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## The Greek Fall

Simulacral Thanatotourism in Europe

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# The Greek Fall: Simulacral Thanatourism in Europe

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*Abstract: The paper explores the socio-cultural dynamics of Greek demonstrations in 2011, suggesting that their function exceeds that of social movements as we know them. A form of what I term “simulacral thanatourism,” including marches and demonstrations to Greek cities in protest for austerity measures, actualised in this context a form of mourning about the end of Greece’s place in European polity. This mourning, which places Greece at the centre of a withering European democratic cosmos, inspires in today’s dystopian Greek Raum two conflicting forms of social action: one is geared towards consumption of the country’s political history in terms similar to those we examine as “tourism.” This symbolic consumption of history re-writes the European past from a Greek standpoint while simultaneously promoting relevant entrepreneurial initiatives—in particular, the global circulation of imagery linked to riots and protests, and thus the movement of the abject aspects of Greek culture in global spaces. The second form of action is directed against the image of contemporary Greece as a corrupt topos that does not deserve a place in Europe’s political Paradise; this places the blame for the nation’s demise on its political factions. The two forms of action may be antithetical but do coexist in Greek social movements to the date, articulating a cosmology of nostalgia for Greece as an idyllic tourist object. The paper explores these themes through the proliferation of imagery in recent demonstrations, highlighting how a tourist-like marketing of activist visual culture partakes in reproductions of theological ideas rooted in Europeanist discourse.*

*Keywords: Consumption, Cosmology, Europe, Greece, Simulation, Social Movements, Thanatourism, Travel (Imaginative)*

## INTRODUCING THE “FALL”

Over the last two years, various constituencies have been warning us about the demise of Greek economy. Articles that predicted the country’s exit from the Eurozone or regular commentary on the dangers of a Euro-implosion stemming from Greece’s inability to pay its debt became the focus of everyday speculation (Editorial, *BBC News* 22 October 2011). This is the “End Game,” warned Paul Krugman in 2010 (*New York Times* 5 May 2010): it is about time for the big world players to protect world stability and for Greece to leave the Eurozone before things get worse for the rest of the world. We are now past this point, with the country’s parties just having reached a fragile consensus to form a government and a Parliamentary map that is as fragmented as it gets. Before entering the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Greece’s default was closer to realization. Today, the Greek masses know it and react in ways that are both harmful and meaningful, seeking to symbolically deface a discredited political elite for failing to deliver on promises of socio-economic betterment.

Does this turmoil hide the beginnings of a revolution? Or is it merely that systemic malfunction is more easily attributed to an impersonal state the masses can safely blame for Greece’s social ailments (Althusser 1994, 106–7; Poulantzas 1973 and 1978; Herzfeld 1992 and 2005)? As

unemployment numbers sore to over 20%, Greece's population shrinks from new outbound migrations and progressively ages, the chagrin of those who are unable to move away from the problems and thus have to endure welfare cuts has some rational basis. Albeit destructive, public retaliation makes sense. The circle has been squared, if we consider that globally relevant social movements were entrenched in political and economic factors such as a rising governmental influence and the increase in negotiations over people's welfare. But in Greece the demand to open up the system of political representation to the free working classes (Tilly 2004, 27) ceased to be a burning issue after the political restoration of 1974. Significantly, the present crisis disempowered the middle classes: the post-restoration dominant bourgeoisie is also now economically impoverished and politically disenfranchised. It is therefore better to re-examine if indeed undesired socio-political changes at European and global levels brew the climate for a second "French Revolution" and what this revolution might entail. Or to be bolder, to argue that middle-class disempowerment guides the general shift towards a "social movement society" (Meyer and Tarrow 1998, 4).

What I nevertheless find remarkable is not so much the budding social movements in Greece per se—far from it. Rather, I am more concerned with the way Euro-politics and the Greek political world's disorganized tactics activate a sort of theatricality amongst the outraged Greek masses. It is as if we live a drama of collapse in which "the People" are both victims, protagonists and political actors ready to simulate (and profit from) the imminence of grim post-Independence days-to-come. The idea of returning to a 19<sup>th</sup>-century-like state of affairs whereby the country's debt sustains a national duty (Tzanelli 2008, ch. six) towards its Western European donors re-appeared with vengeance in public discourse.

