Interplays of Ethnicity, Nationalism and Globalisation within the Greek contemporary dance scene: Choreographic choices and constructions of national identity.

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Abstract

The foundations of contemporary dance in Greece, in the early twentieth century, were set in close relation to the 'National Issue': the delineation and establishment of a coherent national identity. While the contemporary dance-scape has developed and even moved away from the ethno-centric orientation of the early choreographers, this initial connection between dance and national identity has shaped the local course of dance. The thesis examines relevant grand and resistance narratives on history, culture and identity, on both national and international planes, that have informed the local choreographic negotiations of identity.

The 2004 Olympic Opening and Closing Ceremonies, directed by choreographer Dimitris Papaioannou, are examined as an example of national representation addressing an international audience, through contemporary dance. The widespread popularity and immense projection of this commissioned work, renders it a valuable case-study of a contemporary performance of collective imaginings on 'Greekness'.

The thesis explores the socio-political background of three strategies of national representation within the Ceremonies, namely 'Historicisation', 'Folklorisation' and 'Universalisation', and their negotiation within local choreographic texts, from the late 1920s until the present day. Through the analysis and contextualization of the Olympic Ceremonies, further observations emerge, regarding the socio-political character of dance in Greece and its specific position within the local discourse on cultural and national Identity.

It is argued that a combination of contextual and stylistic tendencies has formed a referential ground, common to all subsequent choreographers, who position themselves and their work in relation to this precedent. This referential connective tissue somehow connects local dance groups, suggesting a number of 'national' characteristics that typify the local contemporary dance scene. These characteristics are further analysed with specific regard to their socio-political agenda, under the prism of power and resistance within the contemporary Greek arts landscape.
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Introduction

a. Choreographing Greece: The national importance of the Olympic Opening Ceremony

Friday the 13th of August 2004! The great moment we all have been waiting for, for seven years has come: The Olympic Games return to Greece, where they were born; in Athens that revived them 108 years ago; in Athens, the birthplace of democracy, and civilization. The XXVIII Olympic Games unarguably present the greatest challenge in the history of contemporary Greece. It is the great celebration of Humanity, Peace and Brotherhood of the people. The eyes of the entire world will be turned for seventeen days and nights to the city of Socrates, Aeschylus and Pericles … the heart of the planet will beat to the rhythms of Athens. The unique, grand moment has finally come, let’s all us Greeks enjoy it! The Greek Public television (NET) welcomes you to the 28th Olympic Games.

(Diakoyannis, NET, 13/08/2004 –translated by the author)

With this short welcoming speech, the football announcer Yiannis Diakoyannis introduced the live transmission of the Olympic Opening Ceremony to an attentive Greek audience, as the television screen featured various long shots from the Olympic stadium. Right from the start, Diakoyannis’s celebratory commentary drew the awareness of the Greek spectators to the importance of the Games for the country’s national morale and international prestige. After the intense feelings of national pride generated by the National Greek football team’s success at the European championship two months prior, the upcoming Olympics generated opportunities for yet another (internationally acclaimed), national triumph. Since Diakoyannis is an emblematic figure in Greek football, commenting for all the major games since the 1970’s, the familiarity of his voice at the beginning of the live transmission of the Opening Ceremony, almost instinctively provoked similar unifying sentiments and expectations of competence and excellence. As Greece tuned in for the screening of the official start of the 2004 Olympic Games,
Diakoyiannis's presence—probably even more than his words—referenced an underlying connective tissue that linked the two events: the boosting of the national morale through an international success. As journalist Maria Maragou commented: "Since our National (football team) won the championship, cueing us on the excellent Opening Ceremony of the Olympiad and all that await us, we, Greeks, run. We feel that we are running ahead; and on the tension of the speed, glimpses of the past are sneaking in; of the decades we have surmounted" (Maragou, 2004, p. 17).

Maragou also links the two events, based on their weight within the national discourse. Even though there is no pragmatic reason why a victory in football would ensure a successful Olympiad or an artistically versed Opening Ceremony, they are sequentially positioned in the same determinist orbit towards national progress and excellence. This idea of national empowerment within the international community runs concurrently to a sense of perpetual progress towards modernisation and Europeanisation, which has characterised the local political discourse of the past few decades. In this determinist orbit, the Olympic Games appear as a significant landmark, while the importance of the Opening Ceremony is specifically underlined. Moreover, those "glimpses of the past" and of the "decades we have surmounted" appear within the text, as dynamic and instructive forces within this orbit, which further inform, and direct it. This footage is actually the introductory part of Maragou's review of the "first organised Gay Art presence in Athens" (Ibid). The references to the Olympiad and the European Football Championship are linked to the organisation of the gay, multicultural art exhibition When gods become human, in the Museum Frysira (curator Edward Lucie-Smith) in " the blessed 2004", during which "we have seen it all" (Ibid).

The exhibition's "alternative" character—"gay and multicultural"—featuring "artists from third world countries -resisting the established local institutions’ (e.g. Outlook and DESTE) orientation towards artists from the big art-centres” suggests an "openness” (ibid), which is contextualised within the nation's course towards modernity. Discussing national identity and cultural representation, Rachel Fensham
and Peter Eckersall note, “nations that conceive themselves as modern, although emergent, must therefore manage and co-opt their local theatre practices” (1999, p. 57). This is also true for other local cultural practices, as the manifestation of cultural literacy, specifically linked to High Art, appears as a prerequisite for a society’s entrance into modernity. Social and cultural pluralism, tolerance and a showcased internationalist (or post-national) spirit, as I shall discuss in Part 4, rank among the contemporary imperatives of modernity. Since the idea that “our nation’s image is its culture” (Dimitriadi-Psaropoulou, 2006, p. 28) is a popular concept in Greece, the hosting of a ‘radical’, ‘high-art’ exhibition, such as the one reviewed by Maragou, is therefore suggestive of Greece’s modernity, or at least of its determinist orbit, towards it. Thus, the connection between the exhibition and the Olympiad is less tangential than it first appears.

In this way, the article addresses some of the key issues that revolved around the Olympic Games of 2004 (and more specifically the Opening Ceremony), which are also indicative of the wider political climate of Greece, in the last decades: national empowerment is sought through the attainment of a significant international status. This status has mainly referred to the identification and alignment with Europe and the ‘West’, in terms of economic, political and cultural conditions. Moreover, the establishment of this international/European status has been, as I shall discuss in the thesis, grounded on (ancient, ‘westernised’) history, as well as on a contemporary process of modernisation. Maragou’s article is suggestive of this tendency: the European football championship sets the stage for the excellence of the Olympic ceremony; the hosting of a ‘high-art’ exhibition heralds further exciting national prospects. All of these indicate the country’s status as developed and modern. These events are seen as the first, in a series of victories, which further promote and accelerate this progress. Moreover, ‘our (acknowledged and celebrated) past’, appears to be assisting this course, with its distinctive and prestigious role in the nation’s identity.

Much writing of the time shares Maragou’s tone, underlining the national significance
of both the victory in the European football championship and the forthcoming Olympic Games, often interpreting the first as a good omen or a preview for the second. The theme and layout of the Opening Ceremony was kept secret by its director, choreographer Dimitris Papaioannou, throughout its preparation, at the same time that the ceremony was promoted by the media, which regularly introduced and re-introduced Papaioannou to the wider public (in its majority unfamiliar with his previous work) while presenting sporadic information and even assumptions on the general direction of the awaited spectacle. In order to start advertising the Opening Ceremony (within the wider promotional campaign for the Olympics), the promotion of Papaioannou’s artistic profile for the Greek public was a necessary act. While he is very popular with the local dance audience, with many of his choreographies acknowledged by critics, journalists and governmental carriers (through funding awards, or the attendance of politicians in his latter performances), for the majority of the population he was a new name.

Long before the Games started, the well-promoted and yet well-kept secret of the Opening Ceremony, further marketed by Papaioannou’s frequent media-reports and commentaries on the progression of the rehearsals and the aesthetic and ethnic orientation of the event, had already built feelings of anticipation for the successful enactment of the ceremony. What is more, this was the first event of the Olympiad and hence the landmark that was to delineate and ensure the smooth operation of this national task, identified as the ‘greatest challenge of contemporary Greece’: the 2004 Olympic Games. As the preparatory period had been characterised by an increasing pressure from the Olympic Committee towards the completion of the infrastructural works and most importantly by a mistrust and disbelief, on the part of the international community and press, regarding the ability of Greece to successfully host such a large scale event, the smooth operation of the Olympics became a matter of major national importance. By the time of the opening night even those who had long been expressing objections, or at least their disassociation from such an event, could not but feel the weight of a possible failure. A few days before the official start of the Games, Papaioannou had also remarked on the “complete reversal of the -until
This shift in the public mind was partially triggered by extended propaganda and advertisement, which was intensified as the Games approached, promoting the Olympics as a nationally significant enterprise. However, what mainly fuelled and validated this formerly discounted event was that the international community questioned national competence. As Papaioannou speculated in the lecture demonstration that followed the success of the Opening Ceremony, in the Institute of Goulandri-Horn (Athens, 18/5/05), the completion of the Games had become a matter of "self-assurance for the contemporary Greek". Similarly actress Lydia Koniordou stated that this ceremony was "one of the most important moments for the Modern Greek civilization" (Koniordou, in Barka, 2004, p. 15). Within this negative climate the success of the Greek national football team gave a boost to the national morale and being considered by many as a "first step towards a successful Olympiad", it gradually contributed to a defensive nationalist sentiment. A sentiment that has been grounded on a historical collective (ethnic) memory of both pragmatic and imagined facts, fears and uncertainties as to the status of the national state as a valid political, economic and cultural entity within the 'society of the nations'.

Within this climate, the success of the Olympiad did not only depend on the display of infrastructural and/or administrational competence, but also more importantly on the successful representation, communication and transmission of the nation's profile through the Opening Ceremony. As Papaioannou pointed out, this ceremony is the most "powerful card" for the country that organises the games. Even though it is defined by a very strict protocol, (which dictates for example the presentation of the Olympic and the hosting country's flags, the Olympic committee, the welcoming country's Head of the State, the athletes, and the lighting of the stadium's torch with the Olympic Flame), the main purpose of the ceremony is to re-present the country's national portrait for a large and varied international audience. For example, Papaioannou has said that he approached the project as a "gigantic advertising spot" for the country (in Loverdou, 2005, p. 65). Hence Papaioannou, along with most
Journalists and commentators argued that opening ceremonies function as the hosting nation’s calling card to the world. If one perceives it in this way, all the decisions related to the selection of the artistic director for the ceremony are reflections of the aesthetic, artistic, and social space that he/she represents. Such criteria are primarily politically defined and can reveal the dominant political tendencies of the time, as well as the mainstream, hegemonic, public sentiments of self-identification and representation. The appointment of an independent (and initially somewhat marginal and subversive) avant-garde choreographer like Dimitris Papaioannou, for the artistic administration of the 2004 Games in Athens, can therefore be read as a significant act of expression of national artistic, cultural and political investments, with specific reference to the cultural and national self-portrait(s) and the status and dynamics of the contemporary dance scene within Greek society.

As noted, however acknowledged Papaioannou and his works with Edafos Dance Theatre (Όμιδα Εδάφους) were for a dance audience in his pre-Olympic period, by no means was he a widely recognisable public persona throughout Greece. In her article The Identity of the Contributors to the Celebration in the Olympic Stadium, Fotini Barka noted that the artists were “a fistful of Greek creators, almost unknown to the wide audience, but very familiar to those following closely the local cultural production of the last decade”). Papaioannou’s appointment as the ceremony director and the subsequent extensive publicity that he enjoyed in the following two years have made his name, but not necessarily his earlier oeuvre, recognisable to the wider public. Still, for the majority of his regular audience, this involvement with the Olympic Games seemed, at least in the beginning, inconsistent with the aesthetic and political character of his earlier work.7 Acknowledging this ‘contradiction’ Papaioannou defended his involvement in such a large scale political and economic event, with a series of comments on the importance of ‘abandoning the cynical self’, in order to be positively creative (in Kormaris, 2003, p. 38). Interviewed by Vassilis Aggelikopoulos, Papaioannou said that among the ceremonies’ creative team “everyone had to get over the shyness, common within avant-garde artists who always detach their position” (22.8.2004, p. 16). Nonetheless, his identification with
independent, left-wing political affiliations and a related elitist, non-mainstream/commercial artistic avant-garde, as well as his preoccupation with equally 'marginalised' artistic cultures, like comic strips and experimental dance-theatre, did not seem to fit the profile of the ceremony director as much as that of a curator of a mainstream and inclusive caption of 'Greekness'. In this way Papaioannou's decision to participate in and lead 'the mainstream' and the ways he chose to represent a mainstream idea of 'Greekness' are particularly significant.

Nor was the appointment of Papaioannou the only politically significant act. Even more revealing was the response of the Greek public to the opening and closing ceremonies, which ranged from openly affirmative to enthusiastic. Even the sporadic critiques and objections that were articulated after the closure of the ceremonies mainly questioned their artistic value rather than their validity as (re)presentational images of 'Greekness'.\(^8\) The positive response of the local audience to Papaioannou's 'Hellenic' ceremonies gives his work a degree of legitimacy, which permits its study as a significant artistic representation of Greek cultural identity and/or as an expression of nationhood. That this symbolic representation was performed through contemporary dance—an artistic medium unfamiliar to the majority of the Greek people—rather than through the more familiar traditional or folk dances, is another significant parameter. The question of how an avant-garde choreographer came to be involved in such a mainstream spectacle is overtaken by a more basic one: how did Greece came to be re-presented (in the largest contemporary international spectacle) through contemporary dance? Or, to be more precise, how was this international projection of the Greek National Self\(^9\) achieved through an artistic medium that is by no means the most popular, the most celebrated, or the most identifiably Greek?

This network of initial questions on how and why an 'unknown' choreographer came to represent collective national sentiments, through an equally 'unknown' artistic genre shed light on the local discourses on national identity and the neo-Hellenic self-portrait and their peculiar relationship with (contemporary) dance. This discussion challenges a perception of contemporary dance as a trans-national language, exploring
its diasporic character and the specific national investments that characterised its shaping and development within the Greek space. Moreover, these questions address common perceptions of the polarity between ‘mainstream’ and ‘avant-garde’ local cultures and political positions, as well as on the ‘foreignness’, the exclusivity and incomprehensibility of High Art (dance) versus the explicit, ostensibly shared ‘Greekness’ of the popular and the folkloric. Finally they address issues regarding perceptions of the Self and the Other, in both national and international terms and their symbolic performance in contemporary dance.

I argue that the ceremony’s successful articulation of ‘Greekness’ for both local and international audiences can be attributed to Papaioannou’s skilful negotiation of the artistic, cultural and political issues that historically have shaped this national discourse. An analytical and deconstructive approach to the choreographic, contextual, aesthetic and kinesiological choices that shaped the 2004 Opening Ceremony has served as a starting point for my sociological and political analysis of key issues that have informed the contemporary Greek dance scene. For example, issues relating to (auto)-exoticism, nationalism, globalization, modernization and the negotiation of tradition and history, are prominent within Papaioannou’s choreographic text and may be identified, addressed and analysed in terms of their choreographic and political significance. As a result, within the thesis, I identify some of the focal points and keystones within local artistic affairs –and even more specifically the local dance practices– and their correlation to temporal socio-political currents and changes. For that, I also tackle grand narratives on Greekness with specific reference to their socio-political implications in order to exemplify their negotiation within the local dance scene.

In addition, an examination of Papaioannou’s artistic and ideological agenda further accounts for his prominent position within the Greek dance milieu, and his subsequent appointment as the director of the Opening and Closing ceremonies. As several critics have pointed out, Papaioannou’s background in fine arts (from ‘well established’ to more ‘marginal’ forms, such as painting and comics respectively)
resulted in a stylized choreographic language, which relied heavily on image and form and which occupied an important role within his works with *Edafos Dance Theatre*. Reviewing the ‘run through’ of Papaioannou’s last performance 2, journalist Nikos Legakis characterises the choreographer as an “image-lover” (εικονολάμπων):

Dimitris Papaioannou, using a ‘cuisine’ with which he’s, without a doubt, familiarised with, orchestrates sensitivities and dexterities towards a rather visual direction, with references that span in various areas and periods of the visual arts.

(Legakis, 2006, p. 28 –translated by the author)

I believe that it is through this ‘visual’ choreographic language that he communicated with the Greek audience, who—in its majority—has been more familiar with the visual and plastic arts than with contemporary dance. Furthermore, *Edafos Dance Theatre* featured some characteristics that have typified the local dance scene. The self-identification of the group as dance theatre, which refers to the employment of dramatic as well as ‘pure’ dance forms, is probably the most commonly shared characteristic of the local contemporary dance groups today. Apart from the impact that Pina Bausch’s works had on the Greek contemporary choreographers, this relation between dance and theatre dates back to the foundation of modern dance in Greece, at the beginning of the twentieth century, appearing as one of its core features. The significant position of the Greek theatrical tradition, both nationally and internationally, and its undeniable prestige facilitated the import of western concert dance, providing it with a source of thematic, and technical material, as well as with a solid and prestigious referential basis.

In addition, inter-artistic collaborations and the co-existence of different art-forms within *Edafos Dance Theatre*’s performances, typify the company. Specially commissioned music compositions also accompanied most of the performances. This artistic ‘merging’ was a ‘tradition’ for contemporary Greek theatre and dance scenes from the beginning of the twentieth century, especially exemplified through the (artistic and intellectual) ‘Generation of the (19)30s’. It is therefore argued that the
continuation of this tradition within the works of Edafos Dance Theatre has further facilitated its acknowledgment and establishment within the local artistic affairs.

In addition, the re-working, re-presentation, and post modern cross-referencing to Greek tragedies and folk myths [Medea (1993), Iphigenia on the old bridge of Arta (1995), Xenakis’s Oresteia, Aeschylus’s suite (1995)], gave a distinct ‘Hellenic’ character to the group, which also contributed to its popularity. Finally, a preoccupation with gender issues and with ‘human nature’, in its subtle psychological nuances, as well as with interpersonal, especially erotic relations were popular subjects (for both artists and audiences), during the ‘blossoming’ period of Greek dance, in the 1990s. I argue, that the exploration of these iconic Greek elements, rather than the introduction of a completely new choreographic language, granted Papaioannou and the group their success among a large, local audience. Within that context, the wide appeal of the ceremony—an event which consciously and deliberately employed similarly familiar elements and techniques—can be better understood. Hence, the main hypothesis of this text is that by tracing those elements and examining their nature and significance, some deeper currents within the local dance scene can be revealed; I argue that the recurrence of these discourses forms a nexus that could be identified as a connective tissue that links the Greek dance groups, suggesting some (however debatable) distinctive national characteristics.

As a final point, I wish to explain the decision to reference Papaioannou’s name exclusively throughout the thesis, whenever I discuss the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. This individualised reference is not intended to reduce the staging process to a single person’s creative decisions. On the contrary, I fully acknowledge the multi-directional collaborations that constituted the conceptual and practical dimensions of the ceremonies. Nonetheless, and for the sake of clarity and consistency, I personify this team-work in Papaioannou’s name, as he was the appointed director and overall coordinator of this commissioned work. Moreover he was the ‘public face’ of this task: he delivered all the interviews, information and clarifications on the ceremony, both before and after its performance and he was the
one who personified for the media and the public the ‘artistic’ side of the Games. Finally, he was ultimately credited with the conception and materialisation of the ceremonies. While I often refer to him as director/choreographer, rather than merely as director, this is intended less to describe his specific work for the ceremonies than to underline his general professional identity. For the Opening Ceremony, the choreographing of the dancers’ parts was given to Angeliki Stellatou, the closest and oldest partner of Papaioannou in Edafos Dance Company. Similarly, the choreographing of the ‘athletic space’ is credited to Wanda Rokicki and the Athletes’ Parade, as well as the audience’s instructions, to Doug Jack. Moreover, the conception of the Clepsydra section is attributed to Angelos Mentis, while the texts presented were selected by Lina Nikolakopoulou and the Ceremony’s soundtrack was directed by Yiorgos Koumendakis. Nonetheless, Papaioannou was the artist chosen to visualise and realise the ceremony, being charged with the conception, direction and supervision of the show, shaping the overall effect. Hence, the Opening Ceremony bore his particular artistic imprint and is now considered (by both the critics, audiences and the artist himself), as a landmark in his career.

b. The role of the arts in the stimulation and shaping of national imageries: Politicising the Opening Ceremony.

In order to perform Greek identity, or Hellenicity, Papaioannou turned to the Past and to the historical Self. In present-day Greece, the National Self is nearly always presented within a historical framework, which positions, defines and legitimates it. Papaioannou confessed that this clichéd and potentially parochial referencing to antiquity initially concerned him and his collaborators:
But again antiquity? Again all the clichés that tire us and always provide as with an excuse and a shield to hide under our everyday mediocrity? The answer is Yes. Because the Olympic Games were born in antiquity and because anything long gone by is banal, not because it is was not great, but because it has stopped functioning in a specific way.

(Papaioannou in Karouzakis, 2005, p. 28 -translated by the author)

The very first concert dance choreographies, in early twentieth-century Greece centred on this historicising of the self, according to the time’s official national narratives on history and tradition. Dance was nationalised and ennobled though its connection with a highly valued national discourse, contributing to the construction of a self-directed, distinct and recognisable national portrait, which would legitimise the sovereignty of the then still young Greek state. Even though for many ‘western’ nations (such as the US, France, Canada, the UK) the reference to the past is not required to define or strengthen the ‘uniqueness’ of their nationhood, for Greece, as well as for most of the post-colonial and/or ‘oriental’ nations, the reliance on history emerges in almost all national discourses as the sine qua non defining factor and the very essence of nationhood. Even though often manifested and shaped through the arts, this phenomenon is, as I shall attempt to demonstrate, primarily political and is related to the established world order and power hierarchy.

The relationship between art and the construction of national identity can be located within the wider discourse on the socio-political agenda of the artist and the social context of art in general. The examination of art as an interactive and dynamic social phenomenon (whether seen as a social expression or as a generator, promoter or challenger of socio-political situations and positionings) has deconstructed the myth of its transcendental and apolitical character and re-contextualised it within the ‘real’ world, by tracing, highlighting and analysing its socio-political, economic and ideological parameters. For example, Andrée Grau and Stephanie Jordan note that:

the arts including dance, can reflect, reinforce, prompt.
challenge as well as be appropriated in the quest for identity. They are never politically innocent: they operate in dialogue with both exclusive and inclusive ideologies.

(Grâu and Jordan (eds), 2006, p. 4)

Through that prism, the role of the arts within specific ethnic, nationalistic, political, and ideological frames has been subjected to analysis, revealing veiled issues and offering a range of different insights on both the arts and the societies under consideration. The significance of the arts for a specific regime and the relevant regulative policies that are employed, as well as the artists’ inter- or counter-action with them can be enlightening in terms of the political aims and mechanisms of a specific period. At the same time the political background, context and orientation of an artistic stream or period further informs the reading(s) and/or critiques of these works. For the purposes of this study, the Greek dance scene is examined in relation to the development of Western concert dance since the late nineteenth century, focusing on their relationship with grand narratives of Greekness. Under that scope, I tease out both the global (western) and local politics of identity with reference to their implications for the national negotiation of history and tradition.

While Benedict Anderson defined the nation as “an imagined political community” (1991, p. 6), Ernest Gellner suggested that “nations come into being when people develop the will to be united with all those, and only those who share their culture” [Gellner (1983) in Bradley, 2006, p 123]. Both have “linked the emergence of nations and nationalism to modernity and the development of industrial capitalism” (Bradley, Ibid). Anderson discusses the impact of capitalism -focusing especially on ‘print capitalism’- on the construction of a shared identity with an assumed common destiny that inspires specific “national imageries”, while Gellner further argues that “the emergence of complex but integrated modern industry demands that all citizens share a sense of belonging and a common culture”, which involves “the general imposition of high culture” on all groups of society” (Ibid). Still, the ‘imposition’ of a culture is rarely a one-way process of ‘transfusing’ and diffusing a ‘high culture’
downwards. Even the most oppressive and forceful cultural/political propagandists have drawn from dominant socio-economic needs, hegemonic cultural practices, and under-class aspirations in order to assemble a 'functioning' ideological and cultural policy. Discussing the works of Anderson (1983), de Certeau (1984) and Hebdige (1979), Arjun Appadurai has also noted the way that "popular consciousness was shown...to be a consciously worked-out strategy of irony and satire, which could critique the ruling order while experimenting with styles of identity politics" (2000, p. 145). Within this process of the construction and promotion of a common culture, whether this refers to a common future or a shared historical past, the contribution of the arts to the production, distribution and establishment of specific shared national imaginings has been significant.

The development of a national(ist) discourse in most newly founded, re-established and/or re-defined nation-states has been in most cases accompanied by an artistic infrastructure cultivated, supported and promoted by the official governmental carriers. The state's interaction with specific artistic genres and particular artists, is of great importance for a better understanding of both the art works and of the specific needs and desires of the society (or societal faction), which generated them. Emphasising the 'up-down' relationship between the sovereign state and the institutionalised arts, art historian Panagiotis Ioannou notes in his article titled In the Service of the Ruling Class:

The visual perception of 'reality' by the members of a society, who have accepted its values through its educational mechanisms, is therefore shaped, and to a great extent directed, by images charged with meanings. The ability of the visual arts to affect the shaping of the spectator, through representation, is the main reason for the multi-layered relationship-dependence (of art) from the governing power, always within the context of the institutional management of culture.

(Ioannou, 2005, p. 3 -translated by the author).

Ioannou focuses on the European Early Modern Period, from approximately the sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth century, when the "works of art" played an
intermediary role in the implementation of the aims and the embellishment of the centralized mechanisms of the political and ecclesiastic power centers” and he concludes with a reference to the Venetian rule in Greece and its impact on the western-oriented (Philhellenic/classicist) character of the ‘official’ art of the Modern Greek state. As Ioannou suggests, “with very few (…) exceptions, the production and empowerment of most artists were closely related to the acceptance of the society, which supported them”, as through the commissioned works (directly or indirectly from the state) they “assured ‘tradition’ and ‘continuity’ and transmitted the dominant taste, projecting (…) a prototype of living (…) which precluded or neutralized the possible resistances” (Ibid). Although his analysis of the dependent relationship between ‘official’, or institutionalized art and the governing power does not refer to the contemporary era, it can be argued that even today, the dominant institutionalized artistic voices of a society, reflect the aesthetic, as well as the ideological sentiment of the dominant faction. This is the case even when this sentiment includes the conveyance of a pluralistic, liberal and artistic political face, which ‘allows’ or encourages free expression and gives space to the existence of diverse voices.

Within this context, it could be argued that the works of art that consciously aim to depict, represent, construct or convey nationality belong to the category of ‘committed art’. Although, as many theorists have argued, all art is, in some sense, politically significant, the intentional portrayal of a specific national profile is by definition a performed political act. In the case of the Olympic ceremony, Papaioannou’s directing of a “Hellenic ceremony” (Kostalas, 13/11/04), was commissioned by the government and hence its depiction of Hellenicity could be examined as a “transmission of the dominant taste” or as a performance of the dominant imaginings on the National Self. Moreover, the ceremony presented a Hellenic image, which enjoyed the “acceptance of the society that supported it”, elevating the artist’s status within it. In addition, Papaioannou’s work for the 2004 Olympics can be placed within a series of works commissioned, supported or promoted by the government of several time periods, whose aim was the projection
of a specific idea of nationhood.

c. Occidentalism, nationalism, totalitarianism and the mediation of the arts in pre-World War II Greece.

The emergence of the nation-state is associated both with the rise of democratic political forms and with the overthrow of absolutist monarchies which preceded them. It has been historically connected with nationalist movements, especially where the formation of a nation-state involved the overthrowing of an occupying power or the ousting of colonial rulers.

(Bradley, 2003, p. 123)

Hence, for the emergence of the nation-state, the cultivation of a nationalist spirit appears necessary (Gellner in Bradley, Ibid). For the foundation of the Modern Greek state, which required the overthrow of the Ottoman occupation forces, the cultivation of the necessary nationalist spirit relied on both the idea of a distinct and therefore unifying historical past, as well as of a common future after liberation. At the same time, the 1821 Freedom Struggle marked the transition from the Ottoman centralized feudalism to civil democracy. Within this struggle, the turn to democracy appeared as a significant decision not only for the new nation’s social structure and organization, but also for the establishment of its national identity. This decision was formed around two axes, which have shaped the official neo-Hellenic sense of identity: on the one hand, democracy was the form of social organization which typified ancient Greece (and more specifically the state of Athens). For an ethnic group which struggled to prove itself as a distinct national entity by differentiating itself from the other ethnic groups of the Ottoman Empire, the reference to the past, and even more to a social model radically different from the occupational one, strengthened the national discourse. On the other hand, its adoption by the western European nation-states and its semiotic appointment as a symbol of ‘Occidentalism’, which opposed the ‘Orientalist’ monarchic realm, automatically removed Greece from the ‘Orient’ (as represented by the Ottoman Empire) and re-located it within the ‘West’. This
historical repositioning of the Greeks towards the West attracted Europe’s interest in the Greek Revolution, inviting the western Philhellenes to affiliate with the Greek fight and to acknowledge it as a national Freedom Struggle, rather than as an extremist rebellion internal to the Ottoman state.

The role of the arts within this early nationalist discourse was indicative of these two tendencies: the projection of the ancient and western/European dimensions of the Greek nation. As Ioannou points out, “the political priorities defined the artistic choices (...) hence, to the point that the creation and establishment of a political sovereign centre was exclusively directed towards western Europe, the Philhellenic (classicist) painting and sculpture was initially selected as the state’s official art, created by Italians, Germans or their Greek imitators (...) who would materialize the first orders of public character” (2005, pp. 4-5). Hence, the works of Italian or German artists, as well as of their Greek “imitators” (Ibid) were favoured, while the more ‘folkloric’ (and therefore more ‘oriental’) artists were cast off. The ‘national(ist)’ and historical thematology of these works (mainly focusing on episodes from the Greek revolution) and their classicist (or else western) style supported the wished-for profile of the newly founded nation-state. Moreover, since the very beginning “the idea that the character of a nation depends (among other things) on the position and status of the arts within it”, dictated a political line, which appointed the governing body as a ‘patron of the arts’. Hence, those first commissioned public works involved a series of wall paintings in the university, which re-presented King Otto as “a protector of the Letters and Arts” (Ibid) in order to establish his authority and elevate his prestige.

Dictator Ioannis Metaxas (1871-1941) adopted the same political line, implementing an intensive interventionist policy regarding the local artistic affairs, almost from the beginning of his rule (1936). As art historian Eleni Mathiopoulou explains, this policy was rooted in the dictator’s belief that the artistic development of the country was “the main criterion and requirement for the maturity of the Third Hellenic Civilisation”,14 which in turn was an ideological construction that supported and
“legalised, ethically, and historically, his regime” (2005, p. 16). Mathiopoulou characterises Metaxas’s artistic policy as “a liberal-pluralist stance”, which concerned itself only with the “stylistic experimentations and not the ideological content of the works” resembling more Mussolini’s and Bottai’s rather than Hitler’s, Goebbels’s and Rauschenberg’s policies. Metaxas’s ‘liberal’ and ‘inclusive’ artistic policy, 

his fulfilment of most demands of the artists of the time and his extensive financial support initiated a “policy of extensive purchases of art works, of unprecedented endurance and intensity”, which drew a majority of artists (and even progressive intellectuals) to an acceptance of his regime. This patronage was gradually accepted and, together with Metaxa’s theory of ‘Three Civilisations’, it secured and legitimised his rule. Artists like painters Nikos Hatzikuriakos-Gikas and Kostas Parthenis, Yiannis Moralis and Tassos, poet Zacharias Papadoniou and writer Fotis Kontoglou, many of whom were Venizelian, liberal and left wing artists staffed the public organizations and institutions and composed works for the government. Metaxas funded monumental works of art, which praised the “National Past” and its “rejuvenation”, under his regime (Mathiopoulou, 2005, p. 18). World War II abruptly interrupted this artistic ‘blossoming’ and toppled the established status quo (Ibid).

d. The positioning of the first Greek choreographers within the early twentieth-century national(ist) discourse.

Since the first dictatorship coincided with the development of the local concert dance scene and with the first choreographies often commissioned or sponsored by the state, a brief account of the time’s political and artistic climate appears necessary to contextualise and understand the foundations of what we now call ‘Greek contemporary dance’. The works of the early dancers and choreographers appeared in line with the dominant political status quo and avoided any political overtones that could upset the dominant taste. Even before Metaxas’s dictatorship, both the A (1927) and B (1930) Delphic Festivals, conceived and organised in Delphi by the poet Angelos Sikelianos (1884-1951) and his wife Eva Palmer-Sikelianou (1874-
1952), as well as Koula Pratsika’s (1899-1984) later performances with her students, embraced, or at least respected, the official ideological and aesthetic guidelines. Both the artists and their main sponsors, as well as their target audience, came from the newly formed Athenian bourgeoisie and were often directly or indirectly involved in the state’s political and economic affairs.¹⁷

Pratsika later organised and choreographed large public festivals to commemorate the 4th of August (the official day of the coup, which Metaxas’s dictatorial regime celebrated every year), from 1937 to 1940, under the guidance of the Ministry of Press and Tourism. The celebrations included gymnastics’ performances and group recitations by the school’s students and staff, as well as by thousands of workers, farmers and villagers (in Ursa Minor, 1991, p. 40). While, as Fessa (2004, p. 404) notes, these celebrations offered the chance to the (bourgeois) students of Pratsika’s school “to get in touch with the genuine and polymorphic local dance tradition”, they nonetheless resembled other European dictatorial or fascist public events. The celebration of ‘Hellenism’ and the promotion of an artistic, ‘civilised,’ European national portrait, as well as the choreographing of specific governmental anniversaries, public ‘openings’ and feasts, typified the character of the time’s dance performances, which aligned with governmental political lines until the beginning of World War II.

The war stopped all dance activities and Pratsika’s dance school closed, while many of her students joined the resistance or registered as nurses. The catastrophic Civil War which followed (1946-49)¹⁸ heightened the political sensitivity and awareness of many artists, including dancers and choreographers, and yet, theatrical dance as a genre remained apparently a-political almost until the late 1970s, when the growing ideological, political and aesthetic pluralism of post-dictatorial Greece became noticeable in dance. Although Pratsika and her students presented the first ‘pure’ dance performance, titled Water Celebrations, in 1939, at Marathon Lake (Savrami in Gregoriou (ed), 2004, pp. 41-42), most dance remained tied to theatre, as choreographers were almost exclusively focused on the tragic chorus, at least until
the foundation of the first dance company *Hellenic Chorodrama*, by Ralou Manou (1915-1988), in 1950. The co-dependence on theatre is both artistic and political: dance drew its prestige from its significance in the development of the national theatre scene (and more specifically in the modern re-staging of the ancient tragedies), by providing drama with its chorus. At the same time, the political disposition of the time’s choreographers mainly manifested itself through their affiliation with either the conservative/traditionalist state theatres or the progressive (e.g. Karolos Koun’s *Θέατρο Τέχνης* -Art Theatre) streams that typified -and divided- the theatre scene (Spathis in Panagiotopoulos, 2003, p. 252).

