

**Different Styles/Common Thread: Cyclic Forms and Principles
in the Different Stylistic Phases of the Greek Composer
Yannis A. Papaioannou up to 1965**

Abstract

The notion of cyclicism as intending to enhance formal unity seems to have been engraved upon Papaioannou's (1910–1989) artistic awareness through his meticulous reading of Vincent d'Indy's *Cours de composition musicale* during his apprenticeship years. While this concept is evident in the thematic affinities and cross-references between movements in his first multi-movement works of the 1930s, it remained central to his music up to 1965, in spite of his change from a style in which tonal elements played a central role to the gradual assimilation of twelve-note elements in his post-1950 music.

Through analytical reference to works from different periods, this paper explores the various realizations of the concept of the cyclic form and their structural implications (for example, the association of the gradual recycling of material with scenic action in the ballet *Pirates* of 1952). Moreover, it concentrates on two cyclic aspects which are associated with the notion of *telos*: the recurrence of the opening material, and the combination (superimposition or juxtaposition) of previous events in the last formal section. Both aspects are discerned on different sides and levels of structure. Firstly, in the large-scale thematic recurrences (such as in both the 'tonal' Sonata for violin and piano of 1936 and the twelve-note 12 Inventions and Toccata for piano of 1958) and the combination of previously-heard thematic or motivic material in the last movement (such as in the 'tonal' Scherzo of 1938 and the twelve-note Sonata of 1958, both for piano). And secondly, in the serial structure of some of Papaioannou's twelve-note works (the reappearance of the opening serial form delineates both local- and large-scale formal articulation, while the last movement utilizes all the reordered series which are used separately in previous movements). The aural perceptibility of these serial structures is also critically assessed.

Prologue

In the short programme notes for the first performances of his First and Third Symphonies Yannis A. Papaioannou (1910–1989) focuses on the same aspect of formal structure despite their stylistic differences: the thematic affinities between the movements.¹ Written in 1946 and 1953 respectively, the two symphonies are quite representative of the change in Papaioannou's music from a style in which tonal elements played a central role to the gradual assimilation of twelve-note elements in his post-1950 music – the main stimulus behind this change might be found in the experiences, bibliography and music scores that Papaioannou acquired during his first stay outside Greece in his life, mainly in Paris, during the academic year 1949–1950.

Both the above-mentioned programme notes allude to the notion of the cyclic form. This notion as a parameter that enhances formal unity seems to have been engraved very early upon Papaioannou's artistic awareness: through his meticulous reading of Vincent d'Indy's *Cours de composition musicale*, which he bought in 1926, when he was sixteen years old.² In this treatise d'Indy describes and 'promotes' the notion of the cyclic form as an important compositional model that ensures formal unity, placing his own music in the tradition of the music of Beethoven and Franck and having at the basis of his discussion the idea that motivic unity is equivalent to organic unity.³ This idea lays at the core of Papaioannou's discussion in the only two extant texts in which he makes explicit reference to the compositional process; written in 1965 and 1975, these texts demonstrate the enduring influence of d'Indy's ideas to Papaioannou.⁴

Nowadays, the ideas of d'Indy and other romantic theorists and composers have been seriously questioned, specifically regarding the equivalence of motivic unity to organic unity. Leonard B. Meyer, for example, in an article published in 1991 focuses on the 'distinction between unity through syntactic function as opposed to unity through motivic similarity' arguing in favour of the first (Meyer, 1991: 244).

However, in the case of Papaioannou the most interesting aspect in the application of the cyclic concept is that it can be understood as the common thread within his stylistic evolution. The present paper explores the various realizations of the notion from his first 'tonal' works of the 1930s up to the twelve-note music of the late 1950s and mid-1960s. Moreover, it proposes that two cyclic aspects are associated in his music with the notion of *telos* on different levels of formal structure: the recurrence of the opening material, and the combination (superimposition or juxtaposition) of all the previous main thematic material. Since these principles are also discerned in the serial structure of much of his twelve-note music, it is proposed that the notion of *telos* is also served by these serial structures, although in this case the aural perceptibility of this aspect has to be critically assessed.

