

ΧΡΟΝΙΚΑ ΑΙΣΘΗΤΙΚΗΣ

ANNALES D' ESTHETIQUE
ANNALS FOR AESTHETICS

TOMOΣ / VOLUME 36 • 1996

Proceedings

Oxford Conference
Aesthetics in education, culture and tradition
Oxford, 29 August - 1 September 1996

ΑΝΑΤΥΠΟ - OFFPRINT

ΕΚΔΟΣΗ ΤΟΥ ΙΔΡΥΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΑΝΑΓΙΩΤΗ ΚΑΙ ΕΦΗΣ ΜΙΧΕΛΗ
ΜΕ ΤΗ ΣΥΝΕΡΓΑΣΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗΣ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑΣ ΑΙΣΘΗΤΙΚΗΣ

EDITION OF THE PANAYOTIS AND EFFIE MICHELIS FOUNDATION
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE HELLENIC SOCIETY FOR AESTHETICS

THE CLASSIC AND THE ROMANTIC IN NEO-HELLENIC AESTHETICS

In this paper I will attempt to present the relevance of art to aesthetics focusing on the antithesis of the classic and the romantic as was discussed in 19th-century Greece. Actually this paper starts out from the belief that in order to understand the reception, in 19th-century Greece, of aesthetic concepts and traditions, of styles and methods that are a substantial part of the heritage of European civilisation, one needs to be familiar with the historical circumstances at that time. In what follows I will argue that for various ideological, political, social and historical reasons, classicism and romanticism became a matter of debate and exercise in the fields of neo-Hellenic art and aesthetics.

Greece gained its independence in a war waged against the Ottoman Turks that lasted from 1821 to 1827. It was a time in which the rediscovery of ancient Greek art gave birth to the classical style which then spread out all over Europe. Already in the 18th century themes and motives taken from ancient times resulted in works of art that are characterised as "neoclassical". It is well known that classical Greece came into pre-eminence mainly due to Winckelmann's ideas, and neo-classicism became the dominant style. At the beginning of the 19th century the romantic attitude towards ruined temples and antiquities attracted archaeologists, scholars, architects, draughtsmen, artists and travellers from England, France and Germany to Greece. Visiting and reporting on its monuments became a passion as well as a fashion for many Europeans. A visit to Greece was a visit to an ideal. That is clearly

expressed by the French painter A.L. Castellan who wrote in the early 19th century: "It is to this ancient theatre of the arts that we call the artists of our country. Painters, sculptors, it is in the plains of Arcadia, by the banks of Evrotas... that you will harvest new and sublime ideas. There you will discover the Greek form in all its primitive beauty ... You will not be able to deny that it surpasses the imagination ... Landscape painters, come to this land: the sun shines here in all its splendour in an azure sky, free from those grey mists that so often obscure in your climates, and gives objects a uniform tint. How many memories will spring to mind when studying this landscape! Here, a column standing amidst the ruins will help you retrace the outlines of a temple ...".¹

At a time of eclecticism encouraging the neoclassical and romantic styles,² the Greeks paid great attention to their pre-Christian past; they also realised the benefits that would rise from the exploitation of their heritage; at the same time they adopted the principles of the Enlightenment and they benefitted by its ideas as well as by the spirit of romanticism. The declaration of their national independence for which many philhellenes helped, gave Greece the opportunity to become a nation-state in the modern sense of the word. It was not until 1833 that a system of government and stable frontiers was agreed by the Great Powers. A year later the Bavarian Prince Otto was appointed King of Greece and classicism gave a new aspect to Athens and other cities of the Greek Kingdom. From that time on an educational system was built based mainly on the German and French models which gave emphasis to the practice of the arts. As Professor Ludwig Von Maurer, one of King Otto's advisors, had declared in 1834: "Just as the Greeks in the 14th and 15th centuries brought wisdom to the rest of Europe, now Europeans, especially the Germans, must return the light to the land from which it has long since vanished".³

