

Translating ‘Self’ and ‘Others’: Waves of Protest Under the Greek Junta

Dimitris Asimakoulas, Lecturer in Translation Studies, Centre for Translation Studies, The University of Surrey, UK. D.Asimakoulas@surrey.ac.uk

Abstract:

The Greek junta (1967-1974) can be seen as the as the most recent black page of modern Greek history. It is mostly remembered in terms of shocking oppression as well as for the massive antiauthoritarian student movement that took place in a global sixties context. This paper summarizes significant protest activities under the Greek junta, an authoritarian regime that was in a state of flux. Events are categorized under three broad protest waves: passive resistance/ clandestine activities, elaborate cultural activity and mass mobilization. As is shown, networks of resistance developed gradually with the convergence of the needs of various sectors or society. Effective opposition meant resorting to “meaningful” discourse in an authoritarian context. The role of culture in this context proved to be instrumental, because it served as the arena where this meaningful discourse was interpreted and re-interpreted against the backdrop of local and global demands. Cultural activity and consumption morphed into ideological and organizational preparation that eventually determined the stakes of an open antiauthoritarian movement.

Setting the scene

The period of the notorious “Greek Junta,” which ruled from 1967-1974, constitutes a pivotal point in recent Greek history, as it is the basis for the construction of contemporary political identities. Yet despite its socio-political significance and legacy, the years of the junta today are the objects of a bizarre mixture of memory and erasure. Generations of politicians, voters, and young people, in particular, use it as a point of reference in crafting their own political preferences and identities. The period has also been examined by journalists, both Greek and foreign, and to a lesser extent, academic researchers. Their work, however, is hindered by the lack of easy access to archival material and by the erasure or highly selective appropriation of memory by political and social actors during the period. Relevant material is often out of print or very difficult to find—a problem compounded by the fact that Greece appears to lack the historical culture, with its emphasis on documentation, of other modern societies. Government documents are either not available or just now trickling into the public sphere. Indeed, the

whole period remains very underresearched, as Katsaros (1997) and Kornetis (2006) note.¹ An additional factor that contributes to the erasure mentioned above is the fact that this (admittedly) traumatic period has, to some extent, been repressed at both collective and individual levels. Further, certain political groupings are deeply invested in a myth of resistance to the Junta; rich empirical research and a more complex narrative of the period therefore threatens to destabilize contemporary political identities.²

This paper is not primarily concerned with the relationship of the Junta years to *contemporary* political identities, though this would be a topic of fruitful research. Rather, it explores important identity formation processes in the late 1960s and early 1970s themselves by examining a major motor of such processes: protest under the authoritarian regime of the Junta. The main theoretical premise is that in such types of collective behavior, various social groups both construct and elaborate their identities as they pursue common goals. In other words, they make their experiences, ideas, and demands visible to others, while reinforcing their voices by being aware of/mimicking similar struggles of those around them.

In exploring this process, I draw on the notion of “translation” in two senses. First, translation literally denotes textual and cultural production, which played a crucial — if largely underappreciated — role in resistance to the Junta. The important role of translation in social processes is very often ignored by academics and lay people alike; this is further compounded by the fact that translation is (routinely) understood as a transparent, mechanical, impersonal process rather than a mediated social act. Second, the notion “translation” metaphorically signals discourse elaboration/struggle. The idea of translations in the literal sense as messages with material substance moving through institutions, time and space and from one linguistic code/sign system into another can be mapped onto this figurative sense as follows: just as translation is an (assumed) original “text” and a final “recreation” thereof, a context-sensitive transformation that is a negotiated, fit-for-purpose version of an original,³ so too social groups experience thresholds of similarity to and difference from “others”; as they make sense of the world around them they experience connectedness and alterity. Put differently, social groups can be seen

¹ Highly interesting exceptions available in English are the following: Konstandinides (1985), Panourgia (1995), Van Dyck (1998), Van Steen (2000, 2001), Papanikolaou (2002, 2007) and Kornetis (2006, 2008).

² For example, Kostis Kornetis (2006) addresses the problem of combining collective and biographical aspects in historiography; on the other hand, Stavros Zoumboulakes (2002), an author and the editor of *Nea Estia*, flags up the destabilizing potential of further research vis-à-vis public and personal narratives of resistance.

³ Systemic approaches in translation (cf. Lefevere 1992) focus on the ideological and aesthetic ‘refraction/rewriting’ of original texts in target culture settings; post-modern approaches (cf. Vieira 1992) portray translation as an act of cannibalism, of assimilating voices and discourses into hybrids that erase boundaries and hierarchies between sources and final products.

as constantly updating/translating themselves and others. This broad approach to “translation” recalls Fairclough’s conceptualization of discourse as both ideological practice that “constitutes, naturalizes, sustains and changes significations of the world from diverse positions in power relations” and political practice, “a site of power struggle, but also a stake in power struggle” (1992: 67).

This power struggle-communication angle tallies with a context-sensitive approach to “waves” of protest as well as the notion of “frame” in social movement theory. Waves of protest, that is, periods of heightened societal conflict or “destabilisation of social relations”, come into being and expand on the basis of changes in the structure of political opportunities, namely the widening or narrowing of the power gap between challengers and contenders (Koopmans 2005:25). In the case of the Greek Junta, democratic processes were halted after the coup and only later did opportunities presented themselves, top-down, as the regime moved from an initial “cohesive”, hard-line period to a limited reforms period (an important milestone here is the official lifting of censorship, 15 November 1969). Thus the *first wave* of protest was one of passive resistance, with only some limited attempts of bottom-up opposition targeting the weaknesses of the regime.

Waves of protest are also characterized by “contentious innovations” when they generate new interpretive “frames” legitimizing protest (Snow and Benford 1988:212), when new players are involved in the protest game, or when precipitating circumstances bring about new tactics, demands, and identities (Koopmans 2005:25). Such innovations were to be observed in the Greek context in what two closely interlinked waves, a *second wave* of elaborate cultural resistance and a *third wave* of mass protest. The significance of cultural resistance cannot be overstated for the sheer reason that in the early 1970s culture became an instrument of ideological awakening. The private and public enactment of culture filled the gap of absent democratic channels of protest and contributed to the emergence of resistance networks. Culture gave rise to (preliminary) interpretations of events, or “frames” (Benford and Snow 2000:613) that quickly resonated with the experiences and beliefs of the target audiences. This was the onset of a massive “translation” of influences from abroad as well as “re-translation” of domestic Greek discourse; politicized Greek citizens started consuming imported counterculture, and cultural producers foregrounded imported as well as domestic symbolic products and debates that were relevant to the current situation. Given the capacity of culturally resonant discourses to increase the cultural power/legitimacy of challenger groups (Williams 2005:105), this development gradually made possible the *third wave* of mass mobilization. It all culminated with the student movement, a true mass

antiauthoritarian movement with frames that proved to be successful because of the cultural resonance (Williams and Kubal 1999: 235) that cultural resistance set in motion. This non-violent movement was eventually violently suppressed by the junta.

