in the Kingdom of Greece 1833-1843*, Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press 1968, p. 162.

²⁰ Michael Herzfeld, "'Law' and 'Custom': Ethnography of and in Greek National Identity", *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 3. 2 (October 1985) 176.

²¹ John Petropoulos argues that sectional jealousies between Rumeliots, Peloponnesians and islanders played an important role in Greek politics after Independence. He also points to the difference between the Europeanists, who thought of statehood in terms of nationalism, centralization, bureaucracy and perhaps constitutionalism, and the indigenous elements who were satisfied with the machinery of the Ottoman state. For him the two factors which fostered sectionalism were geography and Ottoman rule, which conformed to geographical divisions: "In view of the geographical barriers of sea and mountains, it is not surprising that localism and sectionalism should have been strong. The force of nationalism in 1821 was still new, and town, village, or district still commanded primary loyalty. Traditionally, administration had conformed to geography and had intensified sectionalism. What became independent

conflicts are perceived through binary oppositions such as: autochthons and heterochthons, Helladikoi and outside Greeks, Heptanesians and Phanariots, while the Greek nation, including the diaspora, is seen as consisting of three concentric circles: the first involving the Greek peninsula, the second the Balkans and the third European cities or Asian regions with Greek populations or Greek mercantile activities.²² Regional antagonism emerges as a result of irreconcilable economies (peasant/merchant) and the coexistence of two cultures: an official, administrative culture and a local, customary one.

However, what characterizes nineteenth-century Greece is first a sense of linguistic and cultural diversity, which many describe as anarchy, and, secondly, the increasing use of the term "national centre". As Elli Skopetea argues:

Ἡ χρήση τέλος τῆς λ. κέντρον δηλώνει – καὶ ταυτόχρονα καλύπτει – τοὺς νέους συσχετισμοὺς τῶν δυνάμεων ποὺ συνεπάγεται ἡ κατάλυση τῆς χαρακτηριστικῆς γιὰ τὸν προεπαναστατικὸ ἑλληνισμὸ πολυκεντρικότητας.²³

There are some who see the linguistic diversity during this period as a symptom of a wider political chaos, social instability and moral impropriety. This view is clearly expressed by A. Kyprianos in 1861 in the journal *Philistor*:

Ὅλοι αἰσθάνονται τὴν χρεῖαν νὰ πῆξωμεν τέλος πάντων γλῶσσάν τινα, καὶ ὅλοι θλίβονται καὶ

Greece had never constituted a single unit within the Ottoman empire. Not even each of its acknowledged geographical divisions had enjoyed administrative unity. Moreover, Ottoman rule had favored sectionalism in two ways – by allowing communities and regions a large degree of autonomy and by never attempting to introduce any widespread uniformity of administration." J.A. Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft in the Kingdom of Greece 1833-1843*, p. 20.

²² G. Dertilis, *Κοινωνικὸς μετασχηματισμὸς καὶ στρατιωτικὴ ἐπέμβαση 1880-1909*, Athens: Exantas 1977, p. 277.

²³ Elli Skopetea, *Τὸ "Πρότυπο Βασίλειο" καὶ ἡ Μεγάλη Ἰδέα. Ὅψεις τοῦ ἐθνικοῦ προβλήματος στὴν Ἑλλάδα (1830-1880)*, Athens: Polytypo 1988, p. 72.

βασανίζονται ὅτι ἡ ἀκαταστασία καὶ ἀκοσμία ἥτις παρατηρεῖται κατὰ τὸν πολιτικὸν μας βίον, κατὰ τὰ ἤθη, κατὰ τὸν χαρακτῆρα ἐπικρατεῖ καὶ κατὰ τὴν γλῶσσαν, τὸ πρᾶγμα ἐκεῖνο ὃ χαρακτηρίζει ἰδίως τὸν λογικὸν ἀνθρωπικὸν καὶ δεῖται ὑπὲρ πᾶν ἄλλο κανόνος καὶ μέτρων.²⁴

But the ideal of a unified and standardized language is expressed more adamantly by Philippos Ioannou two years later in *Ethnikon Imerologion*:

Ἐκ τῶν ῥηθέντων συνάγεται, ὅτι αἱ διάφοροι τοπικαὶ διαλέκτοι, εἰς ἃς ἡ χυδαία τῶν Ἑλλήνων γλῶσσα διαιρεῖται, δύνανται μὲν νὰ χρησιμεύσωσιν εἰς ἄσματα δημοτικά, εἰς κωμωδίας, εἰς μύθους καὶ διηγήματα, ὠρισμένα πρὸς διδασκαλίαν καὶ τέρψιν τοῦ ὄχλου, οὐχὶ ὅμως καὶ εἰς σπουδαίαν καὶ ὑψηλὴν ποίησιν, εἰς ἐπιστημονικὰ συγγράμματα, εἰς νομοθεσίαν, δικηγορίαν κ.τ.λ. Πᾶσαι τῶν μεγάλων καὶ πεφωτισμένων τῆς Εὐρώπης ἔθνῶν αἱ γλῶσσαι ἔχουσιν, ὡς καὶ ἡ ἡμετέρα, διαφόρους ἀδιαπλάστους διαλέκτους, ἄλλην ἔν ἄλλῃ ἐπαρχίᾳ ὑπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου λαλουμένας, ὧν γίνεται χρῆσις εἰς ἄσματα δημοτικά, εἰς κωμωδίας κ.τ.λ. οὐδεὶς ὅμως οὐδεμίαν τῶν ῥηθεισῶν διαλέκτων μεταχειρίζεται εἰς σύνταξιν ποιήματος σπουδαίου, συγγράμματος ἐπιστημονικοῦ, ἢ ὠρισμένου εἰς χρῆσιν καὶ ὠφέλειαν τῶν παιδείας μετόχων ἢ γεγραμμισμένων· ἀλλὰ τὰ τοιαῦτα ποιήματα καὶ συγγράμματα συντάσσονται εἰς τὴν κοινὴν τοῦ ἔθνους καὶ γραμματικῶς κεκανονισμένην γλῶσσαν.²⁵

From what has already been said we may conclude that, while the various local dialects that go to make up the vulgar Greek tongue may be used for folk-songs, comedies, fables and tales, intended to edify and entertain the populace, yet they are not suitable for writing sublime poetry or scientific treatises, or for purposes of legislation or legal practice, etc. The languages of all

²⁴ A. Kyprianos, "Περὶ ἀναλογίας καὶ ἀνωμαλίας κατὰ τοὺς καθ' ἡμᾶς χρόνους", *Φιλίστωρ* 17 (15 September 1861) 207.

²⁵ Ph. Ioannou, "Περὶ τῆς Νεωτέρας Ἑλληνικῆς Γλώσσης", *Ἐθνικὸν Ἡμερολόγιον* 1863, p. 111.

the great and enlightened European nations have, like our own, various half-formed dialects, spoken by the common people from one region to another, which are employed in folk-songs, comedies and so on. Yet no one resorts to any of these dialects when composing a serious poem, a scholarly tract, or anything designed for the benefit of an educated readership. On the contrary it is the aforementioned poems and learned tracts that are composed in the grammatically standardized *lingua franca* of the nation.

In the nineteenth century, we witness two conflicting trends. On the one hand, there is encouragement from the Ministry of Education or journals such as *Philistor*²⁶ for teachers to collect dialectal material, a tendency running parallel to the collection of folk songs; and on the other hand the volume of neologisms coined during that period represents, as Marianna Ditsa argues, among other things, the desire to compile and consolidate a homogeneous linguistic instrument for the whole nation.²⁷

Before the War of Independence and for some years afterwards there was a significant tolerance towards dialects and other languages. Few were bothered by the coexistence of Greek and Albanian and most towns, even in the south, such as Nauplion, were little Babylons. Even later, Kolettis, a Kutsovlach himself, defended those who spoke Albanian and Kutsovlach. In August 1844 he contrasted Alexandros Mavrokordatos with himself in this way to Nikolaos Dragoumis:

Δὲν ἀγνοεῖς ὅτι ὡς πρὸς τὸ σύνταγμα φρονῶ ὅ,τι καὶ ὁ Μαυροκορδάτος· ὡς καὶ αὐτός, οὕτω καὶ ἐγὼ νομίζω ὅτι, ἀφοῦ ἀπαξ ἔγινε δεκτὸν πρέπει νὰ ἐφαρμοσθῆ· διαφωνοῦμεν μόνον ὡς πρὸς τὸν τρόπον ἐφαρμογῆς. Ἐκ τῆς τελευταίας διαγωγῆς τοῦ προκατόχου μου συμπεραίνω ὅτι, διατρίψαντες καὶ οἱ δύο τόσα ἔτη εἰς

²⁶ In the first issue of *Φιλίστωρ* in 1862, on the first page, there appears a "Προτροπὴ εἰς σύνταξιν ἰδιωτικῶν τῆς νέας ἑλληνικῆς γλώσσης", that is to say an encouragement for the collection of idiomatic or regional words which will result in the enrichment of the written form of the Greek language.

²⁷ Marianna Ditsa, *Νεολογία καὶ Κριτική*, Athens: Ermis 1988, p. 39.