The lure of the classical heritage captivated Greeks and foreigners in 19th-century Greece. In 1834, a State Archaeological Department was set up and the famous architect Leo von Klenze who supervised the first stage of the symbolic restoration of the Parthenon addressed Otto by saying that the Muses were to be returned to Greece, while the Greek scholar I. Rizos-Neroulos opened in 1838 the first conference of the Greek Archaeological Society on the ancient acropolis of Athens, saying: "Gentlemen, these stones, thanks to Pheidias, Praxiteles, Agoracritus and Myron, are more precious than diamonds or agates: it is to

these stones that we owe our political renaissance".⁴ In fact it was the discovery of the ancient Greek art that brought to liberated Greece many foreign architects and other artists from the late 1820s onwards. In the newly established nation-state an Elementary School of Drawing opened in 1836 featuring an international staff: Ludwig Lange was teacher of drawing, Charles Laurent of Architecture and Pierre Boniroto of Painting. Many Greeks joined those professors in the systematic teaching of the arts in the established technical University.

The Classic and the Romantic, the two concepts on which I will focus, dominate as a style of arts and the literature of 19th-century Greece and attract the attention of Greek thinkers. In order to understand the connection of neo-Hellenic art and aesthetics with classicism and romanticism, we ought to keep in mind that it was shaped under the continuous contact of Greek intellectuals and artists with Western Europe and was the result of the historical, political and social circumstances of the time. Art is, besides all the other characterisations that we attribute to it, a peculiar way of registering the trends, expectations and priorities of a society; it incorporates various values and expresses the spirit of its time. And the same holds true with aesthetics. The trend of neoclassicism that characterised the beginning of the 19th century in Europe, the archaeomania and philhellenism of not only many European intellectuals and artists but also heads of state like Louis of Bavaria, whose son Otto was appointed King of Greece by the Great Powers, coincides with the will of the Greek intellectuals to rely upon their cultural heritage in their effort to strengthen the national consciousness. The search by Greek intellectuals for awareness of the past and strengthening of those elements that form the Greek identity (language, religion, heritage) urges the ideological aspect of classicism and goes hand in hand with the equivalent of "metagenesis", that is pouring from one vessel to the other, a term invented by the Greek scholar Adamantios Korais and adopted by Greek intelligentsia so as to declare his faith in the diffusion of the Western experience mainly through the studying of Greeks in European centres.

The revolution of 1821 and the creation of the Greek state produced the ground for the adoption of romantic concepts which often mingle with neoclassicism. Art is called upon to play a leading and instructional role within the new society. That role is acknowledged by the state which through legislation supports artistic instruction and creation.

Painting, for example, will be called upon to reflect recent history, to satisfy the need of ideological propaganda, to serve as the symbol of status and power for the new order, to give the illusion of the rebirth of ancient glory,⁵ to depict the Greek society, the landscape and faces. The same purposes will be served by playwriting, literature and literary criticism. However, a unique colouring was given to Athens, capital of Greece, as well as the other urban centres by architecture through the love of classical style. Building shapes, interwoven with the neoclassicism and romanticism that prevailed everywhere in Europe, embraced Greek life, public and private, and co-existed with traditional Greek homes as well as ancient and medieval antiquities and Ottoman remains.⁶

Art during the first half of the 19th century carries the clear characteristics of the neoclassical trends that dominate Europeans who study with great interest and passion the monuments of ancient times: the same interest brings to Greece many travellers who engrave in their travel writings, in paintings, in drawings, the monuments and the Greek scenery. The classic beauty of Greek art attracts the attention of everybody as Lord Byron documents: "Ask the traveller what strikes him as most poetical – the Parthenon itself or the rock on which it stands. The columns of Cape Colonna or the Cape itself? There are a thousand rocks and capes far more picturesque than those of the Acropolis and Cape Sounion in themselves. What are they to a thousand scenes in the wilder parts of Greece, of Asia Minor, Switzerland or even of Cintra in Portugal, or to many scenes of Italy and the Sierras of Spain? But it is the "art", the columns, the temples, the wrecked vessel, which give them their antique and their modern poetry and not the spots themselves. Without them the spots of the earth would be unnoticed and unknown".⁷ It is not therefore surprising that the intense classicism that characterised art in Greece at the beginning of the 19th century will gradually mingle with romanticism and give a modifying form to artistic expression whose result will have various effects.