1. Various realizations of the cyclic concept within stylistically different contexts

According to d'Indy, the 'cyclic' aspects that serve a unifying function and provide the sense of cohesion and continuity to a multi-movement work are the thematic or motivic elements which are common between different movements (d'Indy, 1912: 375). D'Indy relates this notion with the characteristic romantic idea that the theme is the protagonist of the musical drama, the unfolding of which thus depends on thematic transformation or metamorphosis (d'Indy, 1912: 376–385).⁵ The examples which will be discussed from Papaioannou's music demonstrate the stable influence of d'Indy's ideas on cyclic elements. What is particularly interesting is how a characteristically popular idea of the nineteenth century serves as a vehicle for the expression of twentieth-century (and occasionally also nineteenth-century) stylistic ideas in Papaioannou's music through the different stylistic connotations of the cyclic elements and the various ways through which they are manipulated – this aspect certainly raises the problematic issue of the relationship between style, technique and aesthetics, which is however beyond the scope of this paper to be further pursued.⁶ The lack of extant sketches for most of the works discussed does not allow identifying the degree of compositional intention which is entailed in the processes described. However, this aspect is palpably demonstrated by the sketches of the Third Symphony. The thematic material of the whole piece is worked out in the places entitled 'Matériel'; the melodic, rhythmic and harmonic experimentation with a twelve-note series (a 'thematic source', according to Papaioannou's own comment) plays an important role in this process.⁷

Example 1a lists the manipulation of cyclic elements in three works: the Humorous Suite of 1936 (one of Papaioannou's first multi-movement works), the Scherzo of 1938 and the Sonata for violin and piano of 1945. As shown by the brackets, in all three works these elements have motivic function in the opening movement and reappear slightly modified, in also a motivic function, in the following movements. In the Preludio of the Humorous Suite the mordent figure and the ascending perfect fourth act as symbols of the music of the past, taking part in the parodistic treatment of Baroque elements through their presence within tonally unstable environments – an element of the structure that reflects the humorous aspect of the title. Moreover, the modification and harmonization of both figures in the subsequent movements contributes to the overall route from the tonal instability of the Preludio to the relatively tonal (or better modal) stability within an F#-centred modal context of the final two movements.

A stepwise figure is also one of the two cyclic elements in both the Scherzo and the Sonata (see Examples 1b and 1c). In the first case the initial harmonization of this figure as an embellishment of a major seventh reflects the 'impressionistic' inclination of Papaioannou's music of this period; in the second, this figure is first heard as an ornamentation of the centric note (D), within a modal environment which reflects Papaioannou's wider objective of these years to focus on what was perceived as the modal vocabulary of the Greek musical tradition.⁸

Quite different is the material of the cyclic elements in Papaioannou's post-1950 music. In the Third Symphony it is the opening melodic twelve-note series which is treated cyclically. However, as was the case in the Humorous Suite, the harmonic modification of one of the cyclic elements contributes to the sense of an overall process from tonal blariness to tonal clarification. More specifically, the melodic fragment based on the first nine notes of the RI form of the series initially adds to the tonally unstable sense of the slow introduction,⁹ while through its Bb-centred harmonization at the opening of the last movement (see Example 2) it announces the centricity of the Bb major triad, which is later confirmed by the more stable diatonic environment throughout this

Example 1a

Humoristic Suite (1936): The cyclic elements

I. Preludio
Lento

II. Gavotte
Moderato grazioso

Musette

III. Sarabande
Molto Andante

V. Interludio [Passacaglia]
Moderato

VI. Gigue
Vivo

Example 1b

Scherzo for piano (1938): The cyclic elements

Moderato
b. 1

b. 27

Poco vivo
b. 88

94

Example 1c

Sonata for Violin and Piano (1945): The cyclic element

I. Allegro serioso

Vln.

Pno.

II. Adagio

Vln.

Pno.

III. Vivace

Vln.

Pno.

Example 2

Symphony No. 3, III, bb. 1-3: Combination of serial and tonal elements

Pesante

RI-0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

(timpani)

B \flat : 1 7 (vadd 6) III \flat 7 1

B \flat : 1 \flat 7 (vadd 6) m \flat 7 1

movement. In the twelve-note works of the years 1958 onwards the focus is on rhythmic cyclic elements. For example, in the Sonata for piano of 1958 a dotted figure is first heard by the opening gesture of the piece (bb. 1–4) and is the most characteristic rhythmic element in the second section of the second theme of the sonata design in the first movement (bb. 118–121); moreover, it gains motivic focus in the second slow movement.