In what follows, the paper will offer an overview of cultural forms of resistance in the context of an authoritarian regime. Important developments will be seen from the perspective of various sectors of society and their participation in the shift from the first wave of passive resistance to forms of more active opposition to the regime.

1. Origins of the Junta: street politics and “the revolution”

Despite the fact that the junta caught Greek society by surprise when a group of colonels seized power, it was not a political aberration. After WWII, there was a civil war in Greece between the pro-Soviet military wing of the communist party (the main vector of resistance against the Germans) and the organized “state” army. A right-wing government soon took power. With the assistance of the United Kingdom and the United States, the communists were defeated militarily in the autumn of 1949 and summarily sent into exile or forced to escape to Eastern Bloc countries. A period of stable right-wing rule followed. Most of the right-wing governments during the 1950s were supported by the king, the army and the state machinery. These three conservative forces sought to contain the left and exclude communists from public life.

State and public hostility toward the political left continued in the 1960s. In May 1963, Gregores Lambrakes, an independent left-wing MP and member of the Greek branch of Bertrand Russell’s *Peace Movement*, was assassinated by right-wing extremists who had connections with the police. His death marked the beginning of the *Democratic Youth Movement Gregores Lambrakes*, whose “repertoire of action included extensive riots and rallies, open discussions and peace walks, focusing mostly on educational and cultural issues” (Kornetis 2006:60).

State repression and intimidation strategies did not stop the advance of Centre Union, which came to power in 1964. The new prime-minister, Georgios Papandreou, launched major reforms to support education and the economy, increasing his popularity and causing concern among conservatives (Clogg 1979:183). The army and the palace continued to intervene in political life, either responding to anti-patriotic ‘conspiracies’ of various kinds or by ignoring constitutional procedures, all of which brought about a political crisis and Papandreou’s resignation in 1965.

Two years of political turmoil and unstable cabinets followed. Voters countered the interference of “parastate” thugs with daily demonstrations employing a “contractual”, “individual rights” frame (Williams 2005:107); in these protests for fair elections members of the *Lambrakes Youth* had massive participation. During this time, secret police and army reports of an alleged communist takeover plot were leaked to the right-wing press. A group of colonels responded by seizing power in a swift and bloodless coup d'état on 21 April 1967, inaugurating the rule of the junta. The leaders of the coup were colonel Georgios Papadopoulos, colonel Nikolaos Makarezos and brigadier Stylianos Pattakos, plus a “Revolution Council” – consisting of several dozen officers and army officials.

As soon as the colonels seized power, they instituted martial law and suspended constitutional guarantees of human rights (Woodhouse 1985:30). The right of assembly and the right to criticize the government were abolished and *preventive censorship*⁴ came into effect (Athenian 1972:76, Gregoriades 1975a:107). In the first days of the regime, the military and state police rounded up more than 10,000 people, detaining them in euphemistically named “reception centers” (Murtagh 1994:7). Surveillance, whether by electronic means or by infiltrators, brutal interrogations, torture, exile and mass trials were all part of the junta’s regime of terror⁵ (Gregoriades 1975a:307). Threats of physical violence were combined with the imminent loss of employment and pensions and the exclusion of dissidents (or their relatives) from the job market (Andrews 1980:28).

Although their regime was not a social movement, the colonels glossed it as such, by referring to the coup as a “revolution”; they employed policies and discourse that constituted a mixture of diagnostic (identifying the problem), prognostic (suggesting solutions) and motivational (offering moral or economic inducements) framing;⁶ all this aimed at “uniting” the nation and isolating its enemies. In speeches, slogans and manifestos, the colonels exhibited features of political populism, namely by focusing on the right to speak on behalf of and save “the entire nation” (rather than specific classes); they also expressed hostility to the status quo prior to their revolution when the nation was undermined by short-sighted, corrupt politicians, scheming communists and intellectuals (Clogg 1972:22, Papadopoulos 1967:19, Papadopoulos 1972:15-19, Woodhouse 1985:30). The rampant anti-communism of the junta served both as a justification of the coup, but also as a blanket justification for persecution. Opposition against the regime or any mention of democratic demands automatically meant being an

⁴ The term here denotes censorial checks before printed/audio(visual) material reached the public domain.

⁵ From 1967 to 1974 the regime sent 8,270 people into exile and indicted 2,000 in 2,344 trials (see Kouloglou et al. 2006)

⁶ Diagnosis entails identifying the problem and attributing causality or blame; prognostic framing identifies tactics and targets; motivational framing creates a rationale for action, or inducements for participation, be they material, status, solidarity, or moral inducements (Snow and Benford 1988:200-202).

enemy of the country, a communist (Murtagh 1999:14). The solution to Greece's problems, according to the colonels, would come through a combination of moral and political purging of society and the return to true values, such as justice, unity, truth and the nation (Clogg 1972:44). They likened their government to a *surgeon* who needs to sedate and cure a patient (Greek society), as well as an *educator* who needs to prepare citizens for "true democracy".⁷ This was a sort of *internal democracy*, a society with no political fiefs and where responsible authorities work for the benefit of public interests (Clogg 1972:50, Woodhouse 1985:32). In an attempt to mobilize the nation, the colonels started stirring up religious and nationalist sentiments too. Thus, coup leaders sought to cultivate the religious traditions of the Greek Orthodox Church, cherishing visions of "the third Greek civilisation" (the two former civilisations were the classical and the Byzantine) (Theodorakopoulos 1976:187). Ultra-nationalism and chauvinism featured prominently in the ideological arsenal of the junta.⁸ The glories of the ancient Greeks constituted a standard topic for the representatives of the regime who took it as their personal responsibility to safeguard the values of an ancient and at the same time Christian "race". The strengths of "the race" were often praised. Schoolchildren and teachers were obliged to attend church every Sunday and all Greeks were required to stand to attention when the national anthem was played (Clogg 1972:40). Such Helleno-Christian values needed to be "defended" in the face of all "anti-national" discourse of "neo-anarchism" and "moral depravity", such as human rights, hippyism and homosexuality (Clogg 1972:42, Papademetriou 1999:159, Murtagh 1994:118).