This suggestion is largely advertised in some media channels. We may consider for example the joking "Tsipriote pound" image that Facebook users promote as a reminder of Cyprus' British colonization. This modified note was inspired by an advertisement by the conservative party of Nea Dimokratia, which prompted schoolchildren to ask their teacher why Greece is out of the European Union, amongst other things (*Sto Karfi* 8 June 2012). Could it be, the image asks, that Greeks now have to choose between their disrespectful Orientalization and their submission to the Western powers that be? This visual articulation of resistance is more akin to the cultivation of a middle-class radical habitus, if we are to believe Crossley's (2003) astute analysis. Either the Scylla of Greece's lowly Oriental heritage or the "yoke" of Western Charybdis then-while collective memory is caught in a time warp that sucks in distant pasts and merges them with narratives of economic risk into a semi-religious meta-narrative of Fall from European grace. The fear of failure to live up to foreign expectations has been haunting Greek *mentalité* since Greek liberation from the Ottoman Turks (1821). In the country, the idea re-establishing a Greek protectorate circulates via various channels—radical, conservative or merely reactionary—further endorsing revolt *en masse*, further dramatizing realities of rebellion and further commercializing the implosion of public rage. It is this untoward situation I seek to explore in the following pages.

### **Epistemological and Methodological Considerations**

Hence, I am not merely speaking of a political situation but endeavor to shed light on its cosmological parameters. And since my audiovisual materials are largely retrieved from this drama's urban staging, my modest task is to examine how Greek "cosmology" is constructed for observers who are both intimately familiar with local permutations of Greek culture and global outsiders. Heretofore "cosmology" refers to ways human experience is socially ordered and framed (Campbell, 1964, 204; Herzfeld, 2008, 152). This framing and performing encourages the conflation of two conflicting processes: one freezes an allegedly identifiable Greek "character" and the second acknowledges its contextual function that unavoidably affects its meaning. Thus framers and performers of the history, character and cosmology of the country integrate

themselves into *the spectacle of social movements*, encouraging the consumption of their symbols of revolt as malleable signs (Lash and Urry 1994, ch. nine).

A form of what I term “simulacral thanatourism”, including marches and demonstrations to Greek cities in protest for austerity measures, actualized a form of mourning about the end of Greece’s place in European polity. Thanatourism involves visits to sites haunted by death—including genocides, terrorist acts or even the histories of Holocaust and slavery (Seaton and Dann 2001). In our particular case this mourning, which places Greece at the center of a withering European democratic cosmos, inspires two conflicting forms of social action: one is geared towards consumption of the country’s political history in terms similar to those we examine as “tourism”. This symbolic consumption of history re-writes the European past from a Greek standpoint while simultaneously promoting relevant entrepreneurial initiatives—in particular, the global circulation of imagery linked to riots and protests and thus the movement of the abject aspects of Greek culture in global spaces. The second form of action is directed against the image of contemporary Greece as a corrupt topos that does not deserve a place in Europe’s political Paradise; this places the blame for the nation’s demise on its political factions. The two forms of action may be antithetical but do coexist in Greek social movements, articulating a cosmology of nostalgia for Greece as an idyllic tourist object. Despite its middle-class ethos, it is worth remembering in the following pages that the anomic environment of urban social movements is at least analogous to the Bakhtinian *carnivalesque* of peasant revolts and certainly comparable to the tourist anomie that valorizes the traveler’s personal pursuits (Dann 1977). In this respect, the exhilarating performance of revolt against social order (bad internal governance, damaging European pressures) becomes in itself the marker of high status—an ironic reinstatement of order. Such is the drama of civility performance: it gives with one hand (status, nobility) what it snatches with the other (utopian end of revolution).

