

The construction of the national identity of modern Greece and its impact on music

The national identity of European people, since the 19th century, is depended on the political circumstances and the cultural matters of a nation. In these last two centuries, politically, people think of their strength and determination as a product, shaped by their common historical continuity and destiny. Culturally, it is constituted from ethnic factors such as customs, language, myths, and religion that are symbolically used to represent a distinct community of people. That was the main notion put forward by Herder's *Volkgeist*, which is perhaps the most influential idea for the determination of nations.

Nations defined and built their historical narrative gradually. They had to construct their own history in order to define their cultures. However, even if modern European nations seem to be by definition the products of a reconstruction of the pre-modern past, all historical constructions are not equivalent to each other, for the reason that some nations have a longer and different history. This is the case of Greece, according to the sociologist Constantinos Tsoukalas, who claims that: 'The historical narratives had long preceded the emergence of national political projects. It is not the nations that built and reconstructed their pre-modern histories, but pre-modern histories that developed into nations'.¹ The idealized shadows of monuments and ruins had an immense symbolic value of pre-modern Hellenism. This symbolic appreciation of Greece acted in combination with the "Greek myth", a product of Western European modernity, and both served the construction of the Greek cultural identity.

The Greek myth was produced by European intellectuals, who saw Greece as the cradle of civilization, democracy, philosophy, drama and naturalistic forms of art. In the Renaissance Age the ancient Greek ideology was idealized; the arts and science were influenced by Greek ideas, many books of Ancient philosophers and scientists were translated, and many Greek scholars, who moved from Byzantium to various European countries after the Fall of Constantinople, spread the Greek cultural spirit. Similarly, the use of Greek tragedy as the model in the formation of opera inspired Monteverdi and his contemporaries in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Moreover, during the Enlightenment, philosophers glorified Ancient Greece. Even in the late 19th century, Wagner returned to Greek tragedy to produce operas, and Nietzsche turned to Ancient Greek tragedy as the model for regenerating modern art. Therefore, it was Europeans that revived the Ancient Greek ideology and discovered their own idealized cultural ancestors in Ancient Greece. It was that imported revival of ancient Greece that proved to be of great importance to the emerging Greek state in 1830, just after Independence. In consequence, this caused an indigenous interpretation of the past, which strengthened even more Greek national conviction.

The construction of Greek national identity is significantly associated with the Greek language itself. Despite the fact that the Greek speaking population was one among the various groups, which composed the multiethnic Ottoman Empire, and that, after three centuries of Ottoman Rule, most ethnic Greeks were poor and illiterate villagers, ethnic Greeks were privileged with regard to the spread of their language. According to the Byzantine traditions, all official ecclesiastical functions were carried out in the Greek language; so, a written version of it was allowed to be

¹ Tsoukalas, Constantine, "European Modernity and Greek National Identity", *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, Vol. 1, no. 1, 1999, pp. 7-14

reproduced. That, along with the European notion of Hellenism that existed in parallel with the contact of the educated Greek speaking strata with Western intelligentsia, gave the Greek language primacy. Tsoukalas, claims that: ‘The sense of pride for speaking the Greek language was mainly imported; a fact which explains, not only that Greek nationalism preceded its Balkan counterparts by half a century, but also that social ascendancy and enlightened rationality were synonymous with linguistic Hellenizing. The Greek language thus seemed to be evolving into something like the Latin of the East’.²

Although the majority of the ethnic Greeks were poor and lived in the arid, mountainous and undeveloped southern areas of the Balkan Peninsula, they were taught their language through the prayers, the psalms and during the catechism. Their folk music, which first appeared with the name of “secular Byzantine music” in the 10th century, became the vehicle through which Greek language survived for centuries. Folk music was integral to daily life. Folk song unconsciously shaped and strengthened their national self-determination for many centuries; while later the use of folk song turned to be used consciously for national enhancement, organizing the struggle for Independence.

However, the most influential aspect of the construction of Greek national identity was its twofold character: Eastern and Western. Just after Independence, most living customs were closely linked with the Orthodox faith and were inevitably anti-Western. The Christian Orthodox Church had been opposing the Roman Catholic West since the 11th century. Oriental Orthodoxy had drawn its cultural inspiration from the glory of the Imperial Byzantium. On the other hand the myth of eternal Greece was imported from the West. The notion of self-determination of nations, which entered the East from the West, as part of the ideological framework shaped in the Age of the Enlightenment, was to a certain degree founded on the glorification of ideas which were traceable in Classical Antiquity.

Henceforth, the Modern Greek state had to face the debate over whether its culture was essentially Western European or Eastern. The oriental, popular and “Dionysian” components of the nation came against its official, rational, European and “Apollonian” element, creating a complicated dilemma. They would either have to consider themselves as direct successors of Imperial Orthodox Byzantines, in which case they might be obliged to give up a part of the universal symbolic aura they owed to their ancestors, or they would have to reject the Byzantine legacy as a “dark” interlude. Yet, the latter option would alienate them from the archetypes of their daily cultural life, which was deeply rooted in religious beliefs. It is worth noticing that this debate was primarily expressed and imported by western scholars, who viewed the Classical Antiquity also as part of their own identity, while Byzantium for them was east, heteronymous, and even “barbaric”.

The answer to this dilemma was given by Constantinos Papanigopoulos, at his writings of the official Greek history in 1860s and 1870s. He argued that the continuity between pagan classicism and Byzantine Christianity could only be appreciated through a totally new concept, created from the amalgamation of the above features; bringing forth a new term, the “Helleno-Christianity”.³ This term combined somehow East with West, and implied a continuity, which demanded the integration of several ingredients into a single historical synthesis. But most

² Tsoukalas, Constantine, “European Modernity and Greek National Identity”, *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, Vol. 1, no. 1, 1999, pp. 7-14

³ Papanigopoulos, Constantine, *Epitomos Istorias tou Ellinikou Ethnous*, Pergamenes, Athens, 1955, p. 10

importantly, it placed Byzantium as the intercession between Antiquity and Modern Greece, even though the Byzantine Empire was multiethnic.

The type of folk music, that with its individuality emphasized the Hellenic character of Byzantium, was *Kleftiko* song. That music was originally introduced by the agricultural Greeks living in the mountains of the mainland at the beginnings of the 18th century, and continued developing all through the 19th century. The significance of *Kleftika* songs lies in the fact that, despite their origin during the years of Ottoman Occupation, their musical identity was purely Greek, because the areas they originated had almost no contact with the Eastern culture. Thereby, these songs were the musical mediation between Classical Times and Modern Times; while at the same time they were establishing even more the meaning of the new term of “Helleno-Christianity”. Their themes were related to the national conviction and their tunes enhanced the national feeling during the pre-revolution as well as the post-revolution period. Therefore, the use of that type of folk music proved to be of decisive value in the construction of the Greek national identity.

Despite the strong impact of folk song, especially the *Kleftiko* song, to the revolution and to the national confidence, during the Ottoman years, an organized band playing western music, like marches, appeared in 1825, which is actually before the Independence year. According to the scholar, Ilias Voliotis, there was parallel existence of the folk song and the music by military bands even earlier, from 1821.⁴ The role of these bands was similar to that of the folk music itself, to enhance the struggle for Independence.

The years after Independence brought forth two opposite poles inside the society of Greece. The one pole included the agricultural people which were the majority of Greeks, while the other one the governing people, the so called upper class. The intermediate social levels were still absent in those years. The folk music was expressive only of the agricultural people of the newly founded Greek state, while the upper class preferred exclusively western types of music. Thus, we realize that the polarization of the Greek society affected decisively the musical identity of the Greek state in the first decades of its existence. In Athens of the 1870s, this polarization became even stronger when the Café Aman and the Café Santan appeared. The latter one had program with dancers of Western Europe, while the first one had musicians playing Greek, Arabic, Turkish, Armenian, and Bulgarian music. The strong competition that developed between these places reflected the opposition that existed between the two social poles mentioned above.

The cultural isolation during the Ottoman occupation, the slow musical communication with Western Europe in later years, the mere refusal of the upper class to approach the music of the agricultural people, meaning the folk music, and the slow social process in contrast to the industrial revolution, caused a delayed internationalization of Greek music. Exception was the music of Eptanisa Islands, which were never under the Ottomans. There from the beginning of the 19th century, developed a kind of music that constituted the first attempt of the foundation of an indigenous music, which combined East with West.

On the other hand, in Athens, such kind of attempt appeared much later, at the end of the 19th century, and that was the *Athinaiiko* song. However, according to Voliotis, the *Athinaiiko* song did not succeed its aim, to create a modern formula of music, which would be able to combine the two identities; something that verifies the

⁴ Voliotis-Kapetanakis Ilias, *Enas Aionas laiko tragoudi*, Nea Sinora- Livani, Athens, 1989, p. 64

ineffectiveness of the Greek society itself to follow the new implications.⁵ In a way, that type of song constitutes the earliest type of Greek urban song. Nevertheless, the urban song and the popular song of Modern Greece derive from the folk music of different people that settled in Piraeus in the 19th and the 20th century. Thereby, the shell of urban and popular song is folk music; and the line between folk music and them, particularly that of popular music, was vague in the first years of their evolution. Therefore in the first decades of the 20th century we can distinguish a great variety of musical types: the folk music, the urban music and the popular music. However, the art music remained the music of the upper class, and so the musical polarization mentioned above continued to exist.

Greek composers of art music faced a similar dilemma to the historical one explained above. Should they follow the Western harmony with its various compositional techniques, or should they remain close to monophony and folk music culture, which pre-existed and had already served the patriotic and national feelings for centuries? Which means should they create music for a limited audience or for the many people? Yet, because European music, at the turn of the 20th century was often connected to “folklorism”, as Béla Bartók defined it, the majority of the Greek composers, worked on the synthesis of both musical cultures: that of East and that of West. Therefore, most Greek art composers accepted the new term of “Helleno-Christianity”, proposed by Paparigopoulos, and applied it to music. At the same time they continued the work of earlier composers from the Eptanisa Islands, contributing to the cultural and, thereby, social convergence.