Similar conservative "interpretative frames" were to be seen in their cultural policy, which was exercised through various channels. The Junta controlled key positions in organizations and ministries as well as funding opportunities (Anonymous 1974a:41; Van Steen 2001:146) and this helped them *translate* cultural production according to the perceived needs and conservative values of Greek society. The government reversed linguistic evolution by promptly putting the archaic *katharevousa* variety of Greek to broader educational, administrative and everyday use at the expense of the modern *demotike* (Anonymous 1972:131). The Ministry of Presidency monitored publications, the press, and public events. Independent censorship committees were also formed, consisting of lawyers, philologists, authors, employees of the Ministry of Press, composers, policemen and military men (Gregoriades

⁷ The regime's preoccupation with this issue is evident in the great number of books, pamphlets and talks dedicated to it; even the use of the correct term for this process was a matter of extensive debate [*αγωγή του πολίτη*, "citizen education", a generic term that applies equally to students and non-students, adults and children] (Gregoriades 1975b:310).

⁸ Unlike fascist regimes, the 1967 junta lacked wide popular basis, they used ultra-nationalism for "internal consumption" only, they had inconsistent and ineffectual propaganda mechanisms and did not exhibit any economic nationalism (Gregoriades 1975c:347-348, Rodakes 1975:13, Woodhouse 1985:32).

1975a:114).⁹ The audiovisual, printed and performed material the censors banned involved references to popular uprisings, sex, “subversive theories”, and ideas that exercised “a bad influence on the youth” or were offensive to the nation, the Christian religion, the royal family and the government (Athenian 1972:96,97). And despite the colonels’ professed love for antiquity, plays by Sophocles and Aristophanes were removed from the repertoire of the National Theatre; this was because their content was deemed to be subversive and because the accompanying music had been composed by Mikis Theodorakis (ibid.:96). The censors also routinely targeted what they saw as critical allusions to the regime; mentions of fascism and the military in general (see Anonymous 1974b:107-110), or references to torture, secret police, paid informers, curfews, random arrests and house searches (Van Steen 2001:159) were banned. The Directorate of National Security also played an important role as it circulated indexes of banned books. The 1969 index contained 760 “forbidden books” by over 200 Greek and foreign authors (including Sophocles, Aristophanes and Shakespeare); the books listed in this index could not be displayed, sold or even talked about (Woodhouse 1985:35). Similar lists were distributed by the Directorate in 1971 (Athens) with 124 banned books and six journals in total and 1974 (Salonica), with 172 books in total. All banned books were dismissed by the authorities as communist or as anti-government.¹⁰

Of course, as an oligarchic elite, the junta was a complex amalgamation of forces, itself subject to internal and external pressures. Papadopoulos responded to foreign criticism¹¹ by promising a gradual transition to democracy and by rescinding the most oppressive measures. Releasing some political prisoners while arresting other opponents of the regime, lifting preventive censorship in November 1969 yet ‘only officially’ so (Woodhouse 1985:86-96, Murtagh 1994:230): these were all strategies devised by Papadopoulos in order to sow confusion. This way he created the illusion that he sought to restore democracy and human rights, but also controlled the demands of his hard-line colleagues. The only consistency can perhaps be seen in Papadopoulos’s strategy of compensating for the lack of freedom of expression with material possessions (or promises thereof) and “public spectacles” (Gregoriades 1975b:227). Football matches and spectacular pageants, school parades and events in stadiums came to replace cultural activity (Kalligas 1975:31). The regime’s provisions were effective to some extent, but opposition soon materialised after 1969, towards the end of the first wave of passive protest.

⁹ For information on the censorship committees and the ways in which the committees passed their judgements see also the Official Gazette of 04.05.1968.

¹⁰ Surviving copies of such indexes are featured in Axelos (1984:145-156).

¹¹ Pressed for allies, the regime even donated \$500,000 to the Nixon presidential campaign in 1968 (Kouloglou et al. 2006)

2. A wave of rogue organizations and passive resistance

The junta justified repressive practices by perpetually claiming that Greece was in a state of emergency. For example, the colonels countered charges of the systematic torture of political prisoners by members of the Council of Europe (Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and the Netherlands) in March 1968 by stating that national emergency obviated the need to adhere to the European Convention on Human Rights (Murtagh 1994:194). Many Greek intellectuals, journalists, politicians and ordinary citizens who were in exile tried to influence public opinion and state policies in countries such as France, West Germany, the UK, Italy, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. To discredit the regime, they provided uncensored accounts of blatant violations of human rights in Greece. Although the direct impact of this type of protest is difficult to gauge, it was nevertheless felt abroad, evident in the resistance of liberal forces in the US Congress to presidential support of the junta (Gregoriades 1975b:330-337). Similar activity was to be seen through “less formal” channels. Many Greek students in Italy, France and Germany who initially distanced themselves from the violence and “lack of direction” characterizing European movements gradually became increasingly radicalized; they consequently started smuggling subversive music, books, propaganda material or even explosives into Greece (Kornetis 2006:104,109).

Other spontaneous acts of defiance against the junta occurred in various cities around Greece, notably Ioannina and Herakleion, in the first days after the coup, but they were soon suppressed. More sustained activities were organized by a number of small resistance groups that formed immediately after the coup. These groups were mainly of a centre/left orientation, though some were affiliated with the Greek Communist Party, such as Regas Pheraios (named after a 19th century ideologue of the Greek War of Independence). There were also resistance groups on the right, such as the ‘Free Greeks,’ (consisting mostly of military officers loyal to the king),¹² and the ‘National Resistance Youth’. The most active centre-left organizations were the PAM (‘Patriotic Antidictatorship Front), in which Mikis Theodorakis played a prominent role and the Democratic Defense (DA), whose leaders included the sociologist Vassilis Filias and the diplomat Rodis Roufos.

Whatever their specific ideological orientations, the resistance groups had something in common: their *habitus* had been formed by the social divisions of the post-Civil War period. Thus they were a

¹² Certain branches of the army, especially the Navy were particularly hostile to the junta; this can be seen in the foiled counter-coups by the navy in December 1967 (organized by the King) and in May 1973 (with the political coverage of Karamanlis).

continuation of already existing social groups and their tactics were conditioned by their pre-dictatorship positions (Notaras 1999:188,190). The resistance frame of their activities was one of *motivation*: the goal of these groups was to express and promulgate popular resistance to living under an authoritarian regime and especially to mobilize foreign public opinion against the junta (ibid.:197). The lack of resources as well as the deep reluctance to co-operate with one another rendered resistance groups short-lived; arrests of key members often spelled the end of their activities. Their common pattern of ‘testing’ the regime’s weaknesses can be seen in the ever-changing and varied nature of the tactics they employed (Woodhouse 1985:36, Murtagh 1994:175): circulating leaflets, broadcasting subversive messages through loudspeakers or recording devices, publishing illegal newspapers or planting bombs in order to damage symbols of the regime; these symbols included public buildings, ministries, army barracks or buildings used by American corporations (as the United States was seen as an ally of the junta). During the span of the Junta’s rule, there were on average 17 bombing incidents every year.¹³ Among these was the foiled assassination attempt of Papadopoulos by Alexandros Panagoulis on 13 August, 1968. Violence peaked in 1969, with 45 bombings and 18 foiled attacks. Bombs occasionally had civilian victims and this may have alienated some sections of Greek society. Yet the fact that lawyers and former politicians immediately offered to represent the captured “terrorists” in the sham trials the regime staged (Gregoriades 1975c:351) as well as the fact that the public was alert to reports of torture prior to these trials (Woodhouse 1985:65) indicate that there was a basic level of popular support. The end result, however, was that armed clandestine activity failed to mobilize large segments of society.