Bauman’s (1998) distinction between Southern “vagabonds” and Northern “tourists” may be rigid in terms of geographical classification but it allows us to examine Greek rebels in terms of status (e.g. destitute rebels vs. affluent tourists) in compatible terms. I would argue that Bauman’s classification is rooted in the sociolinguistic traces of Europeanized antiquity: vagabonds are analytically homologous to the Hellenic *alítes* (*aláomai*=to wander), the peripatetic strangers who endeavor to satisfy their theoretical (*theoría*=God’s view) needs (Vardiabasis 2002). In Europeanized Plato’s *Kratylos* the vagabond roams the world looking for the Truth—a futile exercise, given that “truth” is in the eye of the beholder. Viewed through Bauman’s typology, the rebels are anomic *alítes*, ego-enhancing theoreticians that conceptualize the world via a camera-like mourning vision (see Harrington 2004, 194 on postmodernism). We come full circle here: not only does the rite of Greek revolt reconstitute identity through conceptions of European belonging; it also reiterates the epistemological prerogative of Western European humanity “on the move”. I am not claiming that social movements are a Greek past time, nor do I mean to belittle or disregard the difficulties the country faces in the present situation. My analytical focus is rather different: first I seek to explicate the rationale of Greek social action; and second to analyze its socio-cultural “plot”. The focus is constitutive of the market logic that envelops what we view and hear about Greece in global contexts, so we cannot discard it.

Rancière conceptualizes this through a rather utopian critical suggestion. He claims that in any political movement passive audiences of spectators and the living principle of an active community must become one and the same so that their experience is not merely mediated. But overcoming the gulf separating passivity from activity—or, in Rancière’s terms transform ourselves into ‘emancipated spectators’ (2011, 13)—is cut short by the reality that everything is, after all, mediated, and those who mediate are Baumanesque “tourists” rather than destitute “migrants”, armed with note books, cameras and time to tell stories. This ‘knowledge gap’ is actualized every time narratives develop behind the lens as marketable items and every time events become part of a stage that emulates (*miméte*) reality. If followed, Rancière’s analysis leads to a new Greek social state of things in which recorders of current events both mediate and struggle

against the principles of the “society of the spectacle” (Debord 1995) and practice a standardized *détournement* in promotional events that are akin or identical to online photography and museum expeditions. This new post-tourist type (Liska & Ritzer 1997) excels in playing social scenarios that are not real but invented for an ever-expanding basis of spectacle consumers. The conceptual origins of tourism as machinery and wheel (Greek *tórnos*) point to this processual artifice (Theobald 1998, 6–7): unfolding the events for others and for oneself should lead to their demediation, bridging the gap between reality and a fake spectacle. However, tourists-*tornadóroi* love the artifice of authenticity (its “Disneylands”) making their industry-contrived experience more real than reality itself. The origins of tourism in the European middle class habits of mobility also corroborates the geographical proximity but safe material and emotional distance in reporting everyday developments on-site. But I would argue that the Greek post-tourist is a new developmental model of professional mobility we cannot dismiss against a pure “social movement” model in so far as (s)he is an essential link in global distributions of the activist cause.

My sources, which are mostly a selection of social media downloads and DIY videos, also corroborate the argument that the Greek audiovisual complex is European through and through. The new media age fosters a public sphere that is more decentered than a few decades ago (Poster 1995, 1997; Cavanagh 2007). But although this enables the production of interpretive frameworks for social action independently from state-controlled ideology it would be naïve to claim that it eliminates the power of hegemonic cosmological narratives (Melucci 1995). Castell’s network society model (1996) in which “nodes” direct information flows has to be re-thought in the context of cosmological flows. Here the overlap of various “scapes” (Appadurai 1990) or flows is streamlined primarily through hegemonic ideas (of Europe as an Edenic topos) that then assist in reinstating or challenging other hegemonies (e.g. capitalism).

The digital age produces a mobility matrix in which old and new modes of communication coexist. The merging of informative media discourses with the immediacy of other communication styles such as gossip refers to the persistence of an oral culture in a “secondary orality” (Ong 1982, 130). We should treat the visual material as such a merger between formal and informal styles, because its ultimate purpose is to expose the inefficiency of power apparatuses in the most direct (visual) way. McLuhan’s (1962) distinction between hot (intense concentration, strict control) and cold media (participatory) is not very helpful in deep descriptions of such cybercultures of protest. Is after all the communication of relevant staged events mediated for the sake of computer networking per se (Giddens 2002)? Looking past the discourse of the social formation of technology (Williams 1974), the digital apparatus enables Greek social actors to project a Heideggerian apparition of European Greece that is now globally betrayed, disgraced and humiliated by an opposing force (Herzfeld 1986, 14, 55; Derrida 1976, 107–108). However we see this, the medium is both the message and its mediation, enabling Greek protesters to reconstruct a moral grammar by technopoetic means and social researchers to analyze it (as in Van Dijk 2006). Technopoesis “the totality of practices and processes of ‘self-making’ available to a community and embodied in the artifacts, techniques and technologies available to a culture” (Hand and Sandywell 2002, 208) is mobilized by various social groups for the promotion of disparate causes. In the era of digital reproduction technopoesis—a term signifying the human mastery of nature—can be both kinship-based and transnational in context. In our case, Greek character—the alleged nature of the nation—is audiovisually manipulated in the following ways:

