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**R. Wagner's inter-artistic horizon for the *Total Work of Art* and the modern Greek prose of Aestheticism**

R. Wagner's contribution to the history of music lies in his attempt to unite all the arts (poetry, music, painting, sculpture, etc.) into a single artistic formation. His aesthetic and philosophical theory of the combination of the arts is summarised in the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk* (*Total Work of Art*, 1876), the conception of which has its origins in the Philosophy of Romanticism (Hegel, Schelling).

The German composer tried to materialize this genius theory -of the coexistence of the arts- in the opera, by an artistic genre that incorporates different artistic genres in its core. Having as a starting point the Florence Italian opera, Wagner attempted to create a German version of the opera, leading it to the perfection of its form. He called this new version of the opera a *musical drama*. Unlike Italian opera, which can be divided into sections (e.g. libretto, arias, etc.) that often deal with a different subject, Wagner's musical drama has a continuous flow centered on a specific theme (*endless melody*). The inner coherence of the drama is also served by the *Leitmotiv*, a musical idea that is repeated from time to time throughout the connection. In short, opera or musical drama, according to Wagner, define a musical connection in which different artistic idioms coexist.

Wagner's influence transcended the boundaries of music by penetrating other artistic expressions, such as painting and literature (Symbolist poets, Baudelaire, Mallarmé), while the philosophical extensions of the German composer's theory and works and his connection with the A. Schopenhauer’s philosophy pre-occupied largely the philosophical intelligentsia (F.W. Nietzsche). In his essay *The Case of Wagner* (1888), Nietzsche will connect the German composer with the *Decadent* movement, i.e. the extreme version of Aestheticism. The most obvious indication of Wagner's enormous influence is the predominance of the term *Wagnerism.*

The first reference to Wagner's name and works in Greece is found in *Pandora* magazine on 1/3/1862, as Stella Kurbana points out in her dissertation *Aspects of Wagnerism in the Greek 19th century*. According to Anna Katsigianni, the contribution of pioneering magazines (*Art* and *Dionysos*) and the Greek Symbolists themselves, who clearly showed their interest in German literature and critique, was important in Wagner's wide reception in Greece.

Wagner's theory and artistic realizations have a special significance in the prose of Aestheticism, in which an inter-artistic horizon unfolds, as the narrative discourse, imbued with poetry (especially in matters of rhythm), intertwines with music and painting. References to the name and work of the German composer are found in the critique and prose works of Greek representatives of Aestheticism, such as Nik. Episkopopoulos, Pl. Rodokanakis, Nik. Kazantzakis, Const. Christomanos and Per. Giannopoulos, which we will examine in the dissertation.

More specifically, the aim of the present, proposed essay is the study and interpretation of the ways in which the convergence of speech, sound and image is achieved in the prose of modern Greek Aestheticism. The arts of painting and music penetrate and permeate the narrative in two ways: sometimes they appear thematised, sometimes they contribute to the structural organization of the word. As far as thematisation is concerned, terms and elements from the two different artistic idioms, on the one hand, are used metonymically in the texts in order to attribute spatial and temporal narrative parameters to the plot or to feel the emotional world of the characters; and, on the other hand, they are part of the narrative flow as the characters express their keen interest in arts. As for the structural organization of the narrative, it will be systematically examined whether the structure and the intertwining of the various forms of speech –grammar, syntax and semantics- contribute exactly to the visual and / or musical texture of the particular prose texts of modern Greek Aestheticism.

The systematic approach and interpretive investigation of the above two ways of intertwining music, painting and speech, aim at the inter-artistic approach to the prose of modern Greek Aestheticism, in relation to the vision of the R. Wagner’s *Gesumtkunstwerk*.