τὴν Εὐρώπην, αὐτὸς μὲν ἐλησμόνησε τὴν Ἑλλάδα, ἐγὼ δὲ ἐδιδάχθην νὰ ἐννοῶ αὐτὴν κάλλιον ἢ πρότερον. Ὁ Μαυροκορδάτος ἐξέλαβε τὴν Ἑλλάδα Εὐρώπην καὶ ἀπόδειξις ἢ σύνταξις τοῦ ὑπουργείου τῆς 30 Μαρτίου. Εἶδες πῶς συνέταξεν αὐτό. Ἔστρεψε τὸ βλέμμα περὶ τὴν αἴθουσαν αὐτοῦ καί, ἰδὼν ἀνθρώπους φοροῦντας βελάδας, ὀμιλοῦντας ἀγγλικά καὶ γαλλικά, εἶπεν· "Ἴδου τὸ ἑλληνικὸν ἔθνος καὶ κατ' αὐτὸ γεννηθῆτω τὸ ὑπουργεῖον μου". Πλὴν, ἀγαπητέ, τὸ ἑλληνικὸν ἔθνος δὲν εἶναι τὸ συνερχόμενον εἰς τὴν αἴθουσαν τοῦ Μαυροκορδάτου, ἀλλὰ τὸ συνερχόμενον εἰς τὴν τοῦ Κωλέττου· τὸ ἑλληνικὸν ἔθνος οὔτε βελάδας φορεῖ οὔτε γαλλικά ἢ ἀγγλικά ὀμιλεῖ· φορεῖ φουστανέλλας, ὀμιλεῖ ἐνίοτε καὶ ἀλβανικά καὶ κουτσοβλάχικα καὶ σώζει τὰ ἦθη τῆς τυραννίας, τὰ ὅποια δὲν θὰ ἐξαλειφῶσι διὰ μιᾶς· διότι, ὅσον καὶ ἂν φωνάζωσιν οἱ λογιώτατοι, τὰ ἔθνη δὲν αὐτοσχεδιάζονται.²⁸

You are aware that I think much the same as Mavrokordatos does about the constitution. Like him, I think that once it has been approved, it must be enacted. We differ only in respect of how this is to be done. From my predecessor's recent behaviour I conclude that, during the two years or so he spent in Europe, he forgot what Greece is. I, on the other hand, have learnt to understand it better than before. Mavrokordatos has confused Greece with Europe and the proof of this lies in the formation of his ministry of 30 March. You saw how he put this together. He let his gaze wander around the room and, seeing men in frock-coats speaking English and French, he said: "Behold the Greek nation! Let my ministry be formed accordingly." But, my dear fellow, the Greek nation does not assemble within Mavrokordatos's portals, but in the house of Kolettis. The Greek nation does not wear frock-coats, nor does it speak English or French; it wears the *foustanella*, is sometimes heard to speak Albanian, sometimes Kutsovlach, and preserves the customs (which will not be readily effaced) of its period of bondage. Because, however much the pedants may bluster, nations cannot be made up from scratch.

²⁸ Nikolaos Dragoumis, *Ἱστορικὰ Ἀναμνήσεις*, vol. II, ed. Alkis Angelou, Athens: Ermis 1973, p. 89.

The tolerance of the heteroglossia in the Greek world in the early decades of the nineteenth century is indicated by the numerous translations into *karamanlidika* (Turkish printed in Greek characters) mainly from Greek. The most striking example of such translations is an edition of Aristotle's *Physiognomonika* (a work subsequently proved not to have been written by Aristotle) published at the Patriarchal Press in Constantinople in 1819 in *karamanlidika* for the Turkish-speaking Greeks in Asia Minor. It was translated by Anastasios Karakioulaphis of Kayseri from ancient Greek into a demotic form of modern Greek and then into Turkish (ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ εἰς τὴν καθ' ἡμᾶς ὀμιλουμένην ἀπλῆν φράσιν· ἔτι δὲ εἰς τὴν Τουρκικὴν ἀπλῆν διάλεκτον) and it was offered by the translator as a small gift to the "heteroglot sons" of his "most beloved Motherland, Greece".²⁹ However, the remarkable linguistic and cultural diversity in the Asia Minor regions did not last very long after the orchestrated efforts from mainland Greece for the propagation of a homogeneous, centrally motivated culture. Gerasimos Augustinos sums up the growing tendency of the national centre to dominate the cultural orientation of the Greek communities outside the Kingdom.

Finally, although the number of newspapers and printed works multiplied in the major centers of Greek population throughout the empire, these were in turn overtaken by the printed matter emanating from Greece. Books, journals, papers, and pamphlets published in the kingdom and distributed abroad to the communities increasingly overshadowed the regional significance of Greek centers in the empire after 1870. Their emphasis was on secular rather than religious matters, national rather than community concerns, and reflected an overarching, standardized culture instead of regional variations.³⁰

²⁹ See also Richard Clogg, "Sense of the Past in pre-Independence Greece" in: Roland Sussex and J.C. Eade (edd.), *Culture and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Eastern Europe*, Columbus, Ohio: Slavica Publishers 1985, pp. 7-30.

³⁰ Gerasimos Augustinos, *The Greeks of Asia Minor: Confession, community, and ethnicity in the nineteenth century*, Kent: The Kent State University Press 1992, p. 194.

During the nineteenth century there is a growing attitude of mistrust towards the state and a reaction against the metropolis. It is not only the brigandage or various messianic movements which express this anti-state mentality, but it can be seen on a linguistic level as well. Certain words having to do with Greek institutions are deliberately misread or mispronounced, as, for example, *σύνταγμα* (constitution) becomes *σύντριμμα*, or *ειρηνοδίκης* becomes *νεροδίκης*. For the last word there is a special entry in Koumanoudis's dictionary of new words coined by the learned and it occurs in Papadiamantis's story "Θέρος-Έρωσ" (1891).³¹

Another example of this playful polemic against the bureaucratic jargon of the state is the following passage from the monologue of the illiterate Diomas in Papadiamantis's story "Υπηρέτρα" (1888).

Ένιοτε, έλλείψει όμιλητοϋ, διηγείτο τὰ παράπονά του εις τούς άνέμους και εις τὰ κύματα:

- Πήγα δά και στην Άθήνα, σ' εκείνο τὸ Ίππομαχικό, και μῶδωκαν, λέει, δύο σφάκελα, να τὰ πάω στο Σοκομείο, να παρουσιασθῶ στη Πιτροπή: πήγα και στην Πιτροπή, ὁ ένας ὁ γιατρός με ἤρε γερὸ, ἄλλος σακάτη, κι αὐτοὶ δὲν ἤξευραν ... ὕστερα γύρισα στο ὑπουργεῖο και μοῦ εἶπαν, "σύρε στο σπίτι σου, κ' εμεῖς θὰ σοῦ στείλωμε τὴ σύνταξή σου". Σηκώνομαι, φεύγω, ἔρχομαι δῶ, περιμένω, περνάει ἕνας μήνας, ἔρχονται τὰ χαρτιά στο λιμεναρχεῖο, να πάω, λέει, πίσω στην Άθήνα, ἔχουν ἀνάγκη να με ξαναἰδοῦν. Σηκώνω τριάντα δραχμὲς ἀπὸ ἕνα γείτονα, γιατί δὲν εἶχα να πάρω τὸ σωτήριο για τὸ βαπόρι, γυρίζω πίσω στην Άθήνα χειμῶνα καιρό, δέκα μέρες με παίδευαν να με στέλνουν ἀπὸ τὸ ὑπουργεῖο στο Ίππομαχικό, κι ἀπ' τὸ Ίππομαχικό στο Σοκομείο, ὕστερα μοῦ λένε "πάαινε, και θὰ βγῆ ἡ ἀπόφαση". Σηκώνομαι, φεύγω, γυρίζω στο σπίτι μου, καρτερῶ ... εἶδες ἐσὺ σύνταξη; (ἀπηυθύνετο πρὸς ὑποτιθέμενον ἀκροατὴν), ἄλλο τόσο κ'

³¹ S. A. Koumanoudis, *Συναγωγή Νέων Λέξεων*, Athens: Ermis 1980, p. 694 and A. Papadiamantis, "Θέρος-Έρωσ", *Άπαντα*, vol. 2, ed. N.D. Triantaphyllopoulos, Athens: Domos 1982, p.186.

ἐγώ. Ἐπῆρα κ' ἐγὼ τὴν Πηρέτρα καὶ πασκίζω νὰ
βγάλω τὸ ψωμί μου.³²

The corrupted terms are printed in italics and are used here to underline the distance between the state and the ordinary citizen. At the same time this corruption and its connotations (Απομαχικό - Ιππομαχικό - ἄλογο, φάκελο - σφάκελο - φάσκελο, εισιτήριο - σωτήριο - σωτηρία) have ironic undertones, giving the monologue of the character dialogic dimension and transforming it into a kind of hidden polemic of the poor peasant against the state. Moreover, Papadiamantis in "Χαλασοχώρηδες" refers to a sort of false language (ψευτική), considering it the only weapon the peasants have with which to confront political and social pressures.³³ He says that the peasant practises this sort of spurious jargon twice a week in the various courts, trying to cope with the bureaucratic administration which he simply does not understand. Papadiamantis here and elsewhere points to the linguistic gap that existed between the illiterate villagers on the one hand, and the civil servants or the politicians on the other, and shows how the villagers tried to bridge it, often with comic effects.