Having in mind the relevance of aesthetics to art I shall here focus my attention firstly on the discussion of the classic and the romantic that took place in the field of neo-Hellenic aesthetics. In order to illuminate the discussion so far I will give as study cases three thinkers who were engaged in matters of philosophical aesthetics. The dispute between classicism and romanticism did not concern the Greek aestheticians in

the revolutionary period; they were engaged only in discussions concerning the classic as an aesthetic property (e.g. K. Koumas). That problem will emerge in works on aesthetics written in the middle of the 19th century at a time when the same dispute was a basic topic of the literary discussions of Western Europe.

☐ The philosopher P. Vrailas-Armenis (1812-1884), who taught philosophy for a number of years at the Ionian Academy of Corfu, raised the question of the antithesis between the classic and the romantic in an article published in 1853. Vrailas, whose aesthetic ideas were formed within the spirit of French eclecticism (V. Cousin, T. Jouffroy, C. Lamennais) expresses himself as a true romantic and considers inspiration a prerequisite for artistic creation. Inspiration, feeling and imagination are, according to him, all based on reason which in the sanctuary of artistic greatness orders and arranges the material which the imagination provides with its forming strength. According to him the fine arts harmoniously combine spiritual essence and material form and in every work of art, essence, which is the "idea" – meaning religious, political, historical or human idea of private or public life expressed through various ways and means – co-exists with form; the latter through matter and symbols expresses the idea. In his article titled "The Classics and the Romantics"⁸ he talks about all the controversial discussions which occurred in the 19th century caused by the classic-romantic literary dispute. In this article he attempts to analyse the connotations of the classic and the romantic claiming that the imitation of antiquity harmed not only history and oratory but also poetry; the latter he thinks was imprisoned by its division into epic, lyric and dramatic and its submission to classical rules thus preventing the development of genius and the freedom of poetic inspiration.

☐ Vrailas describes the above-mentioned article as a historical one; however, in it, he expresses himself as a true romantic and engages in matters that were the main topic of aesthetic discussions in Western Europe. According to him the classic is "the perfect writer of the ancient or the new world", the "genius writer that impresses in his works the stamp of human perfection". He believes that the word classic does not present difficulties in its definition but only when it contradicts the word romantic, meaning when it does not express "the eminence of the writer" but the "school in which he belongs, the system that he stands for and which he in a way tries to imitate". Dividing the literary history of

the Moderns in three eras, he names the first period "medieval" that starts, according to him, with the emergence of Christianity and ends in the 15th century, the second "imitating Antiquity" beginning with the Renaissance and ending in the 18th century and the third period "Romantic" which he characterises as "original". The romanticism of the last period is considered by him illustrative of both the medieval times and the new era while neoclassical art and especially literature is taken by him to be a faint imitation and subservient transliteration of ancient art.

Vrailas, referring to the limitations imposed by the rules on historians, rhetoricians and especially poets, believes that classicism brought conditions to individuality, as well as to the full and varied development of intelligence, to the freedom of genius, and considers unavoidable the reaction of the moderns against the classics. According to him aesthetics emerged as a philosophical discipline in the second half of the 18th century being a prelude to romanticism, a creation of that reaction. Romanticism became, therefore, a carrier of the spirit of its time, enhanced the value of poets like Dante and Shakespeare that were faithful interpreters of their century and gave the arts the ability to express the uniqueness of individuality. Critically examining the works produced by the romantic poets and writers (namely Goethe, Schiller, Byron, Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Victor Hugo, Manzoni, Pelico), Vrailas points out a factor common to all of them, that is modernity; it is actually the different way and method of expression that distinguishes them from the classics although they are classics as far as their own work is concerned. Considering also the distinction between classicism and romanticism, he argues that art must not be imitation but creation of the good, the "expression of the ideal through the real". Speaking as a true romantic he claims that the poet is a universal mind, a prophet ahead of his time. Defending the autonomy of the artist and regarding imitation as the "death of art" Vrailas, at the same time, raised the question of defining the rights of free artistic creativity. Nevertheless he criticised all those who supported absolute freedom of the arts and the extreme search for novelty. With scepticism he concludes that subordination to the rules of classicism seems to have been replaced in his days by the extremes of freedom.