Mass communication was another realm where the colonels waged discursive battles, constantly *re-translating* and contesting truth. The Junta claimed that the Western media was a conduit of communist propaganda that painted a distorted picture of Greek realities (Papadopoulos 1967:37). This surely inaccurate view, which attributed virtually any form of criticism to an alleged communist conspiracy shows the zealotry of the regime’s anticommunism. Nonetheless, foreign books and newspapers were sold freely in Greece, either because they were not perceived as posing an immediate, tangible threat or because they were used as indicators of free speech before the eyes of the international community (Roufos 1972:155). The attitude of Greek newspapers, which had enjoyed considerable freedom before the colonels, fluctuated, following the liberalization/hard-line cycles of the junta itself. Some newspapers did not challenge the junta at all, either because they were not motivated to resist or because they were fearful of the consequences. Some publishers pre-empted the intervention of the

¹³ By incident I mean a single focused target, not the actual number of explosions or the number of bombs that did not go off.

authorities by closing their newspapers ‘voluntarily’ and leaving Greece; Helene Vlachou, for example, drew international attention when she issued a statement condemning the junta and then closed down her entire publishing group, including the *Kathemerine* and *Mesemvrine* newspapers, and left Greece (Stratos 1995:140). Other newspapers printed information and views that were deemed dangerous to the nation, or simply challenged the junta directly, and were closed down by the regime (*Ethnos* and *Avge* are examples) (ibid.:140-141). Among the newspapers that remained in circulation, some expressed their opposition in subtle ways, for example by giving scant attention to public figures associated with the regime and by burying issues the junta wanted prominently covered (ibid.:140-142).

Radio, television and cinema came under the direct control of the junta. Army officers were placed in charge of radio stations and played martial music and slogans or songs that supported the “regeneration” of the nation (Athenian 1972:96; Murtagh 1994:118). Television received generous funds from the government, supplanting cinema as the most popular means of entertainment (Komnenou 1999:177). The use of television as a direct means of communication and control of the public was not, however, as successful as the regime had hoped; the more the leaders of the revolution appeared on television, the more blatant their weaknesses and oppressive practices became to an increasingly skeptical audience (ibid.:115). But despite the passive resistance of viewers, television played an insidious role, contributing to cultural stagnation and ideological disorientation. The great bulk of programs consisted of made-for-TV propaganda films directly funded by the authorities. There were also musicals, war films, thrillers and endless soccer matches (Komnenou 1999:179,180; Van Steen 2001:147).¹⁴ The cinema was also used as an instrument of ideological control, as the junta took measures to bring it in line with the “religious beliefs, the customs of the Greek people, their cultural and spiritual standards [and] public order and national security standards” (Official Gazette, 25.07.69, my translation).

In this climate of severe repression, artistic production was limited, partly through the imprisonment of the most radical intellectuals (Roufos 1972:156). Such tight control of information triggered protest in the form of passive resistance. The dominant frame was one of making salient the moral superiority of cultural producers and, consequently, of making the absence of their work felt in Greek society and beyond; as Plaskovites notes, “refusing to submit [their...] work to the police-like control of censors was an act of self respect and dignity” (1987:245). According to Roufos, the only

¹⁴ The potential of football matches as a tool that took the political edge off the public domain was later on recognized by students: one of the most well-known slogans in student rallies was “down with football!” (Gregoriades 1975b:320).

notable books published during the first three years of the regime, apart from translations, were works of scientific and narrowly scholarly interest, which the censors would not even bother to read (1972:156). The most influential literary journals, *Epoches* and *Epitheorese Technes*, were closed down and the literary columns in newspapers went silent (ibid.:157). The orchestrated silence that followed state intervention was designed to amplify the silence of censorship. The “silence boycott”, as it was also known, was spearheaded by George Seferis, the prestigious 1963 Nobel Prize poet laureate.

In this context of inertia on all fronts, decisive action on a mass scale did not materialize. It can even be argued that the regime’s position was strengthened by the general attitude of passivity, which in its turn might have been fed by disenchantment with the political instability of the pre-dictatorship era. Moreover, for a large swath of Greek society, purchasing power and living standards improved under the Junta (Notaras 1999:191). This reality, coupled with the junta’s policy of providing entertaining spectacles for the people, encouraged complacency. Yet various spontaneous incidents indicate that the people, notwithstanding appearances, had been, in essence, “suffering with fortitude” and deeply resented the junta’s rule. In ceremonies the second and third anniversaries of “The Revolution,” for example, high school students jeered Papadopoulos and Patakos. The funerals of George Papandreou on November 3, 1969 and later on of George Seferis on September 22, 1971 turned into massive protest marches. Such funerals had an especially potent symbolism in Greek society, partly because they recalled painful events in the past, such as the funeral of national poet Kostis Palamas under the German occupation. During Seferis’s funeral procession, like in Palamas’, participants started chanting the Greek national anthem, thus turning the event into an anti-dictatorship as well as an anti-fascist protest (Regos 1999: 238).¹⁵

3. A wave of contention: *cultural resistance*

The second wave of cultural resistance was triggered by the junta itself. In March 1969, the state started publishing writers’ work without their permission. Good examples of this practice are the poetry anthology *Popular Muse* (1969) or the weekly anthologies/installments of novels in newspapers (Van Dyck 1998:26). These works already existed in the public sphere but were given more prominence by

¹⁵ Discrediting the junta as fascists and comparing them to the Nazis was to become a common denigration technique at the time.

the regime in order to construct a façade of freedom. The response of authors was immediate and severe. A number of the authors signed a petition letter stating that,

The undersigned eighteen authors of the post-war generation fully share the indignation of those among us whose names are being used, without their consent, for the compulsory publication of their work in the press, in order to create the impression, both here and abroad, that our country enjoys intellectual freedom... We finally wish to honour George Seferis, because he was the first to point out the ever-growing dangers inherent in the perpetuation of this state of affairs. Let us now hope that the poet's voice will not prove to be the voice of another Cassandra. (Van Dyck 1998:26-27) **ONLY COPY OF ENGLISH VERSION IN VLACHOS 1971**

Under these conditions silence was no longer effective. The relevant frames of *dignity* and *individual rights* needed to be translated once more. Many intellectuals felt that silence ultimately served the junta's goal of eliminating opposition. In addition, the art-for-art's-sake mentality that it cultivated offered an alibi for those who primarily sought safety, instead of encouraging them to fulfill their role as intellectuals by openly championing democracy, freedom and justice (Kaklamanake 1987:363, Lentakes 1987:403).