The defeat of regionalism in Greece becomes clearer if one examines the developments in Greek literature, and more specifically the language of Greek prose, since the early nineteenth century.³⁴ Up to 1930 regional identity and local dialects tend to manifest themselves more freely in literary texts than is the case after 1930. During the last century in comedies such as *Korakistika* (1811-13) by Iakovakis Rizos Neroulos or, later, *Vavylonia* (1836) by Vyzantios, different characters represent various local dialects and are named after them: Chiot, Cretan, Albanian, Epirot, Anatolian, Cypriot.³⁵ Vyzantios in his preface maintains that what prompted him to

³² A. Papadiamantis, "Ἰππυρέτρα", *ibid.*, p. 98.

³³ A. Papadiamantis, "Οἱ Χαλασοχώρηδες", *ibid.*, p. 418.

³⁴ In Greek literature the relationship between regionalism and metropolitanism/urbanism is often subsumed under the question of the interplay between folk/popular (λαϊκό) and learned (λόγιο) trends, which could be misleading if we identify the regional with the folk/popular.

³⁵ M. Hourmouzis's comedy *Ὁ Τυχοδιώκτης* (1835) also contains elements of heteroglossia.

write *Vavylonia* was "the pitiful state to which the Greek language has been debased"; in spite of this corrective pronouncement, what is, however, implied in this comedy is the latent conflict between the official and the unofficial, periphery and metropolis, centrifugal and centripetal forces, westernized centralizing authority and oriental undisciplined Romiosyni.

Another indication of the above oppositions can be found in the prose fiction (*ethographia*) of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There, one can distinguish clearly the educated narrator, who speaks the standard Athenian *katharevousa*, or a simplified version of it, and the peasant characters, who are often portrayed using their local idiom or accent. This heteroglossia tends to disappear in the 1930s, perhaps as a result of the shifting emphasis from the periphery and the nation to the metropolis and the state – a process which I sketched out earlier, and which is reflected in the novel of the '30s, representing a strong indication of how closely literature mirrors political and social changes. Heteroglossia in the novel of this period is almost non-existent, with the exception of Myrivilis and novelists, rather marginal at the time, such as Axioti and Skarimbas. Only after the Second World War does heteroglossia surface again in Greek fiction, but for different reasons which I do not have the time to discuss here.

It should be noted here that during the interwar period, and particularly after the population exchange in 1923, the question of minorities (Jews, Slavo-Macedonians etc.) is stirred up, fostered by disputes between Old Greece and the New Lands. Anti-Venizelists, for reasons of political expediency, tended to defend the minorities against the modern, liberal, and national state sought by the Venizelists, which aspired to control, assimilate and neutralize the religious and ethnic minorities. Hence during this period the anti-Venizelists together with the Communists – each group for different reasons – favoured and sheltered ethnic and regional particularisms, in contrast to Venizelism, which emerged as the champion of neutralization and assimilation.³⁶ The fact that most of the prose writers who

³⁶ See George Th. Mavrokordatos, *Stillborn Republic: Social coalitions and party strategies in Greece, 1922-1936*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1983, pp. 226-302.

emerged after 1930 (Terzakis, Petsalis-Diomidis, Karagatsis, Theotokas, Prevelakis) tend to be Venizelos sympathizers, might explain their desire for linguistic standardization and their movement away from any localisms and idiomatism.

The question of heteroglossia ties in with the question of individual and religious rights and the recognition of minorities in Greece, both reflecting the Greek conception of the relationship between the individual and the nation/state. Historically, the ideology of Greek identity has been based on the organic nature of society and the individual's subordination to a superior whole, which is the state as embodiment of the nation. This subordination of the individual to the state/nation, which in turn can justify violation or restriction of individual rights, can be explained by Greece's adherence to eastern spiritualism and Orthodoxy rather than western rationalism and liberal political philosophy. The dominant ideology in Greece privileged organic social units such as the extended family and the nation, not the autonomous individual. While in the West industrial capitalism and political practice treated individualism and individual rights as their fundamental principles, in Greece, as Adamantia Pollis claims, there is a conceptual and ideological denial of individual autonomy.³⁷ The persistence of this denial was assisted in the early twentieth century by legal positivism, imported from Germany, which tended to "reconcile" individual rights with the primacy of the state and resulted in the suppression of the plurality of sub-identities and the rights of religious minorities. Such religious intolerance stems from the long-standing Church-state interdependence which aims at preserving and reinforcing the holistic and transcendental definition of the Greek *ethnos*. Greekness, and in turn the Greek nation, is conceived as something pure and homogeneous, therefore non-Greeks are not – and

³⁷ Adamantia Pollis, "Greek National Identity: Religious minorities, rights, and European norms", *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 10.2 (October 1992) 171-95. Mark Mazower also describes Greek political culture as "highly resistant to notions of multi-culturalism and reluctant to protect individual liberties which go against prevailing views of 'Greekness'" (Mark Mazower, "Classic errors in the Balkans", *The Guardian*, 12 April 1994).

cannot be – members of the nation nor are they entitled to any rights enjoyed by the proper members, i.e. Greek-speaking Orthodox Christians. As Pollis puts it:

The challenge to Greek national identity, to the *éthnos*, does not stem primarily from the recent migrants, however, but from the denial of the prior existence of ethnic minorities within Greece's borders. Since Greekness is an integral, transcendent entity, non-Greeks are not – and cannot be – members of the *éthnos*; hence, philosophically, they are not entitled to those rights that are available to members of the Greek *éthnos*. As a consequence, the indigenous ethnic minorities have been marginalized. [...] Beginning with the founding of modern Greece, the conceptualization of the Greek *éthnos* as coterminous with the Greek state rejects, except for historic religious minorities, the existence of other ethnicities within its boundaries. In light of this official and legal denial of identities other than Greek, evidence of diverse languages and/or cultures has been suppressed and/or attributed to the nefarious machinations of Greece's neighbors.³⁸

One can extend my argument even further and apply it to the relationship between Greece and Cyprus. For example, the recent debate regarding the proper name of Greek-Cypriot literature is symptomatic of the wider tension between Greek centripetal and Cypriot centrifugal tendencies. Those who argue that Cypriot literature is part of Greek literature, and therefore must be named accordingly, are champions of the ideology of the national centre. Those who emphasize the Cypriot character of the island's literature represent the distant echo of suppressed Greek regionalism and the continuation of an earlier resistance of a dynamic periphery towards a stifling centralizing metropolis, as witnessed in the Greek world.³⁹

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 189.

³⁹ One of the leading contemporary Cypriot poets, Kyriakos Charalambidis, identifies the centripetal forces as hellenochristian and the centrifugal as Cypriot consciousness: "Σ αυτό τον τόπο μεγαλώνουμε μέσ' από μια σειρά κεντρομόλων και φυγόκεντρων δυνάμεων. Οι κεντρομόλες: ελληνοχριστιανισμός. Οι φυγόκεντρες: κυπριακή συνείδηση." See: "Κυπροσυλλαβίζοντας", *Αντί*, no. 236 (8 July 1983) 53. For an overview of the various approaches towards Cypriot literature and relevant bibliography see Giorgos Kechagioglou,

Another interesting comparison which can be drawn in this case is Ireland, in order to show how monoglossia and heteroglossia change historically and how literary language reflects their tension. In early twentieth-century Ireland, English as a monoglossic language attempted to silence Irish aspirations for an independent national identity. The strongest literary reaction to this forced monoglossia came from Joyce, whose texts answered linguistic colonialism with absolute heteroglossia.⁴⁰

Regionalism in Greece does not take the form of "unfulfilled" nationalism, as in the case of regions in Spain and elsewhere; it instead represents resistance to the state's centre from peripheral areas.⁴¹ Regionalism is almost coterminous with ethnicity, and its defeat in Greece to some extent originates from, and reflects, the redefinition of ethnicity as nationality by the state. Often ethnic identity or local cultures are appropriated by nationalism or national culture, and there is a common practice of subsuming ethnicity under nationality.

The clash in Greece between regionalism and the metropolitan nation-state represents a wider conflict between traditionalism and modernization. Regionalism is associated with a pre-industrial, agrarian society whereas nationalism is identified with modernization and industrialization. As Ernest Gellner claims, "the roots of nationalism in the distinctive structural requirements of industrial society are very deep indeed."⁴² As soon as the bond of an individual with the traditional local community weakens, his identification with a larger group which transcends the narrow boundaries of a cultural locality becomes necessary. Hence, nationalism, as

"Contemporary Cypriot literature and the 'frame' of Modern Greek literature: a provincial, local, marginal, peripheral, independent, autonomous, self-sufficient or self-determined literature?", *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 2.2 (1992) 240-55.

⁴⁰ Tony Crowley, "Bakhtin and the history of the language", in: Ken Hirschkop and David Shepherd (edd.) *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, Manchester: Manchester University Press 1989, pp. 68-90.

⁴¹ Peter Alter, *Nationalism*, trans. Stuart McKinnon-Evans, London: Edward Arnold 1989, p. 135.

⁴² Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell 1983, p. 35.

Gellner points out, represents the imposition of a high culture on society in place of low local cultures.