Apart from the use of the cyclic notion within traditional formal moulds, reference should also be made to Papaioannou's treatment of this principle in works that explicitly intend to project an extramusical programme. The difference in the realization of the cyclic notion between the Symphonic Legend Vassilis Arvanitis written in 1945 and the ballet Pirates of 1952 reflects his serious rethinking of his music during these years.¹⁰ The thematic structure of Vassilis Arvanitis mirrors the romantic attitude of giving representational power to themes. More specifically, Example 3 lists some of the thematic appearances in different movements of the melody that is intended to be associated with Vassilis, the protagonist – it is worth mentioning that the extramusical association is not only implied by the title but is explicitly stated by the programme notes accompanying the performances of this piece: these included the condensed version of the story of the book from which this piece was inspired.¹¹ Despite the modal character of the music, a reference to the tonal implications of two of the various appearances of the theme provides an interesting reading of the extramusical connotations of these recurrences. Thus, the fact that it first appears as the second theme in the sonata form of the second section of the first tableau (in the subdominant) might be considered as a subtle implication of the unstable character of the protagonist, despite its dynamic presentation by the brass. On the other hand, in the seventh tableau the same theme appears within a modal environment centred on D, the most prominent tonal centre of the whole work,¹² possibly depicting the bravery of the protagonist that is the main topic in the programme of this tableau.

Example 3

Vassilis Arvanitis: Some appearances of Vassilis's theme

In the ballet Pirates there is a strong sense of leitmotivic technique in the association of specific material with the protagonists, although here one could not literally speak of motives that, according to Arnold Whittall's definition of the leitmotif, 'provide the principal, "leading" thematic premises' of the overall formal structure (Whittall 2001). More specifically, after the separate presentation of the three protagonists on stage in the first three tableaux, sections or just fragments of these tableaux are later treated in a quasi-cubist way. They are treated as 'objects sonores' (to use an expression by Stravinsky, whose influence is evident in the preponderance of the ostinati throughout the work). These fragments are juxtaposed or superimposed in new combinations, often on their initial pitch level, without being functionally assimilated by the new pitch

environments. For example, as shown in Table 1, in the eighth tableau most of the music up to bar 32 derives from the first and third tableaux, while, as demonstrated in Example 4, the opening gesture of the ninth tableau is exclusively based on the combination of fragments derived from the opening tableaux.

Example 4

Pirates, IX, bb. 1-3: Material derived from II, III and IV

While in terms of compositional intention the reiterated sections seem to serve the same function as the thematic cross references in *Vassilis*, here their appearances result in the most interesting aspect of the unfolding of the overall form: they add to an increasing recycling of previously-heard material which, in an abstract sense, counteracts the sense of non-progressiveness created locally by the wide use of ostinati throughout each movement.

Thus while the notion of cyclicism according to d'Indy serves mainly the idea of unity which does not axiomatically involve any particular diachronic process, in Papaioannou's music this notion often plays a significant role in contextually defined temporal processes such as the gradual emergence of tonal stability in the *Humoristic Suite* and the *Third Symphony*, or the increasing network of cross references in the *Pirates*. Now we will focus on the notion of *telos*, a characteristic diachronic element, and how it is served by two cyclic principles in Papaioannou's music.

2. Cyclic principles and the notion of *telos*

2.1. Large-scale thematic and serial recurrences

The association by the listener of today of a large-scale thematic return with the notion of *telos* can derive from his previous aural experience of multi-movement cyclic works of the post-Beethoven period, such as Schumann's *Carnaval* and *Papillons*.¹³ Moreover, this association can be seen as a large-scale projection from the part of the listener of the idea of thematic return as a structural factor in 'rounding off' the form in various traditional Western ternary formal designs.