Another attempt for the synthesis of the two musical identities was the creation of a new type of stage art music that had obtained great popularity from the last decade of the 19th century and continued in the 20th century: the *Elliniki Operetta*. Its political and social thematic material strengthened the national conviction of Greeks during the years of the Balkan Wars, particularly in the big urban centers, whereas folk song remained the main way of patriotic expression for peasants. But, the *Elliniki Operetta* was a western type of music that, even though it was influenced by eastern musical features, as “folklorism” implied, it remained closer to West than to East. As a result, it did not succeed its goal and, thereby it was unable to play any social role; that is why its fame faded very quickly (in 1928).

In the 20th century, two political dramatic eras, the one from 1912 to 1922, and the years from 1940-1949, have been fundamental to the cultural, social and political development of the Greek nation. The tragic moment of the Devastation of Smyrna by the Turks in 1922 with the forcible resettlement of Greeks of Asia Minor in 1924 brought many refugees in the Greek mainland, but admittedly it strengthened the will for National unity and indeed affected music. The refugees from Asia Minor brought with them their own musical tradition, the so called *Smyrneiko*, which was influenced by the music of the East. The *Smyrneiko* song was talking about the national defeat of Greeks in 1922; it was expressive of the Greek national feeling, in particular of the nostalgia and the pain of the refugees. On the other hand the folk song had more recognition away from the urban centers, among the villagers and the places it originated.

In parallel to *Smyrneiko* song, there was another kind of song with the same origins, that was highly developed during the interwar years; that was the *Rebetiko* song. The case of *Rebetiko* is very special. In the beginning it symbolized the life and the society of the very low poor class. The refugees from Asia Minor and the poor

⁵ Voliotis-Kapetanakis Ilias, *Enas Aionas laiko tragoudi*, Nea Sinora- Livani, Athens, 1989, p. 70

urban people had common issues and problems during 1920s. *Rebetiko* song carried the Greek folk element while at the same time it was strongly influenced by Eastern musical elements. Thus, *Rebetika* songs were both considered as belonging to the Greek society and culture while at the same time they were named as Eastern songs. And for that reason there was a strong debate concerning their identity, deriving once more from the issue mentioned above, of the twofold identity, that of East and that of West.

During the interwar years, there was a similar kind of music that earned much popularity as *Rebetiko* song had got; that was the so-called urban pop music-*astikolaiko tragoudi*. Its development went in parallel to the development of the big urban societies, like Piraeus, and Athens; its stages reflected the stages that these societies passed through. It was an amalgamation of elements of folk music with influences of the *Rebetiko* song, and of the musical tradition of the several minorities that had settled in the Piraeus. Its significance was that it managed to create cultural interlinks between the poor people and the upper class, and thereby bridging the two social poles. Because it talked about the worries that urban people were facing inside the modern societies, it was the principal type of music which continued existing after II World War. After a short pause of progress in 1940s, there was a quest for urban-popular music to change root in order to develop a modern identity. It was then that after a century of search for a modern musical identity the eastern and the western element typically fused in one, by harmonizing the pop tunes; a technique that was, in a way, imported by abroad and the music of the Greek communities in other countries. From this stage on, urban-pop music was commercialized, and thereby it gained popularity in all social levels.

Dahlhaus has stated that ‘the national side of music is to be found less in the music itself than in its political and socio-psychological function’;⁶ a notion that indeed reflects the case of Greece. Any research on the Greek musical culture has to focus on the fundamental questions of the composition of the national culture, placing the Greek music in the context of two conflicting historical models of the nation; two models, which despite they have derivate from the same nation and its continuous history, brought about internal cultural rivalry. Ideologically that was answered by the new term of “Helleno-Christianity”; a term that, its musical sense practically preexisted to its theory. However, the debate between the eastern side and the western side of Greek music remained an issue from the 19th up to the mid 20th century. This twofold musical identity represented the two opposite social poles of the newly independent Greek state. It was only in 1950s when the society managed to develop some kind of intermediate social levels that the two-sided musical identity seemed to have fused into a single one, the so-called *laiko tragoudi*.

⁶ Dahlhaus, Carl, *19th century Music*, trans. J. B. Robinson, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1989, p. 217

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Vizyenos Adapted: Georgios Vizyenos in Contemporary Greek Cinema, Literature and Theatre

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Introduction

This paper focuses on *To Mόνον της Ζωής του Ταξείδιον* (*The Only Journey of His Life*) (2001), Lakis Papastathis's film adaptation of the homonymous short story written by Georgios M. Vizyenos. I will attempt to contextualize my reading of this film with references to other areas where Vizyenos has been used in contemporary Greece, namely Michel Fais's novel *Ελληνική Αϋπνία* (*Greek Insomnia*) (2004) and its stage adaptation by Rula Paterake (2007). My aim will be to assess how much the myths surrounding Vizyenos's life influence contemporary works, and to further ask why this happens.

Owing much to discussions about the role of imaginatively engineered processes in nation building (Anderson 1983) current debates in Modern Greek Studies are centred on the construction of the Greek literary canon formation (Lambropoulos 1988, Jusdanis 1987, 1991). At the periphery of contemporary cultures Greece has always employed ethnocentric policies towards literature in order to construct a national identity (Tziovas 2003). Literary scholars and critics were considered important in circulating national canonical literature with clear political meaning. In this framework, film adaptations of Greek literature, interwoven in a dialogue with the national cultural narrative, sometimes supporting it sometimes subverting it, form a fertile field where the understanding of the articulation and circulation of literature in Greece can be explored.

As I will try to illustrate, Vizyenos constitutes a relevant case in point, and this paper aims to show how the work of contemporary Greek artists acts as a conduit for the artistic formulation of founding literary myths. Critics were always interested in Vizyenos's personal life Vizyenos because it 'rivals the lives of his heroes in tragic nature' (Peratzaki 1999: 9)¹. A very popular view is that his hospitalization in Dromokaition Clinic was the consequence of his intelligence or his critics's savage and unfair criticism of his work.

The examination of the cultural myth of an author and its role in the context of modern sociocultural anxieties would be severely limited if it were approached in the light

¹ 'Είναι που και η ζωή η ίδια του συγγραφέα συναγωνίζεται σε τραγικότητα τα πεπρωμένα τους [ie. των ηρώων των διηγημάτων του]'.

of the so-called 'fidelity' discourse. Fidelity analysis is based on the discussion revolving around the extent to which adaptations are faithful to the literary source they purport to adapt.² Theoretical investigations in Reception Theory (Gadamer 1975, Martindale 1993) and Cultural Studies Theories depart from the above line of thought and explore the historical framework of adaptations's policies of production, exhibition and distribution, as well as their reception both by critics and audience. In this framework the relationship between literature and adaptations is seen as complicated in its intellectual practices and indicative of intricate interconnections between history, literature, power and culture. As these approaches go beyond dualities such as written/ filmed or original/ secondary text, they offer a political and cultural understanding of adaptations in the Greek context that can be very useful.

Lakis Papastathis Reading Vizyenos: Reading as Sewing

In the last few years Greece has witnessed an amazingly growing interest in film adaptations. Initiatives from national organisations, for example, from the National Book Centre and the Greek Film Centre, include masterclasses and workshops, retrospectives and awards for the best script based on a novel, indicating that adaptations are being promoted. Moreover, the massive migration wave of ethnic, mainly Balkan, minorities to Greece followed by discussions about identity politics brought again issues of cultural connections and Greek distinctiveness to the fore. This is the context in which Lakis Papastathis decided to adapt *The Only Journey of his Life* on the big screen.

Papastathis's well-known interest in literature goes back to 1960s when he took part in the so-called *New Greek Cinema* movement (*NGC*).³ *NGC* directors' self-conscious need to make a rupture with the long-prevailing genres and styles in Greek cinema made them form a new aesthetic paradigm with a clear educational aim (Soldatos 2002, Kechagias et al.).⁴ Their lack of public support, the monopoly of low-art films and the sociopolitical instability in Greece were among the reasons they returned to the past. They adopted a hellenocentric approach to the past, depicted in their subject matter and cinematography, in order to find the 'real', the 'authentic' and the 'everlasting'. Paradoxically enough, they were not completely cut off from Europe since they had acquired European filmic education, aiming at making films which would go beyond the borders of Greece. Indeed the so much needed nationally distinct cinema from inward-looking film-makers did not rely on distinctions such as local/foreign or Greek/ Western-European, a fact that explains to a large extent the affiliations of this movement with belated modernism in Greek literature.

After a closer look at the interviews Papastathis gave after the release of *The Only Journey of his Life* the reader would observe that, apart from details about the production, the director often referred to his status as an auteur. Even if contemporary viewers had not heard of him before they would then learn that with *NGC*, history, literature and Greek

² An illustrative example of this might be Peter Bien's contribution to the special issue of *JMGS* on Greek cinema. His account on the two film adaptations of Kazantzakis's novels does not comply with the call of the editor of the volume for papers which could 'serve as a springboard from future debates and [...] stimulate further research on Greek film in the English language in the next century'. Constantinidis 2000: 1.

³ Papastathis worked as assistant director in 1968-1971 and contributed to the publication of the journal *Σύγχρονος Κινηματογράφος* [*Contemporary Cinema*, 1969].

⁴ In those years, cinema equalled the highly mainstream movies of comedies, populist melodramas, musicals, war and mountain films. See Mitropoulou 1980: 274, Constantinidis 2000: 7, Soldatos 2002:13.

everyday life was rediscovered by directors to become a matter of self-knowledge and moral order.

[Η γενιά του Νέου Ελληνικού Κινηματογράφου] [...] έκανε τη στροφή στην ιστορία, στην λογοτεχνία, στην καθημερινή ζωή [...] [Τότε] έγινε στροφή στην ιστορία, που ήταν ένα είδος αυτογνωσίας, με πρωτοστάτη τον Θόδωρο Αγγελόπουλο, τον πιο πλήρη, τον πιο σημαντικό, ως προς τη γραφή, σκηνοθέτη αυτής της γενιάς [...] Ήταν υπόθεση διαφορετικής ηθικής τάξης, όχι υπόθεση επαγγελματισμού (Papastathis in Georgakopoulou 2002- my emphasis).

