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**MODERN GREEK STUDIES
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The periodical welcomes papers in both English and Greek on all aspects of Modern Greek Studies (broadly defined). Prospective contributors should preferably submit their papers on disk and hard copy. All published contributions by academics are refereed (standard process of blind peer assessment). This is a DEST recognised publication.

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CONTENTS

Gough Whitlam	Keynote Address – 5th Biennial Conference of Modern Greek Studies Association of Australia and New Zealand	7
Vrasidas Karalis	The Occluding Alphabets of a National Poet: The Case of Dionysios Solomos' <i>Reflections</i>	19
Dionysios Solomos	<i>Reflections</i> and Other Fragments	41
Katie Liakatos	Deity or Divine Sorceress: The Evolution of the <i>donna angelicata</i> in the Italian Works of Dionysios Solomos	46
P. D. Mastrodimitris	C.P. Cavafy and the Beloved City	58
Jen Harrison	Death and Salvation in Nikos Kazantzakis' <i>Captain Michalis</i>	66
Andrew Mellas	Manic Eroticism and Sexual Melancholia: Romos Philyras and the Aesthetics of Madness	76
Romos Philyras	<i>My Life in the Dromokaiteion</i>	91
Nasos Vagenas	Identity and Poetic Discourse	110
Steve Georgakis	T.S. Eliot, Giorgos Seferis and the Anzacs	114
	Sport and the Global Greeks	118
Michael Loosli	The Kallikantzari – An Image in Nikos Gatsos' <i>Amorgos</i>	125
	Nikos Gatsos: A Bibliography	129
Anne Reynolds	A Short History of Italian Cafés and Restaurants in Sydney	136
Vassilios Adrahtas	Socrates Christianus – Images of Socrates in Early Greek Christian Literature	156
Tim Buckley	An Ontology of Freedom in Proclus' <i>Commentary in Parmenidem</i> 1022:24–27	167
J. M. A. Nijjem	Sources of the Word in Sikelianos, Seferis, Lawrence and Eliot: ὄργια, ekphrasis, anathematicity [PART ONE]	184
Andrew Itter	The Terror of History and the Mythical Paradigm of Existentialism in G. Seferis' <i>Mythistorêma</i>	203

BOOK REVIEWS

Despina Michael	Στάθης Gauntlett, <i>Ρεμπέτικο Τραγούδι, Συμβολή στην επιστημονική του προσέγγιση</i>	215
John Barnes	Dimitris Tsaloumas: <i>Stoneland Harvest: New & Selected Poems</i>	
	Dimitris Tsaloumas: <i>New and Selected Poems</i>	219
Martha Klironomos	Anca Vlasopolos: <i>No Return Address: A Memoir of Displacement</i>	222
Yiorgos Kalogeras	Helen Papanikolas: <i>The Time of the Little Black Bird</i>	225
Jen Harrison	Nadia Wheatley: <i>The Life and Myth of Charmian Clift</i>	228

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for his heroic efforts to make this journal readable.
This issue is dedicated to Véronica and Andras.*

DIONYSIOS SOLOMOS (1797-1857)

REFLECTIONS AND OTHER FRAGMENTS*

Translated by Vrasidas Karalis

I

Implement in the spiritual form the story of the plant, which starts in and returns to the seed, after having traversed all vegetable forms as stages of development: namely, root, trunk, leaves, flowers, fruits. Implement this after reflecting deeply on the essence of the subject as well as on the artistic form. Beware so that this process would happen without the slightest interruption.

II

A rich and beautiful democracy of ideas that will present substantially the monarch hidden from our senses. Only then the poem will be true. The monarch, who is hidden from our senses and who is communicable only through the spirit in which he was born, is found outside the realm of time. However, a republic of ideas brings his powers down in sensible form within time.

III

You must reflect deeply and with unchanging concreteness (once and for all) on the nature of the idea, before you realise the composition. In this, the most essential and most high content of true human nature will be incarnated: motherland and religion.

IV

Pay attention. Let the common and individual be the fundamental tone of the poem, from the beginning till the end rooted and identified with language. And let it work incessantly for the true essence but in a way which will be understood only by well-versed and profound minds. This will be achieved with the simple and ample method of compound words, with the enrichment of the form with demotic expressions, i.e., *έτοιμοθάνατο, χρυσοπηγή, έτρεξε ή θάλασσα, έλευτεριά και θάνατος, χρυσοπράσινα.*

V

Alternatively, let the fundamental tone remain firmly within the profound center of nationality and let it be vertically elevated, whereas the meaning for which the poem was composed would be gradually magnified.