It is the establishment of an anonymous, impersonal society, with mutually substitutable atomized individuals, held together above all by a shared culture of this kind, in place of a previous complex structure of local groups, sustained by folk cultures reproduced locally and idiosyncratically by the micro-groups themselves. That is what *really* happens.⁴³

What Gellner seems to imply is that nationalism outmanoeuvres regionalism usually in the name of a putative folk culture. Although it constantly refers to, and draws its symbolism from, the healthy and pristine life of the peasants, the *laos*, the *narod* or the *Volk*, nationalism's ideal is a centralized high culture with a deceptive celebration of the local folk styles and dialects. Folk culture is ossified and monumentalized by the nationalists who passionately support it, as in the case of Greek *laographia*, but their centralizing drive leads them to the suppression of regionalism. In this respect, nationalism and regionalism can be seen as opposing trends in the construction and organization of human communities. The former appears as a modernizing trend linked with industrial development whereas the latter seems attached to the past and the rural communities.

If nationalism represents in effect a break-away from pre-modern, rural and essentially oriental social structures, then certain Greek literary trends such as *ethographia* can be seen more as manifestations of regionalism rather than of nationalism, as has often been claimed. *Ethographia* represents a resistance to the centralization and modernization promised by the metropolis, and it is from this perspective that most of the late nineteenth-century literary narratives should be examined, as Artemis Leontis suggests:

It is against this current of centralization, an economic as much as a cultural one, that artists and intellectuals fought when they asserted the centrality of the local village in their literary utopias. Their narratives placed at the heart of the national terrain a fictional peasant simplicity rather than the urban

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 57.

capital that stood at the focal point of state geographies. The literary village served as a topos of a shared past, a rhetorical and geographical site of return. This topos reactivated a cultural inheritance that was premodern rather than classical and re-identified autochthony with the devout Orthodox or Muslim peasant rather than Greek philosophers and ancient Pharaohs or their modern European claimants.⁴⁴

Accordingly, one could venture a generalization by saying that regionalism defines autochthony in pre-modern, local, heteroglossic and religious terms; nationalism, on the other hand, promotes modernization, classicism, centralization and in turn monoglossia. Surely the opposition is not so clear-cut, since one might argue that nationalist ideology propelled the narrative (re)turn to the region. But again this assertion is not entirely true either. It was not nationalism that forced Vizyenos, Papadiamantis, Kondylakis or Theotokis to write about their own regions; after all the *ethographoi* were more interested in regional particularity than the national character as a whole.

As far as regionalism is concerned, Greece and England are characteristic but altogether different cases. In an article entitled "Re: Locations – From Bradford to Brighton", Jenny Bourne Taylor describes her relocation in the late 1980s as a cultural studies lecturer from Bradford to Sussex University (based a few miles outside Brighton). According to Taylor, the two places visually and climatically represent the opposite poles of Englishness: "Bradford seems all depth, with its sombre half-tones, its myths of authenticity, its memories of modernity and heavy industry. Brighton seems all surface – a town whose base is leisure; the celebration of the superstructural and the superficial."⁴⁵

What she is trying to say by referring to the two cultural stereotypes of the North/South divide as well as to the crumbling of the Soviet Union and the break-up of Yugoslavia is

⁴⁴ Artemis Leontis, "The Diaspora of the Novel", *Diaspora* 2.1 (Spring 1992) 136.

⁴⁵ Jenny Bourne Taylor, "Re: Locations – From Bradford to Brighton", *New Formations*, no. 17 (Summer 1992) 94. For the revival of literary regionalism in Britain see the article of D.J. Taylor, "The new literary map of Britain", *The Sunday Times*, 8 May 1994.

that "national identity can be read as an extension of regionalism but also as a break with it."⁴⁶ The nation and its identity depend on, and are formed by, both external and internal differences, borderlines differentiating it from other nations but also borderlines *within* its boundaries. Following this line of argument, one could treat England as a good example of a country where regionalism contributes to national identity, which in turn can be seen as its extension, and Greece as an example of the opposite trend, in which regionalism is stifled and national identity represents a break with it. Under the cultural and administrative dominance of Athens, Greece has destroyed its regional cultural identities and any attempts at revival smack of touristic and folkloristic artificiality.⁴⁷

What we are currently witnessing, particularly in Europe, is the "erosion of the 'centred' nationalisms of the west European nation-state and the strengthening of both transnational relations *and* local identities."⁴⁸ By awakening "local" allegiances and identities, globalisation seems to lead to regionalism and to the confinement of the traditional nationalism of a central state. What will perhaps survive of this type of nationalism is its metaphysics. As G. Jusdanis argues, nationalism with its tales of progress, self-fulfilment and destiny "allows modern individuals to deny their mortality in the face of change [...] to forget contingency, to ignore that

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 87.

⁴⁷ The rivalry between Athens and Thessaloniki after 1930 can be seen as a symptom of the resistance of the regions towards the metropolis. The following editorial comment from the periodical *Μακεδονικὲς Ἡμέρες* in 1937 is indicative of the tension: "Ἡ Θεσσαλονίκη δὲν ἔχει τὴν ἀθηναϊκὴ παράδοση. Εἶναι ἔξω ἀπὸ τὸν κύκλο τοῦ ἀθηναϊκοῦ ἐπηρεασμοῦ. Καὶ γι' αὐτὸ εἶναι ἀντικλασσικὴ. Καὶ γι' αὐτὸ δὲν ἀπόκτησε τὴ συνήθεια νὰ τιμᾷ τὴν κάθε φέρμα τῆς Ἀθήνας. Εἶναι καινούργια, εἶναι ἀνήσυχη. Δὲν ἀναπτύσσεται στὰ καθιερωμένα." *Μακεδονικὲς Ἡμέρες* nos. 11-12 (Nov.-Dec. 1937) 269. The fact that almost all the post-war Greek governments talked endlessly about decentralization and that there was even a programme on Greek television called "Athens is not the whole Greece" constitutes further evidence for the abiding centralizing trend in Greece.

⁴⁸ Stuart Hall, "Our mongrel selves", *New Statesman*, 19 June 1992, p. 6.

they are part of history, that their story is one among many and certainly not the greatest."⁴⁹

The question which arises here is whether the widespread revival of regionalism and the discussion about the Europe of the regions will have any impact on Greece. I believe not, because Greece has ingeniously combined, over the last two centuries, statism and nationalism in order to achieve cultural and linguistic homogeneity, and it seems that she has done it rather successfully.⁵⁰ The fate of regionalism in Greece, as I have attempted to outline above, suggests that it might be better to talk about the "triumph of the state" instead of the "triumph of the nation", to borrow R. Just's title to a recent article.⁵¹ It seems that the suppression of regionalism in Greece provides an unusual looking-glass for examining both the interaction of statism and nationalism, and the crucial role of linguistic uniformity in forging national identity and achieving social cohesion. National culture in Greece since the early nineteenth century has aspired to conceal historical ruptures, ethnic impurities and linguistic hybridities and has achieved that by projecting seamless continuities and imposing cultural monoglossia. Finally, what emerges from the above is that the key to building

⁴⁹ Gregory Jusdanis, *Belated Modernity and aesthetic culture: Inventing national literature*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1991, p. 165.

⁵⁰ I am not suggesting that nationalism succeeded in silencing the voices of regionalism entirely or irrevocably. The existence of so many regional associations in Athens, which often act as pressure groups for regional problems or needs due to their relative proximity to the central authorities or the festivities they regularly organize, testifies that regionalism survives in a nostalgic, almost folkloristic, form as a cultural phenomenon of the metropolis and not of the regions themselves, retaining, however, something of its earlier political force by constantly reminding the central authorities of the existence and needs of the remote regions. Furthermore, it is interesting to observe how a Greek person reawakens their regional accent and dialect when they move back to their home area, even briefly, and revert back to a standard accent once they leave the area.

⁵¹ Roger Just, "Triumph of the Ethnos", in: Elizabeth Tonkin, Maryon McDonald and Malcolm Chapman (edd.), *History and Ethnicity*, London: Routledge 1989, pp. 71-88.

up a challenge-proof national identity does indeed lie as much in inventing a common past as in defeating regionalism and heteroglossia.

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History as fiction in Rea Galanaki's *The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha**

Eleni Yannakaki

The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha by Rea Galanaki was published in 1989. As well as being a best-seller for some time, it has been highly praised by critics and book reviewers,¹ not only for its literary virtues as such, but also because it revives and brings to the foreground the story of an Egyptian general who was born (and remained until the end of his life) Greek. In addition to that, the majority of these reviews treat the book as a modern historical novel.

Things are far from being that simple. What we shall attempt to show in this paper is that *The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha* is neither a nationalistic and sentimental fictionalization of the life of a little boy, who was abducted and Islamicized by the Egyptian army in the nineteenth century, nor a traditional historical novel of the type of Walter Scott, for instance.²

* I would like to thank Dr P. Mackridge, Prof. D. Angelatos and Dr M. Chryssanthopoulos for constructive comments; also, I would like to thank the audiences of the Universities of Oxford, London (King's College) and Cambridge whose questions and comments alerted me to several pitfalls. All the remaining errors are mine.

¹ There have been several book reviews of *The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha*; to my knowledge there are only three proper critical studies of the novel (Thalassis 1991; Maronitis 1992; Sourbati 1992).