Hence, it could be argued that until the early 1980s, dance (as separate from theatre) was actively included in the mainstream national(ist) discourse and lacked any overtly subversive political intention. Its status relied on its potential to convey a mainstream ‘Greek sentiment’, as well as on its endorsement of a ‘national consensus’, based upon the officially interpellated national imagining located within Greek antiquity. Subsequently, younger artists overtook this established dance scene by responding to the intensely political climate and expressing their personal, artistic and social visions outside the fixed frame that had defined the use of a specific thematic content, choreographic language and aesthetic style. The label of the ‘Hellenic’, which appeared necessary in all previous works, did not seem relevant to the new social conditions: within the international community, Greece had by then been well established as an independent and sovereign state. Moreover, a ‘patented’ and exportable Greek identity that relied upon antiquity, the folk traditions, and the exoticised ‘picturesqueness’ of the Greek islands and provinces, was alreadyrecognisable. Furthermore, cross-border and translational affiliations, mainly based on political ideas and intellectual, artistic and cultural streams -ranging from communism to post-modernism- emerged as more potent shapers of identity than national origin. In that way, even though the early choreographers and teachers never lost their status, with some of their choreographies designated as landmarks in local dance history, the intentional ‘Hellenicity’ of these works seemed parochial to many of the choreographers that followed them.
In addition, the assiduity that both dictatorships, as well as the right-wing governments in-between, have shown in cultivating a nationalist sentiment around absolutist and racist ideals of national excellence and cultural superiority rooted in antiquity, made all expressions of nationalism anathema to many progressive people. Hence, for many of the late twentieth century dancers and choreographers, as well as for the general public, the ancient-oriented and explicitly ‘Hellenic’ style of those first works became profoundly connected with extreme right, nationalistic and fascist discourses -although Pratsika herself never belonged to any such factions- leading them to follow completely different routes from their predecessor. Despite her undeniable prestige, arising from her contribution to the development of Greek dance, Pratsika’s legacy has been questioned for her collaborations with the dictatorship of Metaxas, as well as for her participation in the first Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936 and the staging of the ceremony for the lighting of the Olympic Flame. Pratsika’s students and close associates have repeatedly defended her by saying that ‘Aunt Koula’s’ art laid beyond politics and that the 4th of August celebrations belonged solely to the people rather than to political factions. (Iliopoulou in Ursa Minor, 1991, p. 138). While discussing the 1936 Olympics Maria Kefalou-Hors, argues that at this time none of them were aware of who Hitler was and what he intended to do (in Hassioti, 2001).²⁰

Nonetheless, whether Pratsika’s path was followed or opposed by subsequent choreographers, it still is a major reference point for Greek dance, while her teaching methods can be traced in the programmes of today’s amateur and professional dance schools. As dance theorist Nina Alkali points out, her ideas have “stamped not only her collaborators, but mainly the generations of her students, who, in their turn, have shaped the development of dance and of dance (and movement) education, within post-war Greece” (2002, p. 31). Hence, it is important to keep in mind where this ‘idée fixe’ originated and why it gained so much ground during these years. The turn to antiquity and historicity, in both artistic and political terms can be better analysed as an expression of the ‘orientalist’ nationalist model, which typified many post-
colonial, liberated, and re-founded states. The established power structures and their socio-political and artistic expressions have generated specific – profoundly political and often racial – divisions and rankings, whose endorsement and performance appeared as necessary prerequisites for the newly founded upcoming nation-states desiring a position within this global power network. Within this frame, western ideological constructions, such as the exoticicing of the (usually ‘Oriental’ and subordinate) Other have been crucial for the establishment of a western-centric division of the world into two halves, which was also manifested through the arts.

In what concerns western constructions of a Greek exotic portrait, antiquity (and even more specifically its classical period) has always been a central theme. Most anthropological excursions within the modern Greek space (starting, of course, much before its establishment as a nation-state), were intended to find traces of this antiquity within the ethics, habits, traditions and cultural practices of the local peoples. These often ended in disappointment with the ‘degeneration’ of the contemporary Greeks. At the turn of the twentieth century, informed by a wider neo-Romantic return to the Renaissance prototypes, Greek antiquity was so highly valued and idealised as to become a synonym for Culture and High Art. The adoption, embodiment and choreographing of this exoticising discourse was crucial to the structuring and orientation of the neo-Hellenic socio-political Self and for the importation, establishment and development of modem dance within Greece.

The political parameters of the local dance history influenced the more recent choreographic works of the mid-1980s, 1990s, and the present day, functioning as a (positive or a negative) example upon which the more recent dance discourse was formulated. For Papaioannou’s staging of ‘Greekness’ within the Opening Ceremony, the negotiation of history and identity by the early choreographers formed a precedent, which functioned as a comparative unit. Hence, the director demonstrated a knowledge of this past, as it provided the referential ground against which he built the post-modern character of the ceremony’s performance of ‘Greekness’. In order to understand the divergent underlying forces that collided
within the choreographic negotiation of nationhood, I explore, within the thesis, some of the socio-political and economic issues that have framed and informed the neo-Hellenic constructions of identity.

**e. Modes of viewing: DVD and television versus live attendance – a note.**

The greater part of the Greek audience (including myself) only had the chance to watch the televised version of the Opening Ceremony rather than the live event as it unfolded in the stadium. This rendering of the ceremony not only was filtered through the gaze of the cameras, but it was further interpreted and 'covered' by the (often over-dominant) comments of the narrators. This version of the ceremony provided a specific reading of the event, as constructed by the selective imaging through narration, which adds one more coating on the multi-meaning layering of the ceremony. Here, the role of the narrator's voice has had the clear-cut mission of 'decoding' or interpreting for the local audience, the 'hidden' meanings and symbolisms of the ceremony. In contrast to many freelance choreographic works, which offer a minimum of directions to the spectator as to how they should be read, the Opening Ceremony had a specific set of images to present and left little space for individual imagination as to what these images might mean.

As far as the Greek audience was concerned, the aim was to generate consensus for the proposed re-presentation of 'Greekness', as well as for the undertaking of the Olympics' organization. Throughout the show, there is a clear intention of praising both the hosting nation and the idealistic base of the Olympic Games as a panhuman, inclusive and peace-loving festival. Individual and political parties (such as the Greek Communist Party KKE) expressed resistance to the undertaking of the 2004 Games. Thus, attaining this public consensus appeared necessary, even at the ultimate moment of the Opening Ceremony. While the ceremony itself was rather immediate and explicit in its orientation, the assisting voice of the television narrator was nonetheless thought a necessary addition to the performed spectacle. Apart from enlivening the transmitted show, which naturally lacked the intensity and immediacy of the live
experience, the narration also made sure to further illustrate the image, provide historical, etymological, artistic and even sociological information, and explicitly articulate both national identity and internationalist humanism.

Since I did not have the chance to attend either the opening or the closing ceremonies of the Athens Olympics, my analysis is based on my viewings of the recorded televised transmission of the Games, as well as from the official DVD release of the Games, by Athens 2004. The narrators for the Opening Ceremony were Alexis Kostalas, Dimitris Hatzigeorgiou, Yiannis Diakoyannis and Nikos Katsaros. The narration covering the ‘artistic’ part of the Opening Ceremony was written by Kostalas, while Hatzigeorgiou’s, Katsaros’s and Diakoyannis’s voices narrated over the ‘athletic’ part. The Closing Ceremony was covered by Alexis Kostalas, Margarita Mutilinaioi and Dimitris Hatzigeorgiou. Voice-over narration also accompanied the live performance. The texts (for both the Opening and Closing ceremonies) heard in the stadium, as parts of the show, were written by Lina Nikolakopoulou and were delivered by actresses Olia Lazaridou, Amalia Moutousi, Aglaia Pappa (coached by actress/director Roula Pateraki). In the recorded copies, the ‘live’ and ‘televised’ voices are often blurred, with the television narrators being more prominent to the point that they sometimes cover the announcements and commentary of the live stadium show. Still, there are moments when they too, get lost under the show’s music, becoming barely audible. The DVD edition offers the option of a comment-free viewing, which omits the television’s narration.

In the televised version that I recorded during the live transmission of the Opening Ceremony by the state channel NET (13/08/2004), the show is fronted by Yiannis Diakoyannis, with the above quoted commentary. This short introductory-welcoming speech was omitted in the official edition of the Olympiad’s DVD, which starts with Kostalas’s initial commentary. I take all voices into account in my analysis of the ceremony, along with the performed image and sound of the show. Moreover, both the choreographer’s stated intentions and the narrators’ interpretations of the dance text are used in this analysis, together with the image and movement itself, in order to
deconstruct, identify and juxtapose the signifiers, references and symbolisms that comprised it, whether intentional or not.

f. The ceremony's structural layout: two versions.
In order to facilitate my interpretation of the Opening Ceremony, I have divided it into ten parts to which I refer throughout the text. Since my analysis does not always follow their temporal succession within the ceremony, I identify and schematically present some distinct entities in advance, to avoid any confusion. For that, I took into account both the DVD's chapters, that compartmentalize and name the various acts, as well as Papaioannou's own comments on his own conceptual division of the ceremony. Looking at the DVD's chapters, I found a deviation from what Papaioannou had identified as entities. While this may be a result of the lack of collaboration between the ceremony's director and the DVD's editors, it may also be simply a mechanical matter of practicality and convenience, as the DVD's chapters need to be rather short in order to be user-friendly. Hence the entities on the DVD are identified as follows:

1. Countdown
2. Welcoming
3. National Anthem
4. Centaur
5. Eros
6. Historical Retrospection
7. Birth
8. Athletes parade
9. Greek team
10. Olympic cities
11. Olympic flag
12. Flame
I would be more inclined to adopt Papaioannou’s thematic structuring of the show but unfortunately he has not provided a clear division as to exactly when a scene starts and ends. He has referred to some of the scenes by name in his post-show lecture, but he did not specifically care to frame them, or to present an overview of the layout of the ceremonies, divided in distinct entities. Hence, the structure that I present here is my own, attempting to align with Papaioannou’s conceptual framing and naming of it. The layout upon which the present study is based is as follows:

a. **Countdown:** In the televised version, the transmission started before the actual show began, with long shots of the stadium and Diakoyannis’s commentary. The DVD version starts with an additional introductory section, with Kostalas giving his own introduction to the Games, over an edited clip of a series of images of Greece, ‘Greekness’ and the ‘Greek way of life’, until the stadium’s screen countdown reached point zero and a display of fireworks initiated the official start of the ceremony.

b. **Welcoming:** This section starts with the entrance of the drummers, right after the first fireworks display and ends with a second set of fireworks, which concludes the lighting of the Olympic Rings and end of the zeibekiko.

c. **Presentation of the flag:** The scene introduces the Greek flag for the first time. It starts with a paper boat navigating the stadium and ends with the National Anthem, the presentation of the symbol for the 2004 Athens Olympics and a third, short display of fireworks.

d. **The Allegory:** I take the naming of this section from Papaioannou. It begins with the recitation of a section of Yorgos Seferis’s poetic collection *Mythistorima Π* (1935) by actress Lydia Koniordou and concludes with the lowering of a broken idol’s pieces to the water. The scene initiates the trip to the past with a series of ‘allegoric’ images.
e. **Lovers**: This scene is short and it introduces the flying Eros (Yiannis Mandafounis) for the first time. It starts with the games of two lovers (Christos Loulis and Katerina Papageorgiou) and ends with them lying in the water. It is a mediatory, anthropocentric scene, which gives a closure to the mythic element of the *Allegory* and makes the transition towards the next session.

f. **The Clepsydra**: The name is again taken by Papaioannou, who compared the scene with a clepsydra: showcasing the continuous passing of time, without specifically counting any of its moments. The act begins with the entrance of the art-history parade, depicting national art-works from various historical eras, and ends with the undressing of the pregnant woman by Eros, and her ‘escape’ on the back of the chariot.

g. **The DNA**: The scene includes the ‘pregnancy’ and the presentation of the DNA symbol, ending with the performers’ gathering in the water, around the olive tree. It is actually part of the *Clepsydra*, giving the Lysis to this journey to the past.

h. **The Athletes’ Parade**: starts with the presentation of the Greek flag by Olympic golden medallist, Pyrros Dimas. The parade finishes with the athletes’ gathering in the middle of the stadium and Bjork’s performance of her specially composed song *Oceania*, followed by a greeting to the Games from the international space station.

i. **Olympic History**: presents an overview of the modern revival of the Games since their foundation, going through every Olympiad until 2004.

j. **Lighting of the Olympic Flame**: The Greek President of the Republic announces the official start of the Games. Presentation of the flag and anthem of the Olympic Games followed by the declaration of the Olympic oaths. The scene ends with the ‘flying’ torch-race and the lighting of the stadium’s torch by medallist Nikos Kaklamanakis.
While in general I follow the titles given to the ceremony's section in the official DVD, I have occasionally replaced them with Papaioannou's names. Moreover, shaped according to the purposes of my analysis, this structuring does not always coincide with the DVD's, even though some sections share the same title. The relation between the two layouts is as follows: The countdown chapter of the DVD includes both the countdown and Welcoming entities of my structuring. The DVD's Welcoming and the national anthem sections are both included in the presentation of the flag in my version. The Centaur coincides with the Allegory and Eros with the Lovers. Similarly, the Historical Retrospection is Clepsydra and the Birth is the DNA. In the chapter Athletes' Parade, the Presentation of the Greek Team is marked as a separate chapter in the DVD, while it is included in the section of the parade in my version. Finally, while the Olympic Cities coincide with the Olympic History, the DVD edition distinguishes the presentation of the Olympic Flag from the Flame as two chapters, which I have merged into one: the Lighting of the Olympic Flame.

g. Methodological queries, clarifications and theoretical positions.
Within the thesis, I am looking at the socio-political parameters of the Games, and within that context, and in a direct interaction with it, I specifically examine a number of representational techniques, which Dimitris Papaioannou employed in order to stage 'Greekness' for both the local and international audience. This thesis is not intended to be a study on the Olympic institution, or the standardized content and format of Opening Ceremonies per se. Moreover, it is not a comparative study, between Papaioannou's performance of 'Greekness' for the 2004 Olympiad and similar national representations within previous Ceremonies. Instead, I use the Opening Ceremony as an example of a large-scale national event, intended to portray Greekness (both nationally and internationally). The focus is on previous accounts of representing (expressing, constructing and/or reviving) 'Greekness' both within the 'West' and within Greece itself, in relation to the development of the local dance scene.
More specifically, I seek to demonstrate how these accounts inform the contemporary discourse on identity, as well as its negotiations within contemporary dance, drawing from the resourceful example of the 2004 Opening Ceremony. Hence, while there is a vast literature on the Olympic Institution, as well as a number of studies on the Olympic Opening Ceremonies I only touch upon them as this study is specifically focused on the socio-political and theoretical discourses that contextualize and illuminate the ways by which constructions of national identity have been negotiated through specific choreographic choices, within the Greek contemporary dance landscape.

To this end, the thesis focuses on a number of theoretical and political issues regarding the delineation of national and cultural identities and the interplay of local and global politics and power structures within this process. Challenging the authority, objectivity (or neutrality) and 'authenticity' (or naturalisation) of master narratives on History, Tradition and Culture and their evaluation (e.g. as universal or indigenous, Modern or primordial) in regard to the contemporary global power structures, I situate my analysis of the Greek contemporary dance scene within the fields of critical theory and postcolonial studies. Drawing from the relevant literature I employ the notions of the Other as exotic, pre/anti-modern, represented and even repressed, to examine the local politics of identity. In that way, I do not aim to present a historical account of Greek culture or to conduct an ethnographic study on Greek dance. Moreover, while I'm tackling the established grand narratives on Greekness, I do not aim at the proposal of alternative ones. In short, the thesis is not attempting to recover a sense of ‘truth’ or factual accuracy ‘setting the record straight’. Instead, it traces relationships of interdependence between choreographic choices and constructions of national identity, as the title suggests, and larger political issues on identity, such as globalisation, nationalism and ethnicity, as perceived and negotiated locally, within Greece.

The thesis has been divided in four large entities: starting with an analysis of the Opening Ceremony, I identify some of the ideas and problematic areas that informed
its negotiation of Greekness. Locating three main strategies of representation employed by Dimitris Papaioannou and the directing team in order to choreograph Greek identity, I contextualise and analyse them in the following three parts. Hence in Part 2, I discuss what I call ‘historicisation’, as the foundation for the establishment of an official national narrative. In Part 3, I examine ‘folklorisation’, as a means of mediation between ancient and modern national identities and hence as a way of forwarding and grounding history in the present. Finally, in Part 4, I look at the universalisation of the local, both as a national(ist) strategy, and as a conveyor of modernity.

When discussing identity, in Part 2, I mainly draw from Benedict Anderson’s (1996) notion of the national group as an “imagined community”, whose distinct characteristics are defined and constantly re-verified by the circulation of shared practices and ideas within its space. While Anderson mainly focused on the contribution of what he defined as “print capitalism” to the collective imaginings of the nation state, others, like Arjun Appadurai (2000), have broadened this concept as to encompass other contemporary means of distribution of knowledge, like the electronic media. The core argument is that the modern nation-state locates its coherence and sovereignty in “quintessential cultural products, of the collective imagination” rather than in “natural facts, such as language, blood, soil and race” (Appadurai, 2000, p 161). As Gregoris Pashalidis (2000), notes, this constructivist thesis reads cultural and national identities as constructed and imagined, ultimately questioning their authenticity and legitimacy. This is in opposition to culturalism, which traditionally emphasised the affinity of cultural, ethnic and national identities through the “culturalisation of politics”, “naturalising” therefore national identities as solid, monolithic and diachronic. However, both Appadurai and Pashalidis challenge the theoretical ‘conflict’ of these two seemingly contrasting views.

Identifying constructivism with the western tradition of the Enlightenment, reasoning and the critique of ideologies, and culturalism with Romanticism and Modernism, Pashalidis notes that within socio-political praxis the two theses appear most often
interconnected. In that way he questions their ability to explain satisfactorily the complexity of cultural identity and he suggests an approach based on the synthesis of ideas of the autonomy of the individual’s agency and the non-'naturalist’ perception of identity while also addressing the significance of the historical and socio-political context upon which –or against which– such strategic decisions and choices take place. In a similar tone, Appadurai notes that distinguishing between “natural” and “imagined” loyalties implies an acceptance of the “naturalisation” of such factors as blood, language and soil, against the “constructedness” of realities based on “collective interest and solidarity”. In that way the constructivist thesis does not really differentiate itself from the ‘opposing’ ‘naturalist’ or ‘essentialising’ nationalist theories. As an alternative approach Appadurai suggests the juxtaposition of “the conjunctures concerning reading and publicity, texts and their linguistic mediations, nations and their narratives” (Ibid). Of course other cultural texts, such as dance texts, can be analysed in the same way.

In my analysis of constructions of national identity within the Greek contemporary dance scene, I engage with Appadurai’s approach in order to overcome the limitations of a ‘constructivist’ or ‘culturalist’ reading of the politics of identity. Hence, in order to examine the local discourse on identity, I focus on the tensions between the “nation and its narratives”, looking at official and alternative narratives on Greek identity, nationally and internationally. A crucial issue that emerges from such an analysis is the “conjuncture” regarding Greece’s ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’ facets and they way they have been classified as such, and evaluated in relation to the National Issue. While I embrace the emphasis that has been given by a number of scholars on the ‘constructed’ and/or ‘imagined’ core upon which national narratives are woven, I also support the idea that such narratives are nonetheless shaped around specific realities (of social, political and economic nature), which often trigger or dictate, and are in turn triggered by, national narratives on history and identity. Within this thesis, I also align my own understanding of national and/or cultural identity with Pashalidis’s definition of it, as an “intentional creative and mythological self-positioning within a non-controllable, non self-defining historical, social and political context” (2000, p. 80). However, this
is not to suggest a perception of history as an essentialist self-defined force, nor that socio-political conditions are totally uncontrollable and unpredictable, but rather an understanding of cultural identity as

a reminiscing action of self-definition and self-reassurance, which exploits the historical experience and the cultural repertory of the community, according to the terms of the symbolic hierarchies and evaluations, as defined by the kind and stakes of the antagonism that it confronts.

(Pashalidis, 2000, p. 81 –translated by the author)

An equally interesting approach is Arjun Appadurai’s notion of intercontextuality (in relation to our present understanding of intertextuality) as a means of understanding the complex interaction between a milieu -on local, national and international planes- as a producer/provider of a set of contexts that give meaning and interpret the social actions that take place within its borders, as well as a generator of counter contexts or larger contexts, against which its own intelligibility is shaped. In that way, “each context implies a global network of other contexts” and while intertextuality ‘works’ in different terms than intercontextuality, “a theory on globalization from a sociocultural point of view is likely to require ... a theory of intertextual relations that incorporates our existing sense of intertexts” (2000, p. 187). Through this prism Appadurai discusses the emergence of postnations and transnations, underlining the impact of large scale migration in the contemporary collective imaginings, which now stretch over and beyond the geographical national borders generating more complex affiliations and perceptions of identity.

As key-concepts upon which I construct my own analysis of Greece’s political positioning within today’s post, or neo-colonial world order, I use Marta Savigliano’s (1995) negotiation of exoticism and auto-exoticism and Edward Said’s classic study Orientalism (1978). Moving through these theoretical positionings, I found it difficult to fully identify and locate Greece within any of these schemes. The representation of Greece evokes characteristics attributed to both the categories of ‘western’ and
‘oriental’, ‘exoticiser’ and ‘exoticised’. Thus, it would be precarious to attempt to position it solidly within any of these categories. Instead, I argue that Greece inhabits an ‘intermediate’ positioning between such established (even if contested) global entities of East and West. This illuminates the particularities of Greece’s socio-political, cultural and artistic affairs. Moreover, I set my analysis of Greekness in relation to the constant juxtaposition and interaction of the ‘local’ with the ‘global’, as negotiated within arts and dance in general and within the Olympic Opening and Closing ceremonies of 2004, in specific. Alongside Savigliano’s and Said’s definitions of the Other as a surrogate negative reflection of the Self, I juxtapose Pashalidis’s slightly different perspective in order to synthesize a model that seems more suitable for Greek reality. While the shaping of identity within a community is more or less acknowledged by all to be the result of its antagonism with the Other, Pashalidis defines this opposed entity as “important”, or “significant other”, which inverts Said’s and Saviglianos’ idea of the Other as subordinate to the Self. Furthermore, alongside Said’s delineation of Orientalism, I also consider Maria Todorova’s study on ‘Balcanism’, specifically discussing western constructions of a Balkan identity, which I discuss in Part 3, in order to locate Greece’s specific dimensions within the traditional ‘East-West’ world scheme.

Finally, in order to highlight specific socio-political and artistic aspects of contemporary Greece, in Part 4, I mainly draw from Appadurai’s arguments on the politics of modernization, in relation to the formation and establishment of specific global power structures. Similarly, political scientist and anthropologist Mahmood Mamdani (2005) observes a contemporary shift from politics to “Culture Talk”, discussing an academic, as well as political re-definition of culture, as a distinguishing factor between modern, pre-modern, and anti-modern peoples. Pashalidis (2000, pp. 73-82) explains the current “intense politicisation of culture”, as a result of an earlier “culturalisation of politics”, (culturalism), which laid the foundation for the development of nineteenth-century European nationalisms, as well as of today’s “significant political communities of the people and the nation” (Ibid, p. 74). Drawing from these arguments, I examine the specific weight of modernisation within
contemporary Greek political and artistic stages, and its placement within the local discourse on identity. Through a de-construction of the Olympic Opening Ceremony, I trace a consistent representational 'strategy', which appears evasive, transgressing the borders between nationalism and globalism, history and narrative, or past glory and future progress, tradition and modernity. Furthermore, this choreographic strategy is situated within its wider socio-political and artistic milieu, which further 'frames', allocates and signifies this specific performance of identity.

Another important issue that emerged through this study was the significance of nationalism in the constructions/perseverance/solidification of national and cultural identities. One of my main problems was to find a way through the relevant terminology, in order to express accurately the focus and standpoint of my analysis. There seemed to be both linguistic and contextual differences between for example 'patriotism' and 'nationalism', as well as between 'ethnic', 'national' and nationalistic', that although often imperceptible, make the interchangeability of the terms impossible. Besides the etymologic and sociological definitions of the terms, a major problem has been the specific political weight of the term 'nationalist', which in Greece appears different than from its significance within the North American and western European relevant literature. While within these areas, the term is relatively 'politically neutral' and may be used to describe a range of practices and beliefs, including independence struggles, patriotic sentiments (probably with the exception of Germany), as well as chauvinism, racism and imperialism, in Greece it has historically been identified with the socio-political discourse of the extreme Right, with chauvinism, racism and fascism.

The global experience of Fascism, together with the local experience of the two major dictatorships (Metaxas’ 1936-1941, Junta 1967-1974) has drawn solid parallels between nationalism and totalitarianism. The forced and exaggerated -however unsubstantial- emphasis on the nation (at the top of the ‘holy trinity’ of Junta’s slogan “nation, religion, family”), as the ultimate value, which ideologically dressed the dictatorial rule of both Ioannis Metaxas and of the Colonels, has created strong
conflicting sentiments, which at times have reached the opposite extremes. The same nationalist coating was employed to justify the persecution of left-wing and communist groups. The persecution which took place during the Civil War continued with the imprisonment, exiling and unfavourable treatment of left-wing or left-affiliated citizens and their families. The Greek Communist Party (KKE), illegal since 1947 under the 509 law, was finally legalised by the Government of National Unification that was automatically established with the fall of the Junta, in 1974. The attempt for National Reconciliation in 1982, by PASOK acknowledged the partisans' role in the Resistance against the Nazi forces, which was previously discredited because of their left-wing and communist affiliations and the position they took in the Civil War. Symbolically, The National Reconciliation Act aimed to bring together communists and nationalists; practically, it allowed the legal return of the Greek political refuges from the Civil War from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (Christopoulos, 2000, p. 356). This collective experience, which has marked modern Greek history is still so recent as to have a considerable impact on the understanding (justified or not) and use of the related-to-nation terminology.

Hence, the Greek use of the term 'nationalist' denotes specific ideological and political positionings that lie closer to chauvinism than patriotism. In most cases, the 'neutral' usage of the term is replaced by the adjective 'national' (in Greek εθνικός: literally 'ethnic') instead of 'nationalist' (εθνικοποιημένος): a replacement that does not always function in the same way in English. Hence, for the purpose of clarity and consistency with the language I used, as well as with the various texts from which I draw, I initially set on using a less 'charged' definition of the term, in line with its western European and North American meanings. Nonetheless, I found that my own understanding of the term could never be completely detached from its Greek political context, and thus it is also used as to suggest a slightly more 'aggressive' or underlying chauvinist position. Hence, I differentiate between the use of the term 'national' as less charged and 'nationalist' as more exclusivist and totalitarian, using brackets to suggest a combined understanding of the two [e.g. national(ist)], when the situation I'm
referring to has an ambiguous significance and/or ideological base that lies between the two.

Most importantly, I draw a distinction between ‘aggressive’ and ‘defensive’ nationalisms, which, although usually expressed in similar or identical ways, bear significant contextual differences: Nationalist feelings are triggered by the need to differentiate and safeguard one’s own national identity from those of the ‘others’. Sentiments of pride, antagonism and even of hostility and fear of others are embedded within nationalist feeling. Nonetheless, this initial need for distinction and excellence can be the product of an imperialist, aggressive and expansive tendency (usually marking a specific socio-temporal phase of the nation-state), or conversely, its byproduct: a nationalism of a defensive character that develops in order to counteract another nation’s aggressively expressed nationalism. In that way, nationalist discourses that are formulated in order to support independence and freedom struggles, appear different from those created to justify a national rule over all the ‘others’. While this distinction seems to refer to applied ethics rather than to sociological and/or political analysis, it nonetheless provides a useful reference point for examining and interpreting the context, the manifestations and influences of these phenomena, in their socio-political and cultural dimensions. I believe that this can also locate the difference between ‘patriotism’ and ‘nationalism’ within their Greek context: patriotism has been associated with resistance and liberation efforts, as opposed to ‘nationalism’ which has been mainly set to connote an aggressively expansive ‘imperialist’ tendency.

In addition to this socio-political contextualization of my analysis, I wish to make a note about the agency of the artist/choreographer in the midst of politically and economically driven conflicts on local and global scales. While history seems to be ‘taking its course’, individual will appears unpredictable, varied and multidirectional in its own course. Opposing and repressed voices can disrupt or question the consistency and homogeneity of even the smallest faction, group, or articulated theory. Within the arts, such voices often find a means of expression, occasionally formulating counter-nuclei of differentiation and resistance. As Dorienne Kondo notes
The world of representation and of aesthetics is a site of struggle, where identities are created, where objects are interpellated, where hegemonies can be challenged.

(Kondo in Fensham and Eckersall, 1999, p. 7)

Fensham and Eckersall also discuss the political character of ‘cultural praxis’ as a means of “opening up transgressive political spaces within cultures” (Ibid, p. 4). In addition, even when certain artistic voices or practices concede to the dominant ones, they are not merely passive recipients who re-produce a hegemonic sentiment. Instead they are actively involved in the formation and representation of hegemonic ideologies and cultures. However contextualized within specific socio-political and spatiotemporal conditions, individual agency, and by extension the agency of the choreographer, is still formed through a conscious processing and critical evaluation of its factual and theoretical surroundings. Hence, while emphasizing the social and political parameters that frame and often set a performance, such as the Olympic ceremonies, I acknowledge and take into consideration the choreographer’s/director’s positioning within them. Rather than being a mere social product, the choreographer’s approach stems from personal experiences, mythologies and ideologies, and often has the power not only to evade, but even to transform the social milieu that has initially generated them.
I In the Match Begins, a satiric popular song of the 1980s composed and performed by Loukianos Kilaidonis, the ‘semiotic’ presence of Diakoyannis is revealed through the lyrics: “how it unites and shakes us, Diakoyannis’s voice”.

2 This tendency was already manifested in the 1950s with the political pursuits of Konstandinos Karamanlis, when Greece joined the European Community.

3 The Opening Ceremony was seen as the crucial point that would mark the success of the Games. In the pamphlet accompanying the official (Greek) DVD of the 2004 Olympics, Journalist Vassilis Skountis writes “the Opening Ceremony ... convinced even the most suspicious or prejudiced spectator that Athens was not joking” (2004, p. 17).

4 The definition of West (or East) can be problematic as it often depends on the geographical, ideological or political positioning, of the person(s) who defines it, as well as on specific circumstances and time periods. In a discussion, which took place in the University of Surrey, during the PhD seminar week in October, 2003, the participants were amazed by the diversity of the given definitions and interpretations of the terms. These definitions varied according to the nationality, origin and personal positioning of each student. However, it would be useful to note that the only common ground, within all these diverse definitions, was a general agreement on the positioning of north-west Europe and North America, in the West. In Greece, it is a commonplace to refer to the West, or western culture and even to Europe and Europeans without including Greece. At the same time, its –mainly modern and ancient- western character and its physical positioning in southern Europe is also generally conceded. (Svoronos, 1999, Vacalo, 1983 and Voutura, 2000). It is this ambiguous identification of Greece that is examined and discussed throughout this study.

5 In the leaflet accompanying the DVD of the 2004 Olympics, Skountis notes that the “morale of the Greek people”, was at some point “shaken”, before “Greece triumphed once again” (2004, p. 34). Moreover, while criticising the contemporary Olympics, journalist Yeorgios Koumandos admitted that although he held a negative opinion about the hosting of the Games, as they approached he wished for an “at least superficial success, which would prevent the pillorying of the ceremony” (2004, p. 19).

6 Indicatively, the official DVD is “dedicated” to the organisers and participants of the Games... to the “Greek people, who met the Great challenge, to all those who never believed that such a small country could meet the requirements of such a colossal organisational task”, and “to those who apologised for their initial distrust at the end of the Games” (2004, p. 10).

7 Journalist Stathis Tsagarousianos notes his disappointment in the contribution of avant-garde artists to the ‘political mainstream’, citing Papaioannou’s involvement in the Olympics. (2005, p. 29).

8 For example, Yiannis Triantis concludes his praise of the Opening Ceremony, article, writing “ok! But let’s not get carried away as a nation. An excellent Ceremony is not necessarily the... Olympus of Civilisation. Hold it!” (2004, p. 39). Similarly, poet Haris Vlavianos wrote “ceremonies of this kind, directed towards mass consumption, must not be assessed as cultural events” (2004, p. 10).

I use the term capitalised as to suggest a dominant, hegemonic perception and portrayal of national and cultural identities. Nevertheless I fully acknowledge the non-monolithic and non-nationally applicable nature of any such established narrative, which is always bound to challenge competing versions of ‘Greekness’ at many, varying levels.

10 This does not mean that they do not construct their own national histories (past and present). In contrast the reliance on the past for the establishment of national identities has often been the case. The subtle difference is that for most ‘advanced’ or ‘developed’ nations, the performing of identity does not have to refer to the past. The contemporary profile of the nation (exhibiting cultural, industrial and economic excellence) is considered equally valid, distinct and prestigious.

11 Here the term ‘high culture’ refers to the dominant culture of the governing classes, rather than to ‘high art’ as an elitist and exclusive category of art (and/or culture). However, in both terms the common base is the ‘culture’s’ cultivation, promotion and patronizing by the ‘high class’, which establishes its position as a hegemonic sentiment.
Philhellenic is the adjective of the noun Philhellene. Etymologically, the word Philhellene comes from the words Philos (φιλος, ‘friend’) and Hellenes, hence describing a person’s friendly disposition towards Greece. Historically, the term Philhellenism has been connected to the turn towards ancient Greek ideals in the European Renaissance and Romanticism, which gradually included modern Greeks, during the 1821 Revolution (Christopoulos (ed), 1975, p. 314).

Considering antiquity as the first and the Byzantine period as the second ‘Hellenic Civilisations’, Metaxas urged the creation of a superior third one under his rule. Hence “Greece’s task, as the ‘centre’ of Hellenism, was to ‘re-construct’ Greek civilisation and the relevant state power to defend it” (Christopoulos, 1978, p. 386).

In his speech in the exhibition of the “Free artists” in 1937, he stated that “there would not be any artistic confound, within the new state, for the artists” (2005, p. 17).