The above statement was made by Papastathis, who elsewhere explained that he was interested in prose fiction and poetry because they depict ‘Greek life, Greek landscape, language, action, human behaviour’ (Fais 2002: 8).⁵ In his discussion about Greekness, discourses of continuity, patrilineage and ethnic descent came strategically into play. He stated, for instance, that he felt as if he was the ethnic descendant of ‘Papadiamantis, Vizyenos, Cavafy, Seferis and Elytis’ (Georgakopoulou 2002: 68).⁶ On a personal level, he subtly yet indirectly made a connection between Vizyenos who narrated stories of his childhood, with the days of his own (that is, the director’s) adolescence when his first encounter with literature took place.⁷ What is more, it is obvious that he is consciously aware of Vizyenos’s place in Greek literature and the discussions about the author’s work in criticism, a fact that made the interviewer Vena Georgakopoulou ‘feel as if I were a student in a literature class’ (Georgakopoulou 2002: 18).⁸

Papastathis’s strong feeling of living on the fringe of mainstream film industry fuelled a hellenocentric approach or what Katsounaki called ‘hellenocentric, literary passion’ (Katsounaki 2001). His status as a peripheral, intellectual director determined his purpose when adapting *The Only Journey of his Life*. Quoting Panagiotis Moullas’s belief that the story is about a ‘study of death’ (Moullas 1980) Papastathis defined the role of his mission as drugging Vizyenos out of the past and his marginal place where his contemporaries had placed him (Georgakopoulou 2002: 20). According to his own words, his inspired duty towards the author and his work was to make a comment on writing itself. Nearly ten years before the shooting of this film took place, he defined the role of the adaptor. He stated that

Θα υποβαθμίζαμε τραγικά τη λογοτεχνία αν πιστεύαμε ότι το μόνο που μπορεί να μας δώσει είναι κάποια τρανταχτά θέματα για κινηματογραφική εκμετάλλευση ή σηριαλοποίηση. Αλλού βρίσκεται η ουσία: πίσω από τη δράση, στην ίδια τη γραφή (Papastathis 1990: 523).

⁵ ‘Η ελληνική ζωή, το ελληνικό τοπίο, ο λόγος, η δράση, οι ανθρώπινες συμπεριφορές πάλλονται από τις πνευματικές επενδύσεις της ποίησης και της πεζογραφίας’, in Fais ‘Den mporeis na xefugeis apo te zow kanontas kenematographo’ *Vivliotheke* 28/06/2002. Papastathis’s involvement with Greekness can be also manifested, apart from his three full-length films to his recently published short stories *He Nuchterida Petaxe* and *He Heseche kai Alla Diigemata*.

⁶ ‘Νοιώθαμε παιδιά του Παπαδιαμάντη, του Βιζυηνού, του Καβάφη, του Σεφέρη, του Ελύτη’, *ibid.* 48.

⁷ Papastathis goes back in his childhood in Mytelene when ‘Εργαζόμουν σε ένα σφαιριστήριο τις ώρες που δεν είχα σχολείο, μοίραζα μάρκες και έφτιαχνα καφέδες. Σύχναζαν εκεί λογοτέχνες, μορφωμένοι άνθρωποι, οι οποίοι με μύησαν στη λογοτεχνία’. See Papastathis in *Eikones*.

⁸ See also Georgakopoulou’s article in *Eleftherotypia* e online 13 May 2000.

In other words, Papastathis was interested neither in adapting a literary text freely, just because he has an affinity with it, nor in creating a secondary film based on the literary text using cinematic tools (Zannas 1990: 199). Papastathis wanted to go beyond this dilemma. His aim, he says, is not the 'literary work' but the text in its textuality (cf. Barthes From Work to Text). He decided to turn the book to cinematic image aiming at the revival of the story as well as of the book and of its *graphie*.

Let us now turn to the film and see how all the above come into play. Had it not been for the addition of a frame-narrative, the film would have been a rather dull adaptation. Not only did Papastathis retain the main story of little Giorgis, his experience as an apprentice tailor and his trip back to his hometown to see his grandfather before he dies, but he deployed the same narrative tools as the author while fitting them to the demands of the cinematic medium. When casting the parts, the director gave the role of both grandfather and Vizyenos to the same actor (Helias Logothetis) and the role of the little kid to a girl (Frangiski Moustaki) indicating the shift of identities and (in the latter case, cross-dressing) experiences between grandfather and kid. In so doing, he seems to have taken on board to some extent Michalis Chrysanthopoulos's critique that

by identifying the 'I' of the discourse with the 'I' of the character or the narration Greek criticism has not only projected a certain image of the author, but also excluded the possibility of the author's being inscribed not in the narration but in the other characters (Chrysanthopoulos in Beaton 1985:12).

Editing literally follows the rhythm of the book, while the imposing photography blends tale and fantasy with narration, pictorialism with folklore. Let us see now how and why Papastathis, contrary to his statements, is faithful, apart from the adapted story as briefly discussed above, to the myths surrounding the name and place of Vizyenos in Greek letters.

Where Papastathis might have had the chance to escape fidelity was exactly in the first level narrative of the film. The adapted short story functions as a second level narrative in the film for in the opening scenes we see Vizyenos's last moments before his admittance to Dromokaition mental clinic. Notwithstanding the scenes about his passion for the adolescent Bettina and his consignment to the asylum the film is certainly not about the human side of the writer. If the opposite is the case it is due to the following images of the author recollecting or reading his short story from the journal *Estia* in the premises of the clinic. I argue that the moment Papastathis places Vizyenos in the asylum the director's playful reconstruction of the figure of the author begins.

Dromokaition is a place which exists and does not exist, almost a non-topos, where the writer becomes figure living on the fringe of society. After some initial scenes where Vizyenos wanders around aimlessly among other psychopaths in corridors, bearing a cap which differentiates him from the others, in the rest of the film he is still, sitting in isolation from the rest. As far as cinematography is concerned, the asylum becomes almost an ideal – idealised even- space: mise-en-scene implies that everything is clean-cut or politically correct, and the light of the sun beaming inside the author's room creates such a dramatic tension that the viewers cannot do but identify themselves with the author. In terms of its emotional impact the film is successful with no doubt.

Only with his death can the author leave his confined, peripheral space. But even then he is still alive. When in the last scene the author has just died, his life, Papastathis seems to imply, would have been lost forever had it not been for 'his books [...] his manuscripts' which a nurse places with care in a suitcase. This suitcase, essential in the film as several close-ups indicate, stands as a metaphor for literature. The author, through his work, will be

literally handed in, circulated by the new generations. Only through his written work can the author leave his confinement and make the main ‘journey’ of his life.

Papastathis was not interested in making any reassumption about or interpretation of the novel per se but, contrary to his own words about his focus on the writing, he focused on the author. He did not engage himself with the human aspect of the writer but rather with the idealised image of him by using any means the camera could offer. On a deeper level, he commented on the power of cinema per se to construct identities.

By narrating both the short story and the myths circulating by Vizenos’s life the camera renders the film not so much an adaptation of a literary text but rather a comment on the power of the act of cinematic narration in constructing identities.

With *The Only Journey of his Life* Papastathis talked about Vizenos not from a peripheral position. The adaptation was financed by Greek, Turkish and European production companies and was highly celebrated in the prestigious 42nd Thessaloniki Film Festival, where it won eight awards, among which Grand Prix for Best Feature Film, Best Cinematography and Best Film/ Dwards Audience Award.⁹ The subject-matter of the film and its production privileged the film over other, more daring and distinctive, films which took part in the Festival, namely *Dekapentavgoustos* and *Pes sten Morphini pos Akoma tin Psachno*. Except for national, the film got international acclaim in festivals throughout the world.¹⁰

How was the film received by critics? Maria Katsounaki traced the ‘Greek soul, honesty, original passion’ in the film (Katsounaki 2001), which later Vena Georgakopoulou praised as being ‘not only very good [...] [but also] intellectual’ (Georgakopoulou 2001). Stratos Kersanidis mentioned the ‘moral justification of New Greek Cinema’ (Kersanidis 2005) and Mare Theodosopoulou went as far as to claim that ‘it has already become a myth’ (Theodosopoulou 2003).¹¹ In other words, it was believed to have raised the spectrum of ‘quality’ cinema. Interestingly, the same view about inspiration and fidelity in the film have the speakers in the conference on Papastathis work in 2001.¹² Although it was not the most successful movie in 2001, it stands high in the ranks of popular films in 2001. If in Thessaloniki Film Festival the film attracted the attention of the critics, Greek audience went for comedies, namely *To Kláma Bγήκε από τον Παράδεισο* [*To Klama Vgike apo ton Paradeiso*], *Στάκαμαν* [*Stakaman*] and *Ο Καλύτερός μου Φίλος* [*Ο Καλύτερός μου Φίλος*], or even the avant-garde film adaptation *Πες στην Μορφίνη πως Ακόμα την Ψάχνω* [*Pes sten Morphini pos Akoma ten Psachno*], which was provokingly neglected in the festival (Rouvas 2002). Moreover, critics placed the movie in the genre of period piece (ταινία εποχής) or historical (ιστορική) (Rouvas 2002: 532) and thus indicated that the story of and about Vizenos bears the burden of history and memory.

It is obvious, as I have tried to show, that Papastathis, just like the grandfather in the original short story, tried to piece together different fragments surrounding Vizenos and

⁹ The rest awards were Best Cinematography, Best Set Design, Best Music, Best Sound, Best Make-Up and Best Costume Designer.

¹⁰ It was screened in the 26th Contemporary World Cinema (Toronto, 2001), *Sofia?* International Film Festival 2002 (Best Cinematography), in Medfilm Rome Film Festival (2003, Best Film) and in the international film festivals in Hong Kong, D’Amour Mons (Belgium), Chicago, Istanbul, Cleveland, Singapore. See Rouvas 2002: 532-533. It was submitted for the 78th Academy Awards in the category Academy Awards for Best Foreign Film.

