

Alexandros Pallis and the English Poetry for Children: An Intertextual Reading

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Abstract

The present article focuses on the relationship between Alexandros Pallis (1851-1935), a Greek poet who lived in Liverpool, and the English Poetry for Children of the 19th century. After briefly defining the historical context of the poet and his works, an intertextual reading of both his poems for children and the poems of English poets who were either earlier than or subsequent to Pallis is attempted. The need for such a reading is dictated mainly by the fact that a large number of Pallis's poems have an indication showing that they are based on foreign models, in their majority English and Scottish. Although the aim of the present article is to correlate Pallis's poetry with the English poetic tradition for children rather than identify his poems with their foreign sources, the comparative reading leads to the accurate identification of only one English poem, which Pallis actually recomposes, as well as to the very possible connection of several of his poems with English poems for children, including the verses written by Scottish R. L. Stevenson. After this comparative consideration, the European orientation of Pallis's poetry along with his particular contribution to the renewal of the Greek poetry for children is largely emphasized.

Keywords

Intertextuality, Alexandros Pallis, English Poetry for Children

1. As an Introduction

This compendious study doesn't accede to those "influentialogical" approaches that, in the context of Comparative Literature, they devote almost obsessively their interest to discovering the primary sources from which an author was inspired or derived his/her material. Although similar studies have prevailed for many decades within the field of Comparative Studies, establishing a supranational view of Literature alongside the de facto acceptance of a genetic-causal re-

relationship between “great literature” and “mere literature” (Jauss, 1982: p. 9), in this article we adopt the revised perspective of modern Comparative Literature. Consequently, we follow the shift of interest from research of sources and influences to the investigation of aesthetic communication between national literatures. For this reason, we also intersect with concepts, such as influence, perception, and intertextuality, which, borrowed from the Theory of Literature, prove to be crucial to the new paradigm of comparative view of literary texts, especially of Pallis’s poems for children.

The notion of influence as a mechanism through which a literary work contributes to the conception of another text (Brunel et al., 1983: p. 94), with all the writing and reading anxieties it entails according to Harold Bloom (1997: pp. 12-16), has been the basis of the establishment of Comparative Literature. However, today it is even broadened further to cover the full range of issues of literary and wider cultural communication, so it inevitably seeks the help of Literary Theory, thus incorporating issues such as reception/response and intertextuality, to highlight the dynamic relationship between texts. For Hans Robert Jauss (1982: pp. 8-10, 13-14, 20-28, 32-36, 122-127, 135-137) reception is a productive process that constitutes a dynamic literary communication between old and new texts, aiming to free them from causal dependencies and to reveal their interactive relations.¹ Because reception is an active as well as a conscious confrontation with an earlier work, while influences may occur unconsciously and independently of the author’s will (Grabovzski, 2011: p. 111), it should be considered as a narrower concept than that of influence. Therefore, reception brings to the fore the neglected, underestimated factors of literary communication, namely the readers, emphasizing their catalytic role in the revision of the dogmatic certainties of the 19th century, but also in the expansion of the literary canon (Jauss, 1982: pp. 44-45, 140-148). Similar views, however, re-highlight the role of the reader, who is ultimately in charge of the meaning of the text and is called upon to relate what is stated through the intertexts, since intertextuality is not only related to the creation of the texts but also to the process of reading them. The last wording thus directly connects us with Michael Riffaterre (1978: pp. 1-8; 1983: pp. 10-25), who argues that the literary phenomenon is born through the dialectical relationship between text and reader, since it is not exclusively the textual signs serving any interpretation but also all the possible reactions of their readers. Needless to say, all of the above theoretical views set out in this article inspire the way we will read Pallis’s poems intertextually.

Although not guided by an “anxiety of influence”, in Harold Bloom’s terms, Pallis seems to utilize creatively, originally and without guilt or inferiority complex the readings of other poets in the composition of his poems for children. At the same time, he seems to be possessed by a permanent tendency to read and learn constantly, as well as by the expectation of the continuity of his poems over

¹In this combined volume, under the title: *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, Jauss brings together some of his older individual studies. Of special interest are the Chapter One entitled: “Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory” (pp. 3-45), and the Chapter Four entitled: “Goethe’s and Valéry’s *Faust*: On the Hermeneutics of Question and Answer” (pp. 110-138).

time. For the above reasons he does not hesitate to reveal even vaguely their intertextual conversation, while he often dares to transcend provocatively the poetic texts that influenced him and does not reveal his sources. Precisely, because he does not share with those who seem to have been influenced a common literary tradition, his conversation consciously transcends literary similarities, whilst he does not dwell on coincidences or analogies to reflect the “valuable” effect. This, moreover, as will be shown below, also reflects his poetic canon concerning the translation of literary texts.