Eleutherios Venizelos (1864-1936) took part in the Revolution in Crete and became a leading figure in the political affairs of the Independent Greek state, after the military movement of 1909. He ‘resurrected’ the state and his name has been especially linked to the history of the Balkan Wars (1912-13) and World War I, while he was the key figure in the negotiation of Greece’s borders. After the war he was still involved in politics until his death in Paris, in 1936.

Nonetheless, Palmer’s attempt to organise the third Delphic Festivals, in 1950, was impeded by the (state) ‘Security’, because of her “liberal political views” (Fessa, 2004, p. 362).

The first one, of Ioannis Metaxas (1936-1941) ended with the Second World War and the German occupation. The second one, the ‘Dictatorship of the Colonels’ or the ‘Junta’ (1967-1974), triggered popular resistance and was followed by a turn to democracy and socialism.

Both Pashalidis (2000, p. 78) and Appadurai (2000, p. 145) describe this duality as identity formation based on “primordialist projections into the past” versus “conceptions of the future” (Appadurai).

As Greek choreographer Sofia Spyroatou noted, “nowadays, Greekness is a charged term and we have reached a point where we appreciate Misirlou (an old rebetiko song, which was featured (remixed) in the soundtrack of the film Pulp Fiction and became very popular through the film) through ‘Pulp Fiction’” (in Klefoyianni, 2003, p. 23).

However the preface of defence is often used to justify violent assaults against immigrants in many ‘first world’ countries, like Germany and the UK. Racism is explained through xenophobia, as a reaction to the growing numbers of immigrants, as Ilias Kastoulis notes, discussing the defensive character of contemporary racist violence in the immigrant destination countries, (1995, pp. 30-46). Similarly, former victims turn to the future perpetrators of violence towards other ‘fearful
Others', justifying their acts with a 'never again' rhetoric. As Mahmood Mumdani points out, there is a significant difference between the understanding of such position as "never again should this happen to my people" and "never again should this happen to any people" (2005, pp. 10-11).

Again I want to underline that this is not to justify violence, but rather to explain the different expressions and origins of nationalist phenomena.
Part 1
De-constructing the 2004 Olympic Opening Ceremony: Identifying representational strategies for performing 'Greekness'.

This introductory part of the thesis, presents an overview and analysis of the Opening Ceremony of the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. Through a deconstructive approach of the ceremony, it identifies the main socio-political issues that framed the Games and informed the choreographing of the opening show. Looking closely at Dimitris Papaioannou's choreographic and directing choices, I identify a number of representational techniques, or strategies, which provided the ideological and aesthetic core upon which the show was unfolded. Rather than being accidental or temperamental, these choices appear tightly connected with issues of national and cultural identification and representation, both as embodied collective experiences and political pursuits. Hence, the local political economy of identity appears to be framing and informing the ceremony. Conversely, a critical analysis of the ceremony itself has produced a comprehensive synopsis of some of the most crucial issues that have 'haunted' the socio-political and artistic life of contemporary Greece.
Chapter 1
Framing the Ceremony.

1.1 Tracing, negotiating and Performing (a) Neo-Hellenic Self: Employing the a-political transcendence of High Art.
1.1.1. Delineating ‘Home’: significant parameters of Neo-Hellenic identity.

During her speech towards the end of the Opening Ceremony the president of the Greek Olympic Committee, Yianna Angelopoulou-Daskalaki, exclaimed: “Olympic Games welcome home!” However unbiased and un-problematically straightforward this reference to ‘home’ appeared in her speech, the definition of this term, the answer to the “banal question of ‘what is our country?’” (in Karouzakis, 2005 p. 28) had been Papaioannou’s principal concern for the successful representation of Greece to the world. Defining ‘home’ as tied to a distinct national profile and the promotion of a national history, has been one of the main concerns of the Modern Greek state, a project that influences its social-political and cultural affairs. Within a national arena in which interrelated understandings of ‘Greekness’ reflect or are generated by related but distinct political and ideological positions, the presentation of a National Self to the world has been especially complex.

Targeting a national and international audience, the ceremony had a dual purpose, both to re-present the known, experienced ‘self’ and to introduce it to ‘others’. However crucial, though, the engagement of the local audience with this celebratory representation of the National Self was, the conclusive factor that would confirm the success of the assignment was its reception by international viewers. Since this second target-group was the ultimate receiver of the ceremony, its response inevitably influenced to a great extent the local responses. The headings of the-day-after Greek newspapers (of both the Opening and Closing Ceremonies) are indicative of this chain reaction between the national and international reviews and reflect the triumphant spirit that characterised the following days, which was heightened with the end of the Games and the Closing Ceremony:
Greece in the World with a new face: International complimentary comments for the Games’ aesthetic.

(Kathimerini, Sunday, 15 August, 2004)

Triumph in the closure too -dithyrambs from the foreigners and public apology from CNN: ‘YOU WON’.

(Eleutherotypia, Monday 30 August 2004)

The dithyrambic reviews by the vast majority of the world’s media ... are the best proof of the triumphal success of Athens in the organisation of the 2004 Olympic Games. The first bet was, thus, won in the best possible way.

(Ta Nea, Monday 30 August, 2994)¹

These passages reveal the importance of the successful hosting of the Games for the prestige of the local government, organisers and, by extension, of the affiliated citizens. The majority of the related articles focused on the comments of the American, British, French (and slightly less so, German) newspapers, which indicates the impact European judgement had on the Greek perception of the Olympiad. As the explicit distrust (mainly expressed by British media) that preceded the Games had gradually taken a general critical stance towards Greece, the complimentary comments of the aftermath were perceived by the local media as a national victory. The anxiety that this ‘western distrust’ had provoked within Greece, can be better understood when examined in its political context. Most of the ‘attacks’ were focused on Greece’s inability to carry out a project that required a well-functioning bureaucratic mechanism, a rationalised financial management and a functioning cooperation between governmental carriers and private companies, or in other words, a management of time and resources and a coordination of activities. As this kind of efficiency is usually considered as a sign of development, its absence is conversely attributed to the under-developed character of a deficient nation-state. Indeed, many
articles that pointed out this ‘deficiency’ (usually in a light, ironic tone) often relied on clichés regarding the ‘lazy’, ‘impractical’ and ‘opportunistic Greek character’ that suggested a distance from the ostensibly exemplary western practicality and reasoning. Since every comment was perceived as (and to a great extent was) a political one, the opinion of Europe was crucial for Greece.

The country’s assimilation into ‘Europe’ and the West, has been a significant target in terms of economic, political and social prospects, as well as on what concerns the local public hegemonic sentiments of affiliation, identification, desire and expectation for the imagined National Self. This self reflection, as mirrored through a western prism, has been a very important, ongoing issue for Greece. Therefore, the representational strategies used in the planning of the Olympic ceremonies seem to be the tip of the iceberg in this chronic, systematic (and yet often arbitrary) struggle for a legitimate national definition and re-definition, as well as for a presentation and re-presentation of a distinct Self to the world.

This Self, partially imagined, partially experienced, and partially (re)searched, constructed (or created), internalised, embodied and expressed (and of course contested) has gone through a long process of re-definitions, re-arrangement of priorities and (ideological, aesthetic, socio-political and cultural) orientations, which led to the contemporary necessity for the use of ‘re’ when talking of identity.² Papaioannou has relied upon the philosophical and theoretical safety of the use of this ‘re’ (also ‘post’, ‘meta’, or ‘neo’) in order to successfully negotiate Greek Identity. With a history that revolves around competing and complementary narratives on the growth of a ‘defensive’ nationalism, one much abused and re-contextualised by totalitarian regimes and ideologies, formed around the perplexities of the (auto)-exoticising (western) gaze, the negotiation of identity (whether cultural, national or artistic) in contemporary Greece stands against a highly charged and precarious background.

Papaioannou, aware of this history and the pitfalls it entails, stated that he wanted to
avoid the touristicisation, exoticisation, and commodification of this identity. Still, he needed to acknowledge the contemporary collective national version of identity in order to provide a depth and validity to the Opening Ceremony. For that, Papaioannou took into account local and foreign stereotypes, collective imaginings and embodied aspects of identity, incorporating of a selective (auto)exoticised referencing on 'Greekness'. Moreover, he has especially acknowledged, within the choreographic text, some of the major problematic areas, which have long impeded the construction of a coherent and solid image of a national/cultural Self, their sheer intensity and controversy having informed and shaped local perceptions on identity over the years.

One of the most crucial controversies, in the political and cultural affairs of Modern Greece, has been the struggle between the modernised/Europeanised and the historical/traditional Self; a scheme that can also be seen as a struggle between the European (or Western, or cosmopolitan) and the Greek/national identities. In order to establish itself as a separate national entity and gain international recognition, Greece, like most nation-states, relied on a perceived common national history. Within this process, the preservation of its unifying cultural elements has appeared crucial. At the same time, the country’s 'modernisation' or 'Europeanization' and its induction into western political and economic unions and coalitions such as NATO (in 1951) and the European Union (with its previous induction in the European Community in 1974) have been a priority for all governing parties in the latter part of the 20th century, shaping both the country's internal and external affairs. This modernising process, which indicated the nation's 'opening to the world', has often been experienced by the local people as a distancing from the past and from local identity, antagonising this national (re-)grouping and rooting in this past.

This dilemma has been negotiated in almost all sectors of political and cultural life and has concerned many contemporary Greek artists, who felt that the weight of a glorified tradition blocked rather than challenged or informed their creativity. In addition, it has functioned as an unreachable standard. Even though many local contemporary artists have been widely acknowledged beyond its borders, it has been
impossible for Greece to create a contemporary national/cultural face equally as
prestigious as its ancient one. Papaioannou has noted the all-consuming character of
this celebrated national tradition. In his works, he has dealt with ancient mythological
themes, mainly focusing on their symbolic psychoanalytical aspects as many non-
Greek choreographers, such as Martha Graham, have done. In the case of the Olympic
ceremony however, ‘Greekness’ was the core subject, requiring a different approach
to its assets, as well as an ability to successfully re-present and perform it for a wide
audience. Hence, to avoid an elitist, exclusive ceremony the directing team took under
consideration both local and foreign expectations. To that end, they considered
imaginings of the Self and the Other and international clichés on what Greece and
Greekness stand for. Thus, they drew upon some internationally known aspects/eras
of Greek history and culture --such as the arts, sciences and the philosophical and
political principals of classical Athens and the more recent paraphernalia of the
‘Zorbas Myth’ -- especially as foreign interest has provoked their re-interpretation, re-
evaluation, and ‘performance’ by the Greeks.

The auto-exoticisation and commoditisation of local history and tradition has typified
for years most national events. In that way, public performances of Greekness, such as
national parades, festivals and government celebrations, have relied, in the past, on a
Duncanesque aesthetic of a ‘revived’ antiquity, as well as on a Dalcrozan technique
and orientation, and a ‘tourist’ version of traditional and folkloric dances. Hence, the
magnitude of the Olympic Games, which usually calls for large-scale shows and for a
display of ‘local colour’ from the hosting country, as well as their inherent
associations with the ‘classical Greek Ideal’ could have easily lead to a ritualistic
‘archaic’ or ‘tourist’ folk display of Greekness. Papaioannou stated that he wished to
avoid the kitsch,\(^3\) the exotic, simplistic and self-indulgent, flamboyant performance of
the ‘Self’. Aware of the traps that a re-presentation of the past conceals (especially of
a ‘known’ and repetitively ‘revived’, reconstructed and enacted, antiquity)
Papaioannou chose to nevertheless acknowledge the multiple coatings of this trite
past. These ‘historical’ coatings, already embodied within contemporary Greek
reality, were approached and performed through a post-modern commentary. Hence,
he referenced Duncanesque ideas, exoticising clichés, official versions of identity (as a past and future history) and even Fascist-derived aesthetics, in full acknowledgement of their complexity.

Furthermore, the appropriation and ideological distortion of national history and its symbols — such as the flag — within the development of a nationalist discourse by the local dictatorial regimes tended to 'inculpate' all national(ist) expressions. What is more, with the contribution of the early twentieth century choreographers to the celebrations of Metaxas's Dictatorship, and the retaining of the ancient/folkloric dance aesthetics in the following years [almost until the fall of the Dictatorship of the Colonels’ (Junta), in 1974], as well as these celebrations' similarity to, and alignment with, analogous European Fascist events, have established a more specific link between such 'artistic' events and nationalist (often sports-oriented) celebrations with totalitarian ideologies and fascist discourse. Dictatorial public celebrations mobilised a Fascist sports and dance aesthetics, which had drawn from the Fascist glorification of the healthy, competent (Aryan) body. In that way, similar events that fall within a combined national(ist) and physical/artistic discourse have been charged with negative signifiers. While the intensity of this association is now lessened, discharged from the political weight that it bore during the first years after the Junta, it still represents an important dimension of Neo-Hellenic identity that can not be overlooked. For an inclusive and large-scale public display of 'Greekness', such as the Olympic Ceremonies, the director needed to adopt specific strategies in order to avoid being classified within a specific political, ideological and aesthetic space, which is not only politically stigmatised, but also aesthetically challenged.

1.1.2. Designating an appropriate choreographic hypothesis: artistic, 'ethnic', internationalist and 'politically correct'.

Papaioannou's task for the ceremonies was to exploit the dominant national sentiment, creating an inclusive Greek ceremony without excluding any social or
political group or betraying his personal beliefs. For both the opening and closing ceremonies the idea was to represent Greece, in a non-cynical, non-self-criticizing and guilt-free manner; to negotiate ‘Greekness’ without falling into nationalism and to perform it without falling into common clichés. Within the Opening Ceremony, he managed to combine such opposing, yet interrelated, notions, as the local and the global, the modern and the historical, the personal and the panhuman, and the mainstream and the avant-garde. For that, he attempted to trace the “basic axes of Greekness” starting from an inclusive “acceptance of everything” and gradually discarding whatever seemed “superfluous or non-liturgical” (Papaioannou, 2005). A ‘safe’ and evidently appropriate approach was to turn to the Greek arts. As one of the most celebrated and representative aspects of Greek civilization, Art was chosen as the medium that revealed the essence of ‘Greekness’. Hence, instead of providing a straightforward historical retrospective, Papaioannou evoked Greece’s historical presence through references to significant works of art from antiquity until the modern era.

At the same time, the ceremony also linked Greece to the rest of the world. The performed ‘Greekness’ had to be legible to [at least at some level(s)] and inclusive of everyone, able to attract the audience’s interest and sympathy through its comprehensibility. In that respect and in order to be more easily identified with, the represented country had to be associated with a larger entity that exceeded the specific and the local. In that way not only it would be appreciated by international audiences, but it would also be adequately aligned with the expected cosmopolitanist mood, dictated by the Olympic ideal and the dominant international political climate. The main hypothesis was to create an art-centric and anthropocentric performance, which would represent the nation through its arts, while paying tribute to the capacity of the body and mind. The show enacted an “adventure for self discovery, knowledge and reasoning”, which signalled “the beginning of the western world” (Ibid). Finally, the core decision was that “this message be transmitted through the sensuality and eroticism of the Greek art” (Papaioannou, 2004, p 9). In all, the Ceremony would celebrate both national and pan-human values, according to the Olympic ideal.
The idea of representing Greece through its art and, what is more, to represent humanity's journey of self discovery through the Greek arts, aligned with two facets of contemporary Greece: an emphasis on the historicity and distinctiveness of the Greek culture and its parallel connection with global (and more so with western) history. Notwithstanding the recurring ideological overtones of this engagement with the Past, the base line of this dual scheme has remained tightly knit around the need for a distinct, coherent and solid historical national identity, which would also establish the nation's contemporary positioning in the (western) world. In that way, the ceremony met both its nationalist and internationalist prerequisites, as the nation projected its identity through its (already established by 'the West' and hence non-questionable) inter-national connection with a larger (especially powerful and prestigious) unit, i.e. 'the western world'. From then on, further decisions regarding the form, the underlying mood and the political positioning of the ceremony, were addressed in reference to these "basic axes of Greekness", as well as to the main hypothesis.

According to the dominant perceptions regarding the ancient (as well as the demotic) Greek aesthetics and culture, symmetry, harmony and most importantly Metro (good measure), are the most characteristic 'Greek' features. Following this thesis, the same concepts defined the character and atmosphere of the ceremony, which was carefully designed as to control and prevent any outburst that would disturb its harmony and exceed Metro. The spectacle was to be 'tailored' to Greek reality avoiding the extroversion and unconstrained joy of the large-scale spectacles, which, as Papaioannou (18/5/2005) noted, "was not our strongest point anyway". The relatively limited economic and technological means, the size, the population and the culture of the country, as well as the international expectations of 'Greekness' prohibited anything that had to do with excessiveness, or 'over-sizing' both in practical and ideological terms. Instead, the associations of Greek civilization with spirituality, simplicity, scientific and philosophical reasoning, and the anthropocentrism of its arts, architecture, philosophy and religion, constituted the re-construction of a widely
appealing image of Greekness.

As the director maintains, esotericism, controlled pride and joy, and the inclusion of the audience in the spectacle were essential, as to counteract any display of triumph and stardom. Special torches had been handed out to the audience who were encouraged to experiment and ‘play’ with them in order to create a starry-sky effect that enhanced the atmosphere and created a sense of a micro-universe within the stadium. The performers were chosen for their modest, ‘ethical’ and ‘amateurish’ physical presence, as well as for their ability to invoke feelings of identification. The protagonist of the night had to be the country rather then the performers and yet, a self-praising nationalism was strategically avoided in favour of modest pride and openness (Papaioannou, 18/5/05).

The directing team took also special notice of the geographical dimensions and the particularities of the Greek space as markers of identity. Hence, water -prevalent within Greek geography- occupied an equally dominant space within the stadium as a core definer of nationhood but also as an archetypal life source. The architectural layout of the stadium inflected the directing and staging of the ceremony and was made use of in a number of ways: its oval shape inspired the creation of a micro-universe and the dominant central positioning of water simulated a closed archipelago dictating the performers’ positioning, as well as the general stage action throughout the ceremony. As stated in the ‘post-show’ talk the stadium’s shape resembled that of an eye, or of a vagina, which for Papaioannou invoked a convenient association with birth and more specifically with the birth of the Olympics. At the same time, this same shape aligned with another strategic decision, which was to let the spectacle function erotically, “caressing, talking to and arousing the spectator” (Ibid).

The choreographic hypothesis was thus set, exploiting older and well-established formulae, with an added post-modern twist. National history and culture were staged, according to expectation, but watchful for the missteps of ‘anti-modernism’: isolative introspection, primordial nationalism and totalitarianism. The demands of a large
scale spectacle, e.g. inclusiveness, proximity, legibility and extroversion were meticulously met. At the same time, the démodé flamboyance and naiveté of such massive ‘mainstream’ shows was surpassed. The ‘techniques’ that were employed in order to manage a ‘yes, but’ situation had been already tested for their successfulness: mass-entertainment made ‘sophisticated’ through reference to anthropocentrism and eroticism, national self-indulgence moderated with an explicit internationalist referencing, historicity interlaced with modernity, a hint of exoticism ‘legitimised’ through Art and consequently, High Art merged with, yet distinguished from, the ‘kitsch’, all interlaced and interacting with each other. This formula bears striking similarities to the strategies of Isadora Duncan’s artistic œuvre, conveying nationalism and cosmopolitanism, tradition, history and modernity, High-Art and (human) ‘nature’, chastity and eroticism. This scheme appears similar to the ceremony’s hypothesis, with its post-modern hints assuring its contemporary currency. Still, within this layout, the alleged (socio-political, cultural and national) transcendence of (High) art occupies a central position.

1.2 Nation, History and Culture: a narrative on Art and cosmopolitan nationalism.

OR: Reading in-between the voices: the power of interpretive narration and its semiotic significance for the ‘cued’ audience.

Fragmented images of Greece rapidly alternate on the television screen in a video-clip manner (landscapes, ancient sites and artworks, monasteries, glimpses from the Olympic infrastructural works, traditional dances, harvesting scenes, children playing at a village, a couple running playfully at a seashore and even short clips from popular advertisements linked to ‘Greekness’) as Alexis Kostalas’s familiar voice invites the television audience to join “a ceremony that sings, dances, paints and flies in time, in the name of a Greece of yesterday, of today and of tomorrow”.

Right after his initial speech, Yiannis Diakoyannis gave his place to Alexis Kostalas, the most famous ‘cultured’ voice of the local radio, television and live performances,
and a name indissolubly tied to 'high' -or 'western'- art, cultural events related to
dance/movement, like ballet performances and competitions, figure skating and
gymnastics. Indeed, the classification of a spectacle as High Art usually prompts
Kostalas's involvement. He traditionally introduces both ballet and contemporary
dance performances taking place in the Herodes Atticus Odeon during the Athens
Festival, but rarely any contemporary dance events held in smaller venues. With the
Ceremony directed by a celebrated choreographer, Kostalas suited to covering the
'artistic' part of the Olympics. This introductory part set the contextual frame within
which the ceremony would unfold, directing the gaze and the disposition of the
Greek audience towards it. Hence, the opposing, interconnected dimensions of the
ceremony, the local and the global, (or the national(ist) and the cosmopolitan(ist)),
the competitive and the unifying, the 'mainstream'-sportive and the High Art-elitist
evined through Papaioannou's direction, were introduced from the beginning. In
addition, the choice of the narrators seemed to follow and underline the co-existence
and co-dependence of those elements within the ceremony.

Those dualities (namely 'mainstream' versus High art), which typified the aesthetic
context of the ceremony, were semantically performed by the keynote narrators. Their
personas and conventional associations provided the Greek audience with a
subliminal-yet-immediate hint of the ceremony's political and aesthetic frame: with
Diakoyannis being the popular national 'football voice' and Kostalas the
cosmopolitan voice of the artistic, more elitist genres, the televised version of the
Ceremony drafted its parameters. Hence, their presence suggests an indirect reference
to the popular-yet-elitist artistic character that the ceremony aimed for. However, this
polarization and attribution of specific represented qualities to each spokesman is the
product of abstractive theorizing; by no means does it imply an absolute labelling nor
the classification of the two men into two distinct and insulated (social, class,
ideological) categories. What is more, it is not suggestive of their corporeal
representation of a specific ideological/political/aesthetic model. Instead, I would
argue that both narrators consciously attempted to illustrate the 'spirit of the Games'
(and of the ceremony more specifically) through a premeditated, consistent use of
words and recurring references to specific figurative images, which invoke, establish, or reinforce the above mentioned contextual frame of the event.

To inspire a nationalist sentiment Diakoyannis referred to the Greek ownership of the Olympics connecting them to other celebrated Greek ‘exported commodities’ like democracy and civilization, to re-establish the nation’s status in a vulnerable moment of exposure. As the commentary is solely directed towards the local audience, this somewhat pompous statement functioned as a defence mechanism, enhancing the national morale for this ‘nationally crucial’ event. Moreover, the Olympic ‘expedition’ having been criticized within Greece itself, this statement also appears as a final appeal for involvement by attempting to trigger unifying patriotic feelings. At the same time, and in order to soften the dangerously ethnocentric edge of his speech, Diakoyannis invoked the ancient Olympic ideals of peace and brotherhood of the peoples, which inevitably refer to a more ‘politically correct’ trans-national humanitarianism.

Even though in their modern revival those ancient ideals have been re-emphasised, the contemporary profile of the Olympics has been more inclined towards cosmopolitanism rather than humanitarianism, also informed by the recent discourses on globalisation. Both past and current political crises, conflicts and shortcomings on national and international levels are ‘forgotten’ by all involved parties in favour of the ‘site-specific’ Olympic reconciliation of peoples. Nonetheless, the essence of this idealistic practice, as set in the ancient Olympiads, the actual cessation of warfare for the period of the Games, is not even considered as a possibility in the contemporary Olympics. Even so, its simulation is still required: however political such a huge cross-national event is bound to be, the official line is that of a euphoric and almost forcefully a-political climate, which often appears as a stylized positivist naiveté (i.e. ignoring reality and ‘abandoning’ oneself in the constructed utopia of the Games). In that way, even though national athletic excellence is always at issue, especially for the hosting country, a degree of acceptance, tolerance, and openness to other national cultures is the expected customary behaviour. The television commentary appears to
embrace these principles, alongside the more specific local aspirations and imaginings.

Having established a certain extroverted and celebratory ‘national’ mood with Diakoyannis’s speech, the shift to Kostalas’s poetic narration, underlines the artistic and historically rooted national culture, while Papaioannou is introduced as

the director, choreographer, painter, the wizard poet of the image, (who) proposes to us a simple and transparent ceremony -like the Hellenic civilization that it celebrates. He proposes to us, embracing our memories, a trip to the dream; a trip back to the time of yesterday, which defines today and delineates tomorrow. He is asking us to re-embbody and re-live our civilization: timeless and timely, its symbols and values, which have influenced —and always keep influencing— humanity. Besides, as Melina Mercouri had said, ‘our civilization is our biggest and greatest virtue’.

(Kostalas, NET, 13/8/2004)

Hence, the main thesis of this narration is clearly established from the beginning: The ceremony is read by Kostalas as a chance to re-present and highlight the longevity of Greek civilization, its ‘globosity’ and its (ongoing) wide appeal and significance for the whole of humanity. This commentary not only aims to recall a majestic past but also to emphasise the continuous (and allegedly still imperative) presence of Greece, at a time when the nation’s contemporary status is constantly at stake.10 For that, the most valued national virtue is ‘our civilization’ and the reference to former actress and Minister of Culture, Melina Mercouri, is especially indicative. Mercouri was a highly respected and popular public figure and Greece’s appointed cultural ambassador. During her political career, which mostly coincided PA.S.O.K’s (Panhellenic Socialist Party) trajectory in power (from 1981 to 1996), Mercouri attempted to boost (however successfully) the local arts, in order to build and promote a sophisticated and recognizable national cultural profile, intended to shape the country’s international identity.11 For this, Greek civilisation (its antiquity confirming its prestigious position, as the bearer of contemporary western civilisation) has been promoted as the nation’s
strongest point in the international arena. Greece was associated with its most valued and popular exportable commodity: its civilisation. In that way, Mercouri's statement, as recited by Kostalas, not only captures the strategy and orientation of the Athens's Olympics, but it actually recapitulates and draws the axis of the socio-cultural politics of Modern Greece.

After examining the Olympic Opening Ceremony as a bearer and promoter of these traits - the development of nationalism and cosmopolitanism and the co-existence of folk/popular practices with expressions of High Art, 'nobility' and 'Culture' - Papaioannou's selection appears more justified. As Barka later wrote, "this was a High Art spectacle, and as such, it met public recognition (...) people of all ages and social ranks, who have been used to watch easy-to-digest television programs, were moved and they enjoyed, understood and admired an avant-garde, modern and elitist spectacle" (2004, p 15). Since Papaioannou has been considered to be a High Art avant-garde choreographer, the ceremony itself was immediately placed in the realms of 'high-culture'. While High Art is often considered exclusive, and elitist, as Barka puts it, the wide appeal of the spectacle is attributed not to its secular popular character (assumed beneath the prestige of High Art), but to its high quality, which was so powerful, in its refinement, as to move people used to lesser displays. In that way, the 'secularization' of art and the bridging between the popular and the avant-garde, is interpreted by Barka as an artistic transcendence that underlines the High Art nature of the Opening Ceremony, instead of implying its 'lowering' towards more popular art-forms. The ceremony is also described as 'modern', a term used not in its artistic but in its political sense: modernity, alongside High Art and avant-garde, appears as another yet precious and elitist concept, signalling cultural 'development'. The Opening Ceremony's 'bridging' of a hypothetical schism between Culture and inclusiveness, as well as between nationalism and cosmopolitanism, was highlighted, assisted and promoted by the television narration.

However cautious Diakoyannis's initial commentary was, it still focused on an appeal to an extroverted, self-celebrating and national(ist) athletic spirit tied back to Greek
antiquity. On the other hand (and even though he regularly made similar connections, as well as self-gratifying comments and references to national civilisation and culture), Kostalas emphasised the connection of Greece to the world, the sameness of all human beings, the transnational ideal of athleticism and ‘fair play’ and the global reach of Art and Culture. In fact, his presence called for a recontextualization of the Opening Ceremony grounding it in the realm of Art and Culture. While the first voice evoked associations with overt collective sentiments -- a ‘we’ identity (against ‘others’) -- Kostalas’s ‘refined’ voice, more reserved and mellow, ensured the artistic nature of the spectacle, recovering the ‘appropriate,’ internationalist spectatorship mode.

It was made clear to the audience that they were about to attend a celebration of ‘Greekness,’ popular enough to include and unite everyone but nevertheless of ‘high quality’. Civilization and Culture operate as ‘trademarks’ that granted contemporary Greece its national substance within the international community, completing and counteracting other, more vernacular, national ‘trademarked virtues’, such as the Zorba myth of sensuality, artlessness and of a somewhat primitive (or even brutal) joie de vivre. Therefore, their display appeared central to the nation’s ‘fifteen minutes of fame,’ one of the country’s biggest moments of exposure to the world. Aware of this necessity, Papaioannou presented both ‘faces’ of Greece through the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. Establishing a connection with Civilization, Culture, and High Art in the first one, he then was ‘free’ (and in fact bound) to present a more contemporary, vernacular and ‘loose’ national profile on the second one. As he says:

The Opening Ceremony was inspired by the Apollonian rituals. The Closing Ceremony by the Dionysian ones. The first is the light, the spirit, the ideas. The second, the miracle and the drunkenness of life. The first is a celebration of the human being. The second is the man, who celebrates. The Opening is like giving a statue the kiss of life. The Closure is like hugging a man.

(Papaioannou, 2004, p 9)
This statement once again recalls Isadora Duncan’s preoccupation with Apollonian and Dionysian elements. Her fixation on ‘Greekness’ and her ‘appropriation’ of its prestige has created, as I suggest in chapters 5 and 6, a referential ground that still undergirds the local contemporary dance affairs. In addition, both Palmer and Pratsika shared this same Nietzschean ‘fixation’ (Fessa, 2004, p 410). This concept of duality, as expressed by Papaioannou, set the tone and mood of the two ceremonies and defined their separate roles. Art and Historicity were chosen for the beginning of the Games, in order to gain the ‘respect’, admiration and approval of the audience. In contrast, the Closing Ceremony was free to deconstruct and play with this initial impression by presenting a light, joyous, earthy, proximate, folk, and popular Greek image. Nonetheless, these same elements co-exist within the Opening Ceremony itself. Right from the beginning, Papaioannou attempted to connect and engage the audience with the spectacle by acknowledging and performing internationally recognisable symbols of Greekness: the bouzouki and the rebetika music. Being a representative, popular Greek sound both in and out of Greece, the bouzouki took a leading position within the ceremony, establishing its inclusive and mainstream character and releasing some of the built up tension, before the more ‘historical’ segment. This introduction, which functioned as a welcoming to Greece and to the Athens Olympics, included a presentation of the Olympic Rings and a ‘review’ of the Flame’s lighting ceremony in ancient Olympia as a “blessing from the source” (Papaioannou, 2005). In that way, the scene also provided the event with a necessary ‘grounding’, by establishing its connection to the past (Ibid).

As the countdown approaches time-zero on the stadium’s screen a short display of fireworks signals the opening of the night with the welcoming scene. The stadium’s layout is revealed, presenting a round central water theme, resembling a closed sea. As two groups of four hundred drummers enter, walking to their drum beat and encircling the water, one of the live ceremony’s narrators welcomes “the citizens of the world” to Athens and the “Olympic Games back to Greece”. Another (this time static) group of bouzouki players joins the drums in a zeibekiko by Stavros Xarhakos’s while Kostalas makes a poetic-etymologic reference to this ‘lone’ dance, attributing its drawing parallels with the “solitary struggle of the Greeks in their long history”. At the same time, the stadium screen
runs over landscapes from Athens to ancient Olympia while the narrator notes that it was there, 3000 years ago that “the first athlete ran and the race began”.

The camera stops as it reaches the space of Olympia and focuses on a bearded, curly-haired drummer with an almost ecstatic expression, who immediately makes eye contact with the camera and initiates a rhythm. In the stadium, another drummer separates from the group and answers, and as their interaction grows stronger, the rhythm gets faster and wilder, the second drummer entering the water as the drumming climaxes, invoking the applause of the audience. Straight after, their attitude softens, they smile and synchronise their beats while a flamed arrow enters the water and lights the five Olympic circles. The zeibekiko starts again and Kostalas refers to the water and fire as symbols of life, spirituality, knowledge and human determination and the scene culminates and closes with an extended display of fireworks.

The next scene, the presentation of the flag is the first part of the main body of the ceremony and proceeds in a more quiet, dream-like manner. The scene starts with a serene image of a nine year old boy (Mihalis Patsatzis) navigating the stadium (which now resembles a night time sea) on an oversized white paper boat, a typical childhood craft. The water is dark and sparkling under a blue light, as the spectators enhance the dream-like ambience by creating a star-like effect with the torches that they received at the entrance. The boy has short hair and he is dressed in white short-sleeved shirt and blue pants. He waves and smiles in a shy, but content manner and waves the flag. The Navy Philharmonic, dressed in their white uniforms, plays Manos Hatzidakis’s Nocturnal Walk. The presidents of the Greek and International Olympic Comities (Mrs Yianna Angelopoulou-Daskalaki and Mr Jacques Rogues) are presented together with the hosting country’s President of the Republic, (Mr Konstandinos Stefanopoulos), as customary. They walk together across the water to meet the boy who has now disembarked and runs towards them. Kostalas seizes the opportunity to comment on democracy, citing Thucydides (from Pericles’s Epitafios), while during his etymological reference to democracy as “the power of the people” he makes his only cynical/political comment adding “or at least that’s how it should be”. The crafted flag still held by the boy, triggers Kostalas to give a brief reminder of its meaning, symbolising the 1821 Liberation Fight’s slogan “Freedom or Death”, as well as the Greek Orthodox Church. In the stadium, the Greek Flag is raised as a choir sings the National Anthem. Finally, the presentation of the Athens 2004 Olympic symbol (an olive branch) closes with more fireworks,
clearing the stage for the following acts.

Public expectation informed the Welcoming to the ceremony: its extrovert and festive character satisfied the spectators' anticipation for a phantasmagorical opening. It presented a recognisable 'Greek' image and sound with the bouzouki and with a connection with antiquity through Olympia, with a touch of pagan, Dionysian joy and excitement. Following this, the next part, shaped around the customary presentation of the (Greek) flag proceeded in more 'quiet', and introverted tones, in order to prepare the mood and facilitate the transition to the more "cerebral" (Papaioannou, 2005) part of the next phase, the Allegory. This transitional part developed on the same spirit of inclusiveness and engagement with the audiences, which characterised the introduction, but was re-contextualised within a distinctive nostalgic ambience. All the components of the scene account for a fragile, intimate image: the shyness of the nine year old boy, the frailty of the 'paper boat', the melancholic character of the music created an inclusive, emotionally charged but peaceful climate.