At least in terms of compositional intention, for Papaioannou large-scale thematic recurrence acts as a parameter of rounding off the overall form – it is worth noting that Papaioannou knew well Schumann's music from very early, since he played two of his works for piano in his final recital for his diploma in piano in 1934.¹⁴ Example 5 exemplifies how this aspect holds for two stylistically and structurally different multi-movement works: the tonal *Sonata for Violin and Piano* of 1936 and the twelve-note *12 Inventions and Toccata for Piano* of 1958. In these instances, large-scale thematic reappearance initiates what proves to be the concluding section of the piece. A more sophisticated and extended version of the same idea is discerned in the *Suite for violin and piano* of 1954: in the rondo-type design of the last movement (the seventh), the episodes reiterate literal material from the first, material which has not been heard again in its initial form during the piece.¹⁵

Example 5

Large-scale thematic recurrences

5a. *Sonata for Violin and Piano* (1936)
I. *Moderato*

III. *Presto*
b. 20

5b. *Inventions and Toccata for Piano* (1958)
I. *Lento*

XII
b. 45

In Papaioannou, the conceptual basis of this element, the literal recurrence of the opening material as an indication of a concluding process, can be also discerned on different levels of the serial structure in some of his twelve-note works. Example 5b demonstrates how, for example, in the Inventions the large-scale reprise of the thematic appearance of the twelve-note series is heard on the initial pitch level. This aspect of formal articulation is also discerned on a smaller scale: in four Inventions (II, III, VII and IX) thematic recurrence of a serial form on the pitch level of its first appearance rounds off the overall form, while in another four (I, VII, X and XII) the opening serial structure recurs at the end, although this association is not delineated by thematic reprise. However, all of these serial structures raise the problematic issue of their aural perception by listeners who do not possess perfect pitch, a problematic aspect that is further strengthened by the fact that the serial process between the two theoretically associated sections do not raise structurally the expectation of return to the initial pitch level. In other words, the way that these structures are experienced is quite different from thematic returns to the tonic region which have been structurally prepared by the normative functions of the tonal system, even in the cases in which these returns are considerably modified.¹⁶ This is the reason why it is only within these functions that we can talk of returns and not only of reappearances or recurrences as we did with reference to the serial structures.

2.2. Combination of previous events in the last formal stretch

Similar critical reservations hold for another cyclic aspect that in Papaioannou's music is variously associated with the notion of ending: the recollection and combination of previously separately developed elements in the last formal stretch. In terms of serial structure this issue is exemplified by the Toccata of the 12 Inventions and Toccata and the last, ninth movement of the String Trio of 1963. In both cases the last formal section reutilizes all the serial types that have been used separately in previous movements.¹⁷

The sketches of the Third Symphony demonstrate that this idea was also central in Papaioannou's preparation of the thematic plan for the whole work: he notes under the superimposition of themes of different movements that this is destined for the finale. More generally, for Papaioannou's finales holds what L. Somfai has noted for those of Bartók: that 'their meaning can be interpreted correctly only in connection with the preceding movements' (Somfai, 1969: 393).

Let us see different realizations and structural implications of this element. In the last Rondo movement of the First Symphony of 1945 the episodes are based on the elaboration of thematic ideas of the previous movements, as has pointed out by Georges Kokkonis (Kokkonis, 1999), possibly depicting Papaioannou's intention for a climactic finale of a heroic and apothotic character, as it is expressed in the programme note for the work.¹⁸ The juxtaposition of thematic elements as an aspect of large-scale closure is also detected in twelve-note works, such as in the coda of the Sonata for piano of 1958. Moreover, in the ballet *Pirates*, the juxtaposition and superimposition of motivic fragments possibly functions as a musical metaphor of the presence of all heroes on stage. Although it is not evident in the previous instances, the Hegelian notion of large-scale integration can be read behind many motivic realizations of this aspect, such as those demonstrated in Examples 6a and 6b. In these cases, the main motives are coordinated within a new environment (the cadential process in the Gavotte from the *Humoristic Suite* and the tonic major in the Sonata for violin and piano); this new context 'absorbs' the differences of their first appearances within a new unity, reflecting (especially in the Sonata) the Hegelian notion implied

Example 6a

Humoristic Suite, Gavotte, bb. 15-16: Motivic combination

Example 6b

The end of the Sonata for Violin and Piano (1945): Motivic combination

by Papaioannou's handwritten note of 1954 that 'Form is the articulation of elements towards a unified whole (or towards a "higher unity")'.¹⁹ Finally, a quite different realization of the notion discussed is found in the finale of the Imaginary Dance of 1948: this finale combines elements that have been contextually associated with the idea of telos during the piece, since they appear (separately) at the final stretches of the small sections that comprise the overall form.