A similar motivational frame of *responsibility towards the masses* started emerging among influential publishing houses such as *Kalvos* and *Keimena Press*, whose goal was to *protect* readers from hegemonic discourse of drivel and propaganda (Van Dyck 1998:25). Thus, they put out material that the junta did not wish to see in print, retranslating the way the colonels framed art, namely as “art that serves the motherland” (Roufos 1972:153). Opposition to the superficial aesthetics of the junta meant *aesthetic independence* and *quality* of the material produced (Van Dyck 1998:25).

The re-appropriation of the space that the regime had claimed with its propaganda intensified after the lifting of censorship in November 1969. The resumption of publishing activity culminated with the best-selling *Eighteen Texts* (1970), a collection of poems, short stories and essays brimming with political messages. Resistance was enacted largely through metaphors, innuendo and political allusions which readers could easily understand. For example, four of the contributors published short stories which dealt with a fictitious Latin American country under a military dictatorship named “Bolinguary” (Roufos 1972:159). In *The Cats of St Nicolas*, George Seferis, a prominent contributor to the volume, used the metaphor of a snake-infested land and salvation that came in the form of a shipload of cats that bravely fought and neutralized the venomous snakes, freeing its poisoned people (Van Dyck 1998:42). In Takis Valtinos' story *The Plaster*, a debilitated patient is in plaster casts and in danger of dying – a clear allusion to the colonels' metaphor of Greece as a patient in need of the junta's heavy-handed caretaking (Van Dyck 1998:47). The collective nature of the work promoted a frame of *unity* before the

common enemy. Authors from all political persuasions contributed to the volume, thus transcending political divisions of the past and advertising their *collective duty* to the Greek people (Regos 1999:234). A similar book in two volumes, *New Texts I and II*, was published in 1971 by the same publishing house, *Kedros*, this time communicating oppositional messages more directly. Soon after these volumes appeared, they were translated into English, Italian, French and German and were quoted in French and English newspapers, as well as on Deutsche Welle, The Radio Station of Paris and The Radio Station of Moscow (Plaskovites 1987:247, Lentakes 1987:403).

Re-framings of the discourse of the regime soon spread to other areas of cultural production. Painters started a debate on how their art could effectively adapt to the current situation by blending refined aesthetics and oppositional messages (Kokkinides 2002:43). In the area of music, *translating* the old and the new became a mode of subversion vis-à-vis the conservative folk traditions the colonels advocated. In this way they both turned existing cultural forms against the authorities and used new repertoires as an assertion of independence. For example, the countercultural energy of the *rembetiko* introduced from Asia Minor in the 1920s was exploited (especially because of the references to drugs and the underworld) (Kornetis 2006:251). At the same time, Theodorakis continued his project of blending high poetry (by Seferis, Ritsos and Elytis) with folk song melodies. Irrespective of the intentions of the authors of the original ‘texts’, Theodorakis translated them into accessible, politicized messages addressing the problems exile, imprisonment and the lack of freedom (Van Dyck 1998:51). Theodorakis’ banned folkish music remained a potent symbol of resistance and was smuggled by journalists from the BBC and *The Times* out of Greece and then re-broadcast to Greece (Papanikolaou 2007: 94-95). In terms of new material, the *Rolling Stones*, the *Doors*, *Pink Floyd*, *Led Zeppelin* and the artists who had performed in Woodstock were introduced from abroad, or were imitated by Greek rock bands that used politically loaded lyrics (often scrambling rock with folk song elements) (Kornetis 2006:245-246). The result of such processes was a transformative fusion of cultural repertoires and audiences in an increasingly politicized field of cultural production and consumption.

Some poets and popular songwriters also indulged in a more subtle form of resistance, namely, the destabilization of signs in works of art. The Junta’s program of promoting unity in society meant that they did not tolerate incongruity/duplicities in the ways people dressed and talked (Van Dyck 1998:104), in the way titles corresponded to the content of books/articles (Rialde 1974:40) or the way cultural products were to be interpreted (Van Steen 2001:49). All this took place in a context of the schizophrenic tension between the Helleno-Christian chauvinism and foreign dependency/consumerist

culture that the regime endorsed. Thus, Dionysis Savvopoulos, himself a folk-rock innovator, criticized the status quo by adopting the destabilizing technique and by amplifying the evils of society: “[i]nstead of parodying the mixed messages of the times in order to dispel confusion, his songs suggest that, at least temporarily, one should absorb confusion into one’s compositions” (Van Dyck 1998:51). This tactic is also a hallmark for the poets of the generation of the 1970s. They too mapped the confusion of the times onto their strategically deferred language. Their resistance agenda became more open-ended, as everything — whether private or public — had the potential to be political. It focused on issues such as sexual repression, the discourse of consumerism and the separation of high and low culture, which they problematized with the same zeal as class conflict and oppression under the dictatorship (ibid.:57). Both a product and a corrective mirror of their reality, the poets of the 1970s *translated* earlier Greek literary traditions as well as the American Beat movement, forging an identity of their own. Their multi-layered, polysemous aesthetic codes mimicked and undermined the regime’s injunctions while criticizing and assimilating the abundance of commodity culture (ibid.:59).

Cinema was another area where cultural producers and audiences sought the freedom to frame films either as open-ended messages or as directly political translations of foreign trends. Despite the regime’s cultural policy, cinematographers such as Theodoros Aggelopoulos employed an anti-neorealist approach and allegories that suggested similarities between the junta and oppressors of the past (Komnenou 1999:182, Van Steen 2001:162). Aggelopoulos’ films marked a new turn in Greek cinematography and viewing patterns. Representatives of what became known as the New Greek Cinema were influenced by the uprising of May 1968 in France, as well as other global rebellions. They devoted themselves to dissecting contemporary Greek society and even openly opposing the junta (Katsounake 2002:35). These are the years when a new, more sophisticated and politicized viewership starts to emerge. Consisting largely of students and intellectuals, this audience was alert to developments in international cinematography and sought new directors with fresh, even radical approach to their craft (Komnenou 1999:181, Kolovos 2002:42).

In theatre, there was a revival of classical Greek plays. Although it would have been safer at the time to revive “older, tried works, romantic comedies, and melodramas that never posed a threat to the colonels’ ideology”, theatre companies chose Greek drama for its great potential to become politically charged (Van Steen 2001:149). For the audience, simply going to the theatre and showing one’s appreciation of plays that the junta disfavored was an act of defiance. It was also possible for the audience to express, through ovations and spontaneous expressions of support, on-the-spot appreciation

of political statements conveyed overtly or subtly by a certain actor and double entendres played up by the directors (Van Steen 2001:158).¹⁶ In addition, many of the great themes of classical drama — from hubris, the abuse of power, antimilitarism, civil disobedience, tyrannicide and the need for social change — found obvious resonance in the contemporary context. A similar dynamic of ‘contextual ambiguity’ and participatory collusion was evident also in the staging of modern Greek plays, such as Gerasimos Stavros’ *Kalenychta Margareta* (1971), which dealt with resistance under the Nazis, and of foreign and translated plays, such as Bertolt Brecht’s *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* (1971).