¹¹ ‘Ελληνική ψυχή, εντιμότητα, γνήσιο πάθος’, ‘Η ηθική δικαίωση του Νέου Ελληνικού Κινηματογράφου’. ‘Η ελληνική παρουσία στο 42ο Φεστιβάλ Θεσσαλονίκης δεν είναι απλώς πολύ καλή. Ήταν και υψηλής πνευματικότητας’, [ο κινηματογραφικός Βιζυηνός του Λ. Παπαστάθη] έγινε ήδη μύθος’.

¹² As later published in Tomai- Konstantopoulou (2001).

various readings of Vizyenos's short story. It is interesting that, in order to direct this adaptation, Papastathis was supported by state-fund industry as well as well-structured politics to promote abroad this film, and, through it, local cinema production and the image of Greece. In my view, it was exactly Vizyenos's life that made Papastathis suture together different fragments about Vizyenos and his work into a larger narration in Greekness and Greek cinematography in 21st century.

With Michel Fais and his book *Greek Insomnia*, the mythical embroidery is being unsewed as a proof that Vizyenos's myth does not remain fixed, yet still retains its status.

Michel Fais's *Greek Insomnia*: From Sewing (ραφή) to Writing (συγγραφή)

The next case study I am going to turn to is *Greek Insomnia* [*Ελληνική Αϋπνία*] where Michel Fais, departing from an approach which idealises and marks Vizyenos out of his contemporaries, is interested as much in his own autobiography as in a biography of Vizyenos. Fragments of glossaries, archive material from Dromokaition Clinic and letters written by the author and addressed to Vizyenos, blend together in a single whole. The presence of Vizyenos can be traced in the glossaries with words of his works as well as in quotations from his works in the letters. Moreover, original archive material from Dromokaition clinic describing diseases and therapies testifies to crude realism, while letters represent Fais's main contribution in the fictitious aspect of the book. However, Vizyenos is omnipresent in the whole book since his life and his work, together with interpretations of it by critics of his time all emerge from the hybridic writing.

Vizyenos is omnipresent, but always absent, I would add. Fais follows postmodern literary trends, especially in their awareness of the function of the form in constructing meaning. In their work, postmodernists offer multiple alternatives which invite the reader to take an active part not in the construction of reality, but in the construction of his or her own version of it (Tziouvas 1987). *Greek Insomnia*, in the form of a postmodern hybrid, dismantles Vizyenos's life which has been for so long contaminated with myths and inconsistent assumptions made by his critics affecting the reading public. For Fais, his aim is

να ακρωτηριάζω ή να ράβω στοιχεία που έχω λαθρακούσει, που έχω δει με κλειστά μάτια, που μου ψυθιρίζουν οι αράδες που δεν αξιώθηκα να σύρω (Fais 2003: 106).

Fais's technique is sewing different patches so that the outcome is a patchwork, or, using a word of Vizyenos, a *ψηφωτό* (quoted in Fais 2004: 178). In so doing the writer takes the figure of Vizyenos out of its mythological mist while challenging on the same time a single biography. There is a biography out of many others and every reader is invited to make up his or her own version, according to his or her own will. With *Greek Insomnia*, what remains in the end is a figure of Vizyenos deconstructed, dismantled, dissected, purified from long prevailing discourses, broken into tiny parts, only to be rearranged in different pieces, quotations and assumptions. Vassilis Lambropoulos would certainly add that with Vizyenos

neither the sources nor their contemporary amalgamation seem to belong to or form an organized whole, a linear narrative, or an organic tradition.[...] [O]riginals lose their quality of origin and become nomadic: they circulate but cannot function as a *topos*, a commonplace, a shared site of ancestry, feeling and reference (Lambropoulos 2002: 192).

What Fais and Vizyenos have in common is their marginality, expressed in geographical terms. Fais considers himself as ‘ένας μονήρης Βαλκάνιος - δηλαδή μεταβυζαντινός- χαμένος σε κεντροευρωπαϊκές βιβλιοθήκες’ (58). Born in Thrace from a Christian mother and a Jewish father, Fais lived in Komotini most of his time, in the in-between of two religions and two places. At face value, *Greek Insomnia* is about the biography of Vizyenos. On a closer look, however, it is an autobiography of the writer through his symbiotic relation with another writer, as visualised in the front cover of the book. It is not coincidental that in his previous book *Honey and the Cinders of God* [*Το Μέλι και η Στάχτη του Θεού*] (2002) Fais constructed the life of recluse Jewish painter Julio Kaimi, born in Corfu, again in the form of pastiche. As he argues, by writing

[...] προσπαθώ να δώσω απάντηση στο που βρίσκομαι [...] Φωτίζω αυτό που με ενδιαφέρει μέσω της βιογραφίας του άλλου. Θέτεις, με άλλα λόγια, έναν καθρέφτη και βλέπεις το πρόσωπό σου μέσω του άλλου (Fais in Pimblis 2005).

Vizyenos, for Fais, is minor because he writes ‘λοξά μυθιστορήματα μιας εκπατρισμένης γραφής μέσα στον ίδιο της τον τόπο, μέσα στην ίδια της τη γλώσσα’ (174), talking from a minoritarian viewpoint and departing from both the Orthodoxy of Papadiamandis and the Europeanism of Roidis.¹³ From the instability of Vizyenos’s life Fais deals with the instability of his critics vis-à-vis his place in the Greek literary canon throughout the years. Vizyenos is a case in point as critics, or *μυιοχάφτηδες* (52),

προσπαθούν να σας κόψουν και να σας ράψουν στο όνομα κάποιου εθνικού στόχου. Εξ ου και στα χρόνια σας η λαογραφία και η ηθογραφία (σαν να λέμε σήμερα η μετανεωτερικότητα) γεννοβολούσαν σαν κουνέλες Δροσίνηδες και Κονδυλάκηδες. Εσείς όμως, ένα προσφυγάκι της λευκής σελίδας, τη μόνη λαογραφία και τη μόνη ηθογραφία που επιθυμούσατε να εκφράσετε ήταν τα ταραγμένα ενύπνια της παιδικής σας ηλικίας- τους λαμπαδιασμένους μάρτυρες της αδάμαστης αϋπνίας σας.

Following Fais’s line of thought, literature, critique, Greek identity and national narrative are all fluid and complex constructed by a sewing practice. The book went out of print within two months after its first publication and has been reprinted three more times since. As for the critics who commented on *Greek Insomnia* they praised it because, among other things, it deals with a ‘Greek’ and national subject¹⁴ and has a ‘political meaning’.¹⁵ *Greek Insomnia* seems to be part of Fais’s general project on Vizyenos since he has published other works on him, included Vizyenos’s grave photograph in a photo-album,

¹³ See ‘*Η παραφροσύνη σας είναι η απάντησή σας αφενός στην πίστη του Παπαδιαμάντη και αφετέρου στην ειρωνεία του Ροΐδη. Το νόσημα του μυελού είναι η πρώτη παράκαμψη που επιχειρείτε τόσο σε σχέση με την κάτωθεν ορθοδοξία, όσο και με τον άνωθεν εξευρωπαϊσμό που διαμελίζουν τον τόπο. Η γενική παράλυσις των φρενών μετά κινητικής αταξίας είναι το ισχυρότερο επιχείρημα μιας μειονοτικής λογοτεχνίας που φιλοδοξεί να παραμείνει μειονοτική*’ (60- italics in the original).

¹⁴ ‘*Το θέμα είναι εξόχως ελληνικό, δηλαδή πανανθρώπινο*’, in Exarchoroulou 2004.

¹⁵ ‘*Το να διαλέγεις ως πρότυπο τον Βιζυηνό και όχι τον Παπαδιαμάντη ούτε τον Ροΐδη, έχει μια σημασία πολιτική που σπάνια την διδασκόμαστα στο σχολείο*’, in Chartoulari 2004.

exhibited a painting at an exhibition of works about Vizyenos and edited a book with short stories written by authors inspired by Vizyenos.¹⁶

Roula Pateraki's Dramatic Theatre Reading Fais's Greek Insomnia: The Performance of Nudity

When Roula Pateraki decided to adapt *Greek Insomnia* on stage in winter 2006-7, she kept some of the 'marginal' aspects that Vizyenos, in Fais's view, had. The dramatization of the book in theatre, under the same title, was staged between December, 18 2006 and January 20 2007 in Embros Theatre, an old printing-house turned into a theatre, in Psyri district in Athens. The performance was the outcome of Pateraki's collaboration with Fais, something which is clearly mentioned in the programme and visualised on the front cover of programme notes., where, apart from the title ('*Michel Fais's Hellenike Aupnia*') it is Vizyenos's grave photograph as supposedly taken by Fais.¹⁷ It should also be added that this was not the first time that Fais's novels were adapted on stage.¹⁸

There were three actors on stage on the same time, each of whom stood in a different place and represented a different narrative voice of the novel. The voice of the author-meticulous researcher was performed by Tassia Sofianidou who was behind a bench, reading the archive material from Dromokaition while smoking, video recording and listening to music. On the other side of the stage, there was Aglaia Pappa who was reading letters addressed to Vizyenos. The two actresses occasionally removed the two portraits of Roidis and Papadiamandis hanging against the walls indicating the presence of other authors on stage. If the two actresses, who performed the two aspects of Fais were in a delirium of creativity, reading and throwing away pieces of paper, Vizyenos (Konstantinos Avarikiotis) was in a delirium. The actor was clearly set apart from the rest due to his place in the centre of the stage. Moreover, his performance was the most unconventional of all the three. The audience could follow his life from the early days, when his coquettish figure with a fancy costume, top hat and cane stood for his financial support by his sponsors, up to his latest days in the asylum. What followed a zeimbekiko song danced magnificently by Avarikiotis¹⁹ was the most powerful moment that would not shock the audience if the performance was not about Vizyenos. Avarikiotis took off his clothes and started masturbating on scene. Pateraki, with this realistic physical enactment, saw Vizyenos in all his lurid truth in Dromokaition hospital.