² Kotzia (1993) alleges that in both *The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha* and her latest novel *I shall sign myself Louis*, Galanaki fails to reproduce satisfactorily the style of language that we believe to have been used by people like an Egyptian general and a Greek intellectual of the nineteenth century, as Ismail and Louis were; that would indeed be a requirement if Galanaki actually wrote historical novels. Kotzia says: "Ποιο είναι ωστόσο, το πρόβλημα με τα πεζογραφήματα της Ρέας Γαλανάκη; Το πώς ακριβώς μιλούσε ένας Αιγύπτιος πασάς του προηγούμενου αιώνα δεν έχει και τόση ή για την ακρίβεια δεν έχει καμία σημασία. Διότι εκείνο που μετράει είναι να

But let us first have a brief look at the story of the novel. Ismail, who was born in a village on the Lasithi plateau in Crete, is captured, together with his brother Antonios Kambanis Papadakis, by the Ottomans during the uprising at the beginning of the third decade of the nineteenth century. The two brothers are separated at the port of Heraklion. Antonis goes to Istanbul, and from there, as we find out later in the novel, he escapes to Russia, while Ismail (his Christian name is Emmanuel according to the story, though not according to history) is taken to Cairo. There he studies the art of war, fights against the Turks in Syria under the command of Ibrahim Pasha, the son of Mohammed Ali, who was viceroy of Egypt at the time, and is promoted to the rank of pasha.

It is Ismail Ferik Pasha who is subsequently chosen by the then viceroy of Egypt (the son of Ismail's friend Ibrahim and grandson of Mohammed Ali) to repress the Cretan revolution of 1866-68, which by a trick of destiny is financed by Ismail's brother, Antonis, who now lives in Athens, having inherited the fortune of his Greek protector in Russia. Ismail returns to Crete as a conqueror this time, takes part in the siege of Arkadi monastery as well as in the repression of the revolution in his own homeland, the Lasithi plateau, and dies (possibly murdered by the commander of the Sultan's forces, Omer Pasha, for being a

πλάσει η αφήγηση ένα ιδίωμα το οποίο να ταιριάζει με την - αόριστη - εικόνα που έχουμε σήμερα εμείς για το πώς ήταν ένας πασάς στον προηγούμενο αιώνα. Ή, καλύτερα, να πλάσει η αφήγηση ένα πασά μέσα από την ατομική της (τριτοπρόσωπη) οπτική και μέσα από τη γλώσσα που βάζει τον ήρωά της να μιλάει. Είναι όμως ποτέ δυνατόν να γίνει αυτό με φραστικούς τύπους που περισσότερο από κάθε τι άλλο θυμίζουν τους σύγχρονους μας μεταπολεμικούς διανοούμενους; (Και εδώ δεν εννοώ τις ιδέες του έργου γιατί, όπως κάθε άλλο μυθιστόρημα, το ιστορικό αναφέρεται και αυτό στο παρόν). Εννοώ όμως φράσεις όπως «Δεν μπορούσα να ορίσω καθαρά το αντικείμενο του πολέμου που θα έκανα» (σ. 101) ή «Αν ήταν να πεθάνω, ας έφευγα σωστός, έλεγα. Και ότι το πρόβλημα μπορούσε πιθανώς να αναχθεί σε μια διαφορετική δομή σκέψης» (σ. 135) ή «Κατά την άνοιξη θα έσμιγα οριστικά με το αγόρι του οροπέδιου. Γιατί αυτός ο πόλεμος άλλο δεν ήταν παρά μια σπουδή της απογύμνωσης» (σ. 138)."

crypto-Christian) nine months after his disembarkation on the island.

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The normal function of historical time constitutes a basic convention for a whole category of novels which are in various ways preoccupied with the promotion of certain truths related to the present socio-cultural background or (in the case of the historical novel, for instance) that of another historical period. This promotion is carried out in these novels by means of a linear conception of time as well as an emphasis on the integrity of the individual personality.

History, a powerful invention of realist conventions, involves a neutral, homogeneous temporal medium that extends into eternity and a historical consciousness that constituted it.³ The conception of this temporal medium itself, i.e. historical or representational time, has not only made possible the existence of history but has also been one of the primary conventions and instruments of Western thought and art.

Apart from the linearly causal link of different instants and events in the long life of humanity and consequently the envisaging of the present through the "lessons" of the past which this homogeneous medium makes possible, the convention of historical time implies estrangement from the present and the concrete. As Deeds Ermarth (1992: 31) says:

The rationalization of consciousness that supports the continuity of past and future, cause and project necessarily

³ Historical time has been a construct of Western civilization since the Renaissance. The theocratic and static conception of time in the Middle Ages was replaced by a view that considered time as a neutral, homogeneous medium which allowed for the causal connection of several different instants in the long life of humanity and which, through the interpretation of the past (carried out, of course, from the perspective of the present) made possible the control of the future. Related to this view is also the belief that there exist in the world certain stable and unalterable laws which determine people and events of different periods in human history and thread them together in a controlled and teleological continuum.

supports kinds of thinking that seek to *transcend* the present, concrete, arbitrarily and absolutely limited moment. Considered historically the present requires a future to complete or at least improve it, and consequently a dialectical method for getting there just as this same present has been produced dialectically by the past. By emphasizing what is linear, developmental, and mediate, historical thinking by definition involves transcendence of a kind that trivializes the specific detail and finite moment.

According to Deeds Ermarth (1992), one of the aims of post-modern fiction is the subversion of the function and the ideology of historical time and, in general, of all historical values. If historical time implies, as we have said, the existence of logical sequences that are based on a relationship of cause and effect, post-modern fiction annuls the function of historical time by subverting the logic that sustains it. Temporality proves to be one convention among several others, which needs a collective consensus in order to function, while the "past" is a mere invention of human consciousness. The only time which exists is that of the reader, the phenomenological time.

A critique of historical time means a critique of other conventions related to it in one way or another, and above all of the definition of subjectivity as "individuality". Thus a shift from historical, representational time to the different perception of time which is usually encountered in post-modern fiction also implies a new definition of subjectivity.⁴ Thus the absolute, individualized and integral consciousness of nineteenth-century Realism, for instance, is replaced in Post-Modernism by a fluid, multi-dimensional version of subjectivity which accords with the belief in the absence of a single univocal meaning in the world; the human mind is rendered incapable of conceiving and interpreting reality in a single, totalized and non-contradictory manner, since reality, of which human consciousness itself constitutes a part, is simply a matter of perspective.

In *The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha*, history itself is not only the main source of material for the writer, but also the main

⁴ It is not only Post-Modernism that has challenged the integrity of the subject; other movements in the past such as Modernism and Surrealism have done the same.

target of the novel's subversive policy. Apart from both the overt and covert mechanisms by means of which the demythologization of history is achieved, the function of historical time is deeply affected, as is also the integrity of human individuality. Let us start with the first.

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Our text consists of three parts: the first is entitled "Years of Egypt. The myth"; the second part is entitled "Days of nostos and history"; the last part bears the one-word title "Epimythio". The different parts are narrated in different grammatical persons: the second part uses the first person singular, while the first and third use the third person singular.

What one immediately notices in these titles is that the "years" of the first title become "days" in the second; in other words, there seems to be a reversal of the normal track of time, which, however, accords with the fact that the second part gives the account of a limited length of time (nine months only), as compared with the span of the first one which is almost half a century.

The most important thing to note, however, is the fact that the part of the novel which claims to constitute a myth (interpreted either as a fable or as plot, according to the Aristotelian notion of the term) is cast in the third person, in other words the person of a more or less objective point of view – the person employed by an omniscient narrator, for instance. Conversely, the part which claims to be history (or at least to refer to the story of the novel, that is the real events as they happened) is cast in the first person – the person of the subjective and limited point of view. Moreover, the fact that the use of the first person follows that of the third, and not the other way round, indicates a gradual internalization of the story, which certainly accords with the reverse route followed in the novel on one level, as we shall see, but is at odds with the normal development of a person who while growing up acquires a more objective and less emotional perspective.

The third part, which by its very title seems to be related to the first ("Μύθος" – "Επιμύθιο"), and not to the second which it

in fact follows, and whose story-line it continues, is also cast in the third person.

On the other hand, the mode of narration itself does not differ significantly from section to section. Throughout the text, it proceeds by means of an internal focalization on Ismail (and rarely on other people) and of an incessant motion backwards and forwards, that is by means of analepses and prolepses, so that the reader must continually be on the alert to be able to follow the main line of events that develop in time. The procedure of the narration through internal focalizations seems to be at odds with the possible characterization of the book as a historical fiction (though the real historical events in the novel are comparatively very few), in spite of the use of the past tense, the main tense of representation.

However, the fact that our text appears in a form in which interruption and reversal dominate accords with the ideology behind it, which wants things to go back instead of forward, to move in a circular route and not in a linear one, as one would expect from the title of the novel, which claims to be an account of the life and experiences of Ismail Ferik Pasha. The effect of this is, certainly, discontinuity and circularity, two ideas that contradict the basic principle of history (either national or personal) and, by extension, historical time itself.

As on the level of the story, with the life of Ismail Ferik Pasha starting at the middle of the book and going backward instead of forward, our text itself is presented in a similar form, following a similar motion – in fact the text reflects the ideology that dominates on the thematic level.