Alexandros Pallis (1851-1935) is placed by the modern Histories of Greek Literature as the foremost poet of his predecessors, who wrote for children, and recommends his being a peculiar case in Modern Greek Literature. Born in Piraeus he spent most of his life abroad, in England, because of his commercial activity. Without systematic literary studies but with a call for humanities and literary activities (Papakostas, 1985: pp. 142-143), with a strong and combative character as well as consistency in his ideology, he occupied a special position among the men of letters of his era and, particularly, among those who supported the usage of modern Greek language (demotic language), such as Argyris Eftaliotis and Giannis Psycharis (Melas, 1954: p. 709).

However, apart from the attribute as a supporter of the demotic language, which mainly characterizes him and defines his style as a man of letters, another attribute running through his entire life and work is that of the translator, who believes that the innate ability and adequacy of demotic (language) as a system of language may help the people read classical or scientific texts. Among the works he translated are: *Antigoni* (Antigone) (1879) by Sophocles, *Iliada* (Iliad) (1892) by Homer and *Cyclopas* (Cyclops) (1906) by Euripides, several works of Shakespeare, such as *The Merchant of Venice* (1894), the translation of the *Gospels* (1901) and the translation, carried out together with G. Marketis, of part of Kant's *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft* (1781) [known as *Kritiki tou Adolou Logismou* (1904)]. His undiminished interest in the developments of his time, which is inevitably associated with the possible influences he receives from the literary productions of his time, is also expressed through various articles, such as “The Dodecanesian Sin” (Liverpool, 1919) “Notes on St. John and the Apocalypse” (Oxford, 1927), and “Fascism” (Liverpool, 1931), etc. We would argue, therefore, that the broadness of Pallis's spirit directly connects him to the essence of Comparative Literature, while we would say that he accomplishes far ahead of his time what Michel Espagne and Michael Werner (1991) call “transferts culturels” (“cultural transfers”), bringing to the fore the dynamics that develops in the context of international and expanded exchanges, the parameters of which include Literature. Politically and socially aware, Pallis receives stimuli from a variety of other activities, as he travels, watches the intellectual and social developments of his time, participates and reacts, reads and writes. By seeking broader cultural communication with the era and with its people, he manages the challenges of influences and the issues of hiring his works, as well as their intertextual conversation with the works of his European, mainly English, peers. And

if we were to attribute something “blamable” to Pallis, it would not be “an agony of influence”, conscious or not, but the eagerness of the reading realization of his poetic texts for children and the recognition of their intertextual dynamics. The latter along with the relations of Pallis’s poetry with older poetry and its influence on newer poetry, we seek to highlight in the context of this study.

2. Pallis’s Verses for (His) Children

Despite his wide range of translations and other writings, the very literary work of Pallis (1889) is limited: two poetic collections, *Tragoudakia gia Paidia (Little Songs for Children)*² and *Tampouras kai Kopanos (Stringed Instrument and Clobber)* (1907), and a narrative – a peculiar travelogue – *Broussos (Prussus)* (1923). That is the reason why Pallis is thought to have shown a bounded literary ability, although in many cases he is considered to have rather consciously tried to subordinate the nature of the poet to the role of the reformer of language, which he has finally achieved.

The collection *Tragoudakia gia Paidia* (1889), written in pure demotic language, signals a new view on the poetry for children and appears one year after the Psycharis’ book *To Taxidi mou (My Journey)* (1888), which presents the philosophy and the principles of the Demoticism, the movement for the establishment of the demotic language. Until then, despite earnest efforts of creators, such as Elias Tantalidis, Alexandros Katakouzinis, Georgios Vizyenos, or Dimitrios Kambouroglous, poems for children were written in a difficult and confusing language, mainly archaic or katharevousa (purist Greek), and were described by facile sentimentalization or unreasonable simplicity as well as a frequently sheer authoritarianism.

Most of the twenty-five (25) *Tragoudakia* of Pallis, with their cheerful and musical disposition, are creative adaptations of foreign models rather than imitations. They were not written in order to serve as a poetic collection, as they were intended for his own children, but “with the hope that they might be useful to other Greek children”,³ according to his own words appearing on the original inside cover of the edition (Pallis, 1889: p. 4). Needless to note here that Pallis first appeared as a poet with the poems he wrote for (his) children. However, regardless of their intention, these poems seem to have made a great impression when they were published. The famous and “severe” university professor of History Dimitrios Vernardakis was among the first to praise them for both their “genuine and unadulterated” (demotic) language and the completeness of their diction.⁴ Kostis Palamas (1960: p. 36), a dominant poet figure of the Greek literary generation of the 1880s and one of the cofounders of the so-called New Athenian School,

²Since almost all of Pallis’s works are in Greek, a language very likely unfamiliar to most readers, in this study we consider it fair first to transliterate/to spell phonetically every Greek title, views, or verses, quoted or mentioned, into Latin characters and then to give their meaning to English as comprehensively as possible.