4. Further waves of contention: *mass protest*

The intense cultural activity of the post-1969 period, along with the resonant frames of a *moral high ground* and *aesthetic independence* speeded up the emergence of a new collective identity among the youth. Culture started serving as a vehicle of free political expression on a massive scale, gradually leading to a new wave of protest, a *wave of mass mobilization*. The roots of this mass mobilization can be traced to June 1970, when an influential organization was formed, the Helleno-European Youth Movement (EKIN). The name of the organization is itself significant. Greece had ‘voluntarily’ left the Council of Europe just before its certain expulsion for human rights violations. On a more general level, a large part of Greek society became disillusioned with the United States on account of its support of the junta and started seeing Europe as a more reliable force for democracy; more specifically, many hoped that Greece’s desire for membership in the EEC could function as a leverage for domestic change (Poulantzas 1975:65, Athanasatou et al. 1999:30). The purpose of EKIN was threefold: a) to promote modern thought b) to tackle student issues and c) to organize scientific and cultural activities (Vernikos 2003:177). EKIN became very active in publishing and in organizing public lectures, book and poster exhibitions, musical events, and theatre productions (ibid.:179-180). Members of the group would later play a crucial role in the student movement. EKIN quickly found imitators too. The “Society for the Study of Greek Issues” (EMEP) consisted primarily of progressive intellectuals who sought to complement the role of EKIN. EMEP organized talks in various venues in Athens, occasionally inviting

¹⁶ A same pattern of audience participation was observed in other venues of popular entertainment, such as tavernas; when words such as ‘freedom’ were mentioned, there was clapping, and if clapping was prohibited by junta plain clothes policemen, then clicking fingers was employed (Kouloglou et al. 2006).

speakers of international renown, such as Günter Grass (Regos 1999:235). Both groups were banned by mid 1972 by the authorities.

The value of EKIN and EMEP extended beyond the specific activities it organized. Above all the groups provided contexts and settings for individuals with antiauthoritarian views to meet. Initially, these informal networks consisted of mostly of young people from the middle classes. Some had been previously apolitical; their relative financial independence, however, gave them power to assert themselves culturally under the dictatorship. This network eventually became the locus where an independent left wing ideology started to materialize. It represented an attempt to move away from the sclerotic attitude to traditional conservative or left ideals and the class rifts these signified before the junta. It appealed to individuals that formed their political beliefs in the here-and-now of current socio-political developments at the time and ushered in waves of protest that were framed in terms of dignity, spontaneity and independence (Regos 1999:235,238). Young people sought to express this sort of political independence culturally. They read translations of books on modern thought. They listened to banned popular music or music with clear political messages, such as Theodorakis' songs (Kouroupos 2002:44,45). They participated in poetry nights or attended theatre performances by the highly political *Anoichto Teatro* and *Theatro Technes* companies . And they watched subversive American films such as *Woodstock*, *Easy Rider*, *The Strawberry Statement* and Stuart Hagmann's film on the 1968 uprising of Columbia University students, all of which were turned into demonstrations (Kornetis 2008:258, Regos 1999:232-235). The screening of *Woodstock* in November 1970, for example, was followed by a demonstration of 2,000 young people who used slogans against the police and subsequently engaged the police in riots. Such events are highly significant from a resistance angle. Young people both "locat[ed] their struggle in (the context of) the 1960s and dis-locate[ed] the abusive regime of the Greek junta" (Papanikolaou 2007:106). In other words, they projected the oppressive other of the Greek reality onto the global oppressive other (the forces of order in late capitalism that other movements rejected, the War in Vietnam and so on) and displaced their opposition to the Junta by adopting the countercultural energy of the films in "an act of strategic mimicry" (ibid.). This strategic global and simultaneously local translation of resistance frames allowed students to turn both the content of the film and the act of cinema going into a political act or even a demonstration.

In this context of emerging politicized youth and new identities, the role of the publishing industry cannot be emphasized enough. It too was affected by the junta's seizure of power and the movements that sprang up in opposition to it, but also proved to be a shaping force. The publishing

sector had for years been the province of the old left, which had been defeated in the civil war. Under the rightwing governments that followed, the state machine required a “certificate of social beliefs”, which in essence excluded (alleged) communists from the public sector (Axelos 1984:22). As a result, leftists were driven to non-state sectors like publishing. With the advent of the colonels, arrests, closures, preventive censorship and the silence boycott had a severe effect on the industry. Publishing activity dropped dramatically and the sector was purged of the old left. Yet as early as 1968 there was a reorganization of publishers, with small independent left-wing publishing houses coming into being (Axelos 1984:45). As a consequence, not only did many books have left-wing content, but also most authors, publishers, travelling salesmen and typographers were on the political left (ibid.:46). Most of them did not belong, however, to the traditional left, because publishing houses with traditional left affiliations had already been banned (ibid.). These new players in publishing tried both to undermine the dictatorship and escape the attention of the authorities, who might impose hefty fines, close down facilities, literally destroy property, and imprison “transgressors” (Soteropoulou 1996:n.p.). To avoid such detection, they employed a variety of often inventive techniques, from masking the content of books with misleading covers, to highlighting provocative passages by typographical means (such as increased letter spacing) and alerting readers to censored sections by leaving blank spaces (ibid.). Some publishers even reinserted excerpts taken out by the censors just before publication or wove subtle political messages into the volume introductions or even the cover design (Asimakoulas 2006). Many published translations of books with political content that, while not directly addressing the Greek context, offered implicit criticisms of the Greek situation. The translators, who assumed great political risks, routinely used pseudonyms or obscure initials to avoid detection and arrest (Soteropoulou 1997:4-6). *Skaravaios Publications*, founded by political scientist Kostas Venetsanos, is a good example of this mode of resistance. Venetsanos decided to bring out Machiavelli’s *The Prince* because he was frustrated by the restrictions imposed in the form of a very extensive list of banned books he had received from the Ministry of Presidency (Soteropoulou 1996:n.p.). *The Prince* was chosen because it was not included in the index and because it contained many excerpts which read like slogans: “although you may hold the fortresses, yet they will not save you if the people hate you”, “[a]nd he who becomes master of a city accustomed to freedom and does not destroy it, may expect to be destroyed by it, for in rebellion it has always the watch-word of liberty and its ancient privileges as a rallying point”, and so on (ibid.). The book was eventually brought out in 1969, on the 500th anniversary of Machiavelli’s birth (ibid.). It was spotted by the authorities, however, and the publisher was asked to delete parts of the

introduction that referred to Machiavelli's involvement in an anti-regime plot and his consequent imprisonment, torture and then release. The publisher implemented the changes but left margins where the cuts had been made and increased letter spacing to add emphasis to other parts that were equally or even more subversive (ibid.).