Within the Presentation of the Flag, it is the first time that Greece is presented within an image, which functions as a metaphor for the country: in-between East and West, North and South, between the 'Balkan', the 'Mediterranean', the 'European', and the 'Oriental'. Moreover, the minimalism, solitude and fragility of the scene allowed an effortless sympathy and identification, which further accounted for the immediacy of the ceremony. Indeed, Kostalas's comments on the paper boat that we all once made "to travel our dreams" seizing once again the opportunity to compare the small paper boat within the blue 'sea' to Greece, in its "travelling nature", as well as its small geographical space within a "vast beautiful world". Such a romantic and 'globalised' mood bolsters the spirit of the Olympics where the desire for national excellence coexists with the idea of a cooperating and peaceful, united world. Papaioannou (2005) has noted that for the completion of the event it was crucial to "overcome our cynical and critical nature", and embrace (and perform) the utopian ideals of the Olympics. In the same spirit, Kostalas's 'Olympically appropriate' overtly emotional and positivist, as well as nationalist/cosmopolitanist commentary was intended to
counteract any cynical reaction on the part of the Greek television audience, promoting the desired atmosphere of acceptance, romanticism and euphoria.

This is the first time (both in the Opening Ceremony and the whole Games) that the Greek flag is introduced: as a national symbol, its presentation has the potential to trigger both national(ist) and counter-national sentiments. Any reference to the nation as distinct entity automatically separates it from all the others, replicating the non-inclusive scheme of Self/Other. Hence, in order to avoid any negative reaction towards a ‘triumphal’ nationalist display, the flag is introduced modestly, in an unthreatening manner, in the hands of a young boy. The playful and innocent character of this display neutralises its inherent exclusiveness and potential hostility. Since more or less everyone has at some point in their childhood cheerfully and uncritically held a flag (even if not necessarily a national one), spectatorial identification with the scene exceeds its force as a specific national statement. This choice is in accordance with the overall atmosphere of the ceremony, whose layout closely follows the basic rules of rhetoric: immediacy and engagement with the audience is an essential prerequisite for every successful (re)presentation. Besides its international appeal, this image was also intended to engage the local audience, in order to gain their consensus on the performed version of Greekness. The scene is clearly structured as to call up nostalgic feelings: The boy’s attire resembles the appearance of young boys in the 1950s and 1960s, invoking childhood memories for the local adult audience. Indeed, the white shirt and blue trousers is even today a formal dress wear for boys and the official attire for schoolchildren participating in national parades and celebrations. In that respect, the child represents an embodied idea of a ‘typical’ Greek boy. Hatzidakis’s ’s music, which also stems from the same period, supports the overall effect of the scene, which creates a serene, almost melancholic and sentimental, “embracing our memories” as Kostalas notes, atmosphere after the initial outburst, functioning as an inclusive nostalgic reference to the recent past.

Having located a set of goals, as well as a number of performative means that would facilitate their meeting, Papaioannou frames the content, direction and atmosphere of
the Opening Ceremony right from the beginning. Already, several facades of ‘Greekness’ have been addressed, even as brief, passing comments, formulating the wished-for national profile: the historical, the ‘touristy’ and the folk Selves appear alongside the ‘spirited’, poetic and artistic national features. At the same time, the goals of the ceremony, as a spectacle, are also ensured: inclusiveness, immediacy, appreciation and comprehensibility. The contextual frame of the Games is also set, with direct reminders of both their Greek origin and international orientation. Hence, all the individual components on those initial scenes, as well as their calculated succession, establish the frame that will then allow the spectacle to unfold: for the international audience, the roughly drafted initial expectations are met: recognisable images, sounds, brief historical account of the Olympics, an ‘artistic’ image of an endearing, cheerful and yet small and modest Greece, ‘smoothing’ the introduction to this Olympiad’s symbols: the Greek flag, the Greek President of the Republic and the two most important organisers of these Games. For the local audience, the celebratory beginning (both through the ‘stage’ action and the television narration), released a built-up anxiety, prompted a counteracting feeling of national pride and evoked personal and collective embodied images of nationhood. Moreover, the ceremony revealed the technology supporting the event and demonstrated its high quality: the interactive video screens in the drummers’ scene and the filling of the stadium with water, put across a message of modernity, organisational skill and technical ability, that ‘exorcised’ the distressed feelings expressed prior to the Games. From then on, having hinted and superficially ‘planted’ some ideas, the ‘body’ of the ceremony that followed further elaborated and played with these elements in a slightly more abstracted and ‘artistic’ (or ‘cerebral’ as Papaioannou put it) manner.
Chapter 2
Identifying techniques of representation.

2.1 Performing historicity.
As Papaioannou noted, in an almost defensive tone, after eight years of waiting the Games could not start with “allegory and myth”. To allow the most “artistic” part of the ceremony to unfold liturgically and function in the televised version for such a large and varied audience “we would first have to establish a connection with the others (my Italics) and bring them along” (Papaioannou, 2005). Hence, widely recognizable ‘Greek symbols’ (e.g. bouzouki and zeibekiko) were employed to facilitate this initial contact. This acknowledged the powerful touristic image of Greece, re-creating a recognizable ‘Greekness’ that was also proximate to the native people. Belonging to a generation of Greek artists that had explicitly criticized and rejected such ‘obvious’ expressions of ‘Greekness’, Papaioannou nevertheless felt the need to represent them within the ceremony. Still he did not resist the temptation of a cynical –however humorous– comment in the post-show discussion by saying: “we presented bouzouki and zeibekiko right in the start and we finished with those so we could move on to something else” (Ibid).

Even though this statement was presented as a joke, it is indicative of Papaioannou’s own distant relationship with the more popular, vernacular, and even ‘touristic’ music and dance, as well as with the demotic and folk traditions. Like many others –of his generation onwards– his personal choices, as well as his social milieu, mainly located within an urban bourgeois cultural environment, did not offer many chances to observe and participate in similar dance events from an insider’s instead of a spectator’s position. Having studied fine arts, as well as western institutionalized forms of theatre and dance, his unfamiliar, if not uncomfortable, relationship with the popular and more so with the folk and the demotic, appears within the ceremonies. This ‘awkwardness’ was easily spotted by those with a more active and embodied involvement in these music and dance forms, who felt that a particularly significant dimension of ‘Hellenicity’ was only addressed superficially and therefore
unsatisfactorily within the ceremonies. In his relevant article *Hints for the Initiated* Professor of Philosophy, Christos Yiannaras, raises a similar critique, citing Papaioannou’s ‘failure’ to depict successfully the more recent periods. Yiannaras focuses especially on Byzantium, writing

only this explained the adherence to the tourist clichés on Greece: as long as Neo-Hellenes don’t know what to do with ‘Byzantium’, our access to ancient Greece will be through figurative schemes (aerial bridges above twenty five centuries) or through a retailing imitation of western falsification.

(Yiannaras, 2004, p. 18).14

Although it was his status as an acknowledged contemporary artist and choreographer that granted Papaioannou the directorship of the ceremonies, his inability to successfully represent specific aspects of ‘Greekness’ within them, provoked sporadic negative critiques, even by those who had nevertheless enjoyed and appreciated on many levels the ideas and aesthetics that shaped his work for the ceremonies.

Naturally, that raises further questions of how distanced from the local dance forms contemporary dance appears in Greece, how these genres can or cannot merge, interact or inform each other in creative and productive ways and how successful any portrayal of corporeal locality can be through a ‘foreign’ medium like contemporary dance.15 Still, when talking of dance, the problem attains further complications as the representation of a dance genre through the aesthetics and body language of another is at least problematic if not impossible: such attempts at representing national dances through ballet or modern dance have often lead to the heavily criticized ‘character’ dances or folkloric ballets,16 which seemed to weaken and alienate the original character of the dances, producing ‘kitsch’ replicas. In that way, Papaioannou’s attempt to represent so many aspects of nationhood and culture through his own artistic prism seems rather ‘honest’ and consistent with his own style, which was one of the reasons that prompted his selection on the first place. On the other hand, he attempted to compensate for the lack of folkloric elements in the
Opening Ceremony, with their representation in the Closing one, (which was still subjected to criticism), as the Opening Ceremony mainly addressed the far historical past, rather than the living present. The beginning of this 'journey back' starts with the scene of the Allegory:

Dressed in a long black dress, her hair long and loose down her back, Lydia Koniordou (a Greek actress widely known for her performances in ancient tragedies) is standing in the middle of a blurred, dusk-like universe of calm water and starry sky. She is holding (dragging) a marble head upside-down behind her, which is revealed as she raises her left arm to stroke her hair off her back. Then she slowly turns the head upright and carefully holds it in front of her and caresses it tenderly as she recites:

It was falling into the dream, as I was coming out of the dream
I woke up with this marble head in my hands
It exhausts my elbows but I don't know where to put it down

It was falling into the dream, as I was coming out of the dream
So our life became one
And it will be very difficult for it to separate again.

(Seferis, Mythistorima Γ', 1935)

A red centaur carrying a long red spear is approaching the water as Koniordou is reciting. The spear lights up and the centaur throws it towards the middle of the water where a huge replica of a Cycladic Head slowly rises to the sounds of Hatzidakis's *Star of the North*. Kostalas explains about the mythological nature of the centaur and their symbolism of the duality of human nature, and as the Cycladic head is revealed he gives some information on its date of origin, its significance and its impact on the more recent fine-arts minimalism. Frequency waves, squares and geometric shapes are projected on the Cycladic Head and Kostalas narrates on the journey towards reasoning, philosophical and scientific thought. The Head breaks into pieces that float in the air with the central piece taking the shape of an archaic male statue (kouros) as the music shifts to Gustav Mahler's *3rd Symphony*. Kostalas comments on the appearance of kouroi, up to the arts of the classical period, the Golden Age of Pericles's Athens, noting: 'This era's values, ideas and arts are a point of reference and inspiration for humanity, until today". A turning cube floats in the air and a squatting young man is attempting to gradually stand, balance and walk on it. Once again we are reminded by Kostalas of the light that Reason and
scientific thought attempted to shed over the metaphysical and superstitious anxieties and beliefs of the people, with a brief reference to Greek science and philosophy. On the floating pieces, projected images of fragmented and rapidly alternating snaps, feature 'human activity': people from all over the globe engaged in every-day activities, like kissing and hugging, while towards the end, the depictions become more minimalist, focusing on 'insignificant' human details like an ear, a thumb, an eye, or finger prints.

The floating pieces are lowered slowly towards the water, resembling scattered islands, while the lights dim and soften. The accompanying music shifts from Mahler to Yiorgos Koumentakis's composition *Lovers*. A flying Eros (Mandafounis) is wondering about as a couple in love (Papageorgiou and Loulis) appears running, laughing and playing. They hug, undress each other and roll around the seashore framed by the presence of Eros. Kostalas narrates on the birth of the Sea from the love of the Sky and the Earth under the power of Eros, citing that it was in ancient Greece that for the first time love (Eros) was worshiped as a God. Furthermore, he sites from Hesiodos's *Theogonia*, describing the archetypal trinity as the Earth, the Chaos, and Eros. The couple passionately kisses and lies nonchalantly on the 'sea shore'.

The *Allegory* is the part that Papaioannou called the "artistic juice" of the ceremony, since it encompasses all the ideas he wanted to share with the audience. With the *Allegory*, the director initiates the trip to the past, which is completed in the following part, the *Clepsydra*, the section with the most explicit historical referencing. To safeguard this referencing the director used Seferis's poetry to position himself and the show, exposing to his international audience the Greeks' ambiguous and awkward relationship with their past. Aware of the hazards that any attempt at an historical - and even more a representational and generalizing- narrative entails, he introduced this difficult phase of the ceremony by sharing with the audience its choreographic ambiguity, while also offering a glimpse at the 'Modern Greek psyche'. Similarly, Lina Nikolakopoulou, explained why she chose this specific extract as the direct, simple style (of the poem), is revealing of a deeper 'being' of the Greeks. Seferis raised on his shoulders a common sentiment. Our absolute and fatal relationship with the marbles is a heritage, which asks each generation to set it off in its own way.

(in Hatziadoniou, 2004, p. 61 -translated by the author)
However essentialising this statement may sound, it highlights a specific choreographic point. The ‘deeper’ insight on ‘Greekness’ that the scene offers is this intended reference to the significant and complex role of historicisation within the contemporary Greek identity.

Papaioannou has repeatedly commented on the “gratifying and unbearable weight of Tradition” (Hassioti, 2001): the problem of dealing with a past, so celebrated that is hard to overcome, or compete with. Similarly, artist and theatre director Kostas Tsoklis discussed his decision to stage Oedipus at Colonus, saying “every Greek creator hides an incestuous desire to have children with his mother, Greek antiquity, and the inclination to kill his father, again ancient civilisation, to set himself free” (in Spinou, 2006, p. 19). History and tradition have been probably the most acknowledged and prestigious elements of the Greek National Self and therefore could not easily be ignored. Throughout the history of the Modern Greek state, artists tried to deal with, embrace, revive or escape this national Past whose international status and appeal, had turned into an almost compulsory reference point (especially for the early choreographers). Since Modern Greece has not managed to reach the power status of western European nations, it has been almost impossible to create a modern national profile that could compete with, or even proven worthy of, the ancient one. For in the eyes of the international community –and especially of ‘the West’ as I shall attempt to explain– the most interesting artistic phase of Greece was completed almost 2000 years ago. Since then it has been ‘handed down’ to the West, only to be elaborated.

This uneven battle of Modern Greece to rise above –or actually prove worthy– of this past, has shaped the neo-Hellenic sense of identity. For the artists of the relatively young Greek state of the early twentieth century, the exploitation of this tradition, not only enhanced their works with the air of ‘authenticity’, but it also facilitated their acceptance and establishment both nationally and internationally. Still, the turn to antiquity, which started as a way of identifying the Self ‘from within’ had turned into an almost compulsory canon in the following decades, which haunted and appalled
many Greek artists of Papaioannou’s generation. In a farrago of artistic waves, techniques and ideologies, where almost everything new or modern was imported (and therefore ‘foreign’) and everything ‘Greek’ had to prove itself as such by attempting a connection with the Past (whether that was antiquity, Byzantium, or the folk and demotic traditions) contemporary artists often felt that they had to constantly define and re-define themselves and their works according to specific, national or foreign, standards.

Hence, by informing his audience of this problematic relationship with the past, Papaioannou shares with them his own take on the specific show. He also presents another dimension of what Greece and Greekness consists of today, by offering an insight that exceeds national stereotypes and historical details, as if holding a magnifying glass on the scepticism of his generation of artists. In that way, having dealt with the folk/popular in the Welcoming scene, and having set the conceptual framing for the referencing to the past in the Allegory, he is free to continue the trip back in order to present the foundations of Greek art and culture and the “adventure for self-understanding and Reasoning”. His own background in fine arts and the visual aesthetics and style of his earlier performances with Edafos Dance Theatre can be traced in the poetic image of the paper boat, while on the scenes of the Allegory, image (the whole scene with the centaur and the Cycladic idol), speech (with Koniordou’s recitation of Seferis’s verses) and movement (with the Man on the Cube, Eros and the Lovers) appear balanced. However, later, in the stylised part of the Clepsydra, movement is extremely minimalist as the emphasis is on the ‘framed’ statue-like quality of the enacted images of art: representing the Past, those images appear as distant stills or artefacts, repelling any feeling of proximity. The distance with the Past and its role within the history and arts of contemporary Greece is purposefully designated and acknowledged and in that way the show (and the director) eschews the revivalist, or ‘ancient-loving’ label. In an attempt to prevent such labelling Papaioannou repeatedly stated that Socrates’s ‘know thyself’ (γνῶθι σεαυτόν), which inspired the ceremony, was “transmitted through the sensuality and eroticism of Greek art. It (the Opening Ceremony) was not about Greek history, just about art” (2004, p.
9). This ‘anti-historical’ positioning comes right in the beginning with the start of the Allegory as a clear political and artistic statement.

Koniordou’s performance signals the beginning of the main part of the ceremony, which will attempt the journey to the past and the presentation of Greece in its historical/artistic self. With the end of the recitation, Kostalas comments on the “uneasy and travelling nature of the Greeks, that is however indissolubly tied to their past, which they always carry with them”, and cues his audience on the trip of self-consciousness and self-understanding to which they are being invited. For that, Seferis’s verses, presented the self-conscious, awkward feeling of the Greeks for all the “cursed weight of the glorious Past” (Papaioannou, 2005). In that way, Papaioannou immediately disassociates himself, the spectacle and Greece, by the modernist and/or essentialist understanding and performing of this past, escaping the naivety of the parochial romanticism of the early twentieth century. In that way, there is a solid positioning and conceptualizing that suggests a specific reading of the ceremony. Hence the next part of the Clepsydra can proceed smoothly, having ‘ensured’ its basic interpretive frame.

2.2 Representation, post-modernism and the power of the performative voice. With the end of the Allegory, the broken pieces create images of islands in the sea and the “second cliché” as Papaioannou (2005) puts it (the first one being the initial presentation of the bouzouki), a couple in love running on the beach, which functions as a ‘grounding’ to reality after the myth. It also re-establishes the real-life dimensions of the performers and of the space, in order to proceed to the ‘human-sized’ scene of the Clepsydra. For the Greek television, Kostalas actually prologued this part of the ceremony by reading the lovers’ scene as a symbolism for the ongoing passing of generations and ideas, referencing Homer. In that way he softens and neutralises the eroticism of the scene by attributing specific meaning to it, and ties it with the Clepsydra, whose name is derived from this core concept of perpetual succession. Continuously counting the time without ever dictating a specific hour, period or year,
the *Clepsydra* attempts a schematic and flowing representation of Greek history through its art.

The music shifts to Constantinos Vita's composition *a passage*. With Eros always leading the way, flying above all eras, the parade starts with the fertility Minoan *Goddess with Snakes*. A woman holding a snake in each hand, resembling the famous statuette, performs slow arm movements, swirls and backbends. Behind her, like moving figures from wall paintings, statues and ceramics, parade the Minoan *Prince with the Lillies*, a Griffin, maidens and men carrying water, animals and fruits. They are all posing to the, typical in Minoan painting, Egyptian-inspired style, with the torso en face and the head and legs turned en profile. Placed in two parallel rows (one row showing through the gaps of the other) they perform small steps back and forth in a mechanical way. The movement is mainly reduced to the arms and steps. Whenever the head or torso is involved, it is in a restricted, minimalist way. At all times the performers seem to be an indistinguishable part of a setting. They all wear heavy make-up, their faces inexpressive like masks, while the settings, costumes and props appear two-dimensional and rigid, hardly following their moves. The scene is highly stylised and retains all the colours and style of the original wall-paintings, resembling a tableau vivant.

The second 'wagon' still depicts images from Minoan and Cycladic wall paintings: *the Boxing Boys*, a representation of the Minoan 'sport' *tavrokathapsia*, the *Fisherman*, the *Oceanides* (performing fluid, continuous arm movements, completed by the rhythmic movement of their compartmentalised skirts) and the diving *Dolphins*. The movement is now more fluid, but still stylised and repetitive, confined in short phrases. Kostalas cites Nikos Kazatzakis on the human-centric Minoan civilization: “The soul of Greece accomplished the destined mission. It brought God to the human scale. The body moved, the mouth smiled and the stature of God took the size and face of man”.

A set of bronze, armouries and helmets held on sticks introduces the age of bronze and the era of the Mycenaean civilization. It is the Geometric Era and the figures appear even more stylized, in black and yellow, with strict minimalist geometrical patterns. A whirling disc refers to the Disc of Phaestos and another centaur, resembling a clay toy of the same era, performs military-like arm gestures with a slight turn of the torso. A group of men (with the same patterns drawn on their bodies) rhythmically rotate oversized painted shields,
followed by another female group with hoops (the gymnastics Olympic team of Sydney). Kostalas guides the Greek audience on the historical details of the referenced periods, moving from the geometric to the archaic and finally the classical period.

With a white marble-like Pegasus at the front, a group of kores appears white, and static, like the statues they portray, except of a slight extension of the back leg and an ‘offering’ gesture of their right arm to the front. In the last row, a less static and stylized woman takes off her costume and, wearing a bright red dress, she runs free amongst the static group of kourous that follow. She meets and equally ‘human’ kouros and as Eros offers them a flower, they hug each other and leave the parade. The others periodically raise an arm in a salutation keeping the right leg slightly extended to the front. Kostalas again gives the stigma of the period in the arts, philosophy and politics and notes the official appearance of the name ‘Hellenes’ (Greeks) in the 7th century AC. Approaching classical Greece, a replica of the theatre of Epidaurus frames another female ‘statue’ this time more free, detailed and expressive, alternating the two theatre masks (the laughter and the crying). The reference to the tragic and comic writers of the period continues with a group of Aristophanes’ Birds, and Riders, crossed by a blinded Oedipus who is walking backwards to the parade. Turning to mythology, a sphinx and a group of Satyrs and Maenads appears, while inside a tilted frame, Hercules (the mythological father of the Olympic Games, as Kostalas notes) appears to be fighting the Lernean Hydra.

The ‘statues’ of Athena, the Caryatids, the Charioteer and Samothrace’s Niki (Victory) appear in marble-white. Figures of Parthenon’s Marbles follow, with the performers consciously slipping in an out of their rigid costumes, which are part of the set, moulding to fit their roles in the frieze. Kostalas persistently reminds the television audience of the significance that the period’s culture has had for humanity. Images of the first Olympic athletes (runners, wrestlers discobolus), are followed by Alexander the Great on a chariot (referencing the famous Pompeii mosaic). His death, in 323 AC signals the Hellenistic era, introduced by Kostalas as a period “in love with beauty and form” and represented by a bright-colored group of Tanagraiae women with fans, under another colourful Eros. The style changes again to the severe two-dimensional paper-like figures of the Byzantine period with the trademark of the early ecclesiastic Byzantine panting. The themes are drawn from religious myths and historical details: Saints, emperors, important sites, like Agia Sofia and a representation of Agios Georgios (Saint George) killing the (‘evil’) snake.
Finally, reaching the 1821 Revolution, the figures become more live, more 'human' and their movement three dimensional, free and vigorous. This chariot is framed by a group of tsoliades (the former royal guard, now guarding the parliament, who walk in the typical stylised, paced walk). Some of the key fighters of the Revolution like Theodoros Kolokotronis and Georgios Karaiskakis, appear alongside a group of men and women in traditional costumes, some performing stylised movements from demotic dances. A group of black-dressed male dancers from Pontos (part of today’s Northern Turkey) stands out of the otherwise colourful picture. This brief reference to the demotic tradition is actually the only one during the Opening Ceremony and was confined to a visual and rather schematic and symbolic presentation of the demotic dances, not followed by the relevant poetry and music.

In the following carriages, athletes in black and white, dressed according to the time’s fashion simulate the sports of the first revived Olympics in Athens, in 1896, young girls in tunics offering flowers to the winners. Their attire is typical of the time’s romantic turn to Greek antiquity and to the competent, ‘healthy’ body. Heroic gestures bring also to mind the athletic style that was promoted in Germany and central Europe during the Nazi period and which typified similar Games and public celebrations almost throughout Europe during the first half of the twentieth century. Kostalas commemorates the names of Pierre de Coubertin and Dimitrios Vikellas, who took on the revival of the Games. The reference to those first Olympiads closes with the crowning of the first ‘golden’ Marathon runner Spyros Louis.

Right after, karagiozis, the famous character from the Greek shadow theatre appears: rooted in the years of Ottoman occupation karagiozis depicted a poor, hunchbacked Greek who invented ways to feed himself and his family playing jokes on the Turkish Sultan and his officers. Reaching Modern Greek history, a cheap stage with a rebetika band is set and beside it two sailors and military men drink and dance, seemingly lost in their thoughts and memories. As Kostalas reminds his audience, those “typically Greek” images resemble extremely the paintings of Yiannis Tsarouhis: one of the greatest painters in recent history and Papaioannou’s teacher.

Eros, who is still flying and supervising this unfolding of art-history, approaches a pregnant woman in a blue dress, who stands backwards in a pedestal at the end of the ‘caravan’. Eros caresses her and helps her free from her exterior dark dress. Dressed now in a plain white dress, the woman starts to walk slowly towards the water. As Maria Callas sings “Oh my country, I will never see you again”, from
Verdi’s Aida, the woman’s belly lights and a galaxy is formed in the stadium. As the symbol of the DNA is formed by the ‘stars’, all the performers follow her, walking towards the water, one by one or in groups, holding hands and hugging. In the televised version this final scene was de-emphasised; All people, naked of the past enter the ‘purifying’ water, gazing at the future: “the young ones relaxed and with a certain arrogance and the elder ones with the appropriate-to their-age seriousness” (Papaioannou, 2005). Walking in a circle, together with the drummers they form a circle around the water where an illuminated olive tree rises. They leave and the stadium is emptied, to open the space for the Athletes’ Parade that follows.

Even though Papaioannou has already commented on the ambiguous relationship with the past in the beginning of the Allegory, when the following part of the Clepsydra begins, he insists on making his intentions towards this (art-)historical referencing even more explicit. As the majority of Clepsydra’s images date back to antiquity, Papaioannou attempts the scene’s disassociation from previous ‘ancient-loving’ and nationalist/fascist aesthetics by acknowledging our (the contemporary world’s and Greece’s more specifically) distance from the past. As Veroli notes, discussing body politics in Fascist Italy,

to our eyes, the dancers wearing flowing white tunics may look like reincarnations of Isadora Duncan –except that at the time, those images were interpreted as Roman classicism, a classicism that was duly connected with modern Rome and that bore the stamp of Duce’s nationalist and colonialist plans.

(Veroli, 2006, p. 59)

Similarly, within Greece, such images of ‘flowing white tunics’ also refer to a physical aesthetic, linked with the dictators’ appropriation of Greek classicism. For all that, airy tunics and sandals were replaced within the Clepsydra, by static moulds of ready-made plaster-cast dresses that the dancers wore as a facade or a masque, symbolising this ‘dressing’ of contemporary Greece, with the art and culture of the past. As Papaioannou noted in the post-show talk, Clepsydra appears as “a snake, which wants to leave its skin to freely enter the water”. Hence,
the costumes are worn as masques in a 'knowing' post-modern way (...) we have to remove them in order to exit the past towards an unknown future. In that way, the representation and the kitsch are avoided (...) you wear the art of the past: a ready-made robe, a mould; not a breezy tunic.

(Papaioannou, 2005 –translated by the author)

In that way, Papaioannou attempted to avoid the inherent kitsch of a 'literal' representation in favour of an acknowledged interpretation. Rather than proposing a revived version of the past, he presented staged and detached glimpses of it, which appeared self-aware of their distancing and unavoidable differentiation from the original references. These constructed images, resembling figures of a clockwork box “incorporate the kitsch and the banal”, as Papaioannou proclaimed, together with the artist’s love for the past and its arts (Ibid). In this ‘parade’, these “circus, or carnival-like” qualities are mobilised in order to ground and ‘diss-incriminate’ this love for the past, making it “resilient to the contemporary gaze” (Ibid). It is the (post-modern) intention that indeed disassociates the representational from the literal, licensing it with an artistic freedom that supports it. Hence, the gradual change in the performers’ costumes and movement from two-dimensional and restricted in the ancient images, into three-dimensional and free-flowing in the recent ones, signify each period’s distancing from the present. Similarly, in the ‘Parthenon marbles’ and the statues of the classical period, the performers slowly ‘dress’ and ‘undress’ their plaster costumes, each time moulding into their shape and character. This could also be a comment on the exotic appeal of certain aspects of ‘Greekness’ and their consequent embodiment or performance by the local peoples.

The varying proximity of the performed national past was also manifested in a different way, which did not fall into the director’s intentions: a different choreographic ‘awkwardness’, when dealing with recent history. Papaioannou chose to deal with tradition, to the extent that he felt that he could distinguish, extract and enact some representative features or streams. Hence, as he later admitted, the more the distance with the explored period, the easier it was to recognize and discern its
most ‘powerful’ representative elements (Papaioannou, 2005). In contrast, the immediacy of the recent past makes it hard to see clearly beyond the detail in order to abstract the essence. The more proximate eras carry a first (or second)-hand empirical factor, which minimises the required distance that allows a ‘scientific’, or ‘objective’ evaluation (and consequent artistic re-presentation) of it. Embodied memories and oral (hi)stories, carried forward by both individual and official carriers, compile specific and usually diverse personalised and collective narratives on history. Hence, personal preferences and taste, as well as political affiliations and ideological positioning, charge, determine and ‘label’ the recent past, which also appears much richer and detailed than the detached far-historical one. In that way, the ‘copyrighted’ Greekness of ancient history becomes harder and harder to locate and define as we progress to the Modern era. As Papaioannou rhetorically asked, in his defence, “who could confidently decide today what is and what is not ‘Greek’ or nationally significant within modern art history, without the assistance of the ultimate trial of time?” (Ibid).

Answering a related question during the post-show discussion (2005), Papaioannou further elaborated on the subject and admitted to have been deeply sceptical about the development of his representational artistic/historical ‘mapping’ of ‘Greekness’, explaining that the lack of distance makes it extremely difficult to abstract from the contemporary pluralism of artistic voices the most representative ‘Greek’ core elements. To attempt this, would unavoidably lead to simplified generalisations and exclusion, which would divide the audience and disrupt the –up to that point– homogenous feeling of more or less shared cultural and national identity. However, this strategic choice was not just a matter of personal difficulty of dealing with Modern Greek history. The school history books (up to secondary education) cover almost the same periods, omitting (or de-emphasising) more recent history, creating a ‘historical gap’, upon which a number of teachers, as well as political historians, sociologists and other scholars have repetitively attempted to draw governmental attention. The Civil War (1946-1949), the two dictatorships (1936-1941 and 1967-1974) and all their repercussions in recent history are never properly discussed and
taught to A-Level students, for more or less the same reasons: the lack of the required 'safety' distance that would ensure a more 'objective' evaluation of the more recent socio-political history. In that way, even though Papaioannou’s decision came as an artistic strategic solution, it reflects a more general dominant political line.

Browsing through the arts of several historical eras, *Clepsydra* is acknowledging various cultures and phases of Greek civilisation and history in an ongoing succession, which never halts to focus on a specific period until it reaches the present and 'vanishes' towards the 'undefined' future. This carefully directed 'escape from the Past' can be also read more specifically as an 'escape from the National Past'. While Callas nostalgically farewells the 'home', the pregnant woman leaves her [and our (?)] national past for an unknown, post-national(?) future, focused on human individuality (and sameness) as indicated by the human DNA symbol. In fact, from then on, there are no more references to Greece and Greekness, as the rest of the ceremony has a strong internationalist and cosmopolitanist 'Olympic' character. Hence, the local problem of dealing with the national historical self, transforms to a general comment on the self-defining (and often limiting and restrictive) national, racial and religious narratives and the systematically speculated, promoted idea of the post-national 'global village'. Still, it is worth noticing that the liberating turn from the past comes after its thorough acknowledgement. It is this idea of 'knowingly' transcending, rather than a-politically ignoring history that Papaioannou has favoured as both an artistic and ideological positioning.

2.3 Counterbalancing historicism: the imperatives of modernity.
The contemporary profile of Greece has been composed within the Opening Ceremony, as a combination of tradition (or history) and modernity. Apart from a (re)presentation and performance of the Historical Self, the Opening Ceremony was also a testimony of the country's progress towards 'modernisation'. The undertaking of the 2004 Games has been in itself a landmark in this national process. The ability of Greece to host this gigantic international event functioned as evidence of its
gradual 'development' towards modernity, 'Europe' and the 'West'. However, apart from the satisfaction that the timely completion of the infrastructural works evoked, a further point needed to be taken within the Opening Ceremony itself. Being the very first event of the Games, it fell upon it to establish that Greece was indeed ready and that the Games were to proceed smoothly. It is indicative, that in the dress rehearsal of the Opening Ceremony (with the stadium at full capacity), the show started with a short comedy sketch, where two workers appeared to finish the construction of the stage until the very last moment, congratulating each other for its apt completion for the beginning of the show. The general discontent with the delay of the Olympic infrastructural works was so intense that it could not be overlooked. This 'unofficial' performative comment was therefore intended to both acknowledge and subvert this fact. Moreover, it demonstrated a reassuring state of efficiency, which allowed the entertainment of the related anxiety, stating that this ambivalence belonged to the past. The message was quite clear: everything had fallen into place and so everyone could relax and have a laugh about this happy-ending adventure.

This intention of demonstrating competence and modernity, translated here as administrative, infrastructural and technological efficiency, can also be traced throughout the ceremony. Realising and staging this spectacle, required a highly advanced technical support, which was equally impressive (and equally promoted) as the artistic layout. The mechanisms that were employed to fill and empty the stadium with water within seconds, the software programmes that allowed the drummers' interaction in the Welcoming section, as well as the scenes of the Allegory and the Lighting of the Flame, to unfold, were of the latest technology, while the greeting from the international space station, at the end of the Athletes' Parade, was —apart from another globalist comment— also a suggestion of technological aptitude. Papaioannou's directing choices for the most expensive part of the Allegory, the surfacing and deconstruction of the Cycladic Head, were designed as to highlight and project this technology and its potentials by ensuring, that the spectators become aware of the enormity of scale in performance.
During the post-show talk, he ‘confessed’ that the choice and use of specific colours, was deliberate, to assist this effect. For example, the first centaur appeared illuminated in bright red for specific reasons: firstly, to inform the audience that the limited range of colours used in the Allegory scene was deliberate and not the result of technical inefficiency, and secondly, to highlight the human-scale dimensions of the centaur against those of the Cycladic Head, so as to underline the sheer size of the latter. Papaioannou also pointed out that they wished to make visible for the audience the employed technology, which was superior of any mechanical solutions that might have been given for the staging of the scene. This showcasing of modernity through technological competence was advocated even prior to the Ceremony by Papaioannou. Interviewed by Vassilis Aggelopoulos he stated that the ceremonies would “narrate to the world an ancient history using contemporary techniques. They will present a spectacle inspired by Greek history and art, but approached through a contemporary scope and with the assistance of the latest technology” (Aggelikopoulos, 2004, p. 6).