³Unless otherwise stated in the bibliographic identity of the sources used throughout this paper, any responsibility for the translation into English rests solely with us.

⁴From a letter from D. Vernardakis to A. Pallis; extract of the letter is cited by Dimitris Giakos (1954: p. 723).

thinking of these poems as the only worthy poems for children Greeks acquired until that moment, talked enthusiastically about the Pallis's verses, which do not cease to be poetic while being childish. As for the poet and critic Tellos Agras, the poems of Pallis were true findings for Greek Children's Literature and could be compared only with the *Ta Chelidonia (The Swallows)* (1920) by Zacharias Papantoniou (Agras, 1935: pp. 4-5). The poet Stelios Sperantzas (1954: p. 716) claims that Pallis opened up the way as one of the first, if he was not the first, to the proper Children's Literature'. Finally, the philologist and university professor Emmanuel Kriaras (1985: pp. 28-29) states that the *Tragoudakia* was not only another expression of Pallis's interest in enlightening the young, but also an evidence of his active contribution to the scholastic and social matters of his time. Indeed, Pallis's attempt to have the child-reader of his child-centric poetry confronted with everyday life as well as with the contemporary social issues and developments is probably associated with the influence exercised to him by the English positivists and empiricists. Such an attempt was nothing but a political act when it was made, taking into account conditions and necessities (Delonis, 1985: pp. 45-46).

Many scholars underline the educational aspect of Pallis's verses. According to Professor K. Th. Dimaras, Pallis in his poems, which seem to be a "sudden jump" in the face of earlier similar efforts, appears as a pioneer of a new pedagogy that respect child's peculiarity and needs. Whether he writes original poems or translates, fun, coolness, the joy of life flow from his children's poems (Dimaras, 1987: p. 366). Pallis actually demystifies poetry for children written in his time and makes a turn to language and to children's needs, which will be followed by all pioneer intellects and educators of the early 20th century (Benekos, 1981: p. 47). Thus, the center of gravity of literary works is transferred from the general and abstract to the specific and individual (personal), which was a demand of the period and the literary generation of the 1880s. If all the above views and the moment the collection was published, which actually coincides with the commencement and culmination of the struggle over the language - are quantified, it is easy to understand the reason why these poems of Pallis drew often negative or even hostile criticism.⁵ However, the response to the *Tragoudakia* from the readers and the general success they had (republished in 1899), encouraged Pallis to proceed to a final edition, under the title *Tampouras kai Kopanos (Stringed Instrument and Clobber)* (1907). In this edition, there are some differences concerning the number and the titles of the poems included, the short prologue of Pallis appearing in the 1889 publication has been removed, while all the texts of the edition are written in capitals, which seem to be the choice of the publisher in Liverpool and not of the poet himself.

The entire edition *Tampouras kai Kopanos* - with very few differentiations in the poems for children, such as "I chira tou kyr Deina" ("The widow of Mr. Someone"), which appears as "I kyra Deinaina" ("Mrs. Someone's"), which we

⁵It mainly concerns the disapprovals and attacks of the followers of Mistriotis. For more information see Triantaphyllidis Manolis (1963: p. 112) (and on the following pages), where the report of the "Epitropi pros Exetasin tis Glossikis Didaskalias ton Dimotikon Scholeion" [Committee for Examination of the Language Teaching in Primary Schools] appears).

will approach intertextually below, is later included in *Koufia Karydia (Hollow Nuts)* (Liverpool, 1915)⁶ along with other works of Pallis. This publication, which finally includes twenty-seven poems for children, is the last one published in Liverpool while Pallis was still alive.⁷ In the republications of his poems for children Pallis attempts often to change not only the order the poems are published but also the titles, the stanzas, entire verses or even individual words. This fact, in combination with his practice of marking some poems with the indications “From English”, “According to English”, etc., shows the gradual, probably torturing, process his individual language and poetic idea went through in order to mature, as well as his relationship with the European literature of the time due to the place and the way he lived. Of the twenty-seven poems finally composing his poetry for children the eleven are modelled on a foreign poem. Two are subtitled “In French”, two are “From English”, six are “According to English”, while only one, “I KYRA DEINAINA”, is subtitled: “The first stanza is according to an English song”, without other specific information.

The first publication of Pallis’s poems in 1889 made the same impression as the quite earlier publication of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) of Lewis Carroll, with its impact on the English society, because it recanted didacticism and promoted the importance of children’s entertainment through reading (Benekos 33-34). Lots of scholars consider that the influence from the atmosphere of the English literature for children is obvious in Pallis’s poetry. Tellos Agras (1935: pp. 4-5), for example, underlined that Pallis, before writing his own poems, had been introduced to the meaning of the “childish poetics” by the English poets, and had been particularly influenced by R. L. Stevenson, whose poetics could be detected in *Tragoudakia*. The names of other contemporary poets with Pallis are also reported, such as A. Tenyson, R. Kipling, and E. Lear (Karakitsios, 2002: p. 60).