VI

Let the whole poem express the concept as if it was a world in itself, mathematically graduated, rich and profound. Only with this line one is allowed, through its successive invention, to create

the most grandiose and terrible impressions. This has never been effectively achieved. Those who had the intention of doing it (like Euripides and most of the moderns who are his children) made it outside the idea, and causes discomfort to those who think.

VII

It is imperative that in the poem of *Duty* the long and terrible agony of misery and suffering be protracted, so that through this would be manifested intact and holy the intellectual and moral paradise.

VIII

The following idea must be realized. All human bonds, paternal, fraternal, spousal etc. They are bound on earth and are exulted to glory etc. Their land is taken away and so they are forced to manifest the depths of their saintly soul. In the background of the frame always Greece with her destiny till the end, from suffering to suffering, to the extreme distress. Then *ἔτρεξε ἡ θάλασσα* and their soul *ἔπλεε* in bitterness and they faltered on their feet as if inebriated. Then the message from the enemy comes to change religion. St Augustine says that the Cross is the cathedral of true wisdom, because everything that Jesus taught for three years with the Gospel, were all compressed in three hours on the Cross.

VIII (2)

Intensity of forces that evolve within natural-national means on a small piece of land: great forces from all directions, which motivate the development that is heightened constantly. Do so in order that while the force that triumphs over the hostile powers is intensified the recollection of past glory's to be found amongst them: *Οἱ Ἀδελφοποιτοί*. Reflect deeply on the nature of idea; let its transcendental depth present, in all its fecundity, the natural part situated seamlessly through national devices.

VIII (3)

But in order to achieve this, it is necessary to meditate on the substantialising shadow that will generate the bodies, through which she will be manifested, united with them. With these bodies pay attention so that the conditions of rendition will be expressed – nationality extended to its utter potentiality. So, metaphysics become physics.

VIII (4)

Take and forcefully concretise one spiritual power and fragment it into a given number of male and female characters, to whom [the details] of the rendition will correspond. Think forcefully so that it happens romantically or classically if possible or in a mixed but genuine style. Homer is the highest example of the latter, Shakespeare of the former; of the third, I don't know any one.

IX (1)

Let the absolute existence of the poem have multiple meanings: among others the small anonymous and inglorious land is suddenly elevated to the peak of glory, first by revolting and then by enduring, resisting many forces – and from there she falls into extreme tribulation. Thus a certain unity of forces is manifested in the balance of forms. The meaning is the same from

beginning till end where is the word *αίματοσακισμένα?* thus indeed every word is born full of meaning, and the work appears individual within the spirit of its own creative generality.

IX (2a)

The bodiless soul of the Poem which left God and after completing the circle embodied in the organs of time, place, nationality, language, with different thoughts, feelings, sensations etc., to create a small corporeal universe appropriate for manifesting herself according to her potential; and then moving away from all of them returns to God.

IX (3)

*Σέ βυθό πέφτει από βυθό ὡς πού δέν ἦταν ἄλλος·
ἐκεῖθε ἐβγήκε ἀνίκητος καί καί μέγας*

pay attention to determine in gradations as in a climax of difficulties which great ones will transcend them, through all that their senses absorb from the external world either through its attracting beauty or through the pressing and painful necessity till the certainty of death, but above all through the recollection of glory; the more grand and varied these things are the more they raise liberty higher, full of the duty that is replete with everything included in morality, religion, motherland, politics, etc.

X

It is necessary to do so, that the small circle, in which the fortress is found, to show in its depth and atmosphere, those greatest interests of Greece regarding her material position (something worthy to those who want to keep her and to him who wants to conquer her) and in regard to the moral position the greatest interests of humanity. So the theme of the poem is associated with the system of the universe. Look at *Prometheus* and generally the works of Aeschylus.

Work so that the smallness of the place clearly appears – the iron and impenetrable circle with which it is surrounded. So the smallness of the place will generate the great substances.

XI

Stay firm in that high position. Their affliction consists in recollecting their prior felicitous situation which was full of the benevolence of the land and which they will now lose. They had everything and felt that they were in their home: now they feel that they will lose everything – they feel this gradually and in the end totally. Hunger enters this circle only as an external force, which they finally overcome together with the rest.