### **The Imaginary Terrain: Demise, Mourning and Indebtedness**

Let me explain a bit more: not only does the discourse of Fall construct an interpretive background to foreign (non-Greek) realist analyses such as that of Krugman’s; it also produces the (Greek) meta-script of citizenship in the margins of Europe. Like a political documentary, this

meta-script is now performed by the disenfranchised Greek folk that care little about the consequences of their destructive spin—for they have got nothing left to lose now.

It is argued that history dies hard where economy is ailing. Current “European pariahs” such as Greece, Spain and Portugal have a not so illustrious place in the history of European democracy, after all. The first half of the twentieth century saw all three countries harboring totalitarian regimes that consolidated their power in such difficult global economic conjunctions as the present one. Might this be the fate of Greece in the near future? The fear is incorporated in social movements that begin with demands for fairer state arbitration of public funds but find vengeful articulation in the destruction of public and private property, clashes of protestors with the police and deaths of citizens. The instigation of public demonstrations in Greece and their escalation into street fights facilitates comparisons with those 1960s social movements in the country that preceded the emergence of the last junta (1967). Ironically, however, it also fuses historical understandings of “good” and “evil”: even the previous socialist government, which flourished after the post-1974 political restoration by resisting the colonels’ authoritarianism, was arbitrarily identified by the masses as Greece’s new dictatorship. The dictum “do not shoot the messenger” was consigned to the pit of destitution.



Image 1: “Greece-Economic Crisis” by Angelos Tzivelekis. The Priest Holds a Print with the Greek Flag and an Embedded Sign “On Sale”

Here dramaturgical revolt gives way to an enmeshing of opposing forces and finally to reproductive simulation—for, images of the strikes and protests join global channels of distribution. Commercial opportunities abound, photojournalist organizations in Greece display such images for sale in websites such as Flickr, where one can find various visual narratives of the events. The meaning of these photos is more rooted however if viewed from within the ailing Greek society as a fear of democratic failure. Take for example this evocative photo by Angelos Tzivelekis, shot in Syntagma Square, Athens (Image 1: 3 September 2011): the protesters hold banners declaring that “The junta did not end in 1973”. The protesters live in a time frame that is disconnected from the consumer of the image but is sensational enough to attract spectatorship even outside the Greek labor masses. A policeman wearing a tear gas mask was

photographed by the same freelance photographer in front of a wall with the graffiti “Bring down the junta” (Image 2: 27 September 2011)—an ambivalent combination of “law” in the foreground and rebellion in the background. It is difficult to decide whether the image prompts viewers to celebrate rebellion as anomie or to sympathize with the law that hunts the “criminal” will-to-representation (Yar 18 July 2012). The actors are missing anyway, and the photographer, and we, are left with artistic surfaces to consume and meanings to produce. In Greece however, such binary opposites of law and anti-law quietly give way to a dystopian scenario of indiscriminate solidarity in violence against a state that has ceased to be a fair arbitrator of justice.



Image 2: “Syntagma, Athens” by Angelos Tzivelekis. The Graffiti Orders “Bring down the Junta!”

Protests and strikes in Thessaloniki, the second biggest city of Greece, articulated another link between a repudiated dictatorial past and the grim present of recession through the parading of a clock, a temporal space frozen at the time of protest: “First day of protests”, states the posted image on Flickr, “all alarms set at 8pm, we woke up” (Sophia Tsibikaki 25 May 2011). Time here signifies a convergence of mobility repertoires, including protest, visual projection of (e)motion and the plight of damaged national pasts. This is a tale of civility lost (in the junta years), gained (by the 1970s social movements), lost again (by those the activists recognize as Greece’s new “dictators”) and, hopefully regained with the help of new protests. The meaning of civility becomes entrapped in a chronotope in which the disenfranchised urban masses are both actors and acted upon. Otherwise put, protesters are recognized as both polluted and pollutant subjects worthy to occupy times and spaces outside the nation’s sanitized modernity (Bakhtin 1981, 84; Blanton 2011, 78). What is a protest after all from the standpoint of the Greek legitimate forces when their task is to control the public image of the city?