3. Towards Intertextuality

It is well known that the basis for the development of the theory of intertextuality is Mikhail Bakhtin’s (1984: pp. 6-8; 1981: pp. 344-355) theory of dialogism. As he argues, in a text there are different and autonomous ideological voices that interact with each other, without being manipulated by the author, so texts live through their interaction with other texts in virtue of discourse transmission. Despite the variety of interpretations and definitions given to the term “intertextuality”,⁸ in its simplest form means that literary texts depend on each other, meet and intersect with other texts. Authors, when writing, imitate other writers, take advantage of the legacy of literary genres (poetry, short story, etc.), refer to other

⁶The poems of Alexandros Pallis quoted (in part only), or by title, in this article are taken from this edition and all subsequent page references will be included in the text (only with page numbers in parentheses).

⁷In this publication Pallis signs as “Lekas Arvanitis Malliaros”, a pseudonym that indicates his origin from the Greek region of Epirus, his persistent character, and his preference for the popular/demotic language of the Greek people.

⁸For exhaustive details about the routes and the diversity of the term’s content, see Graham Allen’s book (2000), the first full-length study on intertextuality.

works, quote or transform excerpts from other works. In any case, is this “interpenetrative relation between texts” that could animate the substance of the terms “intertextuality” and “intertext” (Niazi, 2000: p. 97). The term was first used by Julia Kristeva (1969: p. 85), to denote the intersections between texts, considering that each text is a mosaic of quotations, namely that each text absorbs and transforms another text. Texts can be images, structural patterns, phrases, passages, and even words with a special semantic weight that are embedded in the new text. For Gérard Genette (1979), intertextual relations appear in various forms, but their common principle shows the author as a non-unique or absolute and authentic creator. Roland Barthes (1977: pp. 142-148) talks about the elimination of the author as the ultimate subject of literature and, at the same time, he stresses the emergence of the text as a place of intersecting quotations and writings in constant interaction. Michael Riffaterre (1978: p. 12) will note that the literary phenomenon is born exclusively from the dialectical relationship between text and reader, where the text must be considered as independent of non-linguistic/non textual references or influences and the structure of literary language from the perspective of the reader. Literary experience, according to Riffaterre (1983: p. 2; 1978: p. 2), is essentially intertextual, it is an exercise in alienation from our ordinary thoughts, expressions and perceptions, while readers resist the text and try to appropriate what is not familiar to them. Other theorists, such as Rosenblatt (1978) or Iser (1978), attempting to describe the reading process, although they do not explicitly use the term intertextuality, broaden its content, leaving more space for the reader’s role and experience of both life and (literary) texts.

The “declared” intertextual connection between many of Pallis’s poems and foreign models would permit, according to Julia Kristeva (1969: p. 146), the interdependence and continuous communication between the texts at the level of literary creation, as well as a possible (intertextual) transaction of reading experience during the act of reading. Intertextuality, as a way of writing, is not exhausted when the intertext is identified with the “sources” of a literary work or with the “influences” exercised by a writer on another. According to Kristeva (1993: p. 15, 66), the intertextual intervention and “discussion” is a lengthier process and involves mainly the movement or transfer of a “system of points” to another, as well as the differentiation or restatement of its already declared or stated expression. As a result, intertextuality is definitely connected with the comparative approach and study of literature, while individual words or clichés, wordplays and conventions, preconditions, myths, citations and descriptive systems (word mythologies), etc., may serve as intertexts (Samaras, 1987: p. 23). Readers become the co-creators of the text during an intertextual reading, because they have to analyze the textual reality and, moving between textual indications and reading expectations, to understand intertextual discussion and achieve the “interpretation” of the text, which finally dwells in both the readers and the texts (Wilkie, 1999: p. 131). The view that texts are “produced” and the readers understand them only with respect to the codes already incorporated into them, which are found in the readers as well as in the texts and the authors who are also readers, puts to the ques-

tion every attempt towards original textuality or reliable and delicate reading. At the same time it suggests the idea of a dynamic model of intertextuality, since the intertextual intervention or infiltration specifies any text and reading (Genette, 1979: pp. 85-90). Even Structuralist Riffaterre, whose theory is based on the central idea of Julia Kristeva (1993: pp. 65-66) that the concept of intertextuality refers to the relationship between the texts that governing their writing and reading—stresses that the literary text itself guides the reader in locating its contents and reveals their identity, even in the form of a hypothesis or expectation. In any case, such a reader is not obliged to discover all the texts (Riffaterre, 1978: pp. 81-114; 1983: pp. 10-25; 1990: pp. 56-62, 76-77) but those that are recognizable to him. Provided that no studies have been published regarding the intertextual connections of Pallis's poetry, such a perception of the intertextual procedure is dictated mainly by the need to examine all those possible processes, including the intertextual ones, which configure the process of reading and define the style in which the poetic texts of Pallis are read.