Most "political" publishers offered translations of political books or older Greek works that could be appreciated for their *prognostic* and *motivational* framing potential. The preferred Greek works were ancient drama and political philosophy (Axelos 1984: 55,68), as well as revolutionary and literary texts from the period of the Greek war of independence (Asimakoulas 2005: 97). But it was translations of modern European thinkers that became the main vehicles for this kind of ideological protest and dissemination of subversive ideas. Publishers responded to the needs of the readership – mainly young people and students – who sought texts with a revolutionary and subversive content, books that would help shape their political attitudes and cultivate an antidictatorial sentiment (Soteropoulou 1997:6,7). When the preventative censorship provisions were lifted, there was an immediate spike in demand for *problem books*¹⁷ addressing critical social issues and bringing readers closer to modern European thought. The result was the publication in translation of such authors as Herbert Marcuse, Antonio Gramsci, Jean-Paul Sartre, Arnold Hauser, Eugene Ionesco, and Bertolt Brecht (Kontogiannes 1970:28-29, Kontogiannes 1971:118 and Chatzopoulos 1971:n.p.). This was not without high personal risk, because prison sentences, hefty fines, confiscations, vandalisms by state thugs or intimidation of publishers by summoning them to the Directorate of National Security for interrogation were not uncommon. Yet this massive translation movement was a potent means of maintaining indirect links with European movements at a time when more direct relationships were extremely difficult, given the lack of geographic proximity and restrictions on travel. The majority of Greek publishers consciously saw themselves as part of a political movement, considering it their duty to *awaken and enlighten* readers through literature, philosophy, literary criticism, art, sociology and politic theory and science (Dafermos 2003:29, Frankopoulos 1971:89, and Soteropoulou 1997:4). The motivational agenda of publishers can be seen as a *translation* of the older revolutionary frames of *education* and *reason* of the Greek Enlightenment period that led to the Greek war of independence. It can also be seen as a *re-translation* of the Junta's prognostic frame of "citizen education".

¹⁷ The Greek term is *biblia problematismou* – literally, books of problematizing – the term 'problem books' is coined here somewhat freely, by analogy to 'problem plays'.

On an institutional level, bookstores became the center of anti-authoritarian networks and book consumption became, in essence, a political act. These informal networks operated in tandem with organizations such as EKIN. The newly-formed publishing houses were founded by young entrepreneurs who took part in EKIN events or later participated in the student movement. The numbers and pace of sales confirmed the hunger among readers for what amounted to resistance literature. (Soteropoulou 1997:4). Sometimes 2,000 copies were sold in a matter of a few days, and reprints were often quickly issued when stocks ran out (ibid.). The dramatic growth of the publishing industry after 1970 directly fed into the student movement and the socio-political militancy it fostered (Axelos 1984:52, Krimpas 1999:141, Regos 1999:233).

Developments broadly in the realm of culture helped create a shift in values that in turn instigated protest on a massive scale. The first signs of mass mobilization can be traced to January 1972, when students finally reacted to the regime's intrusions in nearly all aspects of academic life. Lecturer appointments, class syllabi, funding decisions, and even the language of instruction (i.e. the mandatory use of the purist *katharevousa*) were all decided based on the regime's authoritarian agenda. Most importantly, the regime dismantled virtually all representative bodies at the university and polytechnic levels elected by the students themselves. In their place, it appointed people who would help them control the student unions (Murtagh 1994:239). In the spring of 1972, universities set up democratically elected FEAs "student struggle committees", achieving a level of organization that greatly facilitated the spread of the movement. First, the students employed legal resistance, such as elections, class boycotts, and then challenged certain policies and procedures in court. The intransigence of the junta soon led to more confrontational protest tactics such as rallies, sit-ins, and riots (Dafermos 2003:196). The regime's repressive response, such as beatings by the police, the torture of those arrested, and the forced military conscription of "agitators" only strengthened the resolve of students. The climax and end of the student movement came with the Athens Polytechnic sit-ins on 14 November 1973, which prompted many citizens to take it to the streets, both in Athens and in other cities, and confront the authorities. The army was finally called in to violently quell the riots (17-19 November). Dozens of students and citizens lost their lives and martial law came into effect throughout the country.

The student movement had a rather broad left-wing orientation. Though organizations supported by the banned the Greek Communist Party (KKE) and Centre Union (EK) were associated with the movement, their role was secondary. The mobilizing capacities of the KKE-influenced *Regas Feraios* and *Anti-EFEE* ('National Antidictatorship Student Union of Greece') and the EK-inspired *PAK*

(‘Panhellenic Freedom Movement’) and *DA* (‘Democratic Defense’) were limited. This was because such ideologically diverse groups naively saw the broad movement through their own lenses, as a conduit of class-related demands, or because they disagreed on the grounds of organization and action plans (Dafermos 2003:195-208). The democratic organization achieved through the “student struggle committees” as well as the hostility of the regime against the students, helped the movement overcome such limitations. The students’ collective initiatives were the result of consensus. They were based on prognostic frames elaborating the need to secure “individual rights”, “education” and the “national interests of Greece” (Dafermos 2003: 102, 124). They were also based on motivational frames that advertized the higher moral ground of the movement vis-à-vis an oppressive regime that was above the law (Regos 1999: 238). The logic of the protest now was one of taking personal risks in order to highlight the moral message of the demands made (Della Porta and Diani 2007:176). Such developments mark a significant move away from the political divisions of the past and demarcate the space of a new generation of politically committed young people. It was the first time since the coup that a large social group clearly articulated and put into actual practice a resistance agenda. Even the government-controlled media were emboldened enough by the general climate to register explicit forms of criticism: in November 1973, *To Vema* suggested a return to democracy and *Vradyne* supported student mobilizations against the regime (Stratos 1995:145,149). The moral and political appeal of the movement increased spectacularly with the supportive stance of all banned political parties and with its bloody ending. Greece can be seen as a unique case at the time in the sense that its student movement was supported by all politicians and still remained independent enough to translate domestic and international political and social values in such a way that it became the main focus of the antidictatorship effort in the country (Regos 1999:228,236, Dafermos 2003:197). This independence motivated both left-wing and conservative citizens to participate or at least support the movement and further strengthen a frame of *unity* before the common enemy.

