

of Derrida and Ricoeur in any other but suggestive terms, by neglecting to consider areas of conflict, Singer's eclecticism appears hurried on occasion.

Singer notes that metaphor *qua* trope is itself "a metaphor for the epistemological link between texts and ways of worldly knowledge" (23). In his critical readings Singer reviews how the manipulation of catachresis in *Nightwood*, *Second Skin*, and *How It Is* illustrates a specific epistemological bias toward skepticism and disjunction. In its articulation of discontinuity--rhetorical and psychological--catachresis is, as Singer notes, inherently reflexive. Rejecting the classical view of language as denomination and reference, each author emphasizes the generative capacity of tropic play, the tropes of fiction, and their manipulation, serve as homologues for epistemologies, human desire, and ideologies. Though not novel, this is a significant observation and, as theoretical premise, promotes a research project often identified though less frequently undertaken. His critical readings consider, then, "how the text produces an image of its own productivity" (75). His readings are imaginative, for the most part, though there are a couple of weaknesses. Syntax and jargon burden, on occasion, the flow of his discussion. Further terminological opacity sometimes lends an annoying allusiveness. In any event, these shortcomings notwithstanding, Singer's critical readings succeed in substantiating the theoretical claims that would support them.

Alexandros Papadiamantis

TALES FROM A GREEK ISLAND

Translated with an introduction and notes by Elizabeth Constantinides

Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987. Pp. xx + 176, \$16.95

Reviewed by John Taylor

In his classic *History of Neo-Hellenic Literature* (5th ed., 1972) Professor C. Th. Dimaras declares in effect that the work of the Greek writer Alexandros Papadiamantis can be read with pleasure only by people who are not connoisseurs of serious literature. But if until recently a large number of professors of literature have seconded this judgment, nearly all the outstanding writers and poets of Greece, from Papadiamantis's time (1851-1911) to the present, have championed "the saint of modern Greek letters," "the father of modern Greek prose." The poet Kostis Palamas counted among his early defenders. For C.P. Cavafy, Papadiamantis was the "pinnacle of pinnacles." Odysseus Elytis, who devoted a book to him, wrote in *The Axion Esti*: "Brothers, wherever evil finds you / wherever your minds grow muddled . . . invoke Alexandros Papadiamantis." And to these praises could be added articles, studies, literary memoirs, and creative works written by dozens of other Greek writers, such as the materials collected in *Alexandros Papadiamantis* (1979), *Fota olofota* (1981) and *Mnimosyno tou Alex. Papadiamanti* (1981). With the simultaneous publication of an exemplary critical edition by N.D. Triantafyllopoulos, it can be said at last that academic interest in Papadiamantis has been growing. This important translation by Elizabeth Constantinides has been impatiently awaited: only a few of Papadiamantis's 170 stories have previously appeared in English, though three different versions of his novella *The Murderess* (1903) do exist.

Above all, it is Papadiamantis's use of language which the Greek poets have praised, a richly textured, musical prose typically composed of the purist language (*katharevousa*) in the narrative parts and of the dialect of his native island, Skiathos, in the dialogues; but, as Constantinides points out, also complicated by the use of straightforward demotic forms, Byzantine ecclesiastical Greek and even Ancient Greek. Excepting Emmanuel Roidis (1836-1904) and Georgios Vizyinos (1849-1896), two outstanding contemporaries who also used *katharevousa* in combination with other levels of language, no Greek writer is more difficult to translate.

Constantinides's translation follows the original faithfully and for this reason reads more felicitously in the narrative descriptions than in the dialogues. Though in searching for an equivalent of the Skiathos dialect she rightly eschews English dialectal forms which for the reader would "bring associations and connotations that do not belong in stories about a small Greek island at the turn of the century," the mere use of a slang term or a contraction does not suffice to render a dialect; a syntax mirroring that of colloquial speech must also be employed. Sometimes in the dialogues Constantinides follows the Greek too closely; sometimes the speeches, with a slang term or a contraction inserted, are corseted in the same syntax employed in the more elegant English of the narrative descriptions. And of course it is important when translating dialogue to determine whether a character is shouting, whispering, or speaking in a normal tone. If shouting in English, wouldn't Mr. Monahakis shout "hey!" instead of the sibilant "say!" ascribed to him (40; the Greek is indeed "e!")?

The translation is, however, readable throughout. A fault much more grievous than the occasionally inadequate English equivalent--once again, the obstacles involved in rendering Papadiamantis into English are overwhelming--is that the paragraph breaks in the Triantafyllopoulos edition are not respected. In a translation, paragraphs cannot always be started and ended as in the original, but here they are rarely so and Papadiamantis is a writer for whom a paragraph is often a matter of two or three sentences. In addition, in the Greek text direct discourse is indented; i.e., only rarely embedded in a paragraph or attached to an introductory sentence. The often prolix descriptions and digressions found in a story by Papadiamantis read much more easily when the paragraphs are arranged as in the original, than when they appear arranged as they are here, in unjustifiably cumbersome lengths. Several of Papadiamantis's notorious repetitions, so often criticized by the professors, can likewise (in the short paragraphs of the original) be seen as the natural transitions or repetitions of the engaging storyteller.