¹⁶ Γεώργιος Βιζυηνός, *Βιβλιογραφική Πρόταση*. Athens: EKEBI (1996), *Υστερο Βλέμμα*, Athens: Patakis (1996), Art Exhibition *Georgios M. Vizyenos* in Choros Technes 24 in 2006, *Hotel- Ένοικοι της Γραφής. Με τον Γ. Μ. Βιζυηνό, Αλλά και Χωρίς Αυτόν*. Athens: Patakis 2006, respectively.

¹⁷ The programme includes photographs of Dromokaitio asylum taken by Fais.

¹⁸ *Αυτοβιογραφία Ενός Βιβλίου*, directed by Thodoris Gones, was staged in Komotini and Patras in 2005 only for two performances respectively; *Τα Αντρόγωνα*, adaptation of part of *Aegyptius Monachus*, directed by Pandelis Choursoglou, in Metaxourgeio Theatre in Greece only for a limited number of performances; *Η Πόλη στα Γόνατα*, directed by Thodoros Anastasopoulos in 20-30 May 2006, in Amore-Exostes Theatre in Athens. It has to be underlined that all these plays were staged only for a couple of days. In cinema, he has written the script for *Delivery* (2004), directed by Nikos Panagiotopoulos, based on Fais's *Η Πόλη στα Γόνατα* [*The City on its Knees*, 2002], the book-album from Fais's photographic exhibition. By the time these lines are written, he is co-writing the script for Theo Angelopoulos's next film.

¹⁹ Nikos Xydakis's music of *Greek Insomnia* included original music from Thrace, music composed by Sopin, Strauss and Beethoven, rembetika and Theodorakis's music. See the programme of the performance.

Pateraki remained as close to the original novel, but she shifted her attention from the autobiography of Fais to the biography of Vizyenos. She wanted to present him in a realistic way, having fully grasped the author's forces that propelled him to a top place in Greek literature. In an interview she characteristically stated that

Εμείς οι Έλληνες είμαστε πάντα λίγο κομπλεξικοί, λέμε συνέχεια “α, δεν έχουμε μεγάλους συγγραφείς, δεν έχουμε έναν Μπαλζάκ, έναν Τζόις, έναν Προυστ”, αλλά εγώ δεν ξέρω αν οι ξένοι έχουν έναν Ροίδη, έναν Παπαδιαμάντη, έναν Βιζυηνό. [...] τέτοιες δουλειές στην Ελλάδα [...] έχουν σχέση με την ελληνικότητά μας και με την εθνική μας κουλτούρα. Οι θεατές θα αναγνωρίσουν κάτι από την “πατρίδα των γραμμάτων” και την “πατρίδα της γλώσσας” τους, που είναι πολύ σημαντική (Pateraki in Birbili 2006).

Pateraki is interested in adaptations because they involve the transformation of the written, enclosed yet theatrical text to its realisation in the form of a performance (Pateraki in Birbili 2006 and in the programme of the performance). In the case of *Greek Insomnia*, by staging a performance instead of a conventional play, the director retained the original language of the book and its intense and monotonous feeling, as caused by the palimpsestuous form to the book (Pateraki in Birbili 2006 and Cleftoyianni 2006). Notwithstanding her purpose not to treat Vizyenos as a myth she still held the view that it was Vizyenos and the language which he used, linked to Greekness and Greek national culture, that made her adapt *Greek Insomnia*. This time, with her project about Vizyenos, she managed to attain financial support by the J. F. Costopoulos Foundation. The programme, which included reviews about Fais's *Greek Insomnia* and advertisements of Fais's novels and Papakostas's publication of Vizyenos's letters, was printed with the assistance of Patakis, the publishing-house which put out *Greek Insomnia*.

Concluding Remarks

So why did a contemporary film director, author and stage director adapt Vizyenos then? It seems that the distanced relation between Vizyenos and his adaptators allowed them to draw upon different prevailing myths surrounding him. Their touchstone was Vizyenos's peripheral place in 19th-century Greece. Papastathis worked from the centre and transformed Vizyenos into a hero who has stood in history and still holds a special place in Greek Letters. If the film consolidated the mythical image of Vizyenos, Fais's *Greek Insomnia* was less about the generally circulated myth of Vizyenos and more about the function and role of minor literatures in modern world. Last, by directing Fais's book, Pateraki used nudity to present Vizyenos in an unconventional way. The adaptations of and about Vizyenos discussed go beyond binary oppositions such as centre/periphery, national/international, rupture/continuity and biography/ autobiography.

In my paper I did not seek to provide a full-fledged analysis of the formation of the figure of Vizyenos in the latest years in Greece. In that case, I should have equally referred to adaptations for Greek television²⁰ as well as Demos Avdeliodis's famous performances with Anna Kokkinou in *Morphes apo to Ergo tou Vizyenu* (2000) and Lydia Koniordou in *To Monon tes Zoes tou Taxidion* (2007). Although I did not seek to provide an exhaustive

²⁰ In the first one, directed by Vaggelis Serdaris, Giorgos Kimoulis plays the role of Vizyenos (ERT) while in the second one, entitled *Γεώργιος Βιζυηνός* and directed by Christophoros Christophes, Andonis Theodorakopoulos plays the role of the writer (ERT).

analysis of how Vizyenos has been adapted, it did intend to show some of the connotations and discourses involved when adapting literary texts for the big screen or for stage. In addition, it was an attempt to show how the relationship between literary texts and adaptations is complex, intricate and interwoven in institutional discourses and practices. There is no doubt that this is not a simple task. In reality, it is controversial especially when power and influence have been accrued to the writer of the original text. Adaptations either accept the fixed views concerning the writers and recognize a coherent and stable order or shake off their authority of the writers and their texts questioning the national rhetoric about them. In my mind, adaptations are cultural narratives. Investigating the dynamics inscribed in these texts is as much daring as it is fascinating.

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“Super hero comics fandom and psychosocial identity construction in late modernity”

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Abstract - This paper deals with the Psycho – Social Identity construction as an evolutionary process in the socio - cultural context of post - modernity. Readership choices are thought to be a psycho - social investment on the way to the adulthood and to identity construction and also a significant code which can reveal not only the meaning of the personal development, but also the reader’s perception of the Zeitgeist. The research gleanings hold up a model about the appearance of specific psycho - social “growing up” stages according to the readers’ internal and external reality. These phases and phenomena are common both for readers and for their favorite heroes: there aren’t only the individuals who are on the way to adulthood here; we find the same patterns in society’s “growing up” procedure through its projection in the media products. In this context it appears that individuals, societies and cultural capital seem to follow the same specific steps at least in terms of structure and proportion. The qualitative methodological approach follows the multi - perspective deal of the subject, practicing the “montage” technique of the “Bricoleur”: a performance of a various number of diverse tasks, ranging from the Life Story Approach to the semi – structured interviewing and from the in depth content analysis and projection techniques to the interpretive reading.

Key words – Fandom, popular culture audiences, psycho - social identity, imaginary, post – modernity, moral development.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS

Philosophers of our time (Giddens, 1990; Beck, 1992; Bauman, 2002; Balandier, 1994) talk about the end of history pointing out that we are trying to understand and to find a meaning to reality through concentration in the fragments of everyday life; generally through what used to be known during the Hellenistic Times as the “minima” (Cioran, 1988). Today the story telling of mass media is the profound narrator of our history: history of the individual, of its society, of its time and of its culture. With their persistent cataclysmic presence in comics, cinema, advertisement, television, in objects we like, in every spontaneous or more systematic choice we make, media narratives introduce a MacLuhanic extension of our selves projecting out there, available for consumption, what is inside, and at the same time expressing our comment for what is happening around us.

Here we study the narrations of super hero comics. And we try to understand their meaning through the point of view of their consumer, their systematic reader; the comics fan who is not a pathetic hypnotized figure of consumption, or a victim of subculture, as more than 30 years of study about comics and their audience is trying desperately to prove (Wertham, 1954), but an individual who keeps the power of its

personal choice. We point out the importance of the readership choice and we are trying to show what this choice means psychosocially for the person who makes it. In this context we put under theoretical and methodological discussion 3 questions:

- Which are the basic terms that analyze and describe the reading condition where the reader appears to be “imaginarily convinced” by the hero and the story he/she reads?
- What is the description of the heroes and the stories that appear to convince imaginarily the reader in every stage of his psychosocial development.
- What these specific readership choices tell us about the way that the individual face his inner and external reality?

We will show how Greek super hero comics fans choose specific types of super – heroes in every stage of their psycho- social development. Lucacs (1960) and Eco (1994) have suggested that when we talk about a “typical hero” we describe a person who can convince his reader for its social, political, psychological or historical truth. In our study we understand that a typical hero must be “imaginarily convincing” for his reader, in other words must be capable to express what the reader finds true referring to his internal and external reality.

To understand this idea we first need to discuss theoretically a few basic terms.

The fandom

- Generally it is defined as the regular, emotionally involved consumption of a given popular narrative or text (Sandvoss, 2005) and it is associated with a particular form of emotional intensity or “affect” to the reader (Grossberg, 1992).
- Psychoanalytic approaches to fandom (Creed, 1993; Stacey, 1994; Elliott, 1999; Hoxter, 2000) emphasize the intense emotional bond between fans and their objects of fandom through processes such as projection and introjection (Freud, 1905/1977; 1927/1982; 1923/1984) or the intermediate function of the object of fandom located between the spheres of self and object world as transitional object (Klein, 1946/2000; Winnicott, 1951/2000).
- Psycho- social approaches to fandom (Sandvoss, 2005) argued that the relationship between fans and their object of fandom is based on fans self – reflecting reading and hence narcissistic pleasures, as fans are fascinated by extensions of themselves (McLuhan, 1964), which they do not recognize as such.

The imaginary

- Lacans’ “imaginary” (“imaginaire”) (1949) as basic part of inner reality: Refers to the “mirror stage” to describe individual’s faith to be captured for ever in the image of an “identical other” (his image on the mirror). The personal meaning we recognize in every object defines the “imaginary”

area. We suggest that the meaning that every comics fan finds in every super- hero that recognizes as “convincing” reveals his imaginary.

- Kastoriades’ theory (1978) about the “imaginary construction of the social” suggests that imaginary social meanings are embedded in everyday life’s time and place defining the area between Ideology and Culture. We introduce that the super hero comics content, along with the personal meaning that their reader finds in them is captured there.

The idea of the development of self in stages

Developmental psychosocial changes in stages from childhood to adolescence and then to maturity support the diversity of the readership choices. We refer among others to:

- Eriksons’ theory for “the eight ages of the individual” (1990).
- Kolberg’s work about the stages of the moral development (1963, 1969).

Identity and post – modernity

Giddens (1990) and Bauman (2002) describe a new type of identity which is defined as constructed by the fragments of modern life. We find this kind of identity projected at the readership choices of the comics fans at their late stage of their history as comics readers.

Putting this schema in practice we approached our subject in a purely ethnographic qualitative context, based on the life story telling and the interpretative content analysis of 40 semi- structured interviews with Greek systematic super hero comics fans (Brooker, 2002). All men as described by the relevant theory (Barker & Brooks, 1998), based in Athens and Piraeus and aged 18-36 years old.

A. ANALYSIS OF THE “IMAGINARY CONVICTION”

Readers develop an important bond with their object of fandom when they feel “imaginarily convinced” by it. This happens when the super hero they favor projects their empirical truth about their selves and the world they live in. This condition of “imaginary conviction” is analyzed with 3 specific terms:

1. The “imaginary credibility”: Refers to specific claims for credibility that the reader has in connection to what every time thinks of being the “truth” in his internal and external reality (definition about the “human” in super hero comics, representation of the social, ideas about the moral and ideology e.t.c.)
2. The “empathetic enchantment”: Describes the sense of enchantment that the reader feels physically the moment that he reads something that is imaginarily convincing. It often appears in reference to 1) the sentimental adventures of the favorite hero, 2) the super – hero powers, 3) the “bad” character and the violence in the stories.
3. The “imaginary escape”: It is what readers describe as “escape from reality” and it is at the same time an elusion of the inner reality and an appeal to the time of the narcissistic childhood almightiness.

These 3 basic terms of “imaginary conviction” appear to be transformed in time and from stage to stage in reference to the specific developmental stages of identity construction and also in connection to how the individual responds to the changes of external reality (see Postmodernity).

B. THREE STAGES IN THE COMICS FANS READERSHIP STORY

Our research suggests that what comics fans favor to read at every significant point in their history as super hero comics readers reflects deferent psychological, cognitive and psychosocial dimensions of their identity development. In this context we can organize their readership choices in 3 specific stages in reference to their age, preferences and imaginary motivations.

1. 1st Stage (8-13 years old): classic super – heros (Spiderman)

Emphasis to the body super hero powers and to the “human” dimension of the character, idealization, absolute “good – bad”

2. 2nd Stage (13- 17 years old): super – hero groups (X-MEN)

Emphasis to the impressive super – hero powers working in synergy, to the social life of super heroes as members of their group, to “teen boyish” personality characteristics as independence, masculinity, capriciousness

3. 3rd Stage (17- 36): postmodern anti – heros (Spawn, Sandman, Sin Sity, Watchmen)

Emphasis to mental super – human powers, relativity in terms of ideas, morals, ethics, absorption, violence, social realism

If we have a good look at these tree stages we can notice a series of basic transitions that describe the individuals’ change through time.

- From the absolute to the relative in terms of values, moral, ideology in narrations
- From emphasis to physical super – hero powers to emphasis to mental super – hero powers
- From “human realism” to “social realism”
- From focus to the super – hero to focus to its creators
- From a “modern” type of reference to a “postmodern” one

CONCLUSION

The study of the readership choices can reveal the way that comics fans deal with their inner and external reality in specific stages. The psychosocial study of a mass

medium that appear to be “imaginarily convincing” can reveal the way we are growing up as psycho – social individuals in a postmodern context. In this context we can understand how the personal and the social, the individual and its culture follow specific parallel steps. We are all growing up together, simultaneously with our society and our ideology. Our identity appears to be adapted to the environment. Even (according to the concept of this “imaginarily convincing” symposium) the Greek identity to a Greek way of dealing with a Greek description of late modernity.

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Lieutenant Natasha: indirect support or critical assessment of the Greek dictatorship?

(The burden of history in Greek cinema)

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Introduction

In this paper I am going to examine one crucial aspect of one particular film through three different dimensions. This position refers to a general idea but never justifiable, so far as I know. After 1974, in the 15th Thessaloniki Festival, some opinions surfaced arguing that epic films such as *Lieutenant Natasha/Υπολοχαγός Νατάσσα* (YN) supported the Colonel's regime and did not confront it at all (Kamvasinou 2006: 242). In the extremely political atmosphere of the mid 70's, due to the defamation of the so-called *Old Greek Cinema/Παλιός Ελληνικός Κινηματογράφος ΠΕΚ* and the eminence of a new generation of directors with Angelopoulos' explicit thematic and stylistic domination, the film industry and popular films collapsed. I am going to examine this general idea in the film YN because the latter displays some not so symptomatic characteristics. First of all, YN was screened at cinemas the same year as Angelopoulos' *Αναπαράσταση* (Av). At the box office YN is ΠΕΚ largest commercial success and Av occupies one of the last entries. It seems to me that both pay heed to the historical narrative of crucial periods of Modern Greek life, the first being right-wing and the second being left-wing, however not exclusively. The former uses all the stylistic and thematic conventions of Greek film tradition from a slightly different viewpoint, the latter introduces the Brechtian "Verfremdungseffekt" or the "alienation effect" in both narrative and form. In other words, Av introduced the then contemporary European ideas to Greek cinema, while the former observed quiescently Greek identity. From these perspectives, I think the commercial success of YN constitutes the best paradigm of the examination of its historical dimension which has been constructed via three factors: Aliki Vouyouklaki's (A.V.) persona, Nikos Foskolos' career as screenwriter and director and the genre of epic drama films.

1.1. Aliki Vouyouklaki's star persona

At first, I want to outline briefly the main ideas that have arisen in relation to stardom. In film studies, Richard Dyer's seminal book 'Stars' deals with actors and actresses as texts and signs with explicit ideological and social references (Dyer 1979: 22-98). Stars embody audience desire and from the origins of this phenomenon around 1910, the American film industry developed several tactics to feed the media's lust for information about their employees' personal and artistic lives. Gradually, separate on and off screen lives became at times fused and unrelenting. As Christine Geranthy demonstrates, 'it is this duality of image which is deemed to mark a star, a duality which emphasizes a balance between the site of fictional performance and life outside...between the glamorous film world and the surprisingly ordinary domestic life of the star.' (Geranthy 2004: 185) If this is the main characteristic of the persona of a star, there are another three features of stardom, according to Pramaggiore and Wallis: the film industry, the persona and finally subculture/fandom. (Pramaggiore, Wallis 2005: 331-332)

Aliki Vouyouklaki is an example of a star, because her personal and cinematic life is inseparable. Her private and professional lives feed each other. The Greek film industry depended on her persona. A.V appeared on screen in 1954 as a protagonist and after 1959 as a star. Until 1971 her career could be divided into the following periods:

1. 1954-1959: The Progressive Period. She is very unphotogenic in comparison with the joyful, blonde and strongly made-up face after 1963 with the film *Το Δόλωμα*. She connects herself with young people and consumerism.
2. 1959-1961: The Consolidation Period. The film *Το ξύλο βγήκε από τον παράδεισο* was not only a big hit. In this movie she costarred with Dimitris Papamichail and they appear together in sixteen films between 1959 and 1971. The persona in this period begins to form. Main characteristics: androgyny, camp, puerility.
3. 1961-1966: The Affirmation Period. She adds her sexual image and epitomizes the sartorial identity of Greek women.
4. 1966-1967: The Parenthesis of Renewal. With two movies (*Διπλοπενιές*, *Η κόρη μου η σοσιαλίστρια*) A.V. tries to disengage her star persona from the foolish blonde school teenager figure in terms of genre and ideology.
5. 1967-1969: Return to the Standard. The artistic and commercial failure of the previous films forces A.V. to adopt the path of her secure star persona.
6. 1969-1973: The Still-born Renewal. A.V is getting on for her forties and cannot be a joyful young woman. She tries to change herself. The epic

drama film *Υπολοχαγός Νατάσα* (*Lieutenant Natasha*) can be seen from this perspective.

1.2.A.V. as a star in *YN*

A.V.'s new dimension to her star persona was given impressive reviews by Greek newspapers. Reviewers agreed more or less that «αποβάλλει τα γνώριμα κλισέ, αυτά στα οποία οφείλει την πλατειά της δημοτικότητα» ; and

«σαν αρχή η κ.Β. θα πρέπει να ενθαρρυνθή να συνεχίση τον δρόμο που φαίνεται να θέλη να χαράξη με την ταινία της αυτή. Υπάρχουν στιγμές που θυμίζουν ότι αν θελήση μπορεί να εκφράση καταστάσεις και ρόλους που πολύ απέχουν από την «πεπατημένη» των ταινιών της των τελευταίων ετών».(Kousoumidis 1979: 171)

In the initial stages it seems that film critic journalism pinpoints the difference in her role in comparison with other movies. Thirty years later, two other scholars, Yannis Soldatos and Maria Paradeisi, shared the same opinion. Paradeisi believes that there was a new variation to A.V.'s persona, which was distant from the popular girl who achieved her goal with her audacity, ingenuity, determination and naughtiness (Paradeisi 2006: 233-234) . Soldatos claims:

«Όλα κραυγαλέα στην ταινία [*YN*], στο γνώριμο ύφος του Φώσκολου, με δράση και κλάμα πέρα από τα μέτρα της χαρούμενης ώριμης ή ανώριμης παιδούλας που ως τότε ενσάρκωνε στην οθόνη η Βουγιουκλάκη. Και η Εθνική Αντίσταση πέρασε στο φόντο για να προβληθούν τα αισθήματα και τα κάλλη της πρωταγωνίστριας» (Soldatos 2001: 59)

The first opinion echoes the reviews. The second one repeats some general thoughts about the actors' position in Greek cinema, as the generation of the breakthrough periodical *Σύγχρονος Κινηματογράφος* developed a fragmentary theory. I am not going to focus on this. Rather I believe that Soldatos' second opinion was negated by the film itself. Let's see the final sequence, in which two scenes correspond with two stages of A.V. star persona new construction.

With the arrival at Aliartos' train station a large number of citizens welcome her. The reception becomes a double acclamation: firstly the ovation of A.V.'s star persona and secondly as the resistance woman who is more or less a heroine. In this way Natasha's double essence accepts the honors of the army and the title of Lieutenant in a male-dominated profession. At that

moment Natasha subordinates her female identity to the models of military masculinity. Later on, when the camera films the plain where her dead husband lies, Natasha passes a double row of soldiers who raise their phallic symbols, their arms. When Natasha leaves them behind, the soldiers put their arms down at the behest of the officer. It is at that moment when the heroine is beyond the concept of masculinity and the hero. In fact she is in the sphere of female bravery and posthumous fame. There, she confronts another male, her husband, but this time, the latter is dead and mythologized.

At this point Natasha incorporates three identity shifts: the first departs from the identifying with the version of male militarism, the second pushes the female identity beyond the social norms of obedience and the confines of the family and the third elevates the woman, Natasha, into the sphere of posthumous fame. The last dimension revives A.V.'s star persona, as it accompanies the pussycat persona from the movie *Το ξύλο βγήκε από τον παράδεισο*. This progressive and regressive movement towards the reception and rejection of (military) masculinity expresses a critical position to male domination and power.

This latent critical attitude appears also in her attempt to talk, at the end of the narrative. It is an attempt that belongs not only to the melodramatic tone of the film, as she is a captive of her fate, but to the epic dimension: she cannot talk to her son about the military past. She has to be silent, to bring it within her psyche, within her fantasies mixed with compulsion. In fact she cannot communicate freely about facts that have marked her life since 1943, the year in which the film stopped the historical narrative. Her emotions and thoughts are pent-up. When she tells her son, "Yes, my son I feel you, (ναι παιδί μου σε νιώθω)", she embraces him for 55 seconds. In this last scene in the plain the long embrace, the voice of the son which comes from the past, inasmuch as it is the same voice as his father's, the conveyance of bravery to the new male generation creates a mesh of past, present and future. +++

This contradiction between Natasha's trouble to express herself in the present, (and the present in the movie is the year 1970) and the convenience to talk in the past (and the past in YN is WW2 until 1943, as Paradeisi argues (Paradeisi 2006: 237-238)) and consequently to hear her voice and her thoughts, indirectly can be seen as a latent political comment. This transfer from the past to present strengthens from her appearance in film. The ineffective attempt of being an old and young woman simultaneously functions at two different levels. In 1970 A.V. is 37 years old and her role demands two different time periods. She is playing a young girl, almost in her late teenage period, who comes to maturity at middle age through national

sufferings. If the time passage between the young and mature woman is fixed more or less between 20 and 50, the 37-year old V. does not realistically represent either that she is 20 or 50 years old. She is too old to be young and too beautified and smooth to be middle-aged. The time gap of almost 30 years gives the opportunity to combine two different images, the rebellious but also compromised woman. This to some degree explains the huge success of the film with the audience and especially the female one, because this 30 years gap constitutes an age group, guiding two different generations to identify itself from a different standpoint: from being critical to remaining faithful followers of the Greek idol.

Let's see now how this time gap takes place in the movie. Vouyouklaki's deliberate decision to be youthful is detected by two mechanisms: the close-up where the viewer admires her fresh face and clothes, which do not fit in with the Occupation period of the '40's but with the hippy era. For example, when she helps the villagers to roll the carriage, the voluminous belt which ties her dainty waist, the chromatic differences between her warm clothes and the countrymen, the symbolic blonde hair, the pretentious movement of her body which is without question non realistic, the distance between her and the other people, and finally slow motion forces the narrative to be subordinate to A.V.'s star persona rather than Natasha's character. The star Vouyouklaki undermines the movie's historical dimension and transfers the ideological implications of the movie to the present time of 1970 and moreover to the then her star persona.

Let's see another crucial scene, which adds a new direction to the Vouyouklaki movie career. The example is the wedding ceremony. According to Eliza-Anna Delveroudi, «τα γυναικεία χαρακτηριστικά της [θράσος και τσαχπινιά] δεν έγιναν εποικοδομητικά όπλα με τα οποία το γυναικείο φύλο θα μπορούσε να θριαμβεύσει επί του ανδρικού στην κυριότερη επιδίωξή του, το γάμο.» (Delveroudi 2002:141). I do not wish to comment on the melancholic feminism of this view. Rather I will adopt it in a slightly different context in order to say that in fact Natasha marries her lover. But this happens in the middle of the plot. If the marriage is the accomplishment at the end of films after 1959, from 1965 onwards it is located in the middle. So, this shift which is expressed clearly in *YN*, has narrative complications. In *YN*, the orthodox marriage takes place in the middle of the film in a highly dramatic scene. The marriage repeatedly echoes the true marriage of Vouyouklaki and Papamichail in 1965. Even the display of Natasha and Orestis' son calls to mind the recent birth of Vouyouklaki and Papamichail's son. At this wedding ceremony we do not only see the fictional wedding. The viewer is reminded of her personal life and interprets the cinematic-public fact through the private sphere. It is searching for the

repetition of the famous couple and its cinemythology, but this time new directions are added by A.V.'s decision to add a new variety in her star persona, as she repeatedly admits in interviews of this period (Kousoumidis 1979: 247).

The new star persona can now be sketched. In terms of a duple personality in both personal and public life, the new star persona is the fighter woman both in private and civic sphere: fighter not only to accomplish her goals, i.e. to marry her love. She is marrying, but the obstacles after *Δασκάλα με τα χρυσά μαλλιά* and *YN* comes from outside, the national and social battles rather than erotic ones.

2. The historical narrative of Foskolos' movies.

One of the major views of Foskolos' movies generally and *YN* specifically is that they ideologically supported the Greek Junta. Although this opinion has never been developed and justified, it arises from the commercial success of his movies, the technical support on behalf of the dictatorship and Foskolos' directorial inauguration after 1967. The last belief ignores that Filopimin Finos, Foskolos' employer of the well-known Finos Film Production Company, promoted already well-trying and successful screenwriters to become directors, as for example, Alekos Sakelarios. I think the most obvious accusation that someone could charge Foskolos' movies with, is the analogy between social themes and political reality going hand in hand with the melodrama genre. This mixture of different aspects led some to grasp its meanings through the general political and realistic glasses of the '70s'. By observing Foskolos' whole film and television career, I think it is acceptable to admit that the melodramatic tone fits in more with his personality, however with other Greek directors, such as Angelopoulos, the ideological base of the movie matches.

Foskolos entered the Greek film industry in 1959. He was already 30 years old. Peter Greenaway in an interview for Greek Television once said that an artist has formed his personality by this age (Zacharopoulou 2005: ET1). What prevailed in Greek cinema in relation to recording recent history was the silence and the adoption of the dominant viewpoint with reference to the traumatic events of the Occupation and the Civil War, as Yannis Andritsos argues. After 1963, two major notions were formed through two different movies. *Προδότης* and *Μπλόκο* display the official version and the socialist version of the EAM role in the Resistance respectively. According to Andritsos, the movies of the first category

«αναπαριστούν τα απίστευτα κατορθώματα των σαμποτέρ ή παρουσιάζουν μελοδραματικές ιστορίες με φόντο την Κατοχή. Η αντίσταση παρουσιάζεται σαν αποκλειστικό δημιουργήμα των προσπαθειών της εξόριστης κυβέρνησης και περιορίζεται στον αγώνα μικρών ομάδων στις οποίες ηγούνται αξιωματικοί. Μοναδικός σκοπός είναι [η] απελευθέρωση. Δεν γίνεται καμιά νύξη στην κοινωνική διάσταση της Αντίστασης και αποσιωπάται ο ρόλος της αριστεράς. Έχουμε την ολοκληρωτική διαστρέβλωση της αλήθειας και τη δημιουργία μίας εικονικής πραγματικότητας. [Οι ταινίες χαρακτηρίζονται] από τον ψεύτικο ηρωισμό και το μελοδραματισμό.http://gr.f356.mail.yahoo.com/ym/-_ftn5» (Andritsos 2004:57)

In contrast *Μπλόκο* did not create a tradition because the dictatorship stopped such a development, mainly because the Greek cinema had already adopted a more compromised view of recent history. Examining the film production of the 50's, Maria Stassinopoulou pinpoints that commercial films followed the parody and irony in the case of comedy (βλ. *Ένας ήρωας με παντούφλες*) and the melodramatic tone (βλ. *Οι ουρανοί είναι δικοί μας*). In both ways censorship was surpassed (Stassinopoulou 2000: 37-52). This conducted directors and screenwriters to choose an ambiguous frame for their stories in order to speak for contemporary themes.

Under these circumstances, Foskolos entered the film industry in the late 50's following the tradition of compromise and the ambiguity. 1959 is the era of the increase in competition between companies and mostly the emergence of the Greek star system and Vouyouklaki as a national idol, as established by Editor Eleni Vlachou (Kousoumidis 1979:203). Foskolos had already tried his luck in theater, radio plays and literature. After 1959 Foskolos became primarily a screenwriter. It is not symptomatic that Aglaia Mitropoulou's influential book *Ελληνικός Κινηματογράφος* refers to him as scenarist of the movie *Το χρώμα βάφτηκε κόκκινο*. Undoubtedly, it is a considerable movie inasmuch as it won international festival success and principally, depicted recent history with a reference to a parabolic social event of the past. According to Athena Kartalou, *Το χρώμα βάφτηκε κόκκινο* is a key movie for the unfulfilled genre of social accusations (ταινίες κοινωνικής καταγγελίας) (Kartalou 2005, 2006: PhD, 154). In this film Foskolos is the screenwriter and Georgiadis the director, while in *YN* Foskolos is the screenwriter and director.

Both films share some common elements in terms of form, narrative, and historical representation. Natasha's family house recalls the Chornova

one on the Thessalian plain. Several scenes of characters riding are reminders of unsuccessful scenes of Georgiadis' movie. Both protagonists (Odysseas Chornovas/Nikos Kourkoulos, Orestis-Natasha Arseni) are constructed from the position they have to take towards one particular historical moment (In Xoma towards the acceptance of the agricultural movement and in YN the involvement with the Resistance). The latter challenges them to march from ignorance to knowledge, from inactivity to action and finally from individuality to a kind of solidarity. This transition from private happiness to public and national maturity is followed by the intense conflict between characters' loneliness and the perspective of future recognition as heroes by their citizens. When they decide to do something for their motherland, they have to sacrifice something or no part of their private life. While In *Χώμα* the hero played by Nikos Kourkoulos achieves simultaneously personal and national accomplishment, in YN the heroine played by A.V. faces up to the destruction of love and the failure of her secret national mission. If *Χώμα* of 1965 has explicit political references and skepticism about the Greek establishment, as Aglaia Mitropoulou believes, in YN of 1970 the political and cinematic dead-end is prominent, as the final scene reveals: Natasha embraces her son and imagines her past private happiness through the new generation. (I will explain in the next chapter)

It is clear, I think, that from the beginning of his career Foskolos was interested in the melodramatic representation of history rather than the ideological one. I summarize: YN must be seen through three perspectives, the Foskopian way of looking at recent history, the compromised Greek film industry tradition of historical narratives and the way the audience accepts history. I do not examine at this point the last one.

I now move onto the representation of past events when referred to as present, i.e. how the events of the Occupation era deal with the Colonel's dictatorship. The movie YN tells the story of a missing woman's return Natasha, who travels from a German sanatorium to Greece. As she approaches the Greek landscape, her memories begin. Natasha's past is represented by three flashbacks. I will examine the ideological implication of the flashback in the third section.

At this point, I want to sketch the way of entering these. I will take the line upon which the flashback is defined: the concept of time. In YN, now is dated in the movie back in 1965, as the opening scene shows (Konstantinidis, Kokalenios 1997: CD ROM, website of Tainiothiki). Watching the German cars in the movies and Natasha's clothes, I believe that this 1965 slips into 1970. I think that this contradiction between 1965 and 1970 is a matter of escapism from censorship. I also add that I have seen two different editions of

the movies; one with the date (1965) shown in the opening scene and one without it. I do not probe it at all. I return to the time and flashback. Now (and now is 1970, not 1965) has little space in the narrative in comparison with the past. While the camera zooms in Natasha's stone face and straight-faced look, an impression is formed: now lasts for a long time. It seems that Natasha is haunted by some terrible fact of the past, which in turn obsesses the present. In other words, although now is limited, it acquires further space through Natasha's expression.

When she fantasizes about past events, two important factors are revealed as determining her involvement in the Resistance group: Max, the German officer with Greek origin and the spectators in the theater. Max's role played by Costas Carras belongs to a series of characters in Foskolos screenplays where their names show double descent, as Athena Kartalou argues (Kartalou 2005: PhD). His father is a German officer and his mother Greek. The implication of the Oedipus complex, the blond hair, the German profile and his passionate love imply his anxiety to be accepted by Natasha's maternal figure. Although Max becomes obsessive about his costume and his phallic arm, his figure ultimately is not repulsive. He is cute, fluent in Greek his ambiguity between his admiration for Greek people and civilization and his duty to obey German instructions as invader is accompanied by a double and metaphoric discourse.

If vacillation and need for acceptance are the key points of Max's character, I will now focus on how Max and Natasha's relationship is developed. Undoubtedly, their affinity is neutral at first. As the narrative progresses, their relationship escalates like a game of cat and dog. Mostly, when both collide, the crowd intervenes. I refer to a scene, where Natasha for first time faces the possibility of involvement with the Resistance. In a very well constructed scene in terms of cause and effect, men of the resistance invade the theater, where Natasha is ending her performance. After a while, Max enters. The collision is not only between Natasha and Max. It is amongst artist Natasha, frustrated audience and the German officer as well. The construction of the shots is significant. Close-up for Natasha's face, medium shot for Max and extreme long shot for audience.

Each shot has explicit ideological implication. We are watching Natasha's close-up, which recapitulates A.V.'s star persona: star Aliko as the ultimate and unique star who charms the audience of this theater and indirectly the Greek cinema for over 10 years. She is enjoyable and a light-hearted maiden. The least but important contribution is to show the fugitive's exit is ambiguous, as her star persona is ambiguous in terms of her age: young and middle aged woman, light-hearted maiden of '60s and mature

woman of the 70's. Her contribution occurs at the time of the German Occupation. But, if we follow Foskolos synchronic reference of past events, we can define the boundaries, in which the artist must realize his/her role, and his/her obligations towards the regime. This latent political stance comes together with the general one of high culture and pop culture in this period, as Roderick Beaton argues. In his breakthrough *Introduction to Modern Greek literature*, he claims that the metaphoric and connotative discourse dominates in the literature and culture of this era (Beaton 1996: 330-334,338-340). It is not symptomatic that Natasha sings about metaphoric concepts such as ascent (ανηφοριά), descent (κατηφοριά), and darkness (σκοτεινιά). At the end the crowd applauds her warmly, although it is from a more or less passive position. People's neutrality appears again at the end of the film, where it is watching silently the ceremony behind the Greek contingent. In this aspect *YN* indirectly produces a sensation of a latent anti-dictatorship conscience.

3. The epic drama genre

The great commercial success in 1971 coincides chronologically with the Georgios Seferis declaration in 1969 and with the publication of *Δεκαοχτώ κείμενα* in June 1970 (Beaton 1996: 331). Putting the movie in this broad cultural context a crucial question appears: to what extent does the film's militant mood amounts directly to the support of the colonels' regime; and furthermore how the audience could endorse the movie's antifascism with 750.000 tickets in the middle of the Greek junta while at the same time appearing antimilitaristic and democratic, if it appears?

The answer to the second question (if the Greek people of 1970 were completely antimilitaristic) will provide some explanations for the former (indirect support of militarism). According to most historians of Modern Greek History(Veremis, Koliopoulos 2006: 442, Clogg 2003:191, Close2002, 140, Rizas 2003:50), the economic boom and vigor are determinants of establishing the colonels' regime in the first four years. Within a mechanism of censorship art found its way by adopting ambivalence and indirect speech. In such a way the ambiguity of Vouyouklaki's persona and Caras' thoughts can be seen. Their vacillation blends with a general one of the Greek people towards the dictatorship. Only when the Greeks realized that the Resistance could be in vain did the opposition gain public support. Three major facts decisively influenced the change of direction: the Polytechnic School rebellion, the first petroleum crisis in 1973 and the Turkish invasion of Cyprus (Gallant 2001:201-202).

If the Greek public and audience speculated and tolerated the behaviour of the dictators, the answer to the first point (to what extent the

film's militant mood amounts directly to the support of the colonels' regime) will be given if the genre of the film and the connection with popular art is considered. Maria Paradeisi argues in an inexplicit text that the genre of the film wavers between melodrama and the epic movie (Paradeisi 2006: 233-234). In this paper, I agree with this contradiction and its' terms. I also add that the epic/polemic frame gives the melodrama its dynamic.

The examination of this seeming contradiction between the genre of the epic and the melodrama reveals that although the movie enlists the glorious past of the WW2, it eulogizes the feats in arms and the sufferings of an ahistoric and fantastic persona. The conflict between the historical frame of a large national and nationalist narrative and the minor fate signifies another conflict in the level of film ideology: while the premise seems to have wide target, the latter applies in terms of a false character. Furthermore the use of flashback is crucial.

According to Hayward

"Flashbacks are "naturally aligned with history since they make the spectator aware of the past. They are both history and story. But they are a particular representation of the past because it is subjectivised through one or several people's memories. History/story becomes personalized and is narrated through the heroics or the eyes of the individual. The ideological and indeed the nationalistic implications of this are clear. By framing history as an individual experience and because a film in flashback is based on the premise that cause and effect are reversed (we know the result before we know the cause), history can become didactic: a moral lesson is to be learnt-alternatively, as in times of war, it can lead to patriotic identification." (Hayward 2003: 134-135)

The three flashbacks in *YN* through the first person narration, introduces Natasha's subjectivity, as in the first and second section it analyzed.

From this point of view, the ideology of the epic movie does not enhance the national identity, as the latter is expressed by the Colonel's propaganda, as someone could argue, but the melodramatic tone of one minor-unimportant fighter undercuts the efforts of compliance in one version of the militaristic-national identity. Thus how, (remember some tools of the reception film theory) the plethora of the audience really saw the movie could identify itself with one heroic version of the glorification of the martial ethos, which vis-à-vis corresponded with the militant mood.

This last idea brings us to the concept of the popular cinema, which, as Eleftheriotis argues, should be examined in parallel with the national identity (Eleftheriotis 2001:25-46). At last, the whole ideology of Greece after WW2 comes to a critical point in this film. In fact, the conservative ideology touches the extreme boundaries of insecurity.

Conclusion

In the paper I tried to change some general but never explained thoughts about the perception of one particular film which in turn belongs to a great film tradition of Greek cinema in a specific temporal moment. I also tried to give some explanations why this film text should be examined in terms not only of film studies but of cultural studies as well. And this last point raises another great challenging question, which needs answering. Why films under the umbrella of the term popular cinema are defamed and moreover, why the film itself is undermined within Greek culture? I think the answer is not located only in the dichotomy between high and popular art. The crucial point is how the history is represented in popular and art Greek cinema. History in Greek films is not only a matter of explicit social dimensions, as it believed. History in Greek films is a burden mixed with different elements, terms and points of views.

With this case study I tried to examine not a simply defamed popular movie. *YN* is a milestone within Greek cinema. Whether we like it or not, whether we have lived through the 70's or not, whether we belong to the right or left, movies call for consideration. Almost 40 years after its' screening, *YN* reveals its ambiguity and latent premise.

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