4. Searching for Pallis's Intertexts

The fact that Pallis seems to hush his foreign models up does not degrade the value of his inspiration and the importance of the intertextual, broader and narrower, framework of his poetry. Besides, Pallis was always very selective about his sources,⁹ while the confession of the style of his poetic texts and their intertexts should not be considered a fortuitous event. It must result from more specific and broader pursuits of the poet as well as from his literary, scholastic and social interests, which brought him closer to the literary production, both Greek and European, of his time. Thus, he inevitably gets as far as to the European poetry for children in order to activate his inspiration by exposing the possible parameters of the European literary tradition and by bridging his ideology with the aesthetics of his verses.

Although it is difficult to identify the poems of Pallis with their models or with other poems written by English poets, the necessary, yet effortless, perambulation mainly in the English poetry for children has been quite fruitful. The first stanza of the poem "KYRA DEINAINA" (Mrs. Someone's), subtitled "according to an English song", directs to the "Old Mother Hubbard" of George Cooper (1840-1927). However, even at first reading, it is obvious that it is not only the first stanza of Cooper's poem that formed the basis for the poem of Pallis, but also the second, the third and the last one. The first three stanzas of Cooper's poem¹⁰ are hereby cited for reasons that will become obvious later:

Old Mother Hubbard
Went to the cupboard,
To get her poor dog a bone:
But when she got there

⁹The details of the way Pallis worked (mainly intellectually) are given by his son A. A. Pallis (1953).

¹⁰The poem is taken from: Stevenson, 1912: pp. 51-53.

The cupboard was bare,
And so the poor dog had none.

She went to the baker's
To buy him some bread,
But when she came back
The poor dog was dead.

She went to the joiner's
To buy him a coffin,
But when she came back
The poor dog was laughing.

In sixteen (16) stanzas Cooper describes the relationship of an elderly lady with her dog, intercalating a series of jokes and amusing incidents: the dog pretends that it is dead, the dog is smoking a pipe, is feeding a cat, dancing, playing the flute, wearing clothes, reading a newspaper...and...finally, dies in the sixteenth stanza (!). The “able-bodied” Mother Hubbard has no reason and no intention of calling a doctor for her dog but, after its death, she builds a monument to her dear friend!

Below the version of Pallis:

<p>I CHIRA TOU KYR DEINA PAGAI NEI STIN KOUZINA NA FER EI TOU SKYL IOU TO MERTIKO. ME T' ADEIO TIS KEFALI XECHNAEI POU TOCHE VALEI, KAI MENEI TO SKYLI TIS NISTIKO.</p> <p>PAGAI NEI STOU FOURNARI KOULLOURIA NA TOU PAREI, KAI DYIO KOULLOURIA PAIRNEI STRONGYLA. MA SA GYRIZEI SPITI ME TI MAVIA TIS MYTI, TI VLEPEI TO SKYLI TIS KAI GELA.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>ZITAEI VARY LITHARI CHAMO U, OCH TI GIS , NA PAREI, CHTYPONTAS TA NA VGAL EI TO THYMO. OS NAN TA KATAFER EI ME TO KOULLO TIC CHERI, TIC DANKACAN TO SKYLO STO LAIMO.</p> <p>ME KLAMATA I KAIMENI GERONTICCA PAGAI NEI NA KRAXEI TO GIATRO GIA TO SKYLI. ME TO KOUTSO TIS VIMA OS POU NA PAEI, TI KRIMA! O SKYLOS TA XEFTIZEI STIN AVLI. (487-488)</p>	<p>(The widow of Someone's goes to the kitchen to bring the dog's share. With her empty head forgets where she had put it, and her dog stays unfed.</p> <p>She goes to the baker bread rolls to get the dog, and two bread rolls she gets round. But when she returns home with her mauve nose, her dog sees her and laughs.</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>She asks for a heavy stone down, oh, from the earth to take, hitting them to vent their anger. Until she succeeds with her disable hand, they bit the dog on neck.</p> <p>With tears the poor old woman goes to call the doctor for the dog With her bum step until she goes, what a pity! the dog dies in the yard).</p>
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Pallis, taking his cue, describes in an amusing way the relationship of an elderly, lame, disable, cross-eyed lady with her dog. The dog laughs, frisks, runs, and dies after it has been attacked by two other dogs. The love of the woman for her four-legged friend becomes obvious as she tries to keep the dogs that bite him away, to take care of him and to call the doctor. On the other hand, she does not hesitate to take a helve and hit the dog, when it tries to fool her by pretending it is dead.