More precisely, our novel starts as a third-person text, set in the historical past, which, however, in the first part, according to the title, undertakes to relate a myth. It continues in the second part by going inwards and adopting a personal, subjective mode of narration through the use of the first person, although, again according to the title, it purports to talk about history. Finally, it shifts to the third person, though no real change is noticeable in the mode of narration in this part, with the title referring by its etymology directly to the first part.

To pass on now to the function of historical time in the story itself, the normal and physical development of a person from birth to death is juxtaposed with the existence of several births

and deaths of the same person (in fact, one cannot easily tell when birth is implied and not death and vice versa), which happen during the span of one life.

To be more precise, there is certainly one birth at the beginning of the physical life of Ismail, or Emmanuel, as the text wants him to be called before his captivity, but this birth is extra-textual and certainly not of much interest for our story. Then, at the age of seven, Emmanuel is captured by the Ottomans and this fact is considered (retrospectively, of course) as both a death and a new birth for the little boy.⁵ On his return to Crete as a conqueror some fifty years later, our text says that Ismail had started diminishing into a foetus in his mother's womb; its birth (or ambiguously its conception),⁶ however, nine months

⁵ It seems to me that Ismail's death/birth is the result of his mother's sacrilegious union with the enemy at the entrance of the cave: "Ακουσε από τη μεριά της εισόδου τις ιαχές των εχθρών και τις κραυγές των γυναικών. Του φάνηκε πως όλες οι κραυγές έβγαιναν από το στήθος της μάνας του και όρμησε να χωθεί σε εκείνο και μόνο το στήθος. (...) Κάπου είδε μια κόκκινη ανταύγεια και φοβήθηκε ότι έμπαινε στη σπηλιά αντί να βγαίνει. Θυμήθηκε άλλες ιστορίες για μιαν άλικη μαρμαρυγή στα βάθη της σπηλιάς και τις εξηγήσεις για κοκκινάδια παμπάλαιου τοκετού, αίμα λεχώνας και φωτιά για το ζεστό νερό στους λέβητες. Έκανε το σταυρό του για να διώξει το δαιμονικό βρέφος και συνέχισε να βαδίζει προς την ανταύγεια (...).

"Ο Ισμαήλ Φερίκ Πασάς θυμόταν αργότερα πως το διπλό κάλεσμα της μάνας του ακούστηκε χάλκινο, επειδή σήμαινε το σιωπητήριο της πρώτης του ζωής και την έναρξη της δεύτερης, κάτι που ήταν πολύ πιο πρόωρο και πιο σκληρό από μιαν ενηλικίωση. Κι έλεγε ακόμη ότι το παιδί που λιποθύμησε στην αγκαλιά της αλλόφρονης μάνας, κοιμήθηκε αυτόν τον έξοχο θάνατο, που μόνο τα παιδιά μπορούν να απολαύσουν. Και πως η ίδια η μάνα του υψώθηκε πάνω απ' τον κύκλο των ανθρώπων και διαμιάς ξανασυνέλαβε, κύησε, γέννησε και ανέθρεψε το δεύτερό της γιο. Πως βγήκε από τη σπηλιά δεμένος πισθάγκωνα και άρχισε μια καινούργια ζωή σαν αιχμάλωτος." (16-17)

⁶ "Ήταν αλήθεια, μια από τις δικές μου αλήθειες, πλην δεν μπορούσα να κουβεντιάσω γι' αυτήν με τους επισκέπτες μου,

later, corresponds to the physical death of the conqueror Ismail. But birth involves another life to follow, a life after the real death of Ismail Ferik Pasha in Crete, and this possibility makes the circle go round and round without ever closing.

If we now see our story in the light of these successive births and deaths, we can say that the important turning-point takes place between the first two parts, when our story has already come half-circle and now turns back to trace the other half. Ismail's life has abandoned the linear course of the River Nile and has embarked on a journey around the Lasithi plateau.

However, the novel does not end when Ismail's life has already described a full circle, that is after his death at the very place where he was born for the first time. The existence of the "epimythio" seems to reflect, on both the textual and the thematic level, the beginning of a new circle, of a new life, as this latest death/birth requires: Ismail's body travels back to Egypt to be buried, while his soul remains on the island telling his story in the new body of a little boy; Ismail thus remains to the end divided between his two homelands and his two fields of memory.

In addition, the return to his familial home after nine months of life in the womb, the existence of blood, the participation in the ritual first of his mother but also his father as well as the (then still living) older brother, makes me take this last scene (apart from its interpretation as an overt allusion to the Homeric ritual) as another birth.

Going round and round in a circle implies stagnation. Historical time in our novel has been replaced by circular time, that is a continuous motion round a periphery that does not go anywhere, does not move forward, and most importantly does not meet the centre, but repeats and perpetuates the existing status of things. Talking about the subversion of representational time in fiction, Deeds Ermath (1992: 43) mentions the metaphor of a train leaving the rails or a car swerving off the road which seems to recur in several twentieth-century novels that purport to counteract the normal function of historical time.

πως μετά την ανατίναξη τραβούσα τον αντίθετο δρόμο από το έμβρυο και μίγκρινα αντί να μεγαλώνω." (133)

In our novel the dominant metaphor of somebody following the current of linear, representational time, is sailing up and down the river Nile, while going round the Lasithi plateau implies adopting an alternative, non-representational concept of time. When Ismail realizes, however, that he is completely possessed by circular time, that he is trapped within the circle of the Lasithi plateau, he is described by the text as crossing the plateau on his horse in an attempt to escape. Here are Ismail's thoughts:

Στις όχθες του ιερού ποταμού είχα αναζητήσει μαζί με μιαν ολόκληρη χώρα τη μικρή έστω έξοδο από την ακίνητή του ιερότητα, κάποιο συγχρονισμό με τις ιδέες που κινούσαν με ταχύτητα την Ευρώπη. Σωστά έπραξα. Πλην δεν απέφυγα να παρατηρήσω πως η τελευταία μου ευθεία ήταν ο καλπασμός μου μέσα στο τσακισμένο πράσινο, καθώς έσπευδα να βγω από τον κύκλο του οροπέδιου για να μη βλέπω την καταστροφή του. (178-9)

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Along with historical time, human consciousness disintegrates entirely in *The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha*. Ismail, the central character of the novel, is a personality that lacks identity and consequently also lacks authenticity and authority, as we shall attempt to show; this lack of a consistent and stable identity is one of the main fields in which Galanaki's artistic wit seems to play; it is also a situation that remains unresolved to the end, as the main character, together with the whole novel, does not manage to reach a kind of totalization but embarks instead on a continuous journey in pursuit of a meaning that always evades him by going round in circles.

Not only Ismail's death but also the mental disorders of Ibrahim and his father, which lead both of them to death, seem to be the result of the realization that no single and stable truth exists. The relativity and arbitrariness of any truth (the realization of which occurs for Ismail mainly in the second part of the novel) constitutes a central axis (possibly *the* central one) on which not only the personality of the main character, but also

the whole novel is built: both the writer and her character turn to history for meaning, use history in their fictions, only to realize at the end that history, too, is another fiction.

Ismail in particular idealizes his past, his personal history as it is related to the history of his lost nation, only to find that history is a thing of the past and cannot be re-experienced; he realizes also that there is no innocence in history, since there are always several perspectives from which to view a situation, as our text claims; and history, like truth itself, is well beyond any simplistic and monosemous notions that could easily be reduced to polarities such as good and evil.

Moreover, along with the relativity and arbitrariness of truth, the procedures themselves that contributed to the creation but also to the shattering of illusions, are exposed and become overt. And it is through this perspective, of both the creation and the shattering of illusions, that our text becomes aware of itself and, moreover, the reader is initiated into the writing process in the form of a co-author.

But let us look at things in more detail. As we have already said, the title of the first part of the novel contains the word "myth". This can be explained by the fact that it is in this particular part that the gradual weaving and preservation of illusions take place, whether these concern the imagination of the character or that of the writer/reader. In this part, Ismail himself is engaged in a continuous effort to mythologize his life on the plateau before captivity;⁷ for her part the writer creates – while the readers decode – a myth which at the beginning seems to differ only slightly from that of traditional novels which give an account of a character's life from birth to the grave.

⁷ "Το αγόρι άκουγε τα ονόματα των ανθρώπων και τις ονομασίες της γης αποτυπώνοντας στο μυαλό του τις εικόνες που του έφερναν οι λέξεις. Άρχισε να υποψιάζεται ότι αυτά που έκανε μπορούσαν να επιμηκύνουν τη ζωή τους, αν εισχωρούσαν στα αισθήματα με την υπόμνηση του ήχου, της μυρωδιάς, της γεύσης, της αφής και της μορφής τους. (...) Ασυναίσθητα είχε στραφεί εκείνη τη στιγμή προς τη μυστική ζωή του κόσμου που χανόταν, προσπαθώντας, αν και πολύ νωρίς, να επιβληθεί στην αιχμαλωσία του." (25-6)

In the second part, however, the demythologization takes place under the impact of reality and historical events. Ismail realizes that the images ("οι εικόνες") which he painstakingly created and preserved for so many years in his mind were simply the product of his over-active imagination. At the same time, the reader of the novel realizes that in spite of its initial pretensions to verisimilitude, which the use of a historical person in fiction implies, the text gradually undermines its truth and reveals itself as simply a fiction that satisfies only the needs of writing.