Vrailas, being an rationalist, believed in the unlimited capabilities of the human mind, had faith in its freedom and independence of it that is expressed through individuality in philosophy, in science, in religion and

in art. According to him, the mind is "free and unsubdued by nature", "indomitable and untormented". The imagination is also free and arbitrary as well as the arts and especially poetry which is the most spontaneous and liberated product of the human mind.⁹ Although he accepts the ideas of romanticism about freedom of expression in artistic creation, he criticises the dogma "art for art's sake". Absolute freedom leads the artist to "the uninhibited debauchery of the arts" and constitutes an example of personal, social and political corruption.¹⁰ A work of art cannot only be looked at from an aesthetic point of view, cannot distant itself from social awareness, because "every work of art embodies and expresses the advances in industry as well as the nature of the religion, the economic development, the status quo of science, the morals and institutions, the race and the country". He argues that the development of art is the result of individuality and is directly connected with the independence and freedom of the unencumbered self concluding that the arts can flourish only in circumstances of freedom and justice.¹¹

Having in mind the unique combination of freedom and necessity that comes out of the voluntary submission to rules experienced by all artists, he accepted as a limit to the artists' freedom "the eternal laws of truth" and regarded the works of art as a medium to access the absolute and at the same time a mode in which truth expresses itself.¹² Vrailas accepts Hegel's view according to which, "beauty is the expression of the ideal through the real",¹³ something obvious in the poetry of the national poet Dionysios Solomos who signals the movement of romanticism in neo-Hellenic poetry.

Dr. G. Stratoulis, an orthodox priest and principal at a secondary school in Zante who spent several years in England, as did Vrailas – holding the post of Greek ambassador in London – is also preoccupied with the concepts of classicism and romanticism. His work *Essay on Kallology or Elements of Aesthetics* that was published in 1856, constitutes one of the first attempts of systematic writing of philosophical aesthetics. Stratoulis considers that the difficulty in defining the concepts of the classic and the romantic is connected to the inability of the theorists of the literary movements to determine the elements that distinguish those which are related to form, imitation and rules.

Stratoulis limits the use of the term classic to Greek and Roman writers whose works are considered as models and masterpieces. He

knows that although the terms classic and classical are relative they are not synonymous. He considers classical as the outstanding, the perfect, the proficient, the style that was developed as a consequence of the rules of the ancient Greeks and Romans, that follows the rules of Aristotelian poetics and ancient mythology. Stratoulis does not really engage in the meaning of classic, but he focuses his interest on the romantic which is the prevailing trend in the literary criticism of the Ionian Islands at that time. He points out the romantics' attitude to turn their areas of interest towards Christianity, society and morality, and stresses the social character of the romantic art which appeals to sentiment and the imagination. He also thinks unjust the many accusations against romanticism, that is the unlimited freedom of the artist, his rejection of ancient rules, towards mythology and poetry of the ancient Greeks and Romans. The exaggerations of some critics that defined romanticism as opposing the laws of beauty and taste as well as a peculiarity and a limitless freedom of the imagination, are criticised by him; he considers romanticism to be nothing more than an expression of human association that takes its form from the progress made by societies. In this sense, Lucian is a romantic because he reformed art according to the new order. In the same way Dante, Arriosto and Tasso are romantics as well as more recent ones like Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, Schiller, Goethe, Chateaubriand, Lamartine.

Stratoulis does not clearly define which European country is the primary source of romanticism and ascertains the interaction that characterises the domain of culture and arts in the modern era. At the same time he realises the existence of an ancient romanticism in relation to a more contemporary one, whose differences lay in the psychological development of man, in the analysis of feeling and reason, in the knowledge of history and in the special interest in morals and passions. He approves the rejection of the mythological topics and their replacement by Christian depiction. He calls poetic art of Christianity the *Génie du Christianisme* by Chateaubriand. He also claims that romanticism did not reject the rules of beauty of ancient literature, but that, without imitating the ancients, it gave us outstanding models of form and style. Dante called himself a student of Virgil and Homer, and Goethe and Manzoni had studied the ancients at great length while the works of Greek Antiquity were known and admired by all the romantics. Stratoulis stresses also the links of the romantics with classicism and considers