The style, the apparent musical disposition and the overall poem of Cooper is reminiscent of English literary tradition of Nursery Rhymes.¹¹ These little poems, despite their often extensive form, through the usually articulated narration, the repeated words and wordplays, the unexpected rhymes and the realistic and amusing pictures, are easy to memorise and very pleasing to (their) little listeners, mainly pre-readers, who sing them (Hunt, 1995: pp. 61-67, 199). Pallis is inspired by the main idea of Cooper's poem and recounts exactly the same incidents, maintaining to some extent the light and playful atmosphere of the model. However, he works it up and alters its narrative flow and the presence of his heroes so much that his poem becomes a "counter-text", as it hardly reminds us of its direct intertext, which is actually parodied, followed by an obviously humorous disposition, which stands as an intertextual indication (Riffaterre, 1978: p. 115). In this way, T. S. Eliot, who said that the immature poets imitate the original while the good ones turn it into something different, is confirmed. It proves here, then, that while in imitation a writer faithfully adopts the organization and style of another, earlier text, the mechanism is a creative elaboration and transcendence of the earlier text, of the foreigner, and is found in works with a strong personal character that are representative of their author (Zima, 2011: p. 145).

Although differentiated, the meanings of only the first, the second and the third stanza are actually maintained from the entire poem of the English poet and are incorporated into the first two stanzas of his poem. In both poems the "anti-hero" dog dies in the last stanza. Cooper gives him an unexpected and unjustifiable end, while Pallis holds in store a "bitter" end for him and justifies it by recounting a "bloody" incident. The way Pallis exploits the poem of Cooper reflects his opinion on translation, his own "system": "When you read the original, your mind represents an image. This image should give the translation..." (Pallis, 1915: p. 311). This conviction of Pallis – given the prevalent view of the time, which advocated that the translator should be almost identified with the author of the text to be translated and, concomitantly, the translator should be attached to the work of the author – is pioneering and of particular interest. Based on the principle of "synchronization", as remarked by the poet and critic Kleon Paraschos (1935: p. 383), according to which the work is zestfully and synchronically dealt with by the translator, the latter is actually empowered to act more freely, to adapt, to introduce anachronisms and even to diffuse the atmosphere of the

¹¹Just to recall an idea for this kind of rhymes, see indicatively the book *The Puffin Book of Nursery Rhymes*, edited by Iona Opie and Peter Opie (1963).

original in order to make the translation more modern, closer “to us”. As a result, the translator takes into account the readers he has in mind and speaks to, giving the translation a more personal style, although he does not avoid some extremities caused by the exclusive implementation of each similar “system”. In fact, Pallis with these weapons, although without a systematic literary background, becomes original by creating unique texts, whose value has been appreciated even by modern critics.

As for the reading, the (inter)textual processes suggested by the poem of Pallis are of particular interest here. The title of the poem is not a positive indication of its interpretation, while the subtitling indication “according to an English song” referring only to the first stanza, is a clear direction for intertextual reference that makes readers searching for the intertext, as long as their pre-existing relative knowledge is helpful, and inevitably affects any signification thus serving as a key to interpretation, as an “interpretant” (Riffaterre, 1978: pp. 81-114; 1983: pp. 10-25). Readers may draw similar experiences from their own stock in order to understand the textually materialized experience. Thus, readers should look for the intertext of the stanza, but possibly without many chances of success.¹² This parenthetical indication weakens as soon as readers “buckle down” to the action of reading, they start to (re)live the experience supporting the poem and is incorporated in its text. When readers are involved in this way and right from the start in the reading process of the poem and proceed to the other stanzas, they would have the feeling that it is probably a poetic device, since there is no other obvious evidence indicating an intertextual intervention, and leading them to the comparison with another text. Besides, Pallis here repeats himself using his usual style and, mainly his language that is his “trademark”, and resorts to several intertextual interventions in the particular poem, which are actually imposed to readers. However, such a feeling may stop the pleasure of reading because it actually prevents readers from intertextual interaction, while they have so many chances to go through the interaction between their own experience and the experience of the text during the reading process that the “deception” of the poet activates them even more, particularly when they are made to explore the emotions provoked by the last incidents of the poem (Rosenblatt, 1978: pp. 24-25). Finally, the common reader does not think that the act of reading the poem is as complicated as it seemed in the beginning, since it is feasible even without successful intertextual pursuits.

The most logical explanation of the above “oddness”, which has more or less been ciphered out by the creator himself, must be related with the actual incidents of Pallis’s poetic composition. It is known that his poems for children were written for his own children that were brought up in an English-speaking environment and were in direct contact with the literary production of the time and,

¹²Except for Pallis’s children who were living in England at that time, in a family milieu that was rich in literary stimuli, a question – which is of particular interest in the reception of this poetry – might arise here as a rather rational one: How could a child (reader) in Greece of the late 19th century could know the poem of a rather minor English poet?

particularly, the production intended for children. As a result, his own children possibly knew the original poem and were able to read intertextually their father's poem as well. Perhaps that is the reason why the subtitling indication does not name the English poem, as it happens in all Pallis's poems, thus functioning as an intertextual play rather than a necessary, or compulsory, intertextual reference that readers must reach (Riffaterre, 1990: pp. 57-58, 74-78).