XII

Think of the balance of forces between man and woman: let men feel everything, but to overcome all with their conscious existence; let the women triumph over everything but as women.

XIII

Depict from the very beginning and every time according to the need of the image the position of Missolongi in a succession: Earth, wind [...] mountains, lagoon, sea. Relation to Mother Greece.

In all these things the work of Liberty should be included. It's necessary in these material representations to proceed gradually from the position in the beginning (materiality and impression) until the words *ἡ μαύρη πέτρα του χρυσή* etc. even as though they had been offered by themselves and have been found on the path of necessity disciplined by Liberty. Keep throughout the rest of the poem firm the idea of the natural smallness of the place, so that the moral grandeur and the natural grandeur in which they are to emerge. When tribulations look exhausted, revive them with the hope of the navy – it is the enemy's navy. It came and the moving forest didn't move any more.

XIV

Beware of the positioning of the confessor's soliloquy, so that, under the pretext that he enjoys the perfect purity of these souls, to end by making completely visible the essential Unity, that is to express one of those great Moments or Aspects or Elements or Conditions. Think deeply if this should happen in a great and simple poem. You must constantly keep this method, which constructs art, consistent, that is whereas one manifestation going one way, to display many others.

XV

Let the idea be associated with depth in both the whole and in the parts. For example: to the regenerated; to the soul of Greece. Everything is in accord with its own receptivity; it evolves to a greater or lesser degree. So different centers will be revealed in the whole and in the parts. And only through such unfathomable depths find rest in God.

XVI

Art is the active bond between truth and beauty – and their identification. It extracts the first from the Word and it constructs it as its own soul, as its own image (think better).

This thought, concretised, must endure all possible forms, to endure all aesthetically, and when none other is left, then it becomes Truth.

XVII

Infuse the poem with forces. Forces of thought, forces of faith, moral forces, forces of the soul (like the one of the young *παλληκαρά*), forces of knowledge. So, the concept passes through all these forces and remains the same. And it is in this way that Truth is achieved.

XVIII

From the first to the last moment let hunger appear as the opportunity through which what is inside comes out unified and exposed to all adversities. Proceed gently with hunger. From the first moment let it be immediately understood that they are in a difficult position, and proceed with gentleness increasingly, as the motive, to bring out the ideas. But only at the end is the decay in their appearance to be obvious.

XIX

Let us talk in the beginning, the middle, the end about Greece (the great Motherland). Look if it is possible to portray in her the Idea succinctly, in whom all other ideas will end up.

The final bond between Time and Eternity. Through her, destiny has announced that they will escape and so the sacrifice will take place.

Think deeply this part because you must not change again. But do not sink in her exclusively.

XX

Look more than you can, when it comes naturally, to accumulate objects, so that every quarter of the verse includes certain important objects: *νιός κόσμος δόξας καί χαρᾶς*.

So in every event, action, thought, word, let the character of those who manifest an energetic and prudent temperance be exhibited towards all directions, stimulated by external objects, according to their importance. Reflect deeply, so that his talk establish in the shortest possible space a secret union with the most essential moments of existence, with the most important differences of unity.

XXI

Simple, gradual and continuous development of a probable and poignant situation. Look, so that this wouldn't happen in the poem through the action in the literal sense of word, but in its general meaning. Amongst the besieged, the larger part with a multitude of ideas will take place, in which few but essential points of the besiegers will correspond, of the Great Mother and of the besieged's navy.

A multitude of ideas must come from the Essences, through which a clear and deep meaning must be transparent.

XXII

Beginning, middle, end. Let it flow incessantly for the sake of Essence, without the interruption of a single word. Essence, which is expressed in a graduated world of actions, thoughts, emotions, words, different expressions on the face.

Let the figure of Greece be indirect in the beginning, in the mind of the warriors, slightly less indirect in the middle and to be revealed to the eyes at the end.

Let the mind be expressed in its full integrity.

The subject sees again, sees and foresees. From the unity of such conditions of time etc. the manifestation of the Essence will occur, since it is multiplied within its own complexity. Look at the art of gradation. Look truly what unity of time actually is and plant in it the great idea or one of the great ideas of the composition. Thus, unity of time is right and great as a philosophical conception; but it is meaningless as an empirical concept.

* I would like to thank my colleague, Paolo Bartoloni for his assistance in translating some crucial terms from the Italian original.