Similarly, the ‘modern’ technological infrastructure of the Opening Ceremony was cited, in a celebratory tone, in the newspaper article Behind the Opening Ceremony: The miracle of technology (2004, pp. 22-23). The article presents a detailed account of the technological means that supported the “technologically and aesthetically accomplished spectacle” of the Opening Ceremony. The subtitle of the article states that “the spectacle gained international admiration for its technological achievements” (and aesthetic qualities), highlighting once again, the political importance of this ‘international admiration’. Apart from the performed designation of identity, through its ‘historicisation’, ‘folklorisation’, and ‘universalisation’, the modernity of the Greek state was also showcased. Hence, besides the staging of a number of direct and indirect conceptual and visual references on ‘globalisation and postnationalism’, the Ceremony also performed ‘modernity’, through the overall exemplification of technological competence.

The use of high-technology is of course a necessary prerequisite for the support of such a large scale spectacle. Nonetheless, the intention of this employment, as well as
its specific citation by Papaioannou in the post-show talk, is indicative of the weight that a verification of the nation’s engagement with modernity (even though this assignment was realised with the help of foreign, namely French, companies) carries. The promotion of the modern (and ‘western’), together with the traditional and the historical, Selves has been an important ‘task’ for contemporary Greece and a key issue in the dialectics of both the two dominant political parties (PA.S.O.K and Nea Democratia) of the last three decades. Within the context of the Olympic Games, whose delineation was in itself a strong meeting point between the two projected national profiles, the ancient and the modern, the Opening Ceremony’s embracing of the new technology and its smooth amalgamation with the mythic, the historical, the traditional and (sporadically) the folk elements, further accounted for the representation and performance of an artistically and technologically advanced, post-modern and historically aware National Self, which coincided with the officially promoted national image.

However, ‘modernity’ was not only conveyed through the engagement with technology. Modernity was also addressed, through the performance’s engagement with a ‘modern’ (in actuality rather post-modern) art form: contemporary dance theatre. The ‘westernism’ (if not ‘globalism’ nowadays) of contemporary dance, has indeed brought a level of ‘sophistication’, (translating as ‘westernisation’ and even ‘cosmopolitanism’) to the ceremony, right from the beginning, with the assignment of its direction to an avant-garde contemporary choreographer. The value of such an engagement within the western artistic world, in contrast to an attachment to the ‘ethnic’, lies in its underlying assumption of the nation’s meeting with one of the most significant criteria of modernity: the expressed and factual affiliation with globalisation, transnationalism, or even better, post-nationalism.

This internationalist mood is thoroughly cultivated throughout the Opening Ceremony and besides being in accordance with the Olympic movement, it has also been dictated by an imperative ‘national need’: the overcoming of nationalism. This need originates in specific external and internal conditions. On an international plane, a nation’s
engagement with modernity and with the vision of globalisation, requires the shift of its focus from the strictly local, to the global. While internal affairs are invariably considered important, a 'modern' nation is however 'obliged' to maintain a parallel macroscopic politic, in compliance with the set international standards. On a national level, the 'denial' of nationalism, is related to its specific political weight within the recent local history, as suggested in the introduction. In that way, while the delineation of a coherent and distinct national profile has been a central aim for the Opening Ceremony, a parallel transcendence of this narrowing national discourse in favour of internationalism, appeared equally vital. Having portrayed a cultural and national identity defined by history, a balancing performance of modernity and transnationalism has been imperative as to avoid the stigma of the 'primordial'.
Chapter 3
Performing Agency: internationalism, pluralism and individuality as conveyors of Modernity.

3.1 Escaping Nationalism

Even within the widespread feeling of national delight for the success of the Olympic Opening Ceremony, the underlying local fear of nationalism is manifested within many relevant articles. A question related to the ‘Hellenocentric’ character of the ceremony appears in the majority of Papaioannou’s interviews that supersede it, as a tactful query on its potentially national(ist) undertones (e.g. Georgakopoulou, 2004, pp. 20, 61), while similar concerns were expressed in relevant articles, either by challenging the ‘nationalist’ orientation of the ceremony (e.g. Stefanidis, 2006, p. 18) or by praising its ‘escape’ from nationalism, in spite of its ‘Hellenocentrism’, with such comments as “our country opens to the world keeping its Hellenic profile” (Lazopoulos, 2004, p. 10). Even when not directly asked Papaioannou felt the need to defend this ethnically-focused character of the ceremony. When asked if he felt that he has been subjected to unsubstantial criticism, he replied “nagging, not criticism. That we over-emphasised the Greek element. Hence, your song was nice, but... you were singing” (in Aggelikopoulos, 2004, pp. 14-15).

Papaioannou, if anything, a left leaning unconventional choreographer in his beginning, was never overtly political. Starting from such a position, an issue he had to deal with was the association of big athletic/national celebrations with official governmental policies and with nationalist ideals. Koula Pratsika’s involvement in the ‘national festivities’, parades and celebrations of Metaxas’s dictatorship politicised dance’s specific position within similar events. Having developed a choreographic language based on Dalcroze’s method, as well as on Isadora Duncan’s and Eva Palmer- Sikelianou’s versions of ‘revived Greek dances’, her choreographies mainly drew from ancient mythology and theatre and were highly focused on the reconstruction and projection of ‘Greekness’. The emphasis on an idea of ‘Greekness’
defined through antiquity, as well as the ceremonial and somehow ostentatious character of their works have been criticised and even negated by many dancers and choreographers of the following generations (e.g. Papaioannou in Hassioti, 2001). Still even this criticism is expressed always extremely tactfully and carefully, because of the high status of these local dance pioneers and their widely acknowledged significance for the development of the national theatre and dance.

A number of subsequent choreographers wished to escape the pre-defined and ‘patented’ ‘Greekness’ of those works, which mainly focused on the glorification of Greek antiquity and the romantic idealisation of folklore, and which they often perceived as an externally imposed restriction on their works, limiting their creativity and their space for personal expression. More than that, as the turn to antiquity served the nationalist fascist discourse of the extreme right, this choreographic line was promoted and retained in most national celebrations until the end of the second dictatorship, that of the Colonels (1974). The appropriation of national symbols and the gymnastic/athletic character in the majority of the dictatorship period celebrations in Greece (like in most fascist festivities) has created associations that had to be somehow cancelled or reversed. Still, the intensity of such associations has been gradually weakened over the past three decades, which ultimately permitted the recent overt mass expression of a celebratory national sentiment, during the 2004 European Football championship, by people from almost all political and ideological spaces.

During the Junta (1967-1974), football had been promoted by the regime as an ‘unthreatening’ outlet for social agitation. Apart from its assistance in the cultivation of a superficial nationalist sentiment, football also promoted a deceptive image of social prosperity and liberty, which was upheld by the dictators. Hence, regular attendance at football matches and the overt expression of nationalist feelings have been ‘stigmatised’ by most left-affiliated fractions. In that way, the wide ‘apolitical’ appeal of the 2004 championship appears indicative of a re-contextualisation of similar expressions and symbolisms, however momentarily. In fact, the intensity and spontaneity of the local celebrations for the victory of the Greek National Football
team, re-introduced a 'guiltless' nationalist sentiment (e.g. the 'proud' display of the Greek flag) and a euphoric sense of national identification and belonging that transcended political affiliations and set the atmosphere for a similar approach to the Olympics. Nonetheless, this atmosphere surrounded the European championship and by extension the Olympic Games in the summer of 2004, prompted a graffiti, on the wall of a busy street in central Athens (Exarheia), which recalled the previous semantics of such events and their relation with social oppression: "we haven't had so much football and police since the Junta". In addition, discussing Junta's 'historical spectacles' Art Historian Manos Stefanidis begins his article, titled *Diachronic Hyper-spectacle*, with a reference to football during the Junta ("GOAL! dear audience, proud Panhellenes!") comparing it with the climate of the 2004 European Championship. Within the article he also refers to the above mentioned graffiti. (2006, p. 30).

Stefanidis recalls the nationalist 'Pan-Hellenic' character of the large scale spectacles organised by the Junta in 'national' and 'international' celebrations, including the regime's, as well as NATO's, anniversaries. He notes the propagandist methods of the Junta, which "invented" television, "trading patriotism and piety" and organised "hyper-spectacles of 'diachronic historical character' in the packed Panathinaiko stadium". To these 'national celebrations', Stefanidis juxtaposes the national representations as staged within the 2004 Olympic Ceremonies, openly criticising them, writing "do all these (Junta's 'Hellenic' shows) remind you of something? Perhaps you have also been recently shaken by the epic depictions of our three-thousand-years history?" The article concludes by reminding the reader of the founding of the Ministry of Culture during the Junta, as to assist its nationalistic propaganda, as well as its "primitive idolisation of art works and ideas of Greek civilisation" for its purposes. Hence, he notes the dictators' appropriation of large parts of Greek history, art and ideas, arguing that their aesthetic and semantic 're-contextualisation' by the Junta is still at work today, signalling a "widespread populism", which has deeply affected Greek society (Ibid).
In addition to such associations of any attempt for national representation with the ‘national(ist)’ spectacles of the Junta, the aesthetic and ideological background of the revived contemporary Olympics [with their inherent ancient-oriented (at least in their initial conception) character, the residues of their connection with racist and fascist ideologies (and more specifically with Nazism), as well as their customary promotion of an excessively euphoric a-political atmosphere and of an ‘aesthetic of the masses’, surpassing and diminishing of the individual], could potentially encourage an authoritarian, assimilative or nationalistic reading of the Olympic Ceremonies. The fact that Pratsika and her students took part in the 1936 Berlin Olympics, has been a ‘black spot’ in her otherwise celebrated career, even though at the time this “Black Olympiad” was highly acclaimed by the majority of the local media. In fact, an article under the title A brilliant idea by Dr Goebels, published four months prior to the 2004 Games (and four days prior to the start of the ‘world tour’ of the Olympic Flame) noted that the official internet site of the Greek Olympic Committee (EOE) of the same year was still “unbelievably praising” the 1936 Olympics, referencing the organisers’ promise that “there would not be any racial discrimination against the Jews and the Niggers(!)” and commenting on the “huge propaganda of the organisers, which managed to attract to Berlin 3.000 media representatives”. As the journalist team virus notes, this is the only (and indeed positive) reference to the Nazis, while the site also reminds the reader that this was the Olympiad which initiated “for the first time the arrival of the Olympic Flame, which gave further grace to the Opening Ceremony of the Games” (2004, p. 54).

The article comments on the use of the racist term “nigger”, revealing of “the deepest racist ideals of the ‘Olympic movement’ in the steps of the extreme racist Pierre de Coubertin”25 (who is actually referenced by Kostalas, during the transmittance of the Olympic ceremony, as the (celebrated) spiritual father of the contemporary Games). Apart from that, the article notes the lack of any reference to the torch-race’s significance for Nazi propaganda in the related sites. Furthermore, it highlights the original conception and establishment of the ceremony for the Lighting of the Torch in Olympia by the Third Reich’s Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels, describing
it as an attempt at a revived ‘ancient-Greek’ Olympic ceremony, aligned with the ideological principles and aesthetics of the Nazi regime, which has been carried forth identical until today. Indeed, the ceremony is still performed at the present day following the style and aesthetics of its original designation, before each Olympiad by a “High-Priestess” and a female chorus in white tunics, under the directions of one of Pratsika’s former students, Maria Hors (yet another leading figure within local dance affairs). The first part of the article concludes writing:

One needs not be an expert in the semiotics of Nazism to realise that all the ritualistic kitsch, which accompanies to the present day the ceremony of the ‘holy flame’ (with priestesses, high-priestesses, altars and sun-gods), is nothing more than a re-introduction of the Hitleric perception of ancient Greece and its rituals.

(Ibid –translated by the author)

The reference to ancient Greece as a basis for racist ideologies, such as the Nazi notion of the Aryan racial ‘purity’ and superiority (which still usually excluded the modern Greeks), has been a common-place ideological construction of Greek fascist factions [such as the contemporary association Χρυσή Αυγή (Golden Sunrise)] and dictatorial regimes. In fact, at the time of the establishment of the torch-race and of the related ceremony, in 1936, with Greece’s active involvement in the Olympiad in Berlin, the country was under the rule of the dictator Ioannis Metaxas. Moreover, as the article indicates, the foundation of International Olympic Academy in Olympia, an idea inspired by Coubertin and realised after his death by the German Karl Dim and the Greek Ioannis Ketseas in 1973, was carried forth under the aegis of the Colonels’ dictatorship. The dictators’ assistance to the Olympic movement is thoroughly acknowledged in the speech of thanks of the president of the Academy at that time, Epameinondas Petralias (13.7.1973). As the author points out, even though Dim has been recently denounced in Germany for his role in the “militarization of German athleticism and the war propaganda of the Third Reich”, in Greece he is still mentioned in the annual session of the Academy as “a great Philhellene, friend and collaborator of Coubertin” (Ibid). The prestige that these ceremonies, committees and institutions, with their extensive referencing to the ancient Olympic ideal, bore for
Greece, hindered their re-evaluation and re-contextualisation by the state. Nonetheless, the underlying politics of such revived ‘ancient’ spectacles have been noted in related articles, and are brought to the awareness (even though in varying levels of intensity and political/historical consciousness) of many Greeks today.

The character and aesthetic of such ancient-like spectacles, not necessarily fascist or racist, but ostensibly nationalist, which often surround national -and particularly athletic- events is therefore politically charged. Hence, Papaioannou was extremely careful in his depictions of nationhood and his (however accustomed and required within the Olympic context) references to the Greek nation, in order to shield the Opening Ceremony against the slightest ‘heroic’, aggressively nationalist, authoritarian, or ethnocentric edge. This intention can be seen as an underlying thread throughout the Opening Ceremony, with the cautious employment of a number of ‘safe proofing’ tricks and strategies at all times, which could be schematically presented as:

a) Introducing the national symbols (e.g. flag) as cultural elements: nostalgically and with modesty, to avoid triumphing and aggressiveness.
b) Connecting the local to the global.
c) Focusing on the individual rather than the mass.
d) Avoiding uniformity, conformity and military aesthetics.
e) Acknowledging the unavoidably ‘heroic moments’, and
f) Engaging with the post-nationalist globalist discourse.

The first time the Greek flag is introduced, it is a small ‘craftwork’ and it is not carried by an athlete or politician, but by a young boy, in a playful manner. In addition, the image of the paper boat, where the boy is in, stands for an allegoric depiction of Greece itself, with the country presented in a non-threatening, non-antagonistic or self-praising manner. This allows the foreign audiences to relax, embrace and sympathise with it. At the same time, it presents a distinct, recognisable image of an embodied sense of ‘Greekness’, rooted in the connective power of this referencing to collective childhood memories (the paper boat, the appearance of the
boy, the small flag etc). The scene promotes nostalgia for the experiential past, associated with a symbolic 'playful' depiction of Greece: small and alone in the ocean, frail as a paper boat, its flag equally flimsy, also resembling a childhood craft. The fragility and sentimentality of the scene not only introduced and established a positive, familiar and immediate icon of Greekness for the foreign spectators, but it also evoked a unifying and internalised sense of a common identity, and of a shared (recent) past in the local audience.

Similarly, the first references to the history of Greek science, philosophy and art, in the Allegory, are smoothly interlaced with more 'internationalist' ones, to lessen their intensity. The 'journey from myth to reason', or towards knowledge and self-understanding, which was the stated and performed intention of the scene, does indeed refer to the Greek 'history of reasoning'. Nonetheless, with the scientific and philosophical foundations of ancient Greece being located as the origins of western reason, the connection of this 'local history' to the world is secured. Indeed, while the appearance of the man balancing on the floating cube triggers a reference to Pythagoras, by Kostalas, Papaioannou himself has later noted that the scene was not to be perceived as a reference to the Pythagorean earth, but as a symbolism on Reasoning and "on the beginnings of the Western World" (2005). Interestingly, the 'opening to the world', which ensures the methodical transcendence of the national introspection in favour of the internationalist spirit, is marked by a connection with the 'West'. It is through that linking with the 'West' that the opening to the rest of the world is attempted. Counting on the traditional projection and promotion of 'western culture' as 'globally significant', as well as 'globally applicable', Greece's contextualisation within it assists its comprehensibility and acceptance by both the 'West' and the rest of the world. In that way, this connection serves two purposes: firstly, it facilitates the engagement of the international audience with a 'known' and generally acceptable historical narrative, which somehow brings them closer to an understanding of the 'local culture'. Secondly, it celebrates this 'local culture', by representing its origins as a globally significant moment in the international 'history of knowledge and reason'.
This dual scheme of a stated globalist and underlying nationalist mood runs throughout the ceremony, but it is more overtly manifested in the Allegory. The projection of scientific symbolisms on the Cycladic Head throughout the scene also operates in the same way. The intention of the scene is to remind the audience that “ideas pre-exist their ‘discovery’. Hence they should not be perceived as novelty achievements but rather as results of intensive thinking” (Papaioannou, 2005). Still, while the stated intention is meant to lessen the ‘national praise’, it nonetheless pays one more tribute to those ‘intensive thinkers’ of Greek history. Even without an insight on the director’s objectives, the national character of the scene and its parallel aim to open and connect its specificities to the world, are clearly traceable. As the ‘Cycladic Head’ cracks, it reveals the kouroς statue that prompts Kostala’s praise of this era’s sculpturing. As Papaioannou noted, the prevalent reference to sculpture, with the dominant portrayal of these art works was thought appropriate as this is the art that “has scattered human limbs all over the world” making ancient Greek art known to the world (ibid). Hence, kouroς is portrayed as another easily recognisable symbol of Greek art. Sculpture is celebrated because it has been ‘known’ to the non-Helladic world, functioning as a bridge between the local and the global. Papaioannou’s comment not only reflects once more the wish to connect and project the local heritage internationally, but it also carries ideas on the ‘globalism’ and trans-nationalism of (Greek? /Western?) art and culture, establishing the ceremony’s positioning.

Nonetheless, the presentation of kouroς is brief and the scene proceeds to moderate the build-up of a triumphal nationalism, with a shift to translocal, ‘unifying’ images. Aware of the ethnocentric edge of the scene, and in order to prevent the built up of an over-stated self-praising atmosphere, the national referencing is promptly disrupted by the breaking and scattering of the Cycladic head, while the projection that follows is solely focused on the celebration of humanity in its diversity. The music also tactfully changes from a characteristically ‘Greek’ sound of Manos Hatzidakis, to a ‘western classic’ (and therefore internationally ‘classic’) composer, Gustav Mahler. The intention is “to beat any tendency for national(ist) triumphing and convey a
panhumanistic/globalist spirit right from the beginning of this “adventure” and before the more detailed referencing on Greek art begins with the *Clepsydra* (Ibid). As a first step, Greek civilization becomes ‘de-nationalised’ or better ‘de-localised’ and linked to other cultures (i.e. the western). However, this connection is still a more or less direct praise for the nation, by highlighting its impact on a powerful part of contemporary world. The second stage then goes a step further to lessen this impression of uniqueness and superiority, by referencing (even briefly and indirectly) other civilizations, juxtaposing them with the local one. It is with the focus on de-nationalised, de-culturalised and even de-personified human details, which are yet distinct in their uniqueness, that humanity is celebrated in its entirety and sameness and at the same time, in its unifying non-conformity and multiplicity. In that way, not only the scene discourages any tendency for national(ist) exultation by acknowledging other (non-Hellenic) peoples, but also conveys an (essential and almost compulsory for the Olympic setting) pan-humanistic unifying feeling.

Throughout the ceremony Papaioannou avoided the aesthetic of a mass spectacle and created a human-centric and human-sized ceremony. Each of the performers can be at all times distinguished, as they are presented as distinct ‘characters’ or personifications of ideas and are very rarely grouped together as to form an ensemble in unison. The aesthetic of the ‘human movement choirs’, from Rudolf Laban (1879-1958) to the Sydney Olympics, was also consciously avoided for both practical reasons, e.g. the number of the volunteers, and ideological: again nothing should resemble the uniformed gymnastic performances of the dictatorships years. Moreover, Greece, in its geographical morphology, in its population, as well as in its architecture, arts and culture, has never been associated with the massive, the ‘grandiose’ nor the assimilative. Even in the customary parade the athletes were encouraged to walk on their own style and pace in a non-linear non-uniformed movement, to avoid uniformity and grouping. The music, carefully selected by well-known Dutch dj Tiesto, was also chosen for its appeal to the taste of the (in their majority) young athletes and its effect on their mood and movement qualities, in order to promote a more relaxed, ‘human’ and personalised, non-military-like presentation
of the athletes (and indirectly of their represented countries). Furthermore, their final positioning was directed as to form a colourful spiral fusion, rather than parallel lines as accustomed, which completely contrasted the military geometrical aesthetics (again to divert any ideas on the militarization of athleticism). In that way, plurality, cross-culturalism and mixing, both as a visual impression and symbolic political statement, were thoroughly promoted.

This globalist imaging was underlined by Bjork’s performance in *Oceania*: a song she composed especially for the Athens Olympics. Within the song, the sea, mother of all, declares her love and pride for all her children and Bjork performed it in a huge wavy dress which seemed to include the whole stadium, assisted by a widespread blue light. This somehow naïf and straightforward metaphor further accounted for the transnational, trans-cultural and unifying appeal of the ceremony (and of the institution of the Olympic games in general), in an obvious, direct and romanticized way. Bjork’s presence, and her undeniable stature and popularity within the international pop-music scene, fortified the transmission of the message, while her extremist, avant-garde (however mainstream) and cynical artistic profile, somehow softened the popularized naiveté and commonness of this (however intentional or political) image. The globalist mood is further enhanced by the live connection with two astronauts from the International Space Station, who greet the Games.

The next scene presents an overview of the *Olympic History*: The course of the modern Olympic Games is represented by a running race, which also functions as a tribute to the first Olympic athletes (runners). Each Olympiad is marked by a finishing line, its ribbon cut by the runner as he passes through, while the year and host city of the Olympiad is mentioned by the stadium’s speakerphones. In that historical run, the First World War is specifically noted by the runner who performs a ‘trip’ and falls. The Second World War, with the ‘notorious’ Black Olympiad of 1936, provokes the athlete to stop, his head tilted forward as in grief, or defeat. The athlete then continues to count the years up to 2004 when he stops, with the audience’s cheers. The following and final section, *the Lighting of the Olympic Flame*, begins with a greeting from the presidents of the International (Jaques Rogue) and the Greek (Yianna Agelopoulou-Daskalaki) Olympic Committees. The scene takes
place mid-stadium, under an olive tree (a culturally and economically significant, as well as representative, tree for Greece and also the mythological gift of Goddess Athena to the city of Athens) while five bells (standing for the five continents) signalled the closure of the ceremony, with the rise of the Olympic flag and the lighting of the stadium’s torch with the Olympic Flame. The Flame is carried in a ‘flying’ relay and handed down to Nikos Kaklamanakis (Gold Medallist in windsurfing), who runs up a giant stair towards the, equally colossal, lowering torch of the stadium, which rises again lit.

This final scene seemed, as Papaioannou noted, to have been “extracted from a heroic comic book”: the gigantic size of the stadium’s torch, as well as of the staircase that the last athlete (Kaklamanakis) had to run for the lighting of the torch, accounted for an unmistakable ‘heroism’, which had been previously avoided. This quality was noted by the director, who ‘confessed’ that the scene bore “a totalitarian aesthetic, in a raw attempt to inspire the idea that the sky and earth are being united for the transmission of ‘spirit’ and the distance between them is the man” (Ibid). For that final scene, Papaioannou admitted to have been inspired by the Olympic Games of 1936 in Berlin, whose aesthetics he had thoroughly studied (as well as all of all the previous Opening Ceremonies). The stigmatisation of that Black Olympiad, established in the preceding scene of the Olympic History, exemplifies both its acknowledgment and condemnation, hence disassociating the current Olympiad (and the Opening Ceremony more specifically) from its ideological, political and even aesthetic context. Still, the Lighting of the Flame presented some resemblance to Fascist aesthetics, which Papaioannou felt the need to further explain in the post-show talk.

The whole concept of that final scene and the sheer size of the performance are bound to result in a triumphing, heroic and ritualistic image, which is extremely hard to re-contextualise. Aware of its inherent fascist quality and ‘heroism’, which would be almost impossible to avoid or reverse, the director attempted to push it further towards that already drawn line in order to acknowledge its character and publicise his own awareness of its intense political and ideological parameters. Since the significance of
similar images is being specifically read and recognised in Greece, Papaioannou handled it as an especially sensitive subject. However, this exact ‘national sensitivity’, as embedded in a collective social memory, has been in itself an important parameter of contemporary post-war, post-dictatorial contemporary ‘Greekness’, which was better to be acknowledged rather than silenced or ignored. Hence, Papaioannou chose to adopt and adapt the inescapable and render it liable to his own idea of ‘Greekness’ by adding to the scene a comic-hero quality, which exaggerated and in that way somehow undermined its initial character. Still, as in most of the double-meaning bearing scenes of the ceremony, this ironic intention was subtle enough to be easily missed or overlooked (and probably was indeed) by the majority of the spectators. The ceremony had to remain a popular, mainstream, a-political and inclusive spectacle and this initial purpose was preserved and maintained at all times, even though Papaioannou had cleverly seen to the establishment of a (however underground) foundation to support possible alternative readings, which in turn bore the potential to ‘dis-incriminate’ and protect the ceremony, at least from the anticipated critiques.

Finally, it is worth noting, that throughout the ceremony, the reference to a national ‘Home’ always appears as a reference to the Past. Papaioannou’s comment on his inability to characterise anything contemporary as ‘Greek’ after the ‘patented’ (meaning internationally recognised as such) voice of Maria Callas, some celebrated poets (e.g. Seferis) and some urban folk characteristics like the bouzouki, the rebetika music, and Karagiozis, is also indicative of a specific ideological and political positioning. While the historical past is recognised as national, its origins (e.g. the water symbolising the source of all life), as well as the future (enacted by a ‘symbolic entrance to the water’), appear de-nationalised. Hence Callas’s interpretation of this specific part of Aida at the moment when all the performers of the Clepsydra stripped off their past to enter the (identity-less) water, can be read as a conscious decision, which further underlined that thesis as it appears to be a farewell to the national past in favour of a trans-national future. This ‘escape from the past’ is initiated by the ‘pregnant’ woman, whose lit belly bears promises for an equally bright future. As
Papaioannou noted, it is the second time that a fictional dreamlike action is forwarded by a woman. The first time "we enter the dream" towards the (national) past is in the Allegory after a "woman's invitation". This second time, after the stage action has finished, a pregnant woman "invites us to enter the dream" one more time, towards an "imagined, unidentified (transnational) future" (2005). This de-nationalisation, is further assisted by the projected DNA symbol, exemplifying the sameness of all human beings, in their shared (and yet individually unique) physicality, promoting a globalist vision of the future.

This positioning is, as mentioned earlier, in accord with the time's political ethics, as promoted within the international community. It requires the overcoming of nationalist and localist sentiments in favour of the vision of a 'global village'. Moreover, it forms the ideological and political theoretical base line of the contemporary Games, aligning once again the Opening Ceremony with the 'politically correct' Olympic spirit, as expected, promoted and perceived by the majority of the world's media, audiences and the relevant international committees, as well as by the sponsoring private companies and governing parties.

3.2 'The Power of Love'

Still, the director's most powerful card and his 'safety net' within this game of impressions was the dominant presence of Eros throughout the ceremony. Having chosen to approach and present Greece through its arts, the spiritual heritage was perceived as an important national emblem and an exportable cultural commodity. As Papaioannou said, all the local ideas and arts have been the results of sensuality and of a culture that loves to enjoy life (2005). Hence, Eros was dealt as another distinctive, classic element in Greek mythology, arts and culture, watching, playing, interfering and haunting every era, every aspect of Greek culture and more than anything its arts (Ibid). In that way, Eros was one of the basic axes around which Papaioannou attempted to knit his understanding of 'Hellenicity'. The first time Eros appears is in the end of the Allegory, initiating and directing the love games of a young couple
around the water: a transcendent scene (*Lovers*), which links *Allegory* to the next part of the *Clepsydra*.

From that moment on, Eros is always present, flying above the proceedings on the stage, as the underlying force that initiates everything. He ‘supervises’ all eras and often interacts with the enacted ‘tableaux vivants’ of the *Clepsydra* occasionally ‘disturbing’ the organised and, therefore expected rhythm of this ongoing succession of generations and ideas. Eros is the force that initiates the two unpredictable ‘escapes’ of this national past: the first one is that of the ‘*kouros-kori*’ couple, where the woman undresses from her costume, disassociating herself from the uniformity of the other statues and symbolically, from the past? tradition? any assimilative social oppression? She then runs backwards in the parade towards the *kouros* resisting and reversing the flow of things, in order to engage the personal, ‘human’ and liberating ‘power of love’. Eros legitimises this revolutionary act by offering a flower to the couple, right before their escape. Towards the end of the parade, Eros also assists the pregnant woman to strip off the Past (by literally taking off her gown, which metaphorically stands for that past) and to walk away towards the unknown ‘nation-less’ future. He is indeed the key-figure of the ceremony and his quality as a strong, omnipresent, non-discriminative and inescapable life force is systematically underlined.

Apart from being a personally intriguing issue for Papaioannou, who has often dealt with the different faces and intricacies of Eros and the representation of the differentiation and/or unification and interaction of the sexes in his previous works (e.g. *Medea, Dracula, The Storm, Human Nature*), Eros has been a popular subject for the majority of the local contemporary choreographers. Human relations and more specifically the erotic ones has been a widely negotiated subject. In fact most of the related choreographies focus on the complicated, problematic or even tragic implications of Eros, (the lack of communication, the emotional immaturity and shallowness, the inability to love, or to express love, the larger than life –and therefore unfulfilled– expectations and fantasies, the sexual differences, social exclusion and
even violence, as well as games of dominance and subordination, are all recurring themes) rather than its romantic version. Even though Eros has always been an important and popular theme within the arts, the popularisation of the Freudian theories and the Modernist turn to the human psyche, have resulted to a more in-depth, often more cynical and less romanticised, or ‘polished’, negotiation of love and sexuality within many western modern and post-modern choreographers. This has been aided by a gradual ‘liberation’ and social acceptance of the human body and the focus (both in art and life) on human sexuality, as well as the (also gradual) opening towards new forms of expression, which characterised the second half of the twentieth century.

In Greece, as well, these have been dominant features of a post-modern wave, which (as a noticeable general stream) appears rather late, around the mid-1980s with the return of the third wave (in the twentieth century) of western-exposed and educated (or re-educated) dancers and choreographers. As a leading figure within this stream, Papaioannou has also been concerned with similar issues in his work and hence the ceremony’s portrayal and acknowledgement of Eros’s significant role within art and life appears as an anticipated comment. Still, its portrayal within the ceremony is not merely confined in its established position within the local (and international) dance scenes or in personal preferences. His role is multi-functional and multi-originated, serving in many ways the director’s purposes and enhancing the character and atmosphere of the ceremony.

In the post-show talk, Papaioannou referred to the importance of Eros for the ancient Greeks, as well as to its less romanticised modern (auto)-exoticised profile and its commoditization as a prevalent ‘tourist attraction’. Whether captured in an idealized, ethereal or even Platonic sense, or in a, somehow cynical, secular and modern version, Eros is in both cases negotiated as a national characteristic. It appears as a significant parameter of identity and of the imagined self, as well as, as an ‘exportable commodity’, since it has been a stereotypical image in foreign imaginings and constructions of ‘Greekness’. In that way, Eros, as an ennobled sentiment (god) or as
a ‘fake’ and somehow degraded value, becomes nationalised. At the same time, and since Eros is negotiated as a pan-human diachronic characteristic, transcendent of national, cultural, racial or ethnic boundaries, as well as of age and gender, it further supports and promotes the inclusive, assimilative and globalist character of the ceremony, and by extension the Olympics. By emphasising a symbol with which everyone can relate, Papaioannou’s portrayal of Eros accounts for the accessibility of the show, facilitating the engagement and identification with it, while at the same time promoting its encoded cosmopolitanism and/or trans-nationalism.

Eros also supported Papaioannou’s initially stated aim, which was to represent Greece through the sensuality of its arts. This focus on sensuality was also intended to ‘exorcise’ nationalism. Three days after the Opening of the Games, Georgakopoulou opened her interview with Papaioannou saying “you are being applauded even by the most conservative and nationalist Greeks”. The comment bore an underlying ‘accusation’ for the Hellenocentric character of the Opening Ceremony, which Papaioannou defended by stepping on the ‘power of Eros’, replying

If this is accurate I would be astonished. Because I think that the message on love, as well as on physical and sensual liberation, which was promoted by the Ceremony, the message that we have to accept the true coordinates of our civilisation, is something that should probably provoke the carriers of such beliefs.

(Papaioannou in Georgakopoulou, 2004, p. 20 –translated by the author)

Furthermore, the non-artistic, non-idealised, un-praised and almost un-dignified position of Eros in contemporary reality (and dance) provides Papaioannou with at least one link with his more cynical, caustic and marginal/elitist artistic self, which had to be toned down for the purposes of the Olympic ceremonies. In fact, in the post-show discussion Papaioannou (2005) presented an alternative, completely erotic reading of the ceremony and justified this decision by referring to the above mentioned national importance of Eros. In his talk, not only did he highlight Eros’s
presence and significance within the show, but he actually interpreted almost every aspect and every image of the ceremony as a more-or-less direct or indirect reference to the sexual act. In that way, the elements of fire and water that dominated the space were decoded as “archetypal symbols of the male and female” with their interaction and spatial arrangement to (re)present recurring symbolic images of the sexual act and the orgasmic experience. Moments such as the initial presentation of the five Olympic Rings (initiated by a flamed arrow, which enters the water and lights them) and the final lighting of the torch (resembling an oversized phallic symbol), as well as less ‘obvious’ hints, such as the arrangement of the fireworks’ display, were decoded by Papaioannou as clear erotic references.

Elements that support his claimed version are the representation of the archetypal Male and Female (in the shapes of the rising torch, the stadium, and the elements of fire and water) and the sexual act (with the lighting of the torch and the fire running along the stadium simulating the final orgasm), as well as a number of more direct references like the constant presence of Eros, the lovers’ scene, the image of a gay couple kissing (projected momentarily on one of the Cycladic idol’s pieces) and the initiation of the Clepsydra with the bare-breasted Minoan Goddess [whose exceptionally sensual movement contrasts the otherwise stylized two-dimensional movement of those ‘ancient’ images- encouraging an “erotic reading of the history of art through sensuality” (Papaioannou 2005)]. At the same time, everything bore a second, equally valid and more ‘Olympically appropriate’ symbolism, which was actually what the organizers saw in Papaioannou’s initial proposal and what the majority of the cheering audiences received.