It should also be noted that some poems of Pallis reflect in many cases, although without the clearness of the previous example, influences from other English poets. For example, the following poems may imply an intertextual "discussion": "Morning" by Jane Taylor (1804), "The Little Girl to her Dolly" by Jane and Ann Taylor (1806), and "My Little Doll" by Charles Kingsley (1862)¹³ might converse intertextually with Pallis's poems: "TRAGOUDAKI" ("Little song") (457), "KALIMEROUDIA" ("Good morning") (463), "SIGA" ("Slowly") (479) or "GIATROS" ("Doctor") (486), respectively; the poem "Wishing" of William Allingham (1854)¹⁴ with the poem "POS ITHELA" ("How I would like") of Pallis (485); the poem "To my Dog" of Tom Hood (1861)¹⁵ with the poems "SKYLOS" ("Dog") (471-472) and "MALLIAROS" ("Woolly") (477-478) of Pallis, though it should be pointed out that there is no indication that they are modelled on some foreign models, etc. Furthermore, there is some evidence in Pallis's poetry clearly referring to mainly stylistic characteristics of the English, among others, 19th century poetry for children: the pervasive and sometimes catalytic and merciful humour, the unexpected or unforeseen development of the "myth" and a feeling of "nonsense" and grotesque.¹⁶ Many poems - like: "KLOSSAS LATHOS" ("Hen's wrong") (462), "FOUNTOUKOS" ("A hazel brown dog") (464), "PERNONTAS" ("Passing") (466-70), "KOPELOUDA KAI POULAKI" ("Girl and little bird") (470), "KOSTAS" ("Constantine") (480), "BARMPTHANASIS" ("Uncle Thanassis") (483-484), "KIÏKIRIKOU KIKIRI" ("Cock-a-doodle-doo") (491-492), and "TOU GIANI TO SOURAVLI" ("Gianis's flute") (494-495), for example, - incorporate characteristics that may be considered intertextual elements at least at the level of creation, although they cannot be identified with certain foreign models. In this case, according to the terminology of Riffaterre (1978: p. 42), the foreign models, the intertexts, function as a production "matrix" of the style of Pallis's poems rather than of the poetic texts themselves.

However, the connection between Pallis's poems and the verses of R. L. Stevenson (1850-1894) seems to be more obvious, although there are no direct, or indicated, intertextual interventions. In this case, the essence of a modern comparative study is highlighted while fulfilled, since it is not limited to finding sources but highlights the aesthetic relationship between two poets and the lite-

¹³The poems mentioned here only by their title are included in: Green, 1962: p. 29, 32, 62 (respectively).

¹⁴See: Fowler, 1960: pp. 81-82.

¹⁵See: Green, 1962: p. 112.

¹⁶The bibliography on Poetry for Children is almost vast. Just in specific case, for the meaning and the characteristics of "Non-sense Poems", see: Carpenter and Prichard, 1991: pp. 380-381.

rary traditions they represent. Actually, the relation between Pallis and Stevenson, apart from the similarities in their topics, is mainly focused on the intentions and the style of the poetry they do offer to children. Through his narrative naivety and the lyricism of his collection *A Child's Garden of Verses* (Stevenson, 1952) tries to lead his readers to the enjoyment of his real everyday life by freeing them from the socially defined etiquette of his both austere and contradictory time. Actually, as Anne Thaxter Eaton (1969: p. 270) very concisely has stated it, the power of Stevenson's verses lies in the fact that they offer, "not a glimpse, but the whole contour of the child's hidden world", in order to recapture this world for the sake of the children. The rapid economic development of Victorian England of the late 19th century and the subsequent higher standard of living coexist with the citizens's anxiety about the future which lead them to the restoration of old, tried and, by definition, conservative principles. Literature, as it usually happens in these cases, is once again used as a means for transporting and "painlessly" implementing these principles. Stevenson opposes as much as he can this tendency and dissociates himself from other poets. While he expresses his interest in children, in whom his hopes for the future rest, he also submits his own poetic proposal that is enthusiastically accepted (Maixner, 1981; Nesbitt, 1969).¹⁷

Pallis, contemporary with the English poet, lives in England at the time and realizes the circumstances described above. At the same time, he experiences the Greek reality of the last decades of the 19th century, which is characterized by political and economic development, social and spiritual mobility as well as by the frustration of national hopes and anxiety for the future. In addition, his restless nature, his permanent tendency to criticism and his wider interests, particularly his direct involvement in the struggle over the language, lead him to form literary expression aiming to either dethrone or get ahead of earlier creators and open new ways. His poetry for children belongs to this framework.