After the captivity scene, Ismail on the one hand makes continuous efforts, as we have already said, to keep alive in his memory what he believes life is like on the Lasithi plateau, while on the other he tries to cope with the everyday reality of Egypt and succeed in his career. He also tries to keep these two worlds (the worlds of imagination and reality) separate from each other, so that he can preserve a balance between them; he is successful in this, at least until the visit to Egypt of his cousin Ioannis, if not until his return to Crete.⁸

However separate from each other these worlds are kept, Ismail is cast between them; in fact, he does not belong to either of them. While in Egypt, his mind is continually with the Paradise lost, there on the plateau; when in Crete, in the second part, facing the harsh reality of both the war and his thwarted expectations, he yearns for his life in Egypt. Life is always somewhere else for Ismail; it lies in a dematerialized, abstract world that has nothing to do with the present and the concrete.

⁸ In a letter to his brother, Antonis, he writes: "Γιατί είχε αποκάμει, έγραφε, από τις ίδιες εικόνες στο μυαλό του τόσα χρόνια. Από την έγνοια να κουρντίζει το ρολόι του σταματημένου τους χρόνου για να μην τις διαλύσει η ακινησία. Να ανανεώνει τα σημάδια τους ξέροντας πως έτσι στήνει μια παγίδα στον εαυτό του. Να τις αισθάνεται ότι αρπάζουν την αιγυπτιακή ζωή του στα ελληνικά τους νύχια και την κατασπαράζουν. (...) Είχε αποκάμει, επανέλαβε, είχε ωστόσο καταφέρει να τις αφοπλίσει με τα χρόνια, γεννώντας τις ο ίδιος συνέχεια, πανομοιότυπες με τις πραγματικές συνθήκες που τις γέννησαν κάποτε." (71)

Being between these two worlds means at the same time that Ismail is cast between two names, two homelands, two languages and two religions. As soon as he arrives in Egypt, he decides to accept his destiny and make the most of the opportunities that are opened up to him in his new country, while he will keep for himself the memories of his previous life. He changes religion because he has to, without much thought or inhibition, as we can see in the following passage:

Καθεμιά από τις ζωές μου κράτησε τη δική της θρησκεία, χωρίς αντιπαράθεση και χωρίς κραυγαλέα επιχειρήματα, – δεν ήταν άλλωστε η πιο ουσιαστική διαφορά ανάμεσα στους δυο τρόπους ζωής. Το σχεδόν γυμνό αγόρι, που ανοιγόκλεινε με μια τσάπα τ' αυλάκια των περιβολιών μουρμουρίζοντας το «Ελέησόν με», όχι μονάχα για να εξιλεωθεί, αλλά και σαν ξόρκι ή για να θυμάται τα γράμματα, παραστεκότανε συχνά στο μεταξωτό χαλί των αραβικών μου προσευχών. (111)

Similarly the Arabic language came naturally to replace Greek.

However, in spite of the ease with which he accepts his new life, Ismail is aware that he has two names, two homelands, two languages and two religions; he is aware that in essence he lies somewhere between these polar oppositions (Christian and Muslim for instance), and that he does not belong to either of the poles. He is reminded of this when, for instance, his classmates in Egypt never ask him about his origins (33), or when his relatives in Crete do not want to have any contact with him. Comparing himself with his brother Antonis, he says:

Ο Αντώνης δεν θα μάθαινε ποτέ για τον πόλεμο, που έκανε και αντίκρυσε ο αδελφός του επιστρέφοντας σαν εχθρός στα μέρη της πρώτης μας ζωής. Η τύχη τον είχε ακουμπήσει στη μεριά που πατριωτικά ιδανικά την εδικαίωναν. (...) Δεν θα μάθαινε ποτέ για την πορεία από τον άντρα στο παιδί και από κει στον θάνατο. (...) Ούτε θα μάθαινε ποτέ για την ανομολόγητη, την απαγορευμένη, την αναπόφευκτη συμπάθειά μου στον εχθρό (...) Ο Αντώνης μπορούσε να με κάνει εχθρό, ενώ εγώ δεν μπορούσα να ορίσω

καθαρά το αντικείμενο του πολέμου που θα έκανα.
(100-1)

Ismail Ferik Pasha is a character with no stable, authoritative identity through which he can come to terms with what is foreign or other; he is a character with a negative identity; he is a person without a name, without a nation, without a language, without a religion, in other words with no past and no future, no history; the blood line coming down from his ancestors stops with him, while his memory, as he says, cannot be bequeathed to his children (83). But a person who does not constitute part of or contribute to historical continuity lacks authenticity and, ultimately, authority.

The discovery at the end of the novel of his familial house (170-9), the one he belonged to before the Fall, is Ismail's last attempt to regain authenticity and identity; it is his last attempt to revive the hitherto dead field of memory and attain his lost innocence. This will happen, he believes, by choosing the old, deserted house as the place of his new birth.

But let us summarize this very important scene. Having been on the plateau for some time, helping the Turks suppress the revolution there, Ismail secretly visits his home one night. As soon as he enters, he buries the testimonies of his second life in a hole in the wall, that is the knife he found in the cave a few minutes before his captivity, together with his brother's last letter to him while he was still in Egypt. Finding the house silent and still, he carries out the ritual which is described in the *Nekyia* of the Homeric *Odyssey*, so that the now dead inhabitants of the house are revived. The first to appear is his mother, who tells Ismail that she welcomes him back home unreservedly; then comes his father, who also says that he accepts him, but with some reservations, since Ismail has broken the continuity of the blood line to which he himself, as his father, belongs. With the illusion that he has been restored to his previous position in the house, that he is loved by it, Ismail falls asleep. But the following morning he wakes up to the most traumatic disillusionment:

Οι πρωινές βελόνες της μαγιάτικης δροσιάς με
ξύπνησαν λίγο πριν χαράξει. Άλλωστε, είχα την

έγνοια να σηκωθώ νωρίς για να δω από το μικρό παράθυρο της ανατολής τον ορθρινό ήλιο. Η εικόνα, που θυμόμουν, φωτίστηκε από το πρώτο φως. Αλλά δεν σκίρτησε. Δεν φανταζόμουν τέτοια σιωπή, σαν τελεσίδικη απόφαση της φύσης. Άρπαξα το σιδερένιο κάγκελο και πλησίασα όσο πιο πολύ μπορούσα τα μάτια μου. Η ανατολή έμενε πάντα σαν ζωγραφισμένη στο χαρτί. Περίμενα να διαλυθούν τα ρόδινα και τότε ήρθε να με παρηγορήσει η σκέψη πως, αφού αντίκρισα το πατρικό μου σπίτι, πόσο μάλλον αφού κοιμήθηκα μian ολόκληρη νύχτα στον κόρφο του, αφού τέλος μου μίλησε το ίδιο σπίτι, η φύση που το είχε χρόνια αντικαταστήσει ούτε θα συλλάβιζε πια, ούτε θα μου επέτρεπε να την ξαναρωτήσω. (177-8)

Throughout the period of his Islamicization, Ismail has preserved in his memory images of the scenery on the plateau, images of nature as it was when he left; coming back to Crete, almost half a century later, he expects this scenery to have remained unchanged, as it existed in his memory. Nature, therefore, has acquired here the role of the pure, edenic place that will restore Ismail's lost identity and offer him the certainty he seeks about the existence of a stable centre in all experience; Ismail believes that by returning, by uniting with nature, he will be purified and will regain his lost innocence.

During his years in Egypt, the years of the fictionalization of the past, the natural environment of the plateau was the lost referent which Ismail dreamt that he would sometime regain; when he is in Crete, cast into the living scenery of the plateau and being disillusioned by it, nature comes to be replaced by the idea of the familial house which he has also to regain. Ismail's house is to be the last step in this continuous process of narrativization of his memory and at the same time the last of a series of fatal disillusionments.

According to Docherty (1987: 52-4), in the history of human thought and art the familial house has been seen not only as a place where man can always return to discover security, a stable identity and purification; it has also been thought of as an expansion of the idea of nature herself, which, in Romanticism for instance, was thought to constitute a large, friendly place in which man could feel more "at home" than in his contingent

local situation, which was an artificial deviation from that "pure", natural state of existence. Bachelard (1957: 24), moreover, has seen the first house, the house in which one is born, as symbolizing the womb; he argues also that this first house becomes the archetype that determines and conditions life after birth.