There is an element of environmental racism in all this that is tied to self-ascriptions of urban civility (Herzfeld 2006). But everything is mediated and circulated by third parties—photographers, journalists or big cyberenterprise with different agendas. To enhance irony, the identification of law with anti-law is ceremoniously encapsulated by cameras in sites rife with histories of revolt and civilizational glory—unmistakably tied in Greece’s case to proof of Europeaness. A photograph by Petros Giannakouris (17 October 2011) of a police officer holding a Greek flag is sure irony in the Greek melodrama. More than 1,000 police officers, firefighters and coast-

guard officers in uniform gathered on that occasion for an anti-austerity protest outside the marble Panathenean stadium, where the first modern Olympics were held in 1896. As a “reservoir of meanings” (Nora 1989, 56), the site belongs simultaneously to the world of tourist signs and heritage fixities, inviting global hermeuts to play a game of definitions. Or consider the photo that was taken in Syntagma Square outside Parliament (another historical area of revolution and democracy) which clearly casts the Greek public in the role of a national martyr ready to be executed in the gallows of austerity: “*Koufáles!*” (Literally tree cavities but also symbolically “sons of bitches”), is carved by the ropes (Image 3: 27 October 2011). In Europe’s interpretive vortex, the gallows of the French Revolution are both tokens of death and digital thanatotourist narratives. In this peculiar conjecture, the Greek People is about to die in a global show of political incompetence. Yet, the show of death is a show of mobility in disguise: it is not just that it enables global trafficking of esoteric Greek cultures and everyday angst, but also that it repeats a global tale of cultural motion (Robertson 1992 on “glocalization”). We could place this phenomenon in the epistemic context of mobilities (Urry 2007) and the subdomain of non-representational theory (Thrift 2007) but the presence of a “camera eye” in this essay would suggest in addition that there is such a thing as an audiovisual presence of (e)motion. Symbolic convergences of media and tourist industries manifest themselves in conglomerations or “sign industries”, contingent mergers of corporate complexes trading in the binding power of arbitrary “signs” instantly recognized by global consumers (Tzanelli 2007, ch. one). Why then should we not consider similar signification processes outside these formal institutional complexes? Within an enlarged consumption regime new understandings of civic engagement are born to counter elitist takes on audiovisual creativity. Lanfant’s definition of *scholé* (2009, 105) presents leisure as both study (first meaning of *scholé*, subsequently reserved for middle-class tourists) and free time (second meaning, associated with proletarian “waste” of paid holiday).



Image 3: "Prepared Gallows!!! Athens, Greece (Hellas)" by Angelos Tzivelekis. Are the Ropes for "Hanging" the Greek People?

Whereas at the systemic level post-war *scholé* was recognized (1948) as a fundamental human right (paid holidays) (Dann and Parrinello 2009, 38), consumption differentiations on the basis of cultural capital continued to maintain divisions in societies (Tzanelli 2011, ch. six). In Greece *scholé* became consolidated in a dictatorial interim, creating for the nation all the preconditions

for a celebration of democracy. But this democracy became the phantom of an institution as the following junta (1967) proved in practice. The promise of democracy had to be deferred again and now again—until there was no more than hope in its utopian resurrection (Todorov 2003, 19; Derrida 2006). The present (global) circulation of images of social insurrection by photographers and video-makers is the last digital resurrection of the promise.

Belief in such utopias becomes a matter of ritual performance: in Greece national holidays are at the heart of situated understandings of *scholé* as educational leisure. Schoolchildren partake in celebrations and parades akin to those we habitually associate with the opening and closing ceremonies of the Olympic Games—yet another thanatotourist spectacle symbolically challenged by marches to the original Olympic sites by protesters in 2011. In fact, the attack upon institutionalized *scholé* manifested during last year’s “Ohi” celebrations (2011), a National Day commemorating the alleged refusal of Greek dictator John Metaxas to accept the Axis Forces’ demand for Greece to surrender on 28 October 1940. Protests and demonstrations swamped the country, disrupting the usual ritual of speeches, school festives and parades. In several towns and cities the parades—themselves a controversial fascist ritual revived during the colonel’s regime (1967–1974) with vengeance—had to be cancelled, as protesters shouted insults to officials and the government, accusing them of playing now the role of dictators. This strange historical montage is supposed to liberate Greeks from the shackles of authoritarian traditions—but at what cost? YouTube is today populated with such un-choreographed outbursts, accompanied by vicious anti-government jokes but also accusations of exploitation of the common folk. In difficult moments such as the present, we fail to recognize that the state and the government, these shadowy arbitrators of freedom, are externalized public will.