Pirates, VIII: Material derived from previous tableaux

Bars	Source
3	r.h.: I, b. 15ii, rhythm and contour
5–6i	r.h.: III, b. 18, transposed
7–8	l.h.: III, bb. 4–8 ostinato, pitch identical, rhythmically varied r.h.: III, bb. 4–5ii/r.h., varied
10	r.h.: III, bb. 7iii–8/r.h., varied
13–15	l.h.: III, bb. 15–32 ostinato, pitch identical, rhythmically varied
17	r.h.: III, b. 18, transposed, varied
19–24	l.h.: III, bb. 15–32 ostinato, pitch identical, rhythmically varied
26	r.h.: III, b. 9/r.h., varied
28	r.h.: III, b. 9/r.h., transposed, varied
32ii–33	r.h.: I, bb. 15ii–17i, transposed, varied
34	r.h.: III, b. 18, transposed, varied

Epilogue

Conclusively, the idea of the cyclic form offers an important tool in understanding a common thread within the stylistic evolution of Papaioannou. Moreover, the various realizations and extensions of the notion by Papaioannou demonstrate interesting twentieth-century transformations of a characteristic nineteenth-century aesthetic idea. Finally, it is interesting to note how elements of the cyclic notion are projected in Papaioannou's overall stylistic evolution. Firstly, through the recurrence of the stepwise melodic figure as an important motivic element in the cyclic processes of all three works covering a period of a decade which were discussed with reference to Example 1. Secondly, the notion that the end has to encapsulate and combine past elements is suggested by the sketches of his last work, a Concerto for piano, which was left unfinished.²⁰ The twelve-note series that Papaioannou employed, or intended to employ, comprise those of two important works of his of 1962 and 1973 (the Concertino for piano and string orchestra and the Double Concerto for violin, piano and orchestra), and also the combinatorial series of Schoenberg's Fourth String Quartet, which might have influenced the use of combinatoriality in his own music, since he incorporated this element only after his own analysis of Schoenberg's work.²¹ Thus, although being unfinished, this Concerto might be seen as providing, in an admittedly abstract way, the notion of telos in Papaioannou's stylistic evolution, analogously to the thematic combinations at the finales of his music.

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Notes

- ¹ Most of the documentary material regarding Papaioannou's biography and music is located in Papaioannou Archive (thereafter P.A.), which is part of the Historical Archives of the Benaki Museum in Athens. For the programme notes under discussion see P.A., File 'Analytical Notes'.
- ² Papaioannou's copy of d'Indy's treatise can be found in Papaioannou Library, which is kept in the Department of Music Studies of the Ionian University.
- ³ These ideas are particularly developed in the chapter 'La Sonate cyclique' (d'Indy, 1912: 375–434).
- ⁴ See Papaioannou 1966 and 1975. The first was completed in 1965 and first given as a public lecture in 6.4.1965.
- ⁵ See Macdonald 2001 for a concise overview of the various compositional realizations of the idea of thematic transformation in the nineteenth century.
- ⁶ For a concise discussion of the cyclic form in the nineteenth century see also Rosen, 1995: 88–92.
- ⁷ See P.A., File 16. See also the sketches entitled 'Matériel' in P.A., File 18; according to my view these sketches are for the Third Symphony and not for the *Concerto for Orchestra* of 1954, although they bear the title 'CONCERTO POUR ORCHESTRE', since they refer to the thematic structure and content of the Third Symphony.
- ⁸ According to the most recent publication of the Catalogue of Papaioannou's works, Papaioannou divided his own stylistic evolution as follows:
- a) 1932–ca 1944 Impressionistic trends;
 - b) ca 1944–1952 Approach to Folklore and the Greek 'National School', use of elements of Byzantine music;
 - c) 1953–1965 Twelve-note system and 'recent techniques';
 - d) 1966–1989 'Entirely personal style' (Moschos/Xanthoudakis/Deniosos 1999: 7). A critical approach to this scheme taking into account the conclusions of analytical research to works up to 1960 is pursued in Chardas 2006.
- ⁹ For example, in its appearances in the first bars of Rehearsal letters B and D and E.
- ¹⁰ The ballet *Pirates* became better known in its version as a piano suite entitled (by Papaioannou himself) *Corsair Dances*, comprising only some of the movements of the ballet.
- ¹¹ See P.A., File 'Analytical Notes'.
- ¹² Seven out of the eleven tableaux of the piece centre on D-rooted triads.
- ¹³ See Kaminsky 1989 for a discussion of this and other structural formal aspects in Schumann's early music.
- ¹⁴ He played the *Carnaval* and the *Concerto for piano*. See P.A., Box 'Biography A'.
- ¹⁵ Bars 41–42 of the Finale reiterate bb. 10–11 of the Prelude, while bb. 10–27 of the Prelude reappear in bb. 67–83 of the Finale (with the exception of bar 20).
- ¹⁶ An example of this is the rhythmically modified return of the opening gesture at the coda of the *Allegro en forme S dithématique* of 1934, an early tonal piece.
- ¹⁷ The Toccata brings back all the reordered serial forms, and the ninth movement of the String Trio reutilizes the three serial types that have been used separately in previous movements.
- ¹⁸ See P.A., File 'Analytical Notes'.
- ¹⁹ This note is situated in Papaioannou Library.
- ²⁰ See P.A., File 38.
- ²¹ Papaioannou's copy of Schoenberg's work bears 1958 as the date of acquisition; Papaioannou employed for the first time an inversionally combinatorial series in his String Quartet of 1959.

Santrauka

Skirtingi stiliai – viena gija: ciklinės formos ir principai įvairiuose graikų kompozitoriaus Yannis A. Papaioannou stilistiniuose laikotarpiuose iki 1965 m.

Cikliškumas, kaip priemonė formos vienovei sustiprinti, atspindi visą savarankišką Y. A. Papaioannou (1910–1989) kūrybinę veiklą nuo mokymosi laikų, kai jis nuodugniai studijavo V. d'Indy „Kompozicijos vadovą“. Šis bruožas išryškėjo jau ketvirtą dešimtmečio pirmųjų daugiadalių kūrinių dalių teminiuose ryšiuose bei pasikartojimuose ir išliko svarbiausiu jo muzikos bruožu iki pat 1965 m., nepaisant to, kad kompozitoriui keičiant stilių, kuriame iki tol vyravo tonalumas, jau nuo šeštojo dešimtmečio pradžios jo muzikoje palaiapsniui įsivyravo dodekafonijos elementai.

Šiame pranešime, analizuojant skirtingų laikotarpių kūrinius, nagrinėjami įvairūs ciklinės formos realizavimo būdai ir jų struktūrinės potekstės, pvz., laipsniško medžiagos perkomponavimo sąsajos su sceniniu veiksmu baletе „Piratai“ (1952). Be to, atkreipiamas dėmesys į du ciklo aspektus, susijusius su *telos* sąvoka: į pradinės medžiagos pasikartojimą ir prieš tai buvusios medžiagos derinius (perkėlimus arba sugretinimus) baigiamojoje formos dalyje. Šie du aspektai išryškėja skirtingose struktūros vietose ir skirtingais lygmenimis:

1) teminės medžiagos sugrįžimuose stambiu mastu: „tonalioje“ Sonatoje smuikui ir fortepijonui (1936) ir dodekafoninėse Dvylikoje invencijų ir tokatoje fortepijonui (1958), taip pat naujame anksčiau skambėjusios teminės ar motyvinės medžiagos kombinavime: „tonaliame“ *Scherzo* (1938) ir dodekafoninės Sonatos (1958) baigiamojoje dalyje;

2) serijinėje kai kurių kompozitoriaus dodekafoninių kūrinių struktūroje (sugrįžimas prie pradinės serijos sąlygoja ir lokalinę, ir visuminę formos išraišką, o baigiamojoje dalyje panaudojamos visos serijos iš ankstesnių dalių).

Pranešime taip pat kritiškai įvertinamas šių serijinių struktūrų girdimasis suvokimas.