Shakespeare to be the founder of the new romanticism arguing that freedom of art is connected with freedom of the mind. He makes special reference to Italian romanticism and considers that the Greeks as well as the Italians can benefit from the works of the ancient Greeks and Romans; he finds, however, that contemporary art cannot be cultivated under the principles of the old romanticism and classicism and that it should create its own rules that can be drawn out of the works of the representatives of the new romanticism. Inspired by German romanticism, Stratoulis expresses the view that the principle on which romanticism ought to rely is "the imitation of the true and the reflection of the ideal".¹⁴ At the same time he acknowledges the relation between classicism and romanticism and the fact that both are based on the reflection of the ideal; in the end it seems that he does not consider the two movements as contradictory and concludes by mentioning the names of distinguished European and Greek artists that cover the whole spectrum of the arts of the different romanticisms.

Within the framework of historicism that was gaining momentum in Athens in the middle of the 19th century, Markos Renieris, a professor of French, and Comparative Law at the Law School of the University of Athens considers the concepts of classicism and romanticism in his work titled *History of Philosophy* (Athens, 1841). Seeing in all expressions of human activity the display of either individuality or "totality" he believes that the literary debates on classicism and romanticism verify the struggle, in the domain of arts, between society and individuality that is ascertained in the historic moments of humanity in the scope of religion and philosophy as well as legislation. Following Schlegel he claims that romanticism is to classicism what graphics (painting) are to plastics (sculpture). Graphics express the great historic moments, the large crowds of people, while plastics by nature cannot depict anything else but individuals. Graphics respect the traditions and institutions of the people and maintain with colour the historic character of the times while in plastics life is annihilated by the monotonous colour of the marble. Of course Renieris did not know at that time that the ancients used colour to emphasise marble sculptures, a shocking discovery that gave new impulse in the visual arts of the 19th century.¹⁵

Renieris also argues that romanticism is an expression of individuality while classicism is an expression of the people; the opposition of the graphic and plastic is expressed according to him in the new classical

tragedy, which is limited in the performance of the people and has removed the chorus, and in romantic drama which "freed from the narrow limits of time and place" revives a whole era. Classicism is, according to him, an expression of the Ego which through religion, philosophy, legislation, public economy, philology and through monarchy, has tormented the whole of humanity¹⁶. He also points out that the spirit of classicism that limits the freedom of the individual was expressed in the symmetrical gardens of France in which according to the French poet Delille (Les jardins):

Pas un arbre au cordeau n'osait désobeir;
Tout s'alignait; partout, en deux rangs étalés,
Se prolongeaient sans fin d'éternelles allées;

Renieris assumes that the tyranny of the Ego on the people had an effect even in nature which subjects itself to the arbitrariness of the rich and produces the art of the gardens of classicism. However, romanticism, according to him, defeats classicism, that is, the philosophy of the Ego, and with Mme de Staël and the Schlegel brothers¹⁷ spreads in the 19th century thus creating a new movement in all aspects of human activity and especially in the arts.

It is clear from what I have said so far that the above three thinkers prefer romanticism to neoclassicism because it leaves the individual free to develop himself and create; it also relieves him from the tyranny of commitment and coercion and promotes individuality, authenticity and creativity. Being aware of the ideological and aesthetic conflicts that cut across this, these thinkers were involved in determining what we could call "classic" and "romantic", and treated both as concepts rather than aesthetic categories of an historical character. But this paper would not be complete without mentioning the neo-Hellenic art of the 19th century and its use of the classic and romantic. In what follows I will limit myself to two arts, architecture and play writing, so as to examine the application of the classic and romantic and their development during the time of the neo-Hellenic Enlightenment and Romanticism.