The public response makes perfect sense—not only as a reaction to constant cuts that condemn people to penury, but also as a pervasive feeling that classroom lessons on a fictional Greek glory are a sham (Faubion 1993). Forget Acropolis and ancient Greek philosophy’s contribution to European civilization already (forget relevant modern tourism for a while too, as foreign visitors to the country fear for their safety these days). But don’t you dare forget that foreigners took everything and our rulers left us bankrupt. The burning bonfires in Syntagma Square, Athens, are solid proof that mobs have now moved beyond consideration for the long-term consequences this situation might have on Greece’s global credibility as a healthy polity. The much-needed ludic culture of tourism gives way to the hallucinatory effect of the Fall.

An image that circulated in cyberspace widely attests this shift from regulated leisure to routine-breaking defiance in the context of nationalized *scholé* (Fimes.gr 28 October 2011). Reminiscent of old Greek slapstick traditions, the photo depicts a student in Larissa’s parade extending his hand towards the spot designated for officials during parades. With his palm facing local administrators and army officials, all five fingers stretch in a gesture any viewer would mistake for an enthusiastic greeting. This embodied dramaturgy actually speaks volumes about the chasm between the “People” and its designated sovereigns. On such national ceremonies parading students are supposed to turn their head in the direction of the local elite as a sign of respect. Just a few days before the “Ohi” Day, I (mistaken for a student) received via Facebook several invitations not to pay attention to this custom. On 28 October 2011 this call was followed by the aforementioned photograph, making it even clearer that the schoolchildren—probably following the general spirit—had joined the crowds of the so-called “Greek Indignants”. The proliferation of episodes on the same day across the country made this incident a centerpiece in the news for a while (see as examples of parade disturbances videos from Xanthi in Western Thrace [AkritisXanthi 28 October 2011], Kalamata in Southern Greece [Eleftheriaonline, 28 October 2011], and Thessaloniki, where the military parade was cancelled due to demonstrations and the visiting President of Democracy had to flee the event [Armoniki, 28 October 2011]). A relevant Facebook page was subsequently set up in support of this pupil’s cause, which gathered over 3,000 followers and discussants.

The photographed pupil's gesture proffers an indignant kinesthetics that can be deciphered within Greek culture (see Herzfeld 2009). Showing five fingers to your interlocutor was an old curse prompting the recipient to lose their five senses and thus all sensory communication with the world. In Greek folk cultures of the village such so-called *moútzes* were offered to those deemed to be socially incompetent, cognitively impaired or plain stupid. But there is also a genealogy of the gesture that recognizes it as a response to the financial decrees of the Ottoman state which were signed with a painted hand. Unlike other gestures, for example the upward nod to signify "no", the *moútz* is not held in common with the Turks. "In this relationship the recipient of the '*moútz*' is therefore cast as the foreign tyrant while the dispatcher [...] is cast as the oppressed inferior" (Carras 17 November 2011). Genealogies aside, the gesture is now widespread across Greece as part of habitus slang. In electronic channels the image of the student with the *moútz* was also accompanied with the Greek expression "*Párte ta, na min sas ta chroστάme*" (=have the *moútzes*, so that we owe you nothing), which often follows the act of *moútzoma*. The expression nicely, even though indecorously, draws the image of a broken social contract, the demise of a civilized relationship between rulers and ruled and its replacement with a variation of what anthropologists term "negative reciprocity" ("Receive my slang, which amounts to nothing, for I gave you my trust and you betrayed me-I owe you nothing!"). The pupil's act is but a spectacular destruction of institutionalized *scholé*, at once defiant and knowing of the structural limitations for social change.