Choosing the house to replace nature after the latter had disappointed him, Ismail, still in the womb of his mother, returns there, as we know, just to be re-born; in this way he will return to the first state of things and will resume what he owned at his original birth, that is the identity and the authority which everybody who belongs to a certain house and family can enjoy; but above all, he will resume his first innocence, which was irreparably lost with his entrance into the cave and the acquisition of knowledge.⁹

However, in the "epimythio", the little boy reveals that it was not only the motionless scene of the rising sun that embarrassed him that morning in the episode of the house which we saw above; it was the realization that his ultimate expectation, innocence, was never to be regained. The little boy says:

Εκείνη τη νύχτα ήθελε ν' αποτυπωθεί αιώνιος, γιατί αισθανόταν πως είχε σηκωθεί πάνω από σχήματα και λέξεις για ν' αγγίξει την έσχατη γνώση. Χρόνια τώρα υπέθετε ότι εκεί θα συναντούσε τη χαμένη αθωότητα· δεν του άξιζε όμως να ευτυχίσει το τέλος των αθώων, αν δεν εξομοιωνόταν. Εκείνη λοιπόν τη νύχτα στο παλιό του σπίτι η αθωότητα χαμογελούσε σαν ο ανευρισκόμενος φύλακας άγγελος της μνήμης. Διστάζοντας να πιστέψει το θαύμα, άπλωσε το χεράκι του ν' αγγίξει τον άγγελο. Τότε μόνο είδε τα μαύρα φίδια, που τυλίγονταν στους φωτεινούς βοστρύχους, κι οπισθοχώρησε. Το μυαλό του έλαμψε ξαφνικά και κατανόησε ότι δεν υπάρχει, ούτε και υπήρξε, κάτι τόσο αθώο ώστε να χαθεί. Άρα, πως δεν υπάρχει, ούτε και ποτέ υπήρξε, επιστροφή. (197)

⁹ The scene in the cave, combined with the frequent reference to the image of apples throughout the novel, seems to recall the biblical Fall and the primordial sin.

This final realization marks the virtual collapse of all the fictions which Ismail Ferik Pasha created for himself to sustain his decentred life; having failed to turn history into reality, to find the paradisaic elsewhere and unite with his pure, natural self, Ismail finally understands that history cannot be repeated in reality; it can only be invented, that is it can be rewritten or repainted on a piece of paper like the stage scenery in Heraklion harbour (148-50). He also understands that innocence, too, has never existed, for it is simply another of those authoritative and monosemous notions that aspire to the supreme truth. What ultimately exists is only Ismail himself (149), who, like everyone, is a finite, decentred being that grows out of contradictions and who vainly pursues a meaning, a stable centre for his life.

Like the novel itself, Ismail remains to the end an untotalized character, for he remains a person with a mobile identity and, therefore, with no authority; he is a character that continually rolls from one status to the other and can be approached only in the same terms, that is in the terms of his fluid personality; he can be received only as a set of versions and assessments ("εκδοχές και εκτιμήσεις", 132), like history itself.

Thus, from another aspect, Ismail, though a historical personage, appears deprived of his referentiality too; by continually undermining the authority of history, our text undermines its own authority, its own truth, its referentiality. Ismail himself, in spite of the expectations he creates in the reader at the beginning, is gradually stripped of all his qualities of authenticity and authority that history would endow him with and remains simply an actor who plays the last act of his life on the stage of Heraklion harbour.

Έλεγα πως κατακτητές και κατακτημένοι είχαν για πολλούς αιώνες μαστορέψει ένα σκηνικό, όπως εκείνα που έτυχε να δω στις ευρωπαϊκές όπερες πριν από πολλά χρόνια, για ν' αρχίσει να παίζεται εκεί μέσα η τελευταία πράξη της ζωής μου. Η ανάμνηση των δυο αιχμαλωτισμένων αγοριών, που χωρίστηκαν για πάντα σ' αυτό το λιμάνι, και χωρίστηκαν ως το κόκαλο από διαφορετικούς δρόμους, μετέτρεψε ξαφνικά το παρελθόν και το παρόν σε διακοσμητικά στοιχεία ενός επεισοδίου. Η εντύπωση του ψεύτικου ήταν τόσο

σφοδρή, που σκέφτηκα μήπως το ήδη παιγμένο επεισόδιο δεν υπήρξε ποτέ σαν ζωή. Τι σήμαινε άραγε ένας αδερφός ξένος και αντίπαλος; Κι ωστόσο είχε παίξει το ρόλο του άριστα, σαν να επρόκειτο για γνήσιο αδερφό. Όμως αν κάποιος μπορούσε να τεκμηριώσει πως είχε υπάρξει σ' αυτήν την εξιστόρηση, αν κάποιος ήταν αληθινός σπαράζοντας ακόμη από τον χωρισμό, αυτός ήμουν εγώ. Τίποτε άλλο δεν μπορούσα να αποδείξω. Αναγνώριζα μόνο τη ζωή μου, καθώς ξαναβρισκόταν στον ίδιο χώρο, σαν ζωή, όχι σαν μίμηση. Αμφέβαλλα για οτιδήποτε άλλο. (148-9)

To sum up, we can say that by questioning the medium of history, that is linear time, as well as the integrity of human individuality, in other words the very creator and receiver of history, our text also questions the authoritative truth of history; historical truth exists only in books; it is the matter and the result of writing, that is of assessing and inventing; truth is the gold that was hidden under the books that contained the ancestors' treasure in Antonis's dream, but Ismail decided that they disperse this gold so that the two brothers do not fight over its possession (85).

"Historiographic metafiction" or "revisionist historical novel" are two terms that are used to designate a trend in post-modern fiction which intermingles historical events with fictional facts. Without embarking on a presentation of the whole ideology that lies behind the choices of post-modern fiction, we can say that one of its basic interests is to reveal, through the exposition of its own fictionality and of its own conventions, the mechanisms that create meaning and value in modern culture; to put it another way, post-modern fiction not only asserts its own fictionality: it claims that our contemporary culture, with its value system and its ideology, is also fiction.

History has undoubtedly constituted a source of meaning for Western societies; the teleological and logical connection of events in a continuous chronology, however disparate and different from each other these events are and however different the social context of these events from the present might be, constitutes a meaning-assigning process for our contemporary culture which justifies its choices by comparing and contrasting

them to the choices of the historical past. This appropriation and narrativization of the past in order to sustain the myths of the present becomes the object of the subversive scrutiny of post-modern fiction.

In order to make clear this use and abuse of history in contemporary societies, post-modern fiction must first demonstrate the use and abuse of real historical events by those who write history by turning events into facts. Post-modern fiction tries to show that in all writing, either fictional or historical, it is the writer who constructs, interprets and evaluates in the way he/she wants, depending among other factors on his/her ideological and social stance. Thus, post-modern fiction that uses history as its subject makes overt the narrativization and meaning-granting of the past that has been made possible by means of the fact-making process of historians of both past and present. As Hutcheon (1989: 36) puts it:

Historiographic metafiction represents not just a world of fiction, however self-consciously presented as a constructed one, but also a world of public experience. The difference between this and the realist logic of reference is that here that public world is rendered specifically as discourse. How do we know the past today? Through its discourses, through its texts – that is, through the traces of its historical events: the archival materials, the documents, the narratives of witnesses... and historians. On one level, then, post-modern fiction merely makes overt the processes of narrative representation – of the real or the fictive and of their interrelations.

The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha is ostensibly using history, though the real historical elements of the novel are limited to the person of Ismail himself and very few events, such as some battles during the Cretan revolution of 1866-68. As we realize, however, the personality of Ismail had to be constructed, to be re-invented by the writer (as the introduction to the novel also reveals), as it has also been narrativized by the historian who "τον κατέταξε οριστικά στην ιστορία με τον αναμφισβήτητο ρεαλισμό των ονομάτων και των τόπων" (106). Consequently, the particular relations of Ismail to the real events as well as to

the other historical persons had to be invented, too, to match this fictional personality.

On the other hand, and by analogy with Galanaki's role, Ismail himself creates history, his own history, through the fictionalization of his past as it is related to the past of the country in which he was born, while at the same time he gradually becomes aware of the fictionalization of the national history in which he is involved through his participation as both actor and witness.

Γνώριζα από παλιά πως η αλήθεια ενός γεγονότος δεν είναι ποτέ μία, και αυτό δεν ήταν ίσως το πιο σημαντικό, όσο ν' ανακαλύπτω ποια ανάγκη επέβαλε την ταξινόμηση εκείνων των αληθειών, που δεν παραμερίζονταν αμέσως από κάποιο άορατο χέρι. Και τούτος ο πόλεμος άρχιζε να γίνεται αληθινός, εφόσον είχε κιόλας αρχίσει να μετατρέπεται σε εκδοχές και εκτιμήσεις. (132)

Thus, by thematizing the arbitrary construction of history in this novel as another fiction within fiction, the text reflects in an allegorical way the equally arbitrary and invented status of meaning and current truth in contemporary reality.

By once again questioning the totalization and mastery of meaning in both history and fiction, our text refuses to conclude in a single ending but instead chooses a multiple one. These versions (four in number) concern the circumstances of Ismail's death on the plateau. This relativized finality accords with Ismail's personality, which is not autonomous and fixed but something in process, as well as with the untotalized status of Ismail's life, as we have already discussed, which describes successive circles. Apart from being an attempt to counteract the processes of mastery of history and of truth in general, this multiple ending of *The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha* also aims at defying any attempt to decode and interpret a fictional text in a closed, unitary and non-contradictory manner.

The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha is fiction about history but it is also about the fiction of history and more importantly about the fictions that our modern historical culture has created. *The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha* should be seen, in this respect, as an

allegory of all fictions, illusions, and consequent disillusionment that contemporary man and woman have to go through in their restless, though futile, pursuit of their lost identity.

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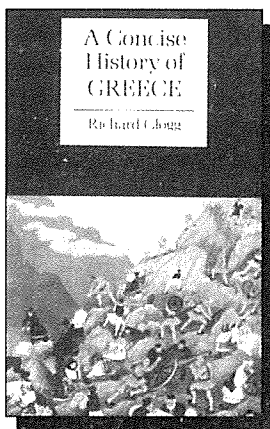
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