In neo-Hellenic architecture we can see the co-existence of the classic and the romantic as a result of the close relation of that form of art with the corresponding trends of ideas and styles in Western Europe. Greek architecture, at the beginning and towards the end of the 19th

century, was formed through German architecture which provides one example of the continuing prestige of classical culture. The Bavarian architects and archaeologists that accompanied Otto to Greece saw neoclassicism as the architectural style that suited the country perfectly. The ideological choice of the classical past is gloriously expressed in 1834, when the capital of Greece is relocated from Nauplion to Athens and every possible effort is made to transform Athens from a picturesque small town to a capital of European standards. At the same time plans were drawn up for the rebuilding of Nauplion, Patras, Argos, Sparta, Chalkis and Hermoupolis.¹⁸

Germany's leading architects, i.e. Schaubert, Gärtner, Klenze, the Danish brothers Christian and Theophil Hansen and the Greek architects Stamatis Kleanthis and Lyssandros Kaftantzoglou, undertake the task of giving Athens and the major urban centres of liberated Greece a new face following the principles of romantic classicism. Kleanthis was a student of Karl Friedrich Schinkel in the Berlin Academy while Kaftantzoglou had studied in Rome and had diplomas from many of Europe's academies. The form of German classicism (1789-1848) is creatively incorporated into Greek architecture over a period of 60 years (1832-1897). Freedom of form characterises Greek architecture in that period and it develops into an autonomous national architectural style which distinguishes itself through scale, proportions and the harmony imposed by the Greek natural environment. The classicist trend of neo-Hellenic architecture is characterised by austerity in movement, the formulation of the surfaces of the architectural work, conservative use of decorative elements and adaptation to the immediate environment. Nevertheless, in the period between 1863 and 1897, even though the classic architectural style is maintained, we also see the adoption of a pluralistic model with inspirations from other orders like the Renaissance or the Gothic model and especially the Byzantine one which serves the blending of the classical style with the functional needs of the neo-Hellenic upper class. In church architecture and some public buildings of the city or private buildings in the country (Eye Clinic, The Mansion of the Duchess of Plakentia), we can see a blending of the classical with the Byzantine, a result of the romantic mood that in turn results in the formulation of a new style, the Hellenic-Byzantine. The Athenian Trilogy, i.e. the University, the Academy and the Public Library, were built between 1838 and 1888 by Christian and Theophil Hansen and present

a clear neoclassical style. A free romantic composition inspired by the Gothic style is represented by The Mansion of the Duchess of Plakentia in the area of Rododafni in Penteli.¹⁹ The new styles of romantic inspiration that are introduced from abroad create buildings that are characterised by rich decorative elements. The blending of various elements leads Lyssandros Kaftantzoglou, professor of Architecture at the National Technical University of Athens, to write in 1878 a thesis titled "Addendum about the differences of the so-called romantic and Greek architecture" in which he analyses the two styles from the classicists' angle, praises classicism, and criticises romanticism arguing that the buildings constructed by his contemporaries are a failure, since they are an aggregation of various architectural styles altered in a distasteful manner that gives out a sense of something grotesque without character and purpose that cannot be chronologically defined.²⁰

The presence of the classic and the romantic, however, is not limited to architecture. Classic and romantic concepts also characterise neo-Hellenic play writing which from neoclassical tragedy and history drama is led at the end of the 19th century, following the trend in Europe, towards realism, naturalism and urban drama. The blending of neo-classical and romantic elements is obvious in the use of historical and thematological materials, in original theatrical productions and in the selection of the writers that were to be translated. During the first two decades of the 19th century that preceded the War of Independence and are placed in the movement of Greek Enlightenment, there is an exclusive use of history and ancient Greek mythology and that is because theatre is considered an important factor in the formulation of the Greek identity.²¹ As an immediate result of the Enlightenment, theatre takes on a clearly defined educational mission. It becomes a theatre of ideas and political thinking, it promotes the virtues of Democracy and tries to become the "school of the people".²² The references to ancient glory aim to elevate the patriotic feeling while the strengthening of social feelings, patriotism and love of freedom is sought after. Translations like *Themistoklis* of Metastasio whose play writing work was met with great success in the pre-revolutionary Balkans, the anti-tyrannical works of Alfieri, Voltaire, Monti as well as those of Greek writers like *Timoleon* by Ioannis Zampelios, *Armodios and Aristogiton* by George Lassanis, *Leonidas in Thermopylai* or *The Death of Demosthenes* by N. Pikkolos, promote the ideological conflict between

democratic spirit and authoritarianism, the faith of the citizen in Democracy and freedom and the condemnation of tyranny and despotism. The Greeks realised that not only individuals but society as a whole may be influenced by literary art works. The reading of literary texts is thought to influence readers' attitudes, and their political and ethical conscience.