The student movement sent shock waves through the entire fabric of Greek society: ousting Papadopoulos (25 November 1973), the hard-liner Dimitrios Ioannides reimposed censorship and martial law in an attempt to manage the situation, but it was too late. Public hostility against the regime had already grown exponentially. It was this state of affairs in combination with the crisis after the Greek interference in Cyprus and the threat of a Greco-Turkish in July 1974 that led to an orchestrated movement of politicians and leaders of the armed forces that destabilized the regime and caused its downfall (Dafermos 2003:196, Regos 1999:246).

Concluding remarks

Opposition to the Greek Junta went through three consecutive waves. In the light of the special characteristics of these stages, it can be said that the situation in Greece both evokes and departs from political developments in other countries. It evokes and departs from earlier demands for democratic rights within Greece too.

Prior to the advent of the colonels, Greece was very similar to nations like Portugal and Spain. It was a partially industrialized nation with glaring social asymmetries and a country where everyone, from the dominant peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie to the middle class and the affluent entrepreneurs, formed a chain of dependency to foreign capital (Poulatzas 1975:59-65). It was an ideologically polarized society that went through a catastrophic civil war and, subsequently, through various waves of protest that contested constitutional rights. The power-hungry Greek Junta emerged in order to perpetuate/manage socio-political divisions in Greece and to protect the status quo, that is, authoritarian capitalism (Gregoriades 1975c:350). This main concern materialized as violent repression, the universalist pretension of the junta as saviors of the nation, the adherence to a selective amalgamation of Helleno-Christian values, and an oscillation between promises of reform and a hard-line approach. These are features that again recall developments in Spain, Portugal and (later) post-coup Chile. But the above characteristics automatically set Greece apart from other countries in Western Europe or the USA, where emerging social movements signaled a break with the values of a capitalist *post-industrial* society, or middle class radicalism that sought to somehow represent the working class (Katsiaficas 1987:54, Kornetis 2006:375, 384, Tolomelli 1998:95). In many cases, the potential of international student movements to question entire societies was only feasible because of the confluence of student demands with those of the working classes (Katsiaficas 1987:94). Trade unionism in this capacity was almost non-existent in Greece in the 1960s.

Due to its (partial) international isolation (Charalambes 1999:88), Greece exhibited collective behavior that had a disparate and sharper focus than was the case with the sensibilities of the New Left movements prevailing in the global arena at the time. Instead of spontaneously seeking a radical change of societal structures in a democratic capitalist society (Rucht 1998:121; Katsiaficas 1987:47,180), and treating alternative forms of culture as a means of emancipation and middle-class critique (Bell 1979: 120-145), Greek citizens had to tackle the very concrete problem of authoritarianism. The initial vectors

of opposition to the regime were small organizations and the generations that had experienced and still lived in the very same framework of social divisions, conspiracies and mutual mistrust passed down from the post-WWII era. They were, in the main, either ideologically attached to the old left or centrists. The passive resistance tactics or the clandestine (often violent) activities of the *first wave of protest* soon proved to have little resonance. Subsequently, the regime's worldview, with the help of censorial restrictions, started dominating all areas of the public domain. The climate of fear and aggressive gate-keeping that the colonels created inadvertently politicized the cultural field. Again similarities can be drawn between Greece and Eastern Bloc countries, like Czechoslovakia, where non-conformist (Western) culture prepared the ground for a direct critique of bureaucratic values (in that context) (Katsiaficas 1987:60). The values Greek intellectuals wished to *re-translate* were precisely what the Junta advocated. This *second wave* of elaborate cultural protest was precipitated by the "opening" of the regime. The resistance frame that spread in the cultural field after the official lifting of censorship in November 1969 was a combination of *aesthetic independence, dignity, and social responsibility*. In the absence of other institutional channels (i.e. political parties), culture started serving as an arena for politics par excellence. The resonance of these ideas can be seen in homologous narratives that emerged in various sectors of society. Artistic production flourished, reappropriating the discursive spaces the regime had claimed or banned. For example, ancient Greek drama was injected with political commentary, cinema was rife with ambiguous societal criticism, song and poetry scrambled Greek tradition and countercultural Western repertoires were valued for their contestatory power in the given context. European values and societies transformed into symbols of commitment to democracy. More significantly, a great number of newly-founded publishing houses with a New Left orientation attempted to awaken the nation and increased their publication output dramatically. Their translations of political books with a non-orthodox left wing content increased the sophistication of radically transforming audiences thus paving the way for the next wave of protest (Kornetis 2008:257).

The circulation of ideas and information that had fueled movements abroad marks an act of double *translation*. First, subversive literature was readily available in Greek. Second, these subversive ideas, refracted through the specificities of Greek society, appealed to a politically committed generation that was *translating* themselves vis-à-vis previous generations. This new generation was gradually escaping from the gravitational pull of the old left. And here lies another marked difference to other international movements of the 1960s. New Left movements abroad did not consolidate a popular base, they were superseded by the old left and their revolutions did not materialize, leaving the existing

“systems of order” intact, if not strengthened (Katsiaficas 1987:181,183). Subsequently, New Left agendas of “constructing a better life” were transferred to the cultural field, which in its turn was eventually depoliticized and commercialized (ibid.:193,196). The Greek experience seems to be a more felicitous reversal of this process. The *third wave* of mass mobilization took shape in cultural spaces first: theatres, cinemas, bookstores, concert venues, tavernas, cultural clubs such as EGIN and universities. The emerging young generation of politically active citizens was able to experience indirectly and indeed incorporate elements of the era’s contestatory and radical energy (Kornetis 2006:378). The Greek student movement that developed after 1970 was not rigidly communist in orientation; the activities of those who supported the movement laid bare dominant ideologies and diffused protest frames that proved to be highly resonant: *independence, moral superiority, unity*. This resulted in mass mobilization that cut across the political and social spectrum. The Junta was singled out as a common enemy, as “fascists” and what everyone came to see as an “anti-national enterprise”. Although the student movement was quashed, it nevertheless created counterhegemonic blocs that did lead to “a better life”, the return to democracy in 1974.

The specificities of the Greek situation bring up a topic/question that needs to be elaborated in greater detail when studying the 1960s. Historiography and social movements theory explore the ways in which individuals, institutions and events gave rise to a global culture of contestation. In the relevant literature, there are very brief mentions of translated (scholarly or radical) material (see, for example, Katsiaficas 1987:194; Della Porta 1998:139), which simply “appeared” as final products in many countries and were seen as evidence of the diffusion of protest frames. This, however, does not do justice to the complex processes of forging links between the individual and society, the local and the global, the old and the new, culture and politics. Effective protest frames exist in a dynamic environment of micro-cosmopolitanism, where contingent regularities on a national level are mapped onto global characteristics and vice versa. The Greek student movement is such a case in point. It can be seen as a belated version of the global students and youth movements of the 1960s, *translated* into a specifically Greek, and sharply repressive, context.

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