For example, the lighting of the torch had a very heroic ritualistic quality of a totalitarian aesthetic, which contradicted and excluded any sexual reference. Eros appears in its mythological (therefore ‘purified’ and chaste) widely accepted facade, framing equally acknowledged depictions of past (‘high’-) art-works. Even the presence of the two couples (the first in the lovers scene and the second ‘escaping’ the Clepsydra) receive their justification in creation: the first couple, which forwards the
Clepsydra, introduces Eros, in its force, which is then expressed through its impact on the arts. The eroticism of the Lovers’ scene is ‘chastised’ through its connection with an idea of Eros as an inspiring creative force, rather than as a mere physical attraction or lust. The second couple’s act, is ‘fulfilled’ in the following image of the pregnant woman, who appears to be carrying our unknown, bright future and therefore gives an alternative meaning to the couple’s union. Similarly, as noted by Kostalas, the water functioned as a “purifier”, bearer of our past and our future, while the fire was associated with spirituality and with human determination for knowledge and reasoning. Theatre critic Georgousopoulos read them as symbols from the pre-Socratic philosophy, referencing to the four elements of Empedocles, water, fire, air, earth (2004, p. 79). Even the perception of the stadium’s shape as a symbolic vagina (and not as an eye as was also noted in the same talk), was also pointed out by Papaioannou as a bearer of associations with the birth of the Olympics in Greece, rather than as a sexual reference.

Adding another layer of meaning to the ceremony, this later reading still appeared somewhat ‘inappropriate’ for a core subject of a spectacle with such mass appeal as the Olympic Games. It is believed that this deliberately unconventional explanation, apart from being a matter of personal choice and taste, ties back to Papaioannou’s provision of an ‘avant-garde safety net’ that would prevent his total association with the mainstream (in its political, ideological and artistic sense): an almost unavoidable consequence of his active and significant involvement with such a debated institution as the Olympic Games. Being intensively criticised on their economic and political significance, as well as for their particular consequences and cost for a country like Greece, the ‘Olympic issue’ had almost turned to a signifier for a person’s political and ideological affiliations and background. As noted, the Greek Communist Party (KKE) had heavily criticized and sabotaged the conduction of the Games in Greece, while in general lines the majority of the left-wing (and of course of the extreme left and anarchist) space had held —at least initially— a negative stance towards them. Moreover, the political (and economic) significance of the Games and their tight bond to national and international capitalist interests and investments, as well as the size
and nature of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies immediately placed the organisers in a different sphere from that where Papaioannou ‘belonged’ for his pre-Olympic audience. In that way, Papaioannou’s latter interpretation of the Opening Ceremony as a personal as well as national narrative around sexuality appears as a highly strategic decision.

For the ceremony, Papaioannou made sure to present a coherent and accessible image of ‘Greekness’ and straightforward symbolisms on nationhood, on the athletic and globalist ideals, as well as on the perpetual and yet relentlessly evolving character of human nature, thought, Art and spirituality. Such ‘Olympic’ and generally acceptable ideas were promoted within the ceremony and further underlined by the televised commentary, which drew its initial information (and therefore a general direction) by Papaioannou himself. Still, Papaioannou later conveniently disassociated himself from this nationalist/mainstream/sentimentalist position to give his alternative (or initial?) version of the ceremony as a symbolic sexual act. Hence, he attempted not only to offer the expected, but also to re-establish his choreographic agency, and protect his avant-garde self. Moreover, by giving a sexual meaning to pompous or heroic symbolisms, such as the huge stadium torch and the lighting scene, he caricatured any nationalist/fascist associations by diverting the attention and shifting the whole meaning, and positioning of the image towards a completely different subject.

In that way Papaioannou achieves a dual purpose: representing Greekness and eschewing it through the dominant portrayal of a universal, pan-humanistic characteristic: the erotic love. By domesticating Eros, he creates an accessible and easy-to-identify-with, identified with, idea of Greekness. At the same time, he transcends the national by negotiating a trans-national subject, proximate, unifying and inclusive to all. In addition, by providing an erotic layer to the ceremony, he managed to disturb its ritualism and solemnity with recurring images of unrestricted, unpredictable and highly individualistic human behaviour. Besides the ceremonial tribute to humanity as a creative, evolving and ongoing ‘entity’, the individual is also celebrated in its ephemeral and volatile existence. This interjection of non-conformed
impulsive behaviour has an effect to further strengthen the ceremony’s ‘resistance to nationalism’ by constantly shifting its focus between the national, the transnational and the individual. Even though the inclusive, mainstream character of the Olympic Games dictated the profile of the ceremony, rounding any extremist (artistic and/or ideological) edges, Papaioannou retained some of the themes and concerns that had characterized his previous work (like the erotic love), which in a way re-claim his position within the local dance avant-garde. In other words, the ‘alternative’ and the ‘mainstream’ were both ‘played out’ and exploited, as to serve the director’s specific (for the ceremony) and general (for his artistic agenda) purposes.

3.3 Identifying strategies of representation.
Through this deconstructive reading of the 2004 Opening Ceremony, one can identify a series of interconnected strategies employed by the director, in order to represent a distinct national cultural portrait. Through the performance of an artistic journey to the past, the ceremony relied on history and tradition, as well as on folk and popular cultural elements. Moreover, its globalisational and humanitarian ‘touch’, together with a display of a ‘western’, post-modern, freely expressed individualism (mainly underlined by the director’s own ‘uncompromised’ agenda), functioned as a showcase of modernity and political, as well as cultural, tolerance and pluralism. Art, in its prestigious and fluid status, was chosen as the medium through which these somewhat ‘conflicting’ aspirations of national framing and internationalist openness, collective and individual agency, history, tradition and modernity and, ultimately, (‘oriental’) primordialism and (‘western’) postnationalism, were smoothly fused. These selectively performed ‘national’ characteristics correspond to a mixture of national and international expectations and regulations on the specifications of a sovereign and ‘accountable’ contemporary nation-state. Indeed, these strategies of identification and representation tie back to some of the main axes around which the Modern Greek national (at times nationalistic) discourse has been developed.

Within Modern Greek history, the emerging need for a coherent identity mainly relied
on the demonstration of the nation’s historical continuity, which initially grounded the notion of ‘Greekness’ in antiquity. The connection between the (ancient) past and the present eventually required the acknowledgment of the Byzantine traditions in the formulation of a local identity. For that, apart from the weight that has been given on the coherence and continuity of the Greek language, special attention has been paid to the detection of a number of distinct and traceable ‘historical’ currents that ran through the folk arts. The ‘Byzantine reference’ has also provided the historical and national contextualisation of another significant parameter of ‘Greekness’, the Christian orthodox religion, which even though differentiated Modern from ancient Greece, it nonetheless held a connection to the latter through Byzantium. In addition, in its recent political history, Greece has thoroughly promoted a Modern, ‘European’ profile, which has at times counteracted the historically and culturally (including religion) defined national identity. Still, the nation’s insufficient industrial and technological development, lead to the solidification of its identity around Civilisation, Art and Culture: a set of undeniably prestigious, recognizable and ‘exportable’ virtues.

Within the following chapters I argue that while the ways through which Modern Greece re-invented and established itself derived by specific national needs, the canvas upon which this discourse on national definition and representation developed, reveals the adoption and embodiment of a number of principles and values as set by the ‘West’. As an ‘emerging’ nation, Greece established its status in relation to its engagement with the western political and economic developmental model, as well as from its cultural fraternity with ‘the western world’. Hence the nation’s historicity and spirituality (traditionally accounted as ‘oriental virtues’), have been projected in their correlation with western models of ‘classicism’, such as the ancient Greek and Roman and the Renaissance aesthetic principles. The engagement with a mainstream western European sense of history has also prompted the projection of Greek civilization as the basis and core of contemporary (western) civilization, elevating it above national and cultural boundaries, to the realms of High Art. At the same time, the antiquisation of the nation was accompanied by a celebration of its folk traditions (that typified
many European nationalist discourses in the twentieth century), as well as by an embracement of the (western) discourse on Modernization.

Looking back at Papaioannou’s directing choices for the Opening Ceremony, his negotiation of these ‘national queries’ can be summarized in a number of representational ‘strategies’. Artistic, scientific and philosophical legacy, validated through history and credited by an international appeal, allowed the simultaneous ‘nationalisation’ and ‘globalisation’ (or ‘westernisation’) of ‘Greekness’. The nation has been delineated through its traditions (folkloric, popular and mainly ancient-derived) and contextualized by claiming a specific place within contemporary world: that of the developed, (western) European, competent nation-state. Hence, these representational ‘techniques’, as identified within the Opening and Closing Olympic Ceremonies, can be condensed in three main and interrelated lines, addressed within the thesis as Historicisation, Folklorisation and Universalisation. These ‘strategies’ are in turn analysed and negotiated in the following three parts of the thesis, with reference to their specific socio-political, ideological and artistic weight.
notes

1 All three newspapers cited, as well as To Vima (cited later in the text) are daily Athenian papers of great circulation.

2 The prefix re- or neo-, to denote a renewed understanding of term, is most commonly affixed in terms describing identity within Greece. Hence, the contemporary Greeks are defined as neo-Hellenes, the new generations that express a strong religious sentiment are described as neo-orthodox and so forth. The employment of nationalist discourse by the local dictatorial regimes also resulted in necessity of re-definition and clarification of the related terminology.

3 Professor Panagis Panagiotopoulos notes “before becoming synonymous of ‘bad taste’, the kitsch was a conscious artistic stream within the visual arts, as well as within the haute couture. Through a dialogic relation with the tendencies of the punk and pop cultures, the kitsch artistry questioned the sonorous academism and the entrenchments of the avant-gardes, which it imputed with pomposity and arrogance. The history of the Hellenic kitsch has a completely different origin: it has the state stamp of the Colonels’ dictatorship, which, within the context of a crumbling, as well as aggressive, ideology of a nationalist world order, collected (...), around a prominent civil-war military camp image, the most superficial elements of our country’s nationalist deposit. (2006, p. 32).

4 Greek classicism was also a central theme in Fascist performances outside Greece, such as Germany and Italy. Patrizia Veroli characterizes Greek classicism as an “obsessively recurrent theme” within Mussolini’s politics and she explains that “this is how the great topos of Greek classicism, which had provided a legitimizing context to choreographic modernity, was retrieved and simultaneously corrupted” (2006, p 59).

5 This reference to cynicism is important since, belonging to an avant-garde which ‘traditionally’ kept a critical stance towards similar economic and political events, tied to state interests, as well as towards any essentialising attempt to define such ambiguous notions, as that of ‘Greekness’, Papaioannou made an effort to justify his choice. He said, “the cynical view is something I have almost studied. I can also see the other side. It is a matter of choice how I will look at things” arguing that it is easier to criticise than to create and that while a critical stance is usually necessary and productive, there are times (like in the Olympics) that one has to maintain a positive stance and act (in Kormaris, 2003 pp. 38, 40).

6 Interviewed by Vena Georgakopoulou, Papaioannou said “Above all was Art —with capital A. We didn’t choose to represent anything from historical periods. We only chose to animate art works, which condensed in their form the energy and scent of each era. There was not a single image which did not come out of a painting, a mosaic, a fresco, a statue or an old, black and white artistic photograph” (2004, p 20).

7 These were also the most ‘western’ features of ancient Greece, connected to Reason and anthropocentrism, appearing directly opposed to he ‘typical oriental’ concepts of excessiveness and theocracy, diminishing of the individual. While these claims are accurate when comparing for example the architectural styles and social structures of (ancient) Greece and (ancient) Egypt, they nonetheless promoted the alleged Western-ness of Greek antiquity as oppositional to an under-valued image of ‘orientality’. For the same purpose, other ‘oriental’ expressions of ancient Greece related to excessiveness, such as the Dionysian cults, were less emphasised within traditional Eurocentric History. Still, much like similar customs today that appear evasive of the established ethics and norms, these cults functioned as contextualised outlets for individual and social agitation. What is more, they are also part of the much-praised anthropocentrism and celebration of the individual in its imperfection that glorified Greek antiquity.

8 Turner (1997), defines postmodernism as “critical scepticism in relation to grand narratives” (1997, p. 18), as well as “an approach to parody, irony, simulation and other forms of reflexivity in literary devices” (ibid, p. 16). I characterise Papaioannou’s commentary on the national grand narrative that he also presents in the ceremony as post-modern, because of his engagement with irony, parody and satire as a means of reflexivity and as a critique of the same narrative that he selectively engages with. I further analyse this idea in the following chapters.

9 I could confidently recognise two scenes from coffee and ouzo television advertisements.
This refers to its ambiguous ‘modernity’ and unstable place within the ‘West’, as well as to more pragmatic challenges, such as the constant re-negotiation of the nation’s borders with Turkey, especially at times of international turbulence in the geographic wider area. The uncertainty that such conditions invoke is often counter-balanced at ‘nationally important’ moments, by a boosting rhetoric, such as Kostalas’s commentary.

It was also during her time as Minister of Culture that the query for the return of the Elgin Marbles from the British Museum to Parthenon begun in earnest.

In his article the wolf and the lamb: the rhetoric of abuse, Umberto Eco comments on the value of captatio benevolantiae and malevolantiae in rhetoric, as means of social persuasion within different forms of political rule (2006, pp. 64-89). He argues that in social systems based on public concession (as in democracy), captatio benevolantiae is a necessary ‘strategy’ in order to attract the audience (or possible voter) and gain their consensus. The case of the Olympic ceremony falls in this category.

He studied painting under the tutorship of Greek painter Yiannis Tsarouhis and “started exploring the world of contemporary dance in 1983 performing with the groups Analia, Small Dance Theatre and La MaMa”, which invited him to New York, where he attended Butoh workshops and trained in Erick Hawkins’s studio until 1986 when he returns to co-found Edafos Dance Theatre with dancer Angeliki Stellatou (Papaioannou in Gregoriou, 2004, p. 231).

Yiannaras here refers to Byzantium as the basis for any analysis of Modern Greek identity, which was shaped during the Byzantine era, as well as during the Ottoman occupation. Yiannaras suggests that the understudy of these periods resulted in an inability to organically link the present with antiquity, as a direct connection (an ‘aerial bridge’) is impossible without a thorough acknowledgement of these intermediate periods and their contribution to the local culture. For this the study of folk culture is a crucial (and also political) issue, and will be thoroughly discussed in Part 3.

Levidi, (1992, pp. 109-112). Similar concerns have been also expressed by anthropologist Irene Loutzaki, as well as earlier, by Eva Palmer-Sikelianou, Koula Pratsika, Vassos Kanelos.

There are plenty examples from Orientalist Ballets and early modern dance performance, which would not be accepted today out of their initial context as revivals/reconstructions of dance history.

The title was inspired by S. L. Foster’s Dances that Describe Themselves (2002).

Even though today the appeal of this shadow theatre is not as wide as before, the comical episodes of his adventures have been for many years a favourite spectacle of the children and Karagiozis is still recognized today as a characteristic Greek figure. He is a local symbol of survival, against all odds.

The depiction of young sailors and men in their military outfit, as well as of scenes from kafeneia (traditional street cafes) and taverns are trademarks of Tsarouhis’s work, which has been typified by these non-heroic and humble depictions of Greek men in everyday-life moments.

In the introduction of Orientalism, Said challenges the common-place academic division between ‘scientific objectivity’ and the (non-scientific) ‘political subjectivity’ (1995, pp. 9-15).

The term is borrowed from Appadurai (2000) and shall be discussed in Part 4, in relation to ‘primordialism’ and modernity.

I use the term ‘nationalism’ in its totalitarian sense, as defined in the introduction.

This is not to suggest a complete apolitical national homogeneity and concession, nor a total discrimination of nationalist expressions (which have lately gained a new ‘stigma’, classified together with any national reference as ‘primordial’ by many modern historians). It is rather suggestive of a general climate which ‘eased in’ the Olympic Games.

This is suggestive of the regime’s close connection with American politics and partially explains the combined hatred towards nationalist expressions and transnational (American) political liaisons expressed by the Left, the years after the Junta. Slogans against the NATO, demanding the ‘removal’ of American military bases from Greece were also central in the initial political speeches (1974-1981) of Andreas Papandreou (former president of socialist party PASOK).

Even though at the time, the term was not as stigmatised as it is today.

See also Loukas, 1991 “on the role of the ancient Greek fantasy in the ethnosocialist ideology” (Virus, 2004, p. 54).
Mainly applies to men: the focus is on masculine eroticism rather than female sexuality as in the traditional orientalist model.

The Closing Ceremony is more thoroughly discussed in Part 3.
Part 2
The art of Historicising: representing the National Self, dancing history.

The historicising of a national narrative reinforces the ties between a nation’s members, distinguishes it from others and justifies its sovereignty on the basis of a shared history and culture assuming both a common past and a common future. In Greece, this historicising of the Self has been mainly formulated in relation to the ‘West’. I argue that Greece holds a peculiar position, which stands both in and out of the ‘West’, and which has shaped its political and cultural discourses on identity. Part 2 discusses the interaction of western exoticism, idealisation, and engagement with Greek antiquity in the definition, evaluation and performance of ‘Greekness’, with specific reference to dance. This relation has not always been clear or straightforward, with a number of other internal and external political factors playing along, such as the need for separation and differentiation from the East and the Ottoman rule, in the nineteenth century, the nationalist introspection that followed the disastrous expedition in Asia Minor, in the early twentieth century, and the collapse of the vision of a revived expanded Greece, as well as the periodical opposition to the West. Nonetheless, it has always been the most definitive underlying current. Finally, as a further insight into the identification of ‘historicisation’, as a choreographic strategy within the Opening Ceremony, this part focuses on the political economy and socio-cultural underpinnings of this means of representation, examining its weight in the national discourse on identity, as well as its correlation to the local arts.
Chapter 4
In-between the ‘Orient’ and the ‘Occident’: Greece on the periphery.

4.1 Discussing exoticism and auto-exoticism
The investigation of the ‘exotic other’ is not new to social and humanities studies. Issues related to exoticism and auto-exoticism, Orientalism and Otherness are crucial to post-colonial, post-Marxist, socio-political and anthropological studies. This concept of the mysterious, appealing and ‘primitive’ exotic Other as formed during the colonial era reflects the very heart of a western-centric perception of the world order and hierarchy. According to Savigliano,

exoticism is a way of establishing order in an unknown world through fantasy; a daydream guided by pleasurable self-reassurance and expansionism … Perhaps all people have practiced exoticism of one kind or another, but Western exoticism accompanied by worldwide imperialism has had the power to establish Eurocentric exoticism as a universally applicable paradigm.

(Savigliano, 1995, p. 169)

The crucial issue therefore is power. Even though everybody may have practiced exoticism at some point, Western exoticism has been universally accepted and established: a palm-treed sandy beach is considered ‘exotic’ and may be described as such not only by a Western traveller but also by the local people, who might have lived near that beach all their lives. In that way, as Savigliano implies, ‘exotic’ has become a synonym for non-western, rather than for ‘different’, or ‘outside’, as its western-centric content has been accepted and used as such, both by westerners and ‘others’. While discussing Orientalism, Edward Said argues that Europe—or ‘the West’—has represented the Orient only because it had the power to do it in a dense and systematic way. Through the (mainly) colonial experience, the “West was able to manage and even produce the Orient politically, socio-logically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively, during the post-Enlightenment period” (1995, p. 3). Furthermore,
Said underlines that “The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony” (1978, p. 5). He borrows the term *hegemony* from Gramsci, to describe “a form of cultural leadership” and he argues that “it is hegemony, or rather the result of cultural hegemony at work, that gives Orientalism” (or exoticism in general), its “durability and strength” (Ibid, p. 7).

Hence, the strength of such powerful ideologies and/or cultures lies in their assimilation of a number of popular (mis)conceptions and behaviours, which grants them, not only a wide public consensus, but also a distinct internal coherence and durability. Orientalism, or western exoticism, elaborated on pre-existing stereotypes and popular ideas about the Other(s) and gave them a clear definable shape, contextualising and justifying them within a wider colonialist ideological scheme. The threading and interlacing of often nebulous, and even semi-conscious ideas, fears and popular beliefs, can create a powerful web, such as the orientalist discourse, with profound socio-cultural implications that are often hard to trace (let alone to eliminate). At the same time, the European colonial experience gave to this discourse a pragmatic dimension, which added to its establishment as an authoritative and ‘objective’ documentation of globally applicable ‘natural’ laws and ‘truths’. In fact, Said emphatically notes that there has been a continuous and considerable material investment in this “created body of theory” and practice, turning it into a system of knowledge about the Orient, which strengthened, multiplied and promoted the orientalist ideas into the general culture.

The “Orient” therefore appears as “an integral part of European material civilization and culture”, while Orientalism “expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles” (Ibid, p. 2). This “European invention of the Orient” was not merely a product of imagination, as it was based on very real facts and experiences from Europe’s (mainly colonial) encounter with the Orient. In addition, when a hegemonic culture, such as colonial western-centrism, has been ideologically, culturally and materially supported, promoted (and at times even imposed) by
authoritative institutions, large scale publications and a pragmatic governing political and economic reality, it has the potency to become authenticated and even 'naturalised' as a cross-cultural/cross-national Truth or fact. Although the twentieth century has been characterised by an international cry for freedom and national independence, which signalled the end of the European, mainly at that point British and French, world domination, many of colonialism's core features and hegemonic ideological streams are still influential.

As an expression of the sovereign colonial ideology, orientalism -and exoticism in general- has provided the base of a number of classifications and divisions (such as East and West, developed and developing, or First, Second and Third World economies, nations and cultures), that are still valid today. Again as Said and Savigliano point out, these classifications are not merely imaginative as they are further supported by both a very real and systematic western foreign policy, as well as by a solid institutional/scholarly and material substructure. As Said explains "what we must respect and try to grasp is the sheer knitted together strength of the Orientalist discourse, its very close ties to the enabling socio-economic and political institutions, and its redoubtable durability" (1995, p. 6). In addition, the neo-colonial politics, with America's world's 'guardianship' being the most prominent, of the post-colonial era (since the end of World War II) have created new alliances and oppositions, which are however still based on these same classifications.

The unequal dichotomisation of the world into the 'postnational, civilised' Occident and the 'primordial, under-developed' Orient still forms the base of today's world order. The core features and various manifestations of this scheme have been decisive in the way most of the 'under-developed' or 'emerging' countries chose to re-discover, re-interpret and re-construct, and finally to re-present their national character to the (western?) world. Within this process, it seems that (auto-) exoticism has played a significant role. The colonial culture, with its morals, ethics, and political ideological positionings, can still be located in the very heart of today's 'global culture' and world order, as well as in very specific cases of highly localised (or nationalised) cultures and subcultures.
Within dance studies, Martha Savigliano’s *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion* deals with issues relating to the endurance of colonial ideologies, examining the impact of imperialism on post-colonial Argentinean tango and by extension, on post-colonial Argentinean self-identification. Being a national symbol and at the same time one of the most popular ‘international’ ballroom dances, tango is analysed with specific reference to its ‘exotic’, or exoticised and auto-exoticised character. Likewise, other writers and dance scholars have explored similar issues, through the study of particular dance practices. It seems, however, that exoticism is often examined through its implications for traditional and/or folk dances from the Orient and the former colonies. The majority of the related dance literature is concerned with the (auto-) exoticisation and staging of such dances (within their place of origin as well as in their transnational formations), as well as ‘Oriental’ themes within Western concert dance. In contrast, there seems to be a comparatively limited bibliography dealing with the implications of exoticism in the adoption of western concert dance within non-Western cultures. In both cases, however, it is the interaction (however unequal this relationship may at times be) with the Other, which re-directs the national imaginings and re-defines the profile of the National Self.

Said argues that “European culture gained its strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self” (1978, p. 3), as the Orient has long been a “cultural contestant and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other”, which functioned as a “contrasting image, idea, personality, experience” (Ibid, p. 1,2). Similarly to Savigliano’s analysis, Said’s interpretation of the Other is focused on its contrasting qualities as a reflective image of a negative and surrogate self. However, this is the constructed image of an Other according to “our” (in that case meaning western) standards, interests, desires and rules. Hence, what defines the Other is its inability to impose itself, its set of rules and ultimately its own perception of the Self and the Other. According to Professor Grigoris Pashalidis,
cultural identity is constructed within the context of a symbolic antagonism of a community with its Important Others, in a reflective, self-defining and self-preserving act, which draws on the historical experience and cultural repertory of the community, but (operates) in accordance to the conditions on symbolic hierarchy and evaluation, as set by the kind of antagonism that faces. Hence cultural identity consists of a symbolic claim, within the terrain of the Other forming an interrelated agonistic and dialogic act.

(Pashalidis, 2000, p. 81 –translated by the author)

Within Pashalidis’s text, the notion of the Other appears slightly shifted from Savigliano’s model, as his argument deals with a community’s ‘important’ or semantic Other. The Other in this case is the one who possesses the power to set the terms and conditions upon which conflicting identities are constructed and thus, to return to Savigliano’s paradigm, Argentina’s semantic Other would be the colonial ‘West’. In that sense, within Modern history, the ‘West’ appears as the semantic Other, not only for the majority of post-colonised nations but for a growing number of ‘less powerful’ societies, which position and identify themselves in relation to it. In the case of Greece’s Modern history, the role of the defining ‘Important Other’ was gradually transferred from the ‘East’, as represented by the Ottoman Empire (later Turkey) to the ‘West’ and yet, its cultural identity is still defined through an ‘agonistic and/or dialogic act’ with both the ‘East’ and ‘West’. Nevertheless, the ‘symbolic hierarchy and evaluation’ system, which provided the skeleton for the development of this Modern identity was set and defined by the ‘West’.

4.2 Locating Greece as an exoticised exoticiser: in-between ‘East’ and ‘West’.

The implications of the colonial construction of the ‘exotic other’ have been intensively experienced not only by the two directly opposing parts (of the Coloniser and the Colonised), which constituted the colonial world, but also by a number of peripheral cultures of which Greece is one. The cultures that had neither a direct nor an active involvement in the colonial history, can be
described as peripheral, and still, they might have played an important—however indirect—role in the colonial perception of the world order. In the case of Greece, this role consists of the indirect contribution of Greek antiquity (as perceived by the West), to the colonial ideology, which provided the base for a number of western ideas about ‘classical’ socio-political and aesthetic values. On a different level, Greece’s involvement appears more direct, through the commercial transactions (and consequent political dependency) of the Greek bourgeoisie with the West during the colonial period. Finally, even though for the peripheral cultures the impact of the colonial era was felt and absorbed from a remote position, its implications have often been decisive on the way these cultures have been re-defined and (auto-) identified as parts of the contemporary world. As political historian Nikos Svoronos writes:

the starting point for every sociological analysis of Greece is indeed, the fundamental fact that the bourgeois classes initially developed under the force of the economic activity in the Eastern Mediterranean, by western powers, on which they remain closely dependant, and that (takes place) within a space whose relations with the central economies of western capitalism have the character of an economic, if not directly political, colonialism.

(Svoronos, 1999, pp. 9-25 –translated by the author)

Svoronos’s comment on the importance of the colonial impact on the socio-political and economic structure of Modern Greece underlines the significance and intensity of colonialism within a typically ‘neutral’ or not-directly-involved peripheral space. Furthermore, it highlights the perplexity of the dual role of Greece within the colonial discourse as a colonial ally/supporter and colonised. Notwithstanding its contribution to the reinforcement of the colonial ideological and/or economic and political authority, however indirect, Greece’s position in relation to ‘the central economies of western capitalism’ was (and many, like Svoronos, would argue that still is) that of an ‘economically, if not directly politically’ colonised country. Taking into account the endurance, intensity and extensiveness of western colonialism, it becomes apparent that its implications were not just confined within the space of the former colonies, as they can
easily be traced, not only within the space of the western colonisers, but also within that of the peripheral ‘detached’ nations.

While discussing primordialism, Arjun Appadurai suggests, “In raising the issue of the postnational” one has to “extend the sphere of the postcolony, beyond the geographical spaces of the former colonial world”. And he continues arguing “the journey from the space of the former colony...to the space of the postcolony is a journey that takes us into the heart of whiteness” (2000, p. 159). Taking that thought further, one could argue that the journey from the space of the former colony to that of the white, western, former coloniser, passes through a number of ‘intermediate’ or peripheral countries. As the sphere of the postcolony becomes more inclusive, extending from the former colony to the ‘heart of whiteness’, it stretches over spaces that belong neither to the former colonised or colonising world, and are often far from the (western?) heart of whiteness. It is often within these ‘in-between’ societies, where expressions of Western colonial culture, such as the notion of the ‘exotic other’ have had an even more complex impact than on the former colonies. In the case of Greece, exoticism actually had a strong influence on the formation or re-formation of its socio-political and cultural life.

It is important to keep in mind that the terms ‘in-between’ or ‘intermediate’ countries are not here to suggest a specific geographical spatial, racial or religious intermediation between the non-white former colonies and the ‘white’ West. Their intermediary character rather lies in their role and positioning within the international political scene, as well as in their internal collective imaginings and socio-political affairs. The terms are thus more closely relevant to intermediate economies and political affiliations, as well as constructions of national identities, through their particular relations to the (post-) Colonial or Imperial West. In Greece, the idea of a cultural intermediation between East and West, appears quite often in various texts.

The history of western political and economic interference in the affairs of these countries is different from that of the former colonies. The difference lies not so much on the intentions, as on the level of intensity and the emergence of these
interferences. Even though western foreign politics oriented towards the less powerful countries may have had the same starting point, there has been a difference in the methods engaged each time —diplomatic and political interference was chosen in the non-colonised countries, instead of military action. Still there have been times when military action and violence substituted diplomacy.\(^{15}\) Another important element is the unstable positioning and the changing roles of the West within these people’s realities and consequent imaginings.

Not having a clear, long-term direct opposition with the Imperial West, unlike the peoples of the colonised world,\(^ {16}\) the collective self-imaginings of these peripheral nations have been accordingly ambiguous. The (ideological and/or active) shifting between any of the two opposing worlds (of the coloniser and of the colonised) have led to subsequent occasional identifications with either of those, according to the ethnic, national —or personal— realities, expectations and needs of different times. This has resulted in historical overlaps of intense transitional periods of co-existing conflicting currents. The frequency of these periods is negatively analogous to the level of regularity and solidity of a society’s ideological and political identity, resulting in a complex and multi-layered sense of self-identification and consequent construction of self. This intricacy can also be traced within the artistic and cultural affairs of these countries, as expressed in specific periods.

In the case of Greece, the role of the West has changed back and forth, from that of a supporting ally, saviour and liberator, to that of a foreign oppressive power within a few decades.\(^ {17}\) This has resulted in an in-consistent ideological positioning towards the West, its politics, its morals, values and culture. Yet this is not an accidental positioning as it is usually responsive to real facts and circumstances. It is important here to note that whether the West is seen as a democratic and helpful ally, or as an imperialistic power it is always perceived as The Power. The reference point has mostly been the West (I am only discussing Greece’s modern history as in the past the defining Other had occasionally been the ‘eastern’ Ottomans or, further back, the Persians, etc). It is often the opposition to, or the identification with Western society and culture.
that accordingly provokes counter-national or cultural imaginings, while in the case of Greece it also provided the ground for local imaginings and constructions of social class and status (Filias, 1985). Still, whether its politics and culture are resisted, or admired and followed, the prestige of the ‘powerful West’ lies, in the world’s consciousness, far above those of the colonised—and therefore less powerful, less admirable and thus lower-valued—cultures.

The value of western culture within the Greek consciousness is much higher than that of its politics, which is very often disputed not so much by the government as by the Greek people. In that way, one could argue that there is a quite clear and consistent negative ideological positioning towards western (and mainly Anglo-American) external politics while at the same time its culture (especially the arts and sciences) is widely accepted and respected. This complex identification and positioning is also relevant to the particular circumstances under which the Greek bourgeoisie has been formed and developed, as well as on its distinct role within the country’s economic and political affairs. The value of western culture in the consciousness of the non-western countries is of extreme importance as it affects not only this culture’s international status but also its authoritative influence on the morals, ethics, cultural and social values and aesthetics of these countries, with obvious effects on their development and structure.

The term ‘non-western’ can be very problematic when used to describe Greece, which is a European ‘western’ country. However, it is this ‘in-between’ positioning of Greece that is of extreme importance here. Again, the crucial difference lies in the collective self-imaginings of the Greek people rather than the official governmental line. Even though the latter has always been western-oriented and usually dependent on British or American policies and guidelines, there is a strong resistance from the people who often see the West (and mainly its politics) as an alien—often objectionable—force. Greece is a typical example of an ‘intermediate’ country. As part of the Ottoman Empire for almost four hundred years, and through a long-term economic and cultural exchange with the Arab world, Greece has both strong affiliations and rivalries with the East. Its geographical positioning in the Balkans and the religious and political
bonding with Eastern Europe has resulted in an additional socio-cultural network, which has historically played a significant role in the country’s self-identification.

Already since the years of the Byzantine Empire and especially from the end of 15th century A.D., Russia was seen as a political ally. This positioning was established through a series of diplomatic acts but also unofficially through a long-term political and commercial exchange with the Greek populations of Asia Minor (especially in Caucasus and around the Black Sea -Koromila, 1993). During the Russo-Turkish wars (1711 and later again from 1768), Russia was seen as a liberator, co-fighter in the Greek struggle for freedom. During the Revolution of 1821 and the years that followed the Greek independence, Russia was established within the Greek imagination (together with the U.K. and France) as an authorised patronising power that would help the national regeneration (Sfuroeras, 1991, pp. 125-127). Moreover, Greece’s relationship with its neighbouring Balkan peoples has been established through cultural exchange, while the political relations with many Balkan countries (like Bulgaria and Albania and later the FYROM) have historically been extremely turbulent.

The Byzantine Empire, which included most of these areas, has been a strong historical, religious and cultural reference point for modern Greece and the hope of its revival (as expressed at specific periods) left a deep imprint on its modern political history, with a dramatic impact on the realities and collective imaginings of the Greeks. Another important aspect is the political bonding of the Greek communist party with the former USSR, which for many years provided a political and ideological model. This bonding is also particularly significant for an understanding of the positioning of the left-wing Greek working class and intellectuals, which have been decisive on the formation of a Modern Greek identity.

Furthermore, being part of continental Europe and through a series of economic and political treaties with the Western world, Greece is classified under ‘Europe’. The Greeks had turned to the West (England and France) during the
years of the Turkish rule in order to gain recognition as an enslaved nation and diplomatic as well as military support for their struggle. The same attitude continued even after the Revolution of 1821 and the years that followed Greek independence, in order to acquire political and financial support (It is significant that the formation of three major political parties, as the English, the French and the Russian-loving one, led to the final predominance of the English party). Since then, Greece has joined the Allied Forces in World War I and II, NATO, the European Community and more recently the EU, establishing its positioning in the West. Therefore, it is now situated on the side of the 'developed' Western economies.