The way he embraces the children-readers of his poetry is similar to the way of Stevenson, while both result from the modern pedagogic principles of their time, which promote the value of the child's individuality and dictate the respect for its personality and needs. As a result, he offers them some ways to activate their thought, to judge, to learn through playing, to perceive and enjoy their everyday moments and experiences and, finally, to save their individuality. This explains the fact that the overwhelming majority of Pallis's poems are based on what would be called "children's experience" or empirical reality rendered in a childlike style, which constitutes the main intertextual basis of his poetry.

Even the evident intertextual interventions or references often introduced, which, after all, could lead the reader to an intertextual interaction, are given in such a way that they function only in case the readers are aware of or are able to activate the knowledge of the intertextual points, according to their own stock,

¹⁷More information on the ways in which 19th century writers depict the child's image, or how they deal with reader's role, in their writings, see the volume of essays edited by James Holt McGavran (1991). Especially for R. L. Stevenson, see Elizabeth Nesbitt's essay (in: McGavran, 1991: pp. 377-378).

and achieve the interpretation suggested (Riffaterre, 1978: pp. 3-6). This does not mean that the reader is deprived of the joy of intertextual play, since, in any case, the textual processes maintain a pleasant tone; it is up to the reader. In the poem “FOUNTOUKOS” (464), for example, another anti-hero dog named Fountoukos is the other face of a peculiar dialogue of the poet with his hero and with his reader. Adopting a childish, subversive attitude towards the socially defined demands that are expressed: to learn reading, to behave like a loyal soldier, etc., this light-brown colored dog contrasts the seriousness of the human demand with the immediacy of the animal instinct. This presence of the likeable anti-hero serves the poet who even goes so far as to use it to parody serious situations such as the typical manifestations of patriotism at the end of the poem.

It is obvious that Pallis in his poems, putting apparently or not forward intertextual requirements, does not simply describe the experience that he forms textually, but stands critically against it, wanting to extend it in reading. Although the reading process itself does not seem fundamentally different from that found in his other poems, both in their thematic and in their verbal expression, nevertheless, there are textual elements that guide the reader to face it with more care. The narrative flow and the liveliness of the language continuously support the reading process and make it so pleasing for the little reader that nothing seems to be able to stop it. This reader, therefore, intensifies his attention and focuses on the relativity of the textual indications but also on the empirical process that he experiences personally and which is not unfamiliar to him. Eventually, through this kind of reading adventure, readers will taste the textuality of the poem – by realizing notional units and systems of points, understanding conventions and tricks, activating emotions and exercising their thoughts – and will be able to realize the intertextual function of any indications, to read intertextually (Rosenblatt, 1978: p. 88, 141).

5. Concluding

Relying on theoretical views about intertextuality and drawing positions from the wider field of Literary Theory (Allen, 2003; Bloom, 1997; Riffaterre, 1978; Wilkie, 1999; Zima, 2011), we attempted within this article to read intertextually Alexandros Pallis’s poems for children. The aim and challenge of this endeavor was not to exhaust our approach to finding sources or identifying the original English poetic texts utilized by the Greek poet; our ultimate goal and expectation was to find out, if a contemporary intertextual reading could overcome the outdated view of a genetic-causal relationship between dominant or influential literatures and subordinate ones, in order to assess the aesthetic communication between Alexandros Pallis and the English poets of the 19th century and thus to reveal, as Jauss would note, their dialogical relationships. We believe that our study at the end, regardless of whether it fulfilled or not its expectations, has at least succeeded in projecting the connotation of a pioneering Greek poet with later theoretical reflection, as well as his potential contribution to the revision

and the enrichment of intertextual approaches proposed in the context of Comparative Literature.

It should also be pointed out that the contribution of Pallis to Literature, particularly to the Poetry for Children, exceeded its original intentions so much that even Pallis had never imagined it. Perhaps that is the reason why most of his contemporaries but also newer critics and scholars distinguish him from his peers. The new example he provided filled a gap and crowned the completion of a series of previous memorable attempts in the field of poetry for children made by figures such as Elias Tantalidis or Georgios Vizyenos. As a result, Pallis is without doubt at the head of the most genuine turn of the Poetry for Children, accompanied by other European poets and introducing a different approach to the poetic speech addressed to the child. Finally, apart from the form of the intertextual requirements suggested by Pallis, what mainly specifies the function of intertextuality in his poems for children is the fact that he constantly tries to give, in Rosenblatt's terms, an intertextual character to the "transaction" between his poetic texts and his readers, and at the same time to preserve the personal sense of their literary experience. Concurrently, he seems to be the first poet for children who consciously attempted to write intertextually as well as to inspire intertextual readings in his readers.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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