Economic debt is just the shallow foreground of a pseudo-metaphysical corridor in global politics: the real background is another debt that looms large, a broken reciprocal circle with Europe's interpellated ghost. Media discourse capitalizes on this story but is also trapped in its allegorical importance for spectators. We watched Greek rebels outside Parliament in Athens inventing a new place for the country in the history of the French Revolution. But subsequent communist protests in the sacred domain of "Europe proper", Acropolis, set clear parameters in this game of indebtedness: Europe owes to Greece, as Enlightenment would never have existed without the lights of ancient Greek philosophy. Touring the Acropolis in protest is the most meaningful pilgrimage of this statement. In pilgrimages of old times the religious community followed a spiritual leader dressed in special attires while voluntarily donating to the sacred site (Graburn 2004, 132). But in the present case the site and its pilgrims-protesters are one and the same as carriers of the "spirit" of the alleged original donors (ancient Greeks) of humanity (Sahlins 1974, 169). This fusion of the logic of capitalist exchange with that of the original, pure reciprocity (Sahlins 1976, 210) resurrects both the phantom of dictatorial rule in Greece and the possibility for the country to stay in European Eden (Herzfeld 1985, 25; Herzfeld 1982). Dressing Acropolis with banners and "dressing up" guests of honor with *moútzes* are part and parcel of the same thanatourist structure: their kinesthetics become aesthetic statements actualizing a sort of mourning for the loss of Greek autonomy to European and domestic "tyrants". As the logic goes, what is the difference between Turks, Europeans and Westerners—they are all the same.

Acropolis and its vagabond protestors take us to the recesses of this pseudo-metaphysical corridor, where we observe how the Greek social imaginary works. Drawing on Benedict Anderson's account of the imagined community of the nation, Charles Taylor argues that social imaginaries are neither theories nor ideologies, but implicit "background understandings" that make possible communal practices and a widely shared sense of their legitimacy (Taylor 2004; Steger 2008). As social imaginaries are both normative and factual in nature they easily produce a performative platform for the community, a so-called *doxa*. This platform assists in the naturalization of subjective socio-cultural orders by representational centers that want to achieve some degree of social cohesion. *Doxa* is also formed in activist circles—or a counter-*doxa*, so to speak. Bourdieu's (1977, 76–77) elaboration on *doxa* is unmistakably connected to the European background of mobility: to *dokō* is both to believe (Bourdieu also speaks of *illusio*) and to learn and thus be a theoretician in possession of a *truth*. Where *doxa* fixes meaning in

favor of community-building, its circulation in a broader socio-cultural field transforms it into a shared commodity, a touring sign. Intentionally or not, the post-national coexists with the national in my digitized materials in harmonious ways that cannot be achieved in real(ist) political time. Such digital artwork becomes a mode of appropriating a field of possibilities relative to the movement so as to use them effectively in new projects (Kaufman and Montulet 2008, 45). Photojournalists and cameramen know this and traffic their utopias abroad.

Negative reciprocities such as that of the *mouftza* develop where two parties are locked into a relationship of mutual recognition (of status). Instead of completely breaking down, the relationship turns into its negative equivalent in critical moments. To generalize more, counter-intuitively Greeks destroy public property in the knowledge that those they harm are essential partners in the damaged political relationship they cannot escape (harming themselves along the way). The state's initial retaliation (in arresting, expelling from school and investigating the *mouftza* maker) also sustained this negative reciprocal discourse. There was a raging debate on whether the said student is to be targeted at all, as he merely articulated public sentiment at large. Another example of negative reciprocity added to a similar controversy: in Patras (Patrastimes.gr, 28 October 2011) the "Ohi" parade was interrupted by the local band. Instead of playing pompous parade music, the band replaced the Greek national anthem with a Mikis Theodorakis resistance song that invoked the junta days, prompting the crowds to join the bizarre pilgrimage to that dark page of Greek history.