There are a few other problems. The translator might have respected the italics sometimes used by the author for matters of emphasis (e.g.: the "yet" in "So you haven't yet decided to remarry," 55). Here and there a phrase is suppressed without explanation (e.g.: the phrase "ego o satyriskos tou vounou" is missing, 90). In his most famous story, "A Dream among the Waters," Papadiamantis introduces "Ksarmeno" as a local variant of the place-name "Xanemo," then, typically, proceeds to explain its etymology; there is no reason to replace the former term by the latter in the translation (85). One of the most telling characteristics of a story by Papadiamantis is indeed the topographical and toponymical precision, a quality which in turn reinforces the credibility of the narrator as an "insider." Movingly manifest in the care with which the author designates and describes places is also his love, indeed his nostalgia, for his native island.

Similar is the genealogical precision of his stories, the author ever specifying who exactly is the mother or father of whom, a stylistic trait perfectly suited to the village community which he describes and to the language which therein was spoken; but such genealogical alignments sometimes lead the translator into unnatural avoidances of the Saxon genitive, unless of course a language reminiscent of the King James Version of the Bible was intended (cf. "Zogara, Zakhos's mother," 97 and such phrases as "Kratira, the daughter of Andreola," 48). And why in "Fortune from America" is the name "Yiannis" translated as "John," a former practice of translators, whereas elsewhere in the stories the Greek names are transliterated? Why is *laghouto* sometimes translated as "lute" and sometimes simply transliterated? Why is *violia* (or a derivative term) sometimes translated as "violin" and sometimes, more correctly, as "fiddle"? Repeated in the introduction (xix) is the common bibliographic error that Papadiamantis, who published his stories in magazines, never saw a selection published in book form in his lifetime. In fact a French translation of two stories appeared in book form in 1908.

This selection of twelve stories offers several of the best and most famous ones, and through them all the major themes of Papadiamantis's work: the superstitions of village life, the corruption of the Orthodox faith, the plight of women abandoned by their husbands or sons, the oppressive obligation of dowering girls, the necessity of economic emi-

gration and the pernicious influx of foreign mores into Greek life, the extreme poverty of the times, the ravages of tuberculosis and alcoholism. Constantinides compares the Greek writer to Thomas Hardy, Alphonse Daudet, Theodor Storm, and Giovanni Verga. Though their styles differ to the extent that Papadiamantis was a realist who must have found affinities with several of the French, English or American realists whose work he translated into Greek (e.g., Twain, Harte, Kipling, Zola, Maupassant), some of these tales will recall the Puritan world of Nathaniel Hawthorne: both authors were perspicacious explorers of evil, of the shadowy realms of the human soul, of the role of religion in a tightly-knit village community. Characters in the works of both authors attain as well a mythical or biblical dimension and Constantinides, referring to such stories as "The American," "Love the Harvester," and "The Haunted Bridge," makes the interesting observation that long before James Joyce "Papadiamantis had used myth as an organizing principle and had made, to quote Eliot on Joyce, a 'continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity.'"

With greater explicitness, however, than in Hawthorne's ever-allusive *Twice-Told Tales* or *The Scarlet Letter*, several of Papadiamantis's stories are marked by a delicate, voyeuristic eroticism. In "Love the Harvester" the narrator notes: "As soon as they left the little town, the girl said she was hot and removed her bodice. Then, with only a long-sleeved chemise over her white cotton camisole, her slender waist, graceful stance, and smooth breasts showed to greater advantage. The swelling flesh beneath the thin camisole hinted that here was a store of pale lilies, dewy and freshly cut, with veins the color of a white rose" (104). The most memorable erotic scene occurs in "A Dream among the Waters," where, from behind a rock, the narrator observes Moschoula bathing in the nude (91). That, with the more modest image of an accidental joining of hands - such as in "The Homesick Wife" (25) - Papadiamantis can powerfully evoke the tension of amorous longing derived from his mastery of the difficult art of suggestiveness. Stylistically, such suggestiveness is ever in balance with the author's meticulous descriptions of, for example, local customs and landscapes.

For, as Greek writers and poets have long insisted, it is to Papadiamantis's style that one must look to comprehend in turn the originality of other aspects of his narrative art. He is far from being - perhaps because of his extensive, early experience as a translator - the country-bumpkin author which he was formerly accused of being; behind the apparent naiveté lies a sure sense of literary technique. Papadiamantis, criticized so often for the seemingly haphazard construction of his stories, consciously followed the impulses of an authentic, original, and profound inspiration. What once seemed to be a regional art, more of folkloristic than of literary interest, moves us still, nearly a century later. It can only be hoped that this translation of twelve stories will encourage the translation of all the others, so that at last Alexandros Papadiamantis can take his rightful place, outside of Greece and neo-hellenistic circles, as a major world classic.

Shirley Neuman, ed.

ANOTHER COUNTRY: WRITINGS BY AND ABOUT HENRY KREISEL

Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1985. Pp. 362, \$9.95

Reviewed by Amin Malak

In one of the interviews reprinted in *Another Country: Writings by and about Henry Kreisel*, Kreisel refers to one of his teachers as "a man of great compassion and deep humanity"; any reader of Kreisel would gather similar warm feelings about him, the dedicated academic, the original critic, and, above all, the talented fiction writer. His two novels *The Rich Man* (1948), *The Betrayal* (1964) and his engaging collection of short stories *The Almost Meeting* (1981) skilfully and effectively articulate the human need for