Even though the identification with the West does not come solely from these political or economic arrangements, they have played a significant role in it. In fact these arrangements have defined the dependency level of Greek economy, which is heavily based on international loans and aid-parcels, as well as on its commercial transactions with the world's powerful economies. These conditions affect not only the country's official positioning within the international political scene, but also its level of autonomy and its status within it. Thus, even though modern Greece is undoubtedly a part of Europe, its prestige (if not its 'privilege' of standing shoulder-to-shoulder to the 'developed West') is mainly justified in its historical past rather than on its contemporary presence.

The sciences, arts and humanities of Greek antiquity are believed to form the foundations of contemporary western civilisation, thus placing Greece on 'this' side of the world. Said considers two ancient Athenian plays, *The Persians* of Aeschylus and "the most Asiatic of all the Attic dramas" Euripides's *Bacchae* to be the first Orientalist texts. He actually concludes his analysis of the texts explaining:

> Two aspects of the Orient that set it off from the West in this pair of plays will remain essential motifs of European imaginative geography. A line is drawn between the two continents. Europe is powerful and articulate; Asia is defeated and distant.

(Said, 1978, p. 56-57)
In that way, he is clearly positioning Greece on the side of the western Orientalists, to be drawing the first imaginary line between East and West. He also suggests that the purpose of most travellers, historians and geographers in classical Greece and Rome was to prove the ‘superiority’ of European civilisation over the East, promoting various subdivisions “separating races, regions, nations and minds from each other”. For Said, these early accounts with the Orient formed the basis of the Western perception of the non-western world.

However thorough this analysis is, it overlooks some important aspects of the situation. For long historical periods Greece has been closer to the East than to Western European cultures, even though the economic and political transactions of the last two centuries have positioned it within the latter. As part of the Eastern Roman (later Byzantine) Empire, Greece was attached to the East during the crucial years of (western) European self-identification and empowerment. According to Greek historian Nikos Psiroukis, the stereotypical division of the world into West-East was an expression of the Western-European “collective egocentrism” as formed during the years of the early Middle Ages. During these encounters with the East, the Greeks and the Arabs were positioned in the Orient, as “atheists” (1992, p. 13). This belief, which was heightened during the peak of European feudalism, was later expressed in practice with the crusades that targeted the Byzantine Empire, as well as the biblical lands of the Arabic world. In 1204 A.D. the Crusaders conquer and occupy Constantinople, the capital of Byzantine Empire. It is believed that the fall of the Byzantium to the Ottomans, in 1453 came as a result of its internal political problems, but mainly because of its weakening after numerous attacks and a short term domination (from 1204 A.D. and for thirty years) by the Christian Crusaders [Nomikos in Psiroukis (1992, p. 13), Maalouf, (1983) and Delanty, (1995)].

Moreover, after the fall of Constantinople (in 1453 A.D.) and for the following four hundred years, Greeks remained under Turkish occupation and therefore in the western consciousness as another part of the (very ‘oriental’) Ottoman Empire. In fact, the greatest concern and struggle of the European Philhellenes and Greek intellectuals, already in the years that preceded the National
Revolution of 1821, was the establishment of Greece as a distinct nation within western conscience and its differentiation from the Turkish-populated provinces of the Ottoman Empire. These first attempts for a recognizable and generally accepted definition of Greekness mainly focused on the re-connection of modern Greek culture with its classical antiquity. For that, a romanticized emphasis was given to the coherence and continuity of the popular language and folk traditions of the Greeks, which functioned as living proofs of such connection, in the eyes of the Western Philhellenes.

The tendency for differentiation and self-definition can be traced within the Greek populations of the Ottoman Empire, who located their ethnic origins in their sharing of a common religion and language, as well as on communal moral and social practices. Those elements created a web, which somehow worked as a referential basis and at the same time as a connective tissue for both the wealthy and often well-positioned bourgeois Greeks of Asia Minor and the poor agricultural populations of the mainland, despite the growing pressure for religious and cultural assimilation by the Ottoman State. In that way, Greek national feeling was moulded around a cultural, rather than racial or territorial, distinctiveness. Through language and religion the awareness of a shared past – located so much in the arts, sciences and literature of ancient Greece, as well as in the cultural and religious traditions of the Byzantine Empire – created a ‘core of Greekness’, which was reinforced and projected – to both Greeks and westerner foreigner alikes – during the period of the National Regeneration.

Still, what appeared as an urgent priority, both during the Revolution and after the establishment of the first autonomous Greek state, was the nation’s recognition by the West as an independent, non-oriental state. At a time when the orientalised contemporary Greeks were completely disassociated from their pre-Ottoman historical past even by Western intellectuals, archaeologists and scholars with great interest and respect for Greek classicism, the re-connection with the widely recognized ‘western’ antiquity was thus essential to provide the Greek people with a certain level of ‘westernness’ that would justify their independence struggle against a – now differentiated – Eastern or Oriental power. In fact, this dis-orientalisation or Europeanisation syndrome (together with its
reactive ethnocentric or orientalist forces) has haunted the whole of the country's modern political history, adding to the complexity or even 'inconsistency' of the Greek self-identification. This 'westernisation' was achieved through the modern nation's re-connection with its antiquity.

The weight of the connection between ancient and modern Greece via their 'westernism' was also made between a number of European and American articles on the 2004 Olympic Opening Ceremony. The post-show praising articles persistently connect the Ceremony's 'contemporary triumph', with the 'greatness of antiquity'. Hence, Italian journalist Antonio Ferrari writes regarding the ceremony that "the power of antiquity astonishes the world", while, commenting on the delayed completion of the infrastructural works, American journalist Lora Vexi writes "we cannot underestimate the people who managed to build Parthenon and assume that they cannot construct a few stadiums and streets" (in Abatzis, 2004, p. 6). In that way, contemporary competence and modernity, as 'western' virtues, are identified with ('western') antiquity and in fact are attributed to it. Within that scheme, all other 'dubious' eras are excluded. One could not however disregard the intermediate historical periods, which have been of great importance in the formation of the Greek identity. Greece, as a Christian European country is today distinguished from the Islamic world and the East, but at the same time its culture and ethics are often perceived as 'oriental', or as 'intermediary' between East and West, even though officially (and politically) its international status lies much closer to the West. As Andersen suggested

The Greeks should always remember that their country is the one that bridges the East with the West and it is their duty to maintain every oriental ornament.

(Andersen in Tsarouhis, 1986, p. 268 –translated by the author)

This idea of Greece being a 'bridge' between East and West, has been often expressed not only by western, but also by ('oriental') Arab, and Greek writers, poets and scholars, such as the Nobelist poet Odysseus Elytis. In a verse from his most celebrated poem *Axion Esti* (3, ΣΤ'), Greece is also depicted as floating...
between Asia and Europe, only touching each of them, as it stands alone in the sea (Elytis, 2002, p. 150). In a different tone, reviewing the Olympic Closing Ceremony, Georgousopoulos referred to the depiction of folk customs, as “the root and fruit of a people, who merged creatively the tree of the East with the fruits of the West” (30.8.2004, p. 7). Similarly, when interviewed by Yorgos Karouzakis on his musical direction of the Olympic Opening Ceremony, composer Yorgos Koumentakis said “for the synthesis of all music parts, I tried to figure what the Greek space is, which connects three continents, the East and the West” (2004, p. 20). For most Greeks the Orient has not traditionally been as distant or alien as for the rest of the West while their identification with one or the other varies according to the subject matter and the historic-political time period. In an article titled Travellers: Images of Greece, historian Aikaterini Koumarianou writes about western travellers in “our East”, meaning Greece (2002, p. 4). The term καθ’ημας Ανατολη [our (side of) East] is a set term, commonly used within Greece, to refer to the whole of contemporary Greece, as well as to the former Greek-inhabited coast of Asia Minor.

However ‘western’ Greek antiquity may be considered, it seems that this western character was constructed and established in a later historical period. Moreover, while the Roman Empire is always perceived as western, Greece is often examined as an indirect influence to contemporary western civilisation, as filtered through Rome. In fact Roman civilisation is often perceived as a mediator between the (ancient) Greek and (contemporary) western culture. Brunschwig (in Droit, 1992, p. 47) suggests that even though the Romans can claim a direct relation with the Greeks, “we (westerners) are only indirectly their heirs, as the heirs of their heirs”.24 In his article under the title: The invisible mediators: between the Greeks and us, the Romans and the Arabs, Brague points out that the Islamic world “is in its own way, an heir of the (Greek) Antiquity. And it is a completely legal heir” suggesting that some of its aspects “might in fact be even more ‘ancient’ than our western world” (Brague in Droit, 1992, p. 31). In addition, much of the ancient Greek civilisation was transmitted to the West, not directly through the Romans, but to a great deal through Arab (and Byzantine) scholars, contributing greatly to the European Renaissance. (Maalouf, 1983, Delanty, 1995).
Returning to Said's text, it would be inaccurate to attribute the world's division (East-West) to ancient Greece, as Said proposes, as its occasional expressions of a feeling of cultural superiority over the rest of the then known world can be misleading. However exclusive Greek self-identification was in classical antiquity with the famous Πας μὴ Ελλην βάρβαρος (meaning "every non-Greek, a barbarian") it was never associated with today's West against a 'barbaric' East. In fact, the peoples of north-western Europe are hardly ever mentioned in any of the known scripts while the 'Eastern' cultures are often acknowledged with admiration and respect. However dismissive, the term 'barbarian' as a synonym to 'foreigner' first appears in the fifth century B.C. and is rooted in the traumatic experience of the Persian wars, 492-478 BC (Papadimitriou, 2000, p. 56). The fear of a complete submission to the (then extremely powerful) Persian Empire, followed by the pride for "Asia's defeat" (as expressed in the above mentioned plays), had signalled the beginning of an era of Greek 'ethnocentrism', that excluded all 'barbarians' (Dihle, 1997 and Papadimitriou, 2000). At the same time it excluded the West at least as much as the East. Even later, during the years of the Roman occupation, Greek civilisation and language was considered (by both Greeks and Romans), superior to that of the -western-Roman conquerors.

It seems therefore inappropriate to characterise ancient Greek culture as Orientalist or to attribute to it the beginnings of today's Western-centricism. The ethnocentrism of Greece in its classical period was eschewed by the peoples, cultures or territories that form contemporary Europe and thus it was not suggestive of the superiority of the West over the East. Similar 'nationalist' expressions can be found in the classical periods of other 'Oriental' civilisations, such as Egypt and China. It is however the Greek literature (mainly that of the classical period) that has been often used selectively to justify European racist, nationalist and imperialistic ideologies and policies (Droit, 1992, p. 11). It is during the European Enlightenment that Western civilisation turned to classical Greece, claiming and re-establishing an ancestral ideological lineage. Its principles, core ideas and evaluations of the world order, with an anthropocentric (and often self-centered) and scientific
'logical' explanation of the world, trace their roots back to Greek antiquity, incorporating it in western history.

Gregory Naz, Professor of Classical and Comparative Philosophy in Harvard University and director of the Greek Annex of Harvard’s Library of the Centre of Hellenic Studies in Washington, said, while interviewed by Fotini Barka on the contemporary role of ancient Greece within western thought, that it provides a way of meeting with the challenges of the contemporary era, which is seeking new answers to old questions, such as 'What does it mean to be civilised?', 'What does internationalism mean?', 'Which is the content of democracy today?', 'What does it mean to be European?', 'What does it mean to belong in the West?' (…) Greek civilisation, with the continuities and fragmentations that characterise it, offers undoubtedly an ideal historical background for the examination of these questions (…) as it is a mixture of diverse historical forces, which resists easy categorisation.

(Naz in Barka, 2007, p. 23 –translated by the author)

Naz’s thoughts on Greece and its identity, as expressed in this passage, appear in agreement with my reluctance to position Greece within a category, such as 'East', 'West', 'Coloniser' or 'Colonised', as discussed in this chapter. Greece’s misfit within Said’s inspired theorising of Orientalism, is indicative of this historical terrain of ‘mixed forces’, which has shaped its course. Nonetheless, I agree with Naz that this not easily definable, or ‘intermediate’ as I propose, character, does turn it into an interesting, if not ‘ideal’, case study, which addresses and negotiates the above posed questions, among others.

4.3 Defining ‘Orientalist’ and ‘Occidentalist’ features: following the colonial paradigm.

What I draw from this discussion of (ancient) Greece’s role within western history is an understanding of the positioning of Greece within western consciousness, as the nearest exotic Orient (or South?). It is a country that is still European (and thus more familiar than other ‘exotic’ non-European places)
and at the same time 'less European' (and thus more exotic) than Western Europe and even the U.S.A. and Canada. The comforting familiarity that western tourists experience in modern Greece is also related to their 'knowledge' of its civilisation and culture. As a part of the western historical and cultural past, Greece (as an idea rather than a geographical space) appears already 'experienced', developed and elaborated, or else understood, explained and possessed by the 'West': this scheme presents striking similarities to Said's definitions of Orientalism and its manifestations through the Western policies in the East. However, the difference that distinguishes the case of Greece from Said's 'orientalist model' of (western) knowledge-power and control over the Islamic peoples, is that Greek antiquity is considered to be western and thus it is examined -and appropriated- in a different way than the Islamic ones. It is with a feeling of nostalgia that the 'West' has approached Greece, seeking its own identity: its roots, 'truths', and its 'way home' to a past (and in that way a more primitive and yet 'purer') way of living.

Nevertheless, exoticism as applied to Greece can be differentiated from others, as it incorporates the charm of the 'other' and the proximity of 'our' (meaning western) past. This linear relationship with Greek civilisation that is well established in the West, also implies an up-down relationship as it seems that the greatness of ancient Greece was handed to the western world where it has been better understood, evolved and elaborated, reaching its ultimate stage in contemporary western civilisation. It is thus suggestive of an inconsistency and/or stillness within Greek history and culture, or even of a failure to comprehend and deal successfully with its own past. In that way Greeks, (as in other cases, Egyptians and other 'oriental' peoples), seem to be less worthy of their ancestral heritage than their 'civilised' western compatriots.

Similarly, while discussing post-colonial nationalism in India, Janet O'Shea explains that

Orientalist scholarship described Indian culture as the attenuated remnant of an illustrious but long-since decayed civilisation, locating the 'real' India in the past rather than in the present. Orientalists criticised 'the East' for
remaining fettered by tradition while 'the West' embraced change and vitality but also fetishized antiquated, hegemonic textual traditions.

(O'Shea, 2002, p. 19)

The fetishising of the oriental 'hegemonic traditions' by both 'the West' and 'the East' appears even stronger when this antiquated past has been incorporated within 'western' history. As O'Shea points out "the discovery that Sanskrit, as a progenitor of the Indo-European language group, linked India to Europe, accelerated this glorification of the past and its canonical texts" (Ibid). Similarly, the westernisation of the Greek antiquity enhanced its prestige within Greece itself.

Sharing a number of 'oriental' characteristics, such as a spiritual hegemonic ancient heritage, together with a 'western' (and therefore materially and technologically upgraded) future, modern Greeks are often hesitant when asked to locate themselves in either the East or the West. However, the location and identification of Greece's 'eastern' and 'western' features, presupposes the embracing of the orientalist division of the world into two -apparently opposing- sides. Defining Orientalism as "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the Orient and (most of the time) the Occident", Said argues that to talk of either the Orient (and/or the oriental), or the Occident, one has to accept a dichotomization of the world into two separate halves: the East and the West. Similarly, political theorist Partha Chatterjee (1986) suggests that (Indian) nationalism "retained the basic ideological tenets of orientalist thought by dividing world into 'East' and 'West', each with its characteristics", such as the "spirituality" of the first and the "material virtues" and technological advance of the latter, emphasizing the value of "their own" specific domain. In that way, the Orient seems to be situated in its glorified yet never-to-return past, while the present and future belongs to the Occident. In addition, "Indian nationalists found validity in the same aspects of Indian culture that orientalists had located as "culturally valuable" turning to their past to dignify their undeserving -according to the colonial ideology - present being (Chaterjee in O'Shea, 2001, p. 20). In a
similar way, both Greece’s ‘oriental’ and ‘western’ aspects have been detected, classified and evaluated according to the Orientalist hypothesis.

Following this classification scheme, progress and modernity appear to be exclusively ‘western’ virtues. Hence, the securing of a nation’s future, (a process that mainly refers to modernisation) requires its fundamental westernisation. At the same time, the nationalist projection of a ‘timeless Greek ideal’, focusing on the re-appropriation of Greek antiquity, falls within the ‘eastern’ sphere of the ‘ancient’ and the ‘spiritual’, while its evaluation and re-definition draws heavily from the related western literature. The concentration on both these ‘eastern’ and ‘western’ aspects is much in line with the orientalist ideology, as they share not only the orientalist division of ‘East’ and ‘West’, but also its definitions, classifications and evaluations of each side’s distinctive and significant qualities. In that way, the ultimate receiver of this attempt for national self-identification and outward projection is in both cases ‘the West’, whose confirmatory acknowledgement signals the success of the expedition, assuring the nation’s international status and prestige. Hence the profile of the Modern Greek state was developed around two legitimising axes as expressed above: the re-discovery and re-appropriation of its hegemonic past –even more elevated by its connection with western civilisation– and the modernisation/Europeanisation of its modern self.

This polarisation, which also appears prominent within O’Shea’s (2001) and Chatterjee’s (1986) remarks on the Indian nationalist discourse, as well as in Said’s definitions of Orientalism and post-colonial nationalism, is –as the authors also point out– functionally interrelated. As Paschalidis (2000, p. 79) explains, these two elements can be found in most anti-colonial, nationalist and nativist movements, as the invocation of tradition and the reconnection with it, appear organically related to the demand for autonomy. Hence, the preservation and/or recreation of tradition is not an end in itself but rather a means to legitimise the present and secure an autonomous future. For a nation like Greece, which is not securely established as ‘modern’ or ‘developed’, the validity of its identity is most often ensured by its historicisation. Greece’s positioning in between ‘East’ and ‘West’, still retains the acceptance of a
number of colonial and post-colonial standards and values that have informed the shaping of a national identity. Similarly, conceptions and performances of Greekness, as manifested through western artists have been imported and domesticated by local ones. The following chapter looks at the way 'Greek discourse' was negotiated by western dancers, choreographers and teachers at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, in order to illuminate its weight and expose the reasons for its adoption by the early Greek choreographers. More specifically, Isadora Duncan's (1877-1927) negotiation of 'Greekness', as manifested through her dances and writings, and their analysis by subsequent dance scholars (i.e. Ann Daly), is especially taken into account for its influence within the Greek space.
Chapter 5
Western constructions of ‘Greekness’: tracing Duncan’s steps.

5.1 Re-claiming history: the re-appropriation of antiquity by the early Greek choreographers.

The history of Greek contemporary dance has been closely related to the development of modern dance in the West (northern and western Europe, as well as North America) or to be more specific, to the way its different faces have been experienced and perceived by Greek choreographers. In this process of consumption, adoption and re-creation of the various movements that characterised western contemporary dance, (auto)exoticism has been a formative factor. The character of contemporary Greek dance today is ostensibly, the (changing) result of a local perception and adaptation of a foreign cultural practice. On a deeper level, it is part of a wider multi-layered network of internal national, and external hyper-national factors, which determine the core of ‘Greekness’, as well as the way Greek and non-Greek ideas, values and aesthetics are perceived, evaluated and classified as such. However, this is not to suggest a general consensus on the definitions of the term; in contrast, there seems to be a wide range of interpretations and definitions of ‘Greekness’ and most importantly, of the way Greek choreographers understand and trace it (or not), within their work(s).

The import of a foreign artistic genre, such as modern dance, within the economically wrecked and politically unstable Greek society of the early twentieth century was due to very specific socio-political conditions. These offered, for the circumstances of the period, a more-or-less fertile ground for the establishment and ‘nationalisation’ of this type of art. Within a society which desperately needed to establish its national and ‘European’ character, the new art form was introduced as a ‘local product’, returning ‘home’ in a more elaborate disguise, after having been ‘revived’ and ‘refined’ within the ‘West’. The early American and European Modern dance, as manifested mainly through Isadora Duncan’s performances and writings, and Emiles-Jaques Dalcroze’s (1865-1950) -and his students’- teachings, was perceived and promoted by the
local artists as a direct reference to the ancient Greek Orhesis and the staged presence of the chorus in Greek tragedy. Hence, the first choreographic attempts were solely directed towards the Greek tragedy. Indeed, the integration of movement and speech, the theatrical (again mainly tragic) context and the intense reference to Greek antiquity were some of the core characteristics that typified these early works.

In fact, the role of the choreographer (here also teacher, director and even mentor) was not only confined to the conception and staging of an artistically (and/or conceptually) complete performance, but more than that, in the composition (or re-construction) of a dance genre, which would convey 'Greekness'. The need for the establishment and development of a distinct national culture, which these choreographers also shared, led them to work with a combination of Greek cultural elements from different periods, (such as ways of making the costumes, as well as the use of demotic and Byzantine-inspired music etc), which suggested a coherent and continuous national historicity embedded in the dance. Through its nationalisation modern dance became acceptable in Greece as a 'serious' art form. The archaeological character of the early performances, which involved extensive study on the part of the teacher/choreographer dressed this new (for the Greek society) art form with the prestige of the 'authentic', the 'national' and the historical. At the same time, its introduction by upper-class Athenian women (such as Eva Palmer-Sikelianou and later Koula Pratsika) placed it immediately in the realms of High Art. Nonetheless, its main appeal was drawn from its reliance on classical antiquity (national and authoritative) and its association with the European/western (cosmopolitan and 'refined') 'high culture'.

Still, the 'Greek connection' that the local choreographers drew from the 'new dance', was neither completely abstract nor random. Instead of imposing a specific imaginative construction on a given form, they actually located and abstracted the underlying Greek references that were embedded within the dance discourse of the time. For a better understanding of these references that drew the attention of the Greek (bourgeois) artists, I give a brief contextualisation of the time's dance scene with reference to the specific role
and position of the 'Greek discourse' within it. The focus is mainly on the performative and conceptual paradigm of Isadora Duncan, as well as on the central European scene (especially in terms of a methodology in movement and dance education), since their appropriation and their re-interpretation of the ancient Greek ideals has been crucial for the formation of a dance education syllabus in Greece. The ‘Americanisation’ of Isadora Duncan’s dances presents a very eloquent paradigm of ‘nationalisation’ of modern dance, or better of its potential to convey and promote specific national(ist) imaginings. Duncan’s example was chosen among other similar cases (e.g. Mary Wigman’s ‘Germanisation’, or Martha Graham’s (later) Americanisation, of dance) firstly for her appropriation and usage of the ‘Greek discourse’ and her association (through her extensive referencing to Greek antiquity and her Greek-inspired dress-code) with a ‘Hellenicised’ dance style (often described merely as ‘Greek’), and secondly because of her strong impact on the first local dancers and choreographers.

In that way, the local need for reference to and reliance on antiquity to convey nationhood, becomes even more comprehensible when considering the immense power of this referencing. Its wide acknowledgment as an archetypal model (in education, political and social organisation and artistic expression, as well as on the sciences, literature, philosophical studies, and so forth) and more specifically its significance for the western dancers, who wished to validate and elevate their art. Hence, the re-appropriation, re-location and re-nationalisation of this powerful and internationally accredited discourse, was naturally appealing –and indeed necessary– not only for the establishment of Greek artists, but for the establishment of Greece itself as a sovereign nation-state, as well as of its culture as a homogeneous, distinct, ‘authentic’ and exportable commodity.
5.2 The Hellenic discourse in the turn-of-the-century western dance scene: elevating the dance.

In the late nineteenth century, theatrical dance seemed to have reached a low point in both America and Europe. After the peak of its Romantic era, ballet, until then the only dance form considered as ‘serious’ (in contrast to the ‘light’ character of the only other known concert dance form at the time, the vaudeville), had reached a point of stagnation, with its repertoire, technique and aesthetics strictly confined to recurring, untimely themes. Despite a few sporadic revitalizing ventures, timid preludes to the forthcoming triumph of its classical period, ballet “bore all the symptoms of an art about to die of exhaustion” (Au, 2002, p. 59). While this low point signalled a transition within ballet, which started ‘re-inventing’ and realigning itself with the avant-garde artistic movements of the time, it also prepared the ground for a new shift in dance creating a new form of solo dance, which was classified neither as vaudeville nor as ballet. As Nancy Reynolds notes,

some of the things that made it new were its seriousness of purpose, the use of concert music as an accompaniment, and an innovative approach to dance technique, in which the rigorous codes of ballet and the exhibitionist high kicks of the music hall played no part. There was also freedom in dress—the dancers wore loose, uncorseted garments, revealed bare limbs, and danced without shoes. Their hair was unconfined.

(Reynolds and Mc Cornick, 2003, p. 1)

The ‘new dance’, with Isadora Duncan being one of its major representatives, came to suggest an alternative (to ballet and cabaret) dance and (to Puritanism) lifestyle. Reynolds suggests that this ‘new’ dance-also called ‘aesthetic’ or, occasionally, ‘barefoot’ dance- did not appear as a rebellion against ballet, as most of its forerunners had not been in a position (at least during the dance’s formative years) “to see any ballet worthy of its name” as “the glories of the Russian repertory were an ocean away” (ibid, 2003, pp. 1,2). Still, with this remark Reynolds only refers to the American and not to the European pioneers of Modern Dance, who have actually been very much inspired and influenced in their perception of the body, rhythm and movement by European (such as
Delsarte’s and later even Dalcroze’s and Laban’s) movement theories, in their turn very much informed by the ‘ballet practices’ and aesthetics of the time.

Moreover, it is unlikely –even if those American pioneers had never watched a “worthy” (as Reynolds puts it) ballet performance– that they were unaware of ballet’s aesthetic and technical norms. In fact Duncan –already proven to have received ballet classes by a very ‘worthy’ ballerina of her time, Maria Bonfanti- (Daly, 1995) often criticised and openly condemned ‘the restrictions’ and ‘pretentiousness’ of ballet, as opposed to her own ‘natural’ and ‘free’ art. Hence, even though what the ‘new’ dance most fought against was the ‘lightness’ of the music hall dances, it also made a case to disassociate itself from the ‘overly serious’, or better the ‘conservative and restrictive’ ballet. Dance scholar Ann Daly defines Duncan’s ‘new dance’, as “forged, practically and discursively, out of three American movement traditions: social Dance, physical culture and ballet” (1994, p. 25). While the first two dance genres “contributed to the positive arguments of Duncan’s discourse” promoting dance as a “means of modelling social intercourse”, as well as, as a means to “social betterment”, she used ballet “to construct her negative argument” projecting her dance as a liberation from ballet’s constrictions in both their physical and social dimensions.

Still, in need to also disassociate themselves from vaudeville dances, many of the pioneers of the ‘new’ or ‘free’ dance sensed that in order to give their art a chance to be recognised as such by the public, they would have to further support it, providing it with a legitimising ideological and aesthetic background. As Daly notes, Duncan’s new approach to movement was, at least in the beginning, hardly even recognised as ‘dance’ (1995, pp. 22-23). For it to become acknowledged as a legitimate art form, it first had to be established as a dance and then to prove itself as a ‘higher’ or else more ‘artistic’, ‘spiritual’ or even ‘natural’ form of expression. More than that, it had to justify its revolutionary and inappropriate, for the time, character by proving its ‘moral’, ‘educational’, ‘socially valuable’ and ‘noble’ nature. The whole set of social and political values that ballet expressed till then, could only be taken by a dance
that could draw from an equal, or more prestigious set of ideological and aesthetic values.

One of the main sources of inspiration for the turn of the century dance artists such as Ruth St Denis (1879-1968), Maud Allan (1873-1956), and -the less acknowledged- Tortola Valencia (1882-1955), was the Orientalist discourse, which appears particularly strong throughout the nineteenth century. Drawing from the 'Oriental' history, mythology and even religion and culture, these artists composed extravagant 'exotic' dances responding to the popular demand for mystic and sensual exotic themes. As at that time most of the dancers were planning, managing and promoting their careers on their own, many of them made sure to advertise the 'authenticity' of their dances. The level of authenticity of a dance creation was directly analogous to its authoritative value and 'exotic' dances were often presented as results of archaeological, historical or even spiritual research. Even without claiming an accurate reconstruction of ancient dances and rituals, many choreographers, including St Denis and Valencia, supported their works by tactfully referencing museum visits, exploratory trips to the Near and Far East and extensive readings on the represented ancient civilisations. Nonetheless, the person who actually set the most elaborate career plan and managed to elevate her own persona, as well as her 'Greek' dancing to the realms of the mythic was Isadora Duncan.

However influenced by the Orientalist discourse Duncan might have been, she chose to identify herself and her art with a more proximate, and yet still exotic, civilisation which seemed even more promising in its elevating power than any other 'oriental' culture: Greek antiquity. As Daly notes, the 'Dance of the Future' was "built upon a compelling, but largely imaginative, past - specifically, the ancient splendours of the Greeks" (1994, p. 26). Similarly, many other dancers and theorists have addressed Greece as an inspirational or even referential source and yet it was Duncan's name that became a key-word in any re-search on 'Greek dance'. The turn to Greece was by no means coincidental, as "the Hellenistic tradition", as Daly puts it, "was then considered the pinnacle of genuine artistry" (1995, p. 62). The "elevated Greek discourse" (Ibid) could thus provide a solid and widely respected aesthetic and ideological
context whose legitimising power extended beyond the sphere of the arts, to those of science and politics. The rise and popularisation of the ‘new dance’, and more specifically Isadora Duncan’s celebration of ‘Greekness’, had definite social and political parameters. Moreover, the romanticised idea of a liberation from the restrictive pretentiousness and conformity of ballet (and what it socially represented) with a re-turn to a ‘purger’, or more ‘natural’ (and therefore more authoritative) way of expression, which Duncan located in the (Greek) origins of (Western) civilisation, provided an ideological dress for the ‘New Dance’, aligning it with the new liberal bourgeois ethics.

Hellenism, as a synonym to ‘classicism’ became a useful tool for the early –in their majority female– choreographers, who used it as a referential basis for their works. The characterisation of a dance as ‘Greek’ automatically classified it in a privileged category in comparison to the ‘non-Greek’, ‘non-classic’ and therefore less prestigious dances. The Hellenic discourse could purify and ennable tabooed subjects such as the display of nudity, technique-lessness and womanhood. Re-contextualising such issues by establishing a secure connection between the dance/r and, for example the a-sexual41 ‘nobility’ and ‘classicism’ of the ancient Greek nude sculptures, the audiences were guided as to how to deal with this staged non-sexual, non-vulgar and thus non-scandalising nudity. In the same way, the very idea of technique was devalued in order to signify manual labour rather than virtuosity and artistry. Ballet’s physically demanding and restrictive -and therefore ‘unnatural’- character was affirmed to be unsuitable for the spirited, expressive, ‘natural’ Greek-modelled body. Moreover, the Hellenic ideal of natural beauty and of a harmonious relationship with (the female, motherly) Nature supported the idea of a celebrated and rather essentialised womanhood.

Conversely, Ted Shawn’s (1891-1972) first all-male piece in 1916, which preceded his forthcoming group of Men Dancers in the 1930s (Au, 2002, p. 94), was called Pyrrhic Dance in reference to the ancient Greek war-dance Pyrrhios. In this case ‘Greekness’, as expressed through the healthy, athletic, masculine bodies of the male warrior-dancers, was employed to convey manliness and vigour, justifying the male presence within a –so far– female...
dominated art form. ‘Greekness’ appeared more as an ideal pan-humanistic archetype, which covered almost all aspects of human action. The undeniable validity of the Hellenic discourse was so strong as to idealise whoever/whatever managed to convey a defensible association with it. In fact, through the projection of the ‘Hellenic’ character of their individual works, a more generalised association of the ‘new dance’ with the principles of ancient Greek education came to play, expanding its elevating power from specific artists and creations, to the whole genre. What was long seen as a form of predominantly male entertainment and/or female leisure activity was now claiming its place within the artistic world as a legitimate professional occupation of artistic and social value.

In Europe the reference to the idealised Greek civilisation’ was also perceived as a validating connection. Again, body-related theories and practices, such as dancing, whose aesthetic and moral character was easily disputed, found comfort in such connection with the authoritative Greek antiquity. Emile Jacques-Dalcroze, one of the most influential teachers and theorists within the history of western theatrical dance, was also associated with the Greek antiquity and more specifically with the similarities of his key-ideas to the principles of the renowned ancient Greek education. His emphasis on the connection of music, rhythm and movement provoked associations with the ancient Greek ideals of the harmonious development of the mind and body through rhythm, music and gymnastics. This approach, which challenged the long-established schism between the body and mind within western cultures, was perceived as an attempt to rediscover and reconnect to some of the ‘long lost’ ideals of ancient Greek civilisation. It is indicative that a number of texts related to Dalcroze’s system contain direct references to (or even quotations from) Plato’s teachings. In the introduction of the second English edition of the Eurythmics, professor M.E. Sadler, praises Dalcroze for having “Reopened a door which had long been closed”, as he “had rediscovered one of the secrets of Greek education”. Such complimentary statements aimed at legitimising Dalcroze’s pioneering methods, acknowledging their authoritative power within the western academic and artistic communities (1941, p. 10).
It is worth noticing that, after a period of stagnation, ballet also turns to Greece for thematic and aesthetic solutions, first with Mikhail Fokine's and later with Vaslav Nijinsky's innovative choreographies. In a similar to Duncan's way, Fokine's first full-length ballet *Acis and Galatea* in 1905, was inspired by the 'Greek Ideal', while in 1907 he actually based the choreography of his *Eunice* on "his study of Greek vase-painting and Egyptian sculpture" (Au, 2002, p. 72).

In his *Memoirs of a Ballet Master*, he writes that "Duncan proved that all the primitive, plain, natural movements ... are far better than all the richness of ballet technique, if to this technique must be sacrificed grace, beauty and expressiveness" (1961, p. 256). As Au suggests, even though Fokine (who had seen Duncan dancing during her first visit to Russia in 1904), denied having been influenced by her, he might have been "stimulated to experiment with a freer use of arms" (Au, 2002, p. 72), or at least motivated by her 'Hellenic' orientation. Still it is debatable whether or not Duncan was his primary source of inspiration and yet her impact on his work seems to be generally acknowledged, as she seems to have given him "a tremendous jolt into a path he was already groping for" (Jowitt, 1985-86, p. 28). Nonetheless, whether these historical claims are valid or not, Fokine's shift towards the ancient—and more specifically classical—Greek culture is indicative of the time's spirit. In fact, the possibility that Duncan's performance did not precede or influence Fokine's orientation, makes an even stronger case of the specific weight and intensity that 'Greek referencing' bore at that period in both (eastern and western) Europe and America.