The band and the parade broke down the symmetry of the performative order during the musical rendition of Theodorakis' composition, producing instead a new *doxologia* to share with the crowds. The global circulation of these acts of defiance (via blogs, YouTube clips and newspapers) generated a simulacrum of history, blending the past with the country's future. *Doxologías* are articulations of the doxic reason (logos) in ecclesiastical motifs. Their global parading in YouTube signals a revolt against fixed cosmic orders, just like Theodorakis' clever use of the chorus "*Sōpa, 'pou na'nai tha' symánoun oi kampánes–aftó to xōma émai dikó' tous kai dikó mas*" ("Shush, soon the bells will sound–this soil is equally theirs and ours"). The song's anamnestic solidarity with the fighters for the national land is turned in YouTube's cybercorridors into landscape for global consumption, just like any tourist product (Urry 2004, 2008). As the caustic article on the *mouftza* case pointed out (Fimes.gr, 28 October 2011), the military elite present in such parades do not appear to respect the custom, so why should younger generations play a conformist game already rooted in those pasts the country struggles to forsake? Just like theatre and its embodied labour, the global projection of this carnival aims to expose the countries hypocrites through a popular selection of the gestures and signs that are publically exhibited. But as spectators we can only experience the thoughts and feelings of the "actors". Media motion disseminates public emotion but cannot produce it as immediate experience unless the viewer suffers its insidedness.

These small rebellious acts sustain the return of a resentful, underdog attitude toward national and global democratic institutions. Giving five is not just an innocent joke but an embodied articulation of resentment with global implications (and applications). Just like the tokens and the embodied acts of activist images professional photographers produce and market, its performative rationale is part of its ontological becoming (Virilio 1990 and 1995). *Omoíōma* (=iconic likening) is what Herzfeld recognized as a Greek-come-global rendition of the "simulacra of sociality" (Baudrillard 1988), a likening that projects outwards an image of intimacy with the intention to preserve the non-existing core of native culture intact (Herzfeld 2005, 25). As technology assists in a marketable collapse of public and private spheres, it reinstates such cultural intimacies as natural orders. Likening expressions of resentful acts to rituals of the domestic hearth projects the image of the Greek nation-family globally. But as the activist cause turns against native "political incompetence" and public property and mechanisms of public order against "Indignant crowds" the mediated story transforms the "nation-family" into the locus of violence, decentering the background of European reciprocity. One may note that the

prominence of kinship bonds in global political discourse is an entrenched feature of social movements rather than a peculiar Greek attachment to tribalist custom (see McAdam 1982). Such custom regenerates a global movement network, interlacing disparate domains of sociality through technologically mediated discourse (Green 2002, 290; Dinerstein 2012). In the cybersphere and the social media the national imaginary transforms into a simulated democratic imaginary that can be interpreted at any time by various actors in the field (Papacharisi 2011, 11). National dramaturgy is thus part of a simulated globality, a narrative of cosmic (e)motion.

### **“Cut!”: Conclusions on Illusions**

The theatre of violence is firmly grounded in discourses of public self-presentation: Greek political parties hold fast to the country’s historically and politically rooted European belonging as an essential aspect of Greece’s reputable image, whereas global political commentators highlight the self-destructive qualities of protest (Gatopoulos and Paphitis, 18 October 2011). They stress how constant strikes paralyze the national transport system, haltering the influx of tourist visitors—so essential now for Greece’s economic survival even outside the Eurozone. There is a degree of truth in this verdict in so far as the global show of Greek death produces a peculiar anti-pilgrimage to what once counted as the “cradle of European civilization”. Meanwhile, commentators and performers are sucked into a simulacral vortex, thus visually reproducing the vocabulary of civilizational corruption. As a result “the (imminent) Greek default” constantly grafts a spectral archplot onto global politics, as a premonition for things yet to come. Such imagological self-narrations produce and reproduce an economy of signs, a chronotope of Greek history that is foretold and thus actualized for native and global spectators. Amateur and professional lenses in Greek protests enable a hermeneutics of recovery: their encapsulations look back to actual human pasts to understand a present allegorized as the future of European memory (Giddens 1987; Stoller 1992; Dallmayr 2001, 40; Banks 2001, 7–9).

This spectacular staging reiterates the basic principles of touring in unpleasant ways: anger and rage, sorrow and mourning are weaved into the usual discourse of criminality, risk and moral panics. By turn all these become enmeshed in overarching fears that *la longue durée* of Greek-European civilizing process meets at last its “end”. Popular parlance about the “end of history” is here refracted through the prism of Euro-politics, but the mourning is so specialized that it can be dismissed as national quirk or hassle on the table of the great European political leaders. The backstage of this process may be empty—like that of any simulation—but everyday concerns fill the Greek terrain with social problems of varied degrees and seriousness. And yet, the real(ist) battle is a constant: it speaks of loss of status and of capital that once upon a time casted Greece and its civilization as a global traveling culture.

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