With the creation of the Greek state and the flourishing of Athenian romanticism we see a convergence of classical and romantic elements, and theatre is led towards historical drama. However, historical themes are now connected with the need to crystallise a national identity and reflect the heroic pages of the recent past namely the Greek Revolution (i.e. *The death of Markos Botsaris*, *George Karaiskakis*, *Athens liberated* by Ioannis Pratonas). In the 1840s there are endless discussions about the need for the rebirth of play writing as far as the form of the play, the nature and the operation of the theatre are concerned. The need for a creation of a national theatre is gaining momentum. Romantic quests for the birth of a national drama are guided by European aesthetic trends like the theory of drama by Victor Hugo, *Play writing Lessons* by A. Wilhelm Schlegel, *Aesthetics* by Hegel. From the theoretical essays of the time the *Prologue* in the play *Frosyni* by Alexandros Rizos Ragavis which borrows greatly from the *Preface of Cromwell* by Hugo and suggests the abolition of the three classical units, is considered to be the first Greek theatrical manifesto. The Prolegomena to *National Greek Drama* that Vernardakis adds in his play *Maria Doxa Patri* constituted a second theatrical manifesto. Vernardakis who is influenced by Schlegel rejects neoclassical tragedy and orients himself towards Shakespeare and the Germans Schiller and Goethe; he also suggests the creation of a national drama whose axis would be the meanings homeland-faith-religion-freedom and this at a time when historicism is gaining ground and the triptych Antiquity-Byzantium-neo-Hellenism which constitutes the identity of the modern Greek is promoted by historians such as Paparrigopoulos, and philosophers such as Vrailas-Armenis whom I have mentioned before. Vernardakis supports the co-existence of comedy and tragedy in the repertoire of the national theatre. The composition of classical and romantic concepts is adopted by Ioannis Zampelios whose work refers to historic faces of Antiquity, of the Byzantine Empire and of the Greek revolution (*Timoleon*, *Konstantinos Palaiologos*, *Georgios Karaiskakis*, *Athanassios Diakos*, *Odyseas*

Androutsos, Ioannis Kapodistrias). The incorporation of the Byzantine period into the body of Greek history goes with the relevant concepts that are being formulated in Europe together with the will of the Greeks to show the unobstructed continuity of their history.²³

The play writing codes are introduced into Greece from France (Voltaire, Racine, Diderot), Italy (Alfieri, Foscolo) and Germany (Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Klopstock). Towards the end of the century the urban and psychological drama is introduced into Greece mainly from North Europe (England, Germany, Scandinavia). The theme of the works written is the one that occupies neo-Hellenic society (working class, social struggle). The generation of 1880 imposes new aesthetic concepts, rejects linguistic archaism (residue of archaeoplixia) and romanticism and promotes the realism of daily life. The transfer from the models of the Enlightenment to those of Romanticism are obvious in comedy as well. From Goldoni and Molière who meet with great success in Greece, Greek intellectuals shift to the comedy of morals and the representation of daily life.²⁴

The coexistence of classic and romantic concepts can be easily recognised also in the field of literature²⁵ which, just like theatre, has the ability to induce intense emotional and sensual experiences in the perceiver and serve as an instrument in changing people's attitudes, norms and behaviour; and the same holds true with painting. The Greeks in the 19th century saw art ideologically and although they relied on European standards, when they developed their aesthetic concepts but also when they created as artists, they tried to give a national character to the works of art they created namely with Greek thematology and national expression. The taking on of the classic and the romantic in the arts makes obvious any dependence on foreign standards, the artistic temperament of the Greek people who tried to combine tradition and novelty and to formulate the Greek adaptation of romantic classicism²⁶ incorporating creatively the European tradition in the local literary and folk tradition with classic or romantic thematology. By no means could we call original the ideas that the aestheticians and artists had and adopted in their works as far as the classic and romantic is concerned. However, we should note the ambitious perspective with which they faced the romanticism of the time and generally modern culture. Having gained the freedom of speech and expression that the revolutionary 19th century gave to nations and individuals, they express

their unlimited appreciation for the freedom of the individual and the people and their faith in the abilities of the human spirit. Above all romanticism was what gave them political freedom and led them to self-awareness and a re-evaluation of their cultural heritage and made them feel proud of being Greeks.

NOTES

1. Cf. Fani-Maria Tsigakou, *The Rediscovery of Greece, Travellers and Painters of the Romantic Era*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1981, p. 26.
2. Cf. M. Greenhalgh, *What is Classicism?* Academy edition, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1990, p. 24 ff.
3. G.L. von Maurer, *Das griechische Volk in öffentlicher kirchlicher und privatrechtlicher Beziehung von und nach dem Freiheitskampfe bis zum 31. Juli 1834*, Heidelberg, 1835, v. II, pp. 39-40; cited in Fani-Maria Tsigakou, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
4. Cf. Fani-Maria Tsigakou, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
5. Cf. Antonis Kotidis, *Hellenic Art, Painting of the 19th century*, Introduction by M. Plaka-Labraki, Athens, 1995.
6. *Neoclassical Architecture in Greece*, publication of the Commercial Bank of Greece, introduction by I. Travlos, Athens, 1967; cf. also K. Biris, *Athenian Studies*, Athens, 1939.
7. Cf. Lord Byron, *Letter ... on the Rev. W.L. Bowle's strictures on the life and writings of the Pope*, 1821, cited in Fani-Maria Tsigakou, *op. cit.*, p. 153.
8. For what follows see: P. Vrailas-Armenis, "The Classics and the Romantics", *Corpus*, Athens, 1973, vol. 4A, pp. 479-488.
9. P. Vrailas-Armenis, Introduction to "Philosophical Studies", *Corpus*, Thessaloniki, 1971, vol. 2, pp. 24-27.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
11. "On Architecture", *Corpus*, vol. 4A, pp. 240-258, and "On Sculpture", *ibid.*, p. 274.
12. "On Painting", *Corpus*, vol. 4A, pp. 310-314.
13. "On Ideal", *ibid.*, pp. 201 ff.
14. Stratoulis' views are expressed in his book *Essay on Callology namely Elements of Aesthetics*, Zante, 1856, pp. 270-282: "About classicism and romanticism from the aesthetic point of view".
15. Cf. *The Colour of Sculpture*, edited by Andreas Bluhm, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, 1996.
16. M. Renieris, *Essay on the History of Philosophy*, Athens, 1841, pp. 69-71.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
18. For what follows see: X. Skarpia-Choipel, *The Morphology of the German Classicism (1789-1848) and its Connection to the Greek Architecture (1833-1897)*, Ph.D., Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki, 1976, pp. 157-310.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 273 ff.

20. K. Biris, "Classicism and Romanticism in the Architecture of Athens", *Athenian Studies*, Athens, 1939, p. 31.

21. For what follows see: Anna Tabaki, *Neohellenic Theatrical Writing and its European Influences (18-19th c.)*, *A Comparative Approach*, Athens, 1993.

22. The speech of Konstantinos Assopios at the Greek school of Tergesti, *Ἑρμῆς ὁ Λόγιος*, 1817, p. 361.

23. Anna Tabaki, "Byzance à travers les Lumières néohelléniques (début du XVIIIe siècle-1830)", *XIX International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, University of Copenhagen, 18-21 August, 1996, pp. 318-335.

24. Anna Tabaki, "Classical and Romantic Aesthetics Aspects in the Neo-Hellenic Theatrical Writing", *Τὰ Τετράδια τῆς ΠΠΚ*, issue 4, 1993, pp. 90-97.

25. R. Beaton, Romanticism in Greece, *Romanticism in National Context*, ed. by Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988, pp. 92-108.

26. Cf. K. Baroutas, *Plastic Life and Aesthetic Education in 19th Century Athens, The art exhibitions, the art critique, the competitions, the art literature, the disputes of the artists and other facts*, Smili, Athens, 1990.