In his choreography for *L'Après Midi d'un Faune* in 1912, Nijinsky also wished to "evoke the flat appearance of the bas-reliefs and vase-paintings that had inspired him", as "the dancers moved in parallel paths across the stage" (Ibid, p. 83). In an attempt to support his work and rebut the spectators' claims that the flat appearance and twisted torsos of the dancers laid aesthetically closer to Egypt than to Greece, Nijinska later explained that her brother "wished to evoke archaic Greece rather than the classical Greece preferred by Fokine and Duncan" (Ibid, p. 82). In that way she both illuminated his intentions and 'secured' the authority of his work by re-positioning it on the side of the sophisticated 'Hellenism'. Even though Nijinsky "did not fall", as Jowitt
suggests, “under Duncan’s spell” he is believed to have being inspired by her free-flowing upper-body movement, as well as by her expression of ‘Hellenism’ (Fessa, 2004, pp. 183-184). Although he chose a different, probably less popular phase of Greek antiquity than the classical period, which intrigued Duncan and Fokine, it seems that the legitimising power of the ‘Hellenic connection’ had not been overlooked either by him, or Nijinska.

Even before Duncan’s international success, French scholar Maurice Emmanuel was publishing, in 1895, his book on *The Antique Greek Dance*, in which he approached and valued the ‘Hellenic discourse’ in a way quite similar to Duncan. Attempting to reconstruct the ancient Greek dances through his study of ancient statues and vase figures, Emmanuel tried to connect those movements with the ‘modern’ (meaning French ballet) dance, “by pointing out similarities and differences, thus aggrandizing a form temporarily in need of all the justification it could get” (Jowitt, 1985-86, p. 26). Seizing upon his material, in 1922, the Franco-Russian balletomane Andre Levinson protested against the “prejudices, which ranged Greek antiquity on the side of Duncan and Dalcroze in their combat against the art of ballet”, stating that they were based on a “popular misconception that had to be eliminated” (Levinson in Daly, 1995, p. 240, note 55).

The intensity of this later statement as well as of the above mentioned attempts to appropriate, or to at least align with, the Hellenic tradition shows its considerable strength as a legitimising asset. Its use (or misuse) as a validating, argumentative or even confrontational means left little space for further confutation favouring its ‘user’ with a definite primacy over the ‘non-enlightened’ ones. As Jowitt suggested, “to link something with Greece automatically dignified it” (1985-86, p. 26). In short, the Greek reference, with its undeniable prestige, worked as a proof-shield securing the art’s and the artist’s, often precarious, positioning within a solid tradition achieving their – almost prerequisite– legitimising connection with ‘Culture’, ‘civilisation’ and ‘spirituality’. In that way, the Hellenic discourse was of great value to the pioneer dancers and choreographers whose reputation and status –even within the artistic world– was always at stake.
For Duncan, “the Hellenic discourse and its corollary, that of ‘Nature’, had been enormously useful to her as a way of establishing a universal, transhistorical cultural authority for dance in America at the turn of the century” (Daly, 1995, p. 178). Duncan’s choice of Nature as her referential basis, and her denouncing of the hard work that ballet technique required was a conscious phase of her (and her dance’s) image-making. Jowitt interprets Duncan’s reluctance to rehearse in public view as a way of preserving her personal myth of spontaneous and labour-free, natural artistry (1985-86, p. 23). Duncan also repeatedly denied having had any influence from the dance techniques of her time, claiming her art to have “sprang out of the Zeus head” (Daly, 1994, p. 24). Daly also notes how “she effectively removed from (her body) any vulgar requirement for labour, which would have smacked of the working class: instead, it could be imbued with an aura of the innate –of good taste, which is, by definition, effortless” (Ibid, p. 115). Building her own myth around narratives that gave the impression of a life and art of luxury and ease, and the blessing of a ‘natural charisma’, Duncan aimed directly to an association with ‘Culture’ at a time when the term was directly related to race (white) and class (upper) and a glorified (and in that case Greek) past.

5.3 Contextualising the dance, performing politics.
At the end of the nineteenth century, dance was confined in a twofold schema, which consisted of the ‘heavy’, over-stylised ballet and the ‘light’ vaudeville scene (Daly, 1995 and Kouroupi, 1999, p. 121). In any case, dance was a predominantly female occupation. Still it was staging a submissive, manipulated femininity as expressed either through the ethereal (even though hard-working) beauty of the ballerina, or through the eroticised body of the cabaret dancer. The (female) dancer was, however, ill-reputed and dance (conceived as a mere bodily and therefore secular function) was far from a prestigious professional occupation. As Daly suggests,

By the turn of the century, the “dancer” (implicitly female, but with little distinction between the trained ballerina, the entertaining skirt dancer, and the moonlighting factory
worker-cum-chorus girl) was constructed as a highly paid, empty-headed, blonde soubrette of ill repute.

(Daly, 1995, p. 157)

The rise of the first feminist issues among the western-European and American upper and middle class women coincided with a widespread tendency for a return to nature and the spread of the ‘physical culture’ craze. The new discourses on healthy living endorsed the idea of an accordingly healthy unrestricted body for both men and women, which favoured such physical activities as the Delsarte-oriented groups and the ‘free’ or ‘artistic’ (dance) movement. It is these socio-political currents that actually prepared the ground for the appearance of such personalities as Loie Fuller, Isadora Duncan and Ruth St Denis, whom Jowitt credits as “the acknowledged foremothers of what came to be called modern dance” (Jowitt, 2000, p. 2).

These pioneers of American modern dance expressed through their artistic choices the new aesthetics and ideas, responding to needs such as the equality of the sexes, a ‘nostalgia’ for a simpler way of life and a ‘return to nature’, a longing for the ‘exotic’ unseen, or a national(ist) need for the legitimisation of a (political as well as cultural) American (or merely ‘white’ middle-class) identity. The ‘new dance’ encompassed traditional and new values offering an alternative modern and yet rooted in tradition, way of life. Loie Fuller, Isadora Duncan and Ruth St Dennis were all deviating from the established Puritan lifestyle. They engaged and celebrated new technological innovations and progressivist discourses on the free –social– body while at the same time engaging on traditional morals, values and ideological frameworks, such as the serene charm of romanticism, the orientalist discourse of the ‘civilised’ white and the ‘primitive’ (non-white) Others, distinctions between High and Low (or even ‘moral’ and ‘immoral’) art and even conventional ideas related to the ‘purity’ of motherhood and of the desexualised (as opposed to the ‘crudeness’ of the erotic) body, the ‘authenticity’ of the Natural and the nonnegotiable prestige of the Classic, that are been explicitly articulated in Daly’s reading of Duncan’s ‘body’. 
It therefore becomes apparent that this shift from the meta-romantic stylised ballet to a freer dance genre was not merely an internal matter of aesthetic or formalist artistic discourse, as it was initiated and fuelled by the mainstream social and political ideological streams and events of the time. The turn-of-the-(twentieth) century changes in the western political and social structure initiated by the new values and realities of capitalism, modernisation and industrialisation required a new dance language that could suitably express, promote or challenge the new ideas, feelings and aesthetics, as well as collective desires and needs. Drawing from the progressivist discourse, the ‘free’ and ‘liberating’ (even though in its core still conservative as Daly points out) character of the new dance came as a reaction to the restrictive, ‘old-fashioned’ structure of ballet and in extension to the old structures of Victorian morals and European conventions. At the same time, sensing the social and political changes that occurred with the new century, the ballet world was also slowly re-adjusting to the new realities, anticipating the great structural, aesthetic and thematic changes that were to mark its ‘golden age’, soon to come with the international tours of Anna Pavlova and Sergei Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes.

The rapid urbanisation and industrialisation of (north) America and (western) Europe in the late nineteenth century had generated anxiety concerning the loss of a familiar (and gradually idealised) past, an ‘unnaturally’ fast changing present and the threatening prospect of a ‘dehumanised’ future. The romantic ideal of a return to the nature, or else to the roots of (the ‘civilised’, white) humanity as expressed earlier by Jean-Jacques Rousseau regained a new vigour as an alternative to the threat of a fast growing materialist culture. These concerns can be also traced in the romantic themes and aesthetics of the Art Nouveau style, which “emphasised nature imagery and fluid, sinuous lines” (Au, 2002, p. 89). At the same time the popularisation of Darwin’s theory of evolution triggered and supported a growing socio-political interest on the human body, its agency and rights, raising new discourses on the equality of races, classes and sexes. This growing interest on body agency had naturally affected the arts with a great impact on the creation and perception of dance. For the first time dance was re-examined as an artistic (and therefore connected not
only with the material, but also with the spiritual 'body') as well as, as a social practice and educational means.

Such social agitations occurred almost simultaneously within North America and Western Europe and especially Germany where the first foundations for the development of European modern dance were set. However distinct in their styles and individual components, and through a fragmentary and yet significant interaction (Partch-Bergsohn, 1994), the two 'schools' that resulted to the formation of early German and American Modern dance shared, at least in their beginnings, a large common ground on what concerned their social and political orientation. The engagement of the Hellenic paradigm in both continents was the outcome of their similar pursuits for essentialising 'truths' in their need to legitimise and root on the 'safe' soil of History, Tradition and Natural Law specific artistic, ideological, social, political, national/ethnic and even racial identities. In a similar way, while discussing early modern dance in Spain, Professor Iris Garland describes it as "that strand of modernism before World War I that engaged European intellectuals and artists with the essential, the primitive and the exotic in a search for spiritual values during the rapid technological changes of the fin du siecle", explaining how "the myth of origins took on a new significance in the quest for universal knowledge and truth" (1997, p. 1).

5.4 Plato on stage: "The True, the Good, and the Beautiful". 53
Those pursuits led to (ancient) Greece, which in western conscience stood for Classicism, Nature, Harmony, Beauty, and Rhythm and most importantly for Culture. 54 As the acknowledged source of (western) civilisation, Greece was thought to hold the answers to the problems of (the then) modern life providing a stable and safe ground for the new dance and movement theories. A connection to such an unquestionable Culture automatically legitimised dance adding to its social prestige and elevating it from a leisure activity to a professional occupation and ultimately, a way of life.
In fact, the idea of a ‘healthy soul in a healthy body’ and the perception of (the ‘right’) movement as a way of cultivating the spirit and soul, as well as an individual and social sense of morality was rapidly growing in Europe and America. The unification of body, soul and mind and the idea of the body not as merely material, but as a “transparent representation, or ‘expression’ of the soul” (Daly, 1995, p. 128), was drawn from the ancient Greek ideal of νοῦς υγιῆς εν σώματι υγιῆ (a healthy spirit in a healthy body). This axiom has been a mainstay concept for Francois Delsarte and Emile Jacques-Dalcroze and had greatly affected the works of Isadora Duncan, Rudolf Laban and Ruth St Denis (determining the orientation of Denishawn school and company), marking the course of modern dance. This interaction was identified by Jowitt (1985-86, p. 28) as a ‘Duncan-inspired, Dalcroze-based’ formula, which has shaped the development of western dance education and performance.

The movement of Delsartism, in America, as formed and developed through the interpretation and appropriation of Delsarte’s theories was also based on the same ‘classical’ trinity of mind-body and soul. As Daly points out, Delsartean theories, as imported to America by the actor Steele McKaye and “compiled and disseminated” by the latter’s student Genieve Stebbins, provided the base for the development of a “variety of “physical culture” practices, from elocution to gymnastics to statue-posing” (Daly, 1995, p. 123). Delsarte’s system, which “in a true nineteenth-century style ... simultaneously embraced art, science and religion”, attempting through the “Principle of Trinity” to harmonise life, soul and mind through bodily movement, had a great impact in the late nineteenth-century America. Delsarte had also introduced three principles that were later adopted by many dancers and choreographers (including Duncan, as Daly suggests): the principles of succession or movement fluidity, which was based on his study of Greek statues (Jowit 1985-86, p. 24), of oppositional forces in movement and of correspondence between physical, mental and spiritual states, which were all perceived as “intimately interconnected and patterned” (Daly, 1995, p. 124). His theory was interpreted, re-interpreted and “forged originally by elocution schools and actors” and later by dance schools and teachers, eventually forming the pose-and gesture school of American Delsartism (Ibid).
In the 1890s America, Delsartism became increasingly popular not only amongst professionals but also amongst upper and middle class women, as a favourite past time. The 'statue posing', or 'living statues; moving in poses drawn “exclusively from classical Greek sculptures whose images were provided in manuals and magazines” became a mainstream trend (Ibid, p. 125). As Daly points out, Stebbins's “Delsarre matinees” had inspired Ruth St. Denis, who started her own career by defining her dance as “artistic statue posing”. It is also very likely that Delsartism, as expressed through its various formations in the numerous ‘statue posing’ classes and expression groups all over the country, had also influenced Isadora Duncan. These various activities formed ‘physical culture’, which “with the emphasis on “culture” as “self-improvement”, “artfully engaged the physical, and moral” suggesting a “natural” unbroken bond between body and soul” (Ibid, p. 127). In that way, the spread of Delsartism provided a fertile ground for Duncan’s approach to dance (Jowitt, 1985-86, p. 24).

Even though the Hellenic trend had started before Duncan, it was her name that became mainly associated with Hellenism and was followed by the numerous ‘Greek dance’ schools. Her ‘Greek dance’ paradigm dominated the western perception of what Greece and Greekness constitutes for, setting the standards upon which (or against which) later Greek (or interested in Greek dance and/or aesthetics) choreographers based their own representations or interpretations of ‘Greekness’. Daly notes that:

By the teens, as a result of Duncan’s success, dance in America meant a band of barefoot nymphs in Greek tunics and headbands, each with a knee lifted high and head thrown back, frolicking quite “artfully” around a tree or against a skyline.

(Daly, 1995, p. 102)

Also citing Duncan’s influence in both the amateurs and professionals of her time, Jowitt writes in her defence:

Duncan could not be held responsible for all the pageants and Greek games (...) for the well-meaning girls in bare feet and
bunchy tunics (...) that were, by the 1924, indispensable in displays of “natural” or “interpretive” dancing.

(Jowitt, 1985-86, p. 28)

Duncan’s ‘Hellenic’ influence was not however confined within the American borders. Discussing the British dance scene, Larraine Nicholas notes that “the ‘free’ dancers of the turn of the century, in particular Isadora Duncan and Maud Allan, had generated a similar British movement of ‘Hellenic’ dancers” (in Carter, 2004, p. 120). Similarly, while describing the (European) dancers of his time Dalcroze writes: “Dancers choose models for their attitudes among great works of sculpture or of painting and take inspiration from Greek frescoes, from statues, from paintings” (1917, p. 26). Even though many of those dancers had turned to Greece out of their own initiative, Duncan’s version of Greekness definitely affected the way this subject was treated in the subsequent years.

Duncan’s impact on the development of expressive dance in Europe and America is generally acknowledged. Therefore an exploration of some of Duncan’s basic ideas on what constitutes ‘Hellenism’, as well as what it stands for in western society and the ways it could contribute to her artistic (and often social or even political) vision seemed necessary for the aims of the present study. Even though Duncan drew many of her poses directly from ancient sculptures, vase paintings and bas-reliefs, her perception of ‘Greekness’ was largely based on secondary sources, rather than from a direct contact with Greek reality and culture. In fact, she did not visit Greece until 1903, after having already being established as a ‘Greek’ dancer. Jowitt also notes that Duncan’s “transformation” from a “solo artist, genteel nymph” to a “true bacchante” and a “great dancer … seemed to have taken place quite rapidly, with only a finishing lustre applied by the air of living Greece” and she explains that “her trip to Greece only fuelled ideas she already had” (1985-86, p. 25, 26). It thus seems that Duncan’s perception of Greekness was already shaped before her visits and staying in Athens, which just added another dimension to her pre-existent Hellenic imaginings.
As Ruth St Denis later pointed out, for Duncan, Greece was—much like the majority of the ‘cultured’ people of her time—“a state of mind”. Duncan’s inspiration was exclusively drawn from her extended visits to the Hellenic collections of the Louvre and the British Museums, as well as from translations of Greek plays, ‘classical’ Greek themed paintings, sculptures and musical compositions or essays on Greek civilization and culture. Still, as dictated by the “educated naiveté of the age ... Greek poetry, Greek philosophy, Greek architecture, Greek statues, bas-reliefs and vases were of consuming interest” (Jowitt, 1985-86, p. 26). In that way, the discovery of the real living Greece was of secondary importance, as the idealised imaginings on Greek civilisation left little space for the ‘banality’ of everyday life. Even though Duncan eventually visited Greece and attempted to set a school in Athens, she did not really deviate from that norm. All in all, she constructed a westernised and rather romanticized conception of Greece and Greekness, which became easily recognizable in the West and enthusiastically adopted in Greece.

As one of her major sources of inspiration Duncan often referred to Friedrich Nietzsche’s Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music, which she often described as her ‘bible’. Through this book she actually had the chance to be initiated on the two balancing aspects of the Dionysian and the Apollonian, which co-existed in Greek tragedy and religion. The importance of the “fierce Dionysian aspect” (Jowitt, 1985-86, p. 26) as a complementary counterpart of the—praised by her contemporaries—Apollonian serenity, was to mark her approach to dance which lead to her shift form the ‘nymph’ to the ‘bacchant’. Moreover, her extensive readings of Nietzsche, especially between the formative years of 1900 and 1905 (Ibid), inspired her idea of the rebirth of the Greek chorus; an idea that was to be adopted and persistently worked upon by the first Greek choreographers, as I shall discuss in the following chapter.

Although during her later years Duncan tried to remove the Greek stigma from her dance (ibid, p. 26) and located her sources of inspiration in the Irish folk and Native American traditions, her association with ‘Greek dance’ remained as such until today. In the International Dictionary of Modern Dance Duncan is described as an “American pioneer dancer, choreographer and teacher (...) who
toured Europe performing barefoot, free interpretations of classical Greek dance" (Berbow (ed), 1998, pp. 213-214). Greek dance scholar Nina Alkali also writes “Drawing inspiration from the ancient Greek aesthetics, Isadora Duncan had opened new routes in dance” (2002, p. 21). Similar passages can easily be found in the majority of the literature related to Duncan. Still, this connection with Greece and Greek dance was not just a construction of her numerous reviewers, admirers or audiences as it has been suggested. Duncan consciously tried to connect herself and her dance to the ‘cultured’ Greek antiquity and in her effort she has re-constructed and re-defined a Greekness that was to haunt Greek (and not) choreographers for years.

It could be argued that Duncan’s version of ‘Greekness’ was still staging a different (or more proximate) Exotic Other, re-presenting a westernised and romanticised idea of Greece. Thus her idealised Hellenism has to be examined within the wider orientalist framework, which characterised the dance (and not only) discourse of her time. As Daly observes, “After the several seasons of Indian incarnations, Salome dances and “La Loie” (Fuller) look-alikes, the ‘Greek’ dance was a welcome distraction” (1995, p. 106). The staging of a new ‘ethnic’ theme came thus as a refreshing variation to the already popular Eastern exotic themes. Greece was often re-presented – both before and after Duncan– alongside other ‘eastern’ cultures, within groups that were characterised by their long history and theorised antiquity. Even though appropriated as ‘western’ and ‘white’ and thus as familiar and proximate, the idealised Greek antiquity and its extended references in dance still formed an exotic alternative paradigm, other than the everyday (western) ‘modern’ life. Still, although Duncan must have been aware of the exotic appeal of her Hellenic references, she did not just aim for that.

What renders Duncan’s staging of ‘Greekness’ a significant point of reference for Greek dance history, is the conscious and tactful way with which it was built and used as a career plan. Even though other dancers like Ruth St Denis and Maud Allan also presented ‘Greek’ themes both before and after Duncan, in most cases these were chosen in between other ‘oriental’ or ‘exotic’ ethnic themes as to present a more diverse repertory satisfying the audience’s ceaseless
eagerness for novelty and re-innovation. The staging of Ted Shawn's *Pyrrhic Dance*, as noted earlier in the text, was actually part of a big production, which was performed in 1906 by the entire Denishawn school in an open-air Greek theatre in Berkley, under the general title *A Dance Pageant of Egypt, Greece and India*. As the title suggests, the performance included 'ethnic' pieces inspired from the above mentioned cultures arraying and juxtaposing them as to represent the Orient in a more holistic way. Thus, Greece was chosen here indiscriminately to add another perspective to St Denis's (re)presentation of the East. Duncan's turn to Hellenism was however a more conscious choice, which drew on carefully selected issues in order to construct and establish the desired self image. One of the most interesting aspects of Duncan's 'Hellenic discourse' was the parallel attempts of linking her dance to Greece, while at the same time distinguishing and 'removing' Greece from (or actually elevating it above) the rest of the 'Orient'. To secure this twofold connection, Duncan invested on Greece's most important virtue: its 'westernness', or even better, its 'whiteness': a characteristic that alone was a confirmation of cultural (and racial) inferiority.

5.5 Setting a Hellenic stage to perform the National Self(s).
As Daly explains "Duncan was interested specifically in going back to and appropriating the roots of *Western* (white) 'Culture' in the Greeks" as opposed to the "primitive" or "precivilised" state of being (and dance) she endeavoured to elevate. Duncan actually located this 'precivilised' state in the fast spreading jazz and ragtime dancing which "she regarded as a reversion to 'African primitivism'" (1995, p. 7). In that way, Duncan portrayed a notion of noble, white Americanness at a time when America's racial and cultural diversity was distorting the definition of a clear national identity. By distinguishing the (western) Greeks from the non-western (or non-white) Others according to the dominant orientalist paradigm and by linking a white, middle-class America with an ennobled ancient civilisation, Duncan constructed a very clear positioning for her, her dance and her audience.

"In this era (second half of the nineteenth century), not so far removed from the implosion of a civil war, America was reconstituting itself, self conscious about
the creation and imprinting of national identity (Ibid, p. 5). Duncan’s dances in which ‘Americanness’ and ‘Greekness’ coexisted with such notions as Nature, Truth, Classicism and Progress provided the ideal framework that could support a strong, young and daring—and at the same time rooted in ‘classical values’ and justified by ‘natural laws’—American identity. It enclosed a respectable and glorified past and a progressive and promising future, draped with the unquestionable prestige of Nature and Classicism. In that way, Duncan elevated her dance into the realms of High Art and Culture through its identification with ‘Americanness’. At the same time, a time where “Migration and movement, mobility and motion characterised identity” (Schlereth in Daly, 1995, p. 9), she identified America with “an elite, white, europeanised monolith” (Ibid, p. 10). By defining her audience as the (‘elite’, ‘white’ and Europeanised—and therefore—‘civilised’) core of Americanness, she also guaranteed the classification of her dance as High Art and its popularity within those who shared “a growing upper-middle-class desire for (national, as well as) social prestige” (Ibid).

The widespread need for the construction, re-construction and/or legitimisation of national identities was another characteristic of the twentieth century. The restructuring of the world order, marked by the first signs of a possible disintegration of the old colonial world and the shaping of new national (geographical as well as ideological and cultural) borders provoked new nationalist feelings and ideologies. Since the very beginning, the ‘new’ or ‘expressive’ dance appeared particularly sensitive to such issues not just reflecting but often suggesting, distinct national (and often racial or social) characters, identities and cultures. In the early twentieth century, dance seemed to revolve around issues of nationalism and more specifically of a white, western, upper/middle class nationalism. Incorporating both ‘new’ and/or re-shaped traditional values, the new dance could add to the justification of the newly constructed or re-constructed nationalisms through their connection with antiquity, tradition and nature. In that way it seems to have provided a consistent ideological framework that allowed it to meet the western tendencies and needs of the time. In an era when not only America but in fact most parts of Europe were trying to restructure and legitimise their identities by tracing and
re-collecting national (or racial) roots, the preoccupation in both America and Europe with the ‘eternal’ and ‘true’ ideals of Rhythm, Harmony, Nature and Classical Beauty that referred to Greek antiquity had both historical and socio-political significance.

The popularity and spread of Duncan’s ‘free’ dance as well as of Dalcroze’s and Laban’s theories on ‘natural’ rhythm and movement in the early twentieth century were not irrelevant to the growing ideological and social streams that were to mark that century. Duncan’s preoccupation with ideas of Americaness and Greekness, was actually an expression of a more general tendency: the designation and representation of nationality/ies. At the same time many of the leading figures in the dance field were also preoccupied with re-presentations of national selfhoods. Whether that was the configuration of one’s own, or the interpretation of other people’s (other cultures’ or eras’) national characteristics, the National Self was one of the main (although not always explicitly proclaimed) subjects of the early modern dance.

In America, Martha Graham was also concerned with American and Hellenic themes, although she addressed them (and especially the latter) in a completely different to her predecessors way. After leaving Denishawn, she tried to escape St Denis’s exotic representations and Duncan’s romantic ‘Hellenism’ leaning towards a more contextualised and informed by her time’s social, political and psychoanalytical discourses, approach. Her choice of Greek themes (largely drawn from mythology and tragic plays) focused on a series of –mainly female– tragic figures which served as archetype characters for a modern study of the human –again predominantly female– psyche. The appearance of the first modern choreographers, which actually historically coincides with the weakening of the colonial ideology, signals a new orientation in dance which evades the ‘orientalist’ discourse. Still, what is also prominent in Graham’s repertory is her celebration of ‘Americanness’ within a series of works based on the American and Amerindian experience (Au, 2002, p. 121). In that way she shares the most prominent tendency of her time, which marked not only the course of dance but the whole first half of the twentieth century: the nationalist feeling.
In Europe, the preoccupation with the ‘healthy’, ‘natural’ and ‘white’ ‘classical’ body that claimed its authoritative power in its association with ancient Greece became a key concept in Nazi ideology as well as within other European Nationalist or Fascist regimes. The communal and ‘moral’ character of ‘expressive dance’, perceived as a means of individual, as well as social cultivation and reform (often through uniformity of movement) was also inline with the ideologies and aesthetics of European Fascist and dictatorial regimes. The gymnastic (‘healthy body’) and moral (‘healthy spirit’) aspects of the new dance, as expressed by some of its main representatives (e.g. Duncan, Dalcroze, Laban), were at times appropriated and used (even though in their most distorted, conservative and restrictive form) by the fascist propaganda. The Nazi account of the ‘Greek Ideal’ as expressed also with the revival of the Olympic Games in Berlin, in 1936 was embraced and adopted by the Greeks.

Along with the international political scene, the dance scene also changed after World War II and the modern choreographers of the late 1950s and 1960s turned to more abstract themes, often focusing on issues of agency and individual freedom. For the modern dancers, choreographers and movement analysts, body was a means of personal expression but also of collective imaginings and diachronic features of the human psyche, as well as of humanitarian ‘classical’ ideals (such as the threefold slogan of the French Revolution of liberté, égalité, fraternité). Still, the general guidelines, as set by Dalcroze and Laban, Duncan, Saint Denis and Shawn), which revolved around these schemes, had a deep influence on the following generations of choreographers in both Europe and America.
Chapter 6
Staging 'Greekness' for a western audience.

6.1 Connecting western modernity with Greek antiquity: the nationalisation of early Modern Dance.

In Greece the twentieth-century creative dance has been, as choreographer Haris Mandafounis suggests, "an imported species" while its alignment with the international avant-garde movements and trends seems to be its dominant tendency (Fessa, 2004, p. 36). As modern dance did not come to challenge a previously established dance status quo there has never been the process of agitation and (re-)creation, found in the West. In fact the appearance of modern dance in Greece precedes that of ballet, while it was the first form of dance to be officially recognised as 'artistic', 'socially valuable' and most importantly 'Greek'. In the beginning of the twentieth century, there was no ballet company or academy operating in the country while the first professional dance school, set in 1937 by Koula Pratsika, had a definite 'Duncan-inspired, Dalcroze-based' orientation and syllabus.

Even though there have been few dance teachers/choreographers working in Athens, ballet technique was mainly employed as a tool for the creation of cabaret/vaudeville dances, while the term 'ballerina' was mainly used to describe young female cabaret dancers and had clear associations with 'loose moral' women. However, although the situation resembles the dance climate in America in the late nineteenth century as described above by Daly, in Greece, ballet had never been established as a respectable dance form —or at least as a spectacle worth presenting in Royal courts and Opera Houses— as it was during its romantic era in the rest of Europe and (probably only as a faded echo of European 'culture') in America. Keeping in mind the time's conservative positioning on body politics and the female agency, the delayed establishment of the ballerina's status comes as no surprise. Nonetheless, in Greece dance was first introduced with Duncan's visits in Athens and established through a middle-upper class circle of Athenian ladies as a sophisticated activity associated with High-Art, Culture and Hellenism, yet still not as a profession.
until Koula Pratsika. Such referential association of ballet with High Class or High Art was only achieved later.

While for most of the European nations the re-definition of their national cultures signalled a return to ballet as High Art, in Greece, it is actually modern dance that first comes to establish its character as High Art, in a very similar process to that of Duncan's elevation of (her) dance's status in America: through its connection with Nature, Classicism, and an upper-class Athenian social circle, as well as through its linkage with other -more prestigious and socially accepted- arts, such as theatre (and especially with Greek tragedy), (western) classical, Byzantine and traditional demotic music, painting, architecture, literature, archaeology. With the legitimisation of High Art dance, and the opening of the first professional -and later State- dance school, in Greece, ballet's status became also elevated, as to signify Class, Culture and 'good upbringing' for young girls, mainly of middle and upper classes, until the 1980s when its appeal became even wider. In that way 'modern' dance achieved first (and also on ballet's behalf): a high status, governmental support and social recognition as a valid professional career. For a better understanding of some of the parameters that contributed to this unorthodox development of dance in Greece, a brief account of the historical framework of the period is necessary.

The appearance and establishment of ballet in Europe dates back to the seventeenth century court dances, originating in a feudal era of wealthy aristocrats and art-lovers which financially supported the artists and sponsored the creation of new works. For Greece this period was however a period of cultural stagnation. Being under a long-term Turkish occupation, Greece was not only politically and economically repressed but also bound to the Islamic moral and law system. The religious restrictions, which applied in all spheres of social and political life set firm moral and aesthetic standards that allowed little freedom for artistic (and especially bodily) expression. By the time Greece was liberated and re-established as an independent state, in the beginning of the twentieth century, ballet was already fully developed (and even over-stylised and already bearing symptoms of decline). Even more, it was strongly related with specific (European) national and cultural identities such as those of Russia,
France or Italy and even England. The import of an already perfected and appropriated by other national cultures dance form, which was completely alien to Greek reality, would be an unattainable task for Greece at the time. With a very low national income and a chaotic political scene the foundation and support of a National Ballet was impossible. Furthermore dance education was non-existent, while even basic education was at the time still considered a luxury for the majority of the population.

Nevertheless, while ballet bore all these negative undertones for Greece, which concerned its foreign/alien nature, the ‘new dance’ as represented by Isadora Duncan appeared more ‘natural’ and thus more simple, attainable and financially viable: it did not require a demanding technical training, big ensembles or expensive costumes, settings and theatres; It could be performed in open spaces, ancient theatres and archaeological sites, with bare feet and simple robes, even as a solo dance. Moreover the new dance appeared to be ‘Greek’.

Similar to the situation in America in the early 1900s Greeks were also “concerned with finding for themselves a national selfhood, a cultural identity and a means of individual self-expression” (Daly, 1995, p. 7). The triptych of novelty, nature and classicism was also a suitable ‘identification guide’ for the newly founded Greek nation wishing to established its new, liberal and ‘European’ or Modern (in any case non-Oriental) character, as well as its historical presence in the area that would justify its right of existence. Duncan’s references to Greek antiquity and the association of Greece with ‘natural beauty’, ‘harmony’ and ‘high’ aesthetics invited the Greeks to re-appropriate and re-present the ‘new’ or ‘Greek’ dance even more ‘Hellenicised’ than before. In that way the new dance provided a new field, which seemed to be more competent for the Greek artists, whose national origin could immediately grant them with the prestige of the ‘authentic’. For what could be more ‘authentic’ and therefore more ‘true’, ‘natural’ and ‘classic’ than an ‘inside’ representation of classical Greece? While the established ballet scene excluded Greece, the ‘new dance’ scene appeared full of promises. Instead of a solid institutional infrastructure that was essential for the development of a national ballet, Greece
collated the ‘authenticity of the indigenous’, which would allow it to create a national and yet internationally acknowledged dance scene. For the development of such aspirations, the already established (so much by Duncan, as well as by Dalcroze) connection between Rhythm, Harmony, Classicism, Hellenism and dance, was momentous.

Naturally, Isadora Duncan’s extensive referencing to Hellenic civilisation and more specifically, her interest in ‘Greek’ aesthetics and dance, functioned as a stimulus for similar expeditions within Greece itself. During her first visit in Athens, in 1903, Duncan attempted (unsuccessfully) to create her own school in Kopanas, while the magazine Panathinaia publishes (15th October) the full text of her essay The Dance of the Future, which she had presented in Berlin few months earlier. On the 28th of November, the same year, Duncan performed in the Public Theatre of Athens and was frantically applauded by the –mainly student– audience. The success of that first performance was followed, after a royal invitation, by a second performance held on the 11th of December in the Royal theatre. This time the performance was attended by the royal family while the rest of the audience consisted of the Athenian ‘aristocracy’ (Fessa, 2004, p. 37). During their stay in Athens, Duncan and her brother Raymond studied about Greek art under the guidance of the archaeologist, painter and philologist Alexandros Philadelfias. Their eccentric appearance (they used to wear tunics and sandals even when promenading in the city) further intrigued the ‘Europeanised’ Athenian bourgeoisie. Still, the intensity of the internal political affairs of the time did not allow a further experimentation or interaction with the local artists, who strove to surpass the everyday hardships.

Duncan’s second stay (and teaching) in Athens, in 1915, was even shorter as it coincided with the beginning of the National Division and the fall of prime minister Eleutherios Venizelos, who had until then supported her local ventures. In a final attempt to set her own dance school in Athens, Duncan returned in 1920 with a group of students and started intensive rehearsals for an ambitious project, the Festival of Dionysos, which was meant to involve for thousand dancers. This time, the catalytic events that followed the catastrophic expedition in Asia Minor caused the cancellation of her plans and prevented the
establishment of a Duncanesque technique and school in Greece. Still her influence on the resident choreographers such as the Palmer-Sikelianou, Kanelos and later Pratsika was direct and considerably lasting. Although the dance education in Greece, as set by Pratsika, was methodologically based on Dalcroze’s principles its ideological and aesthetic orientation was very much influenced by Duncan’s paradigm. Jowitt’s comment on the ‘Duncan-inspired, Dalcroze-based’ method is probably the scheme that best describes the physiognomy of dance education in Greece, during the whole first half of the twentieth century.

6.2 The exotic appeal: Dance under the shadow of a glorious past. Trying to fit Duncan’s ‘Greek Robe’.

Duncan’s case is only an example of the potential of modern dance to be associated with (and convey) specific nationalities. The flexibility of modern dance regarding the style, technique, aesthetic background and thematic (which has been further widened and ‘liberated’ in the post-Duncan years), has been susceptible to the engagement and/or appropriation of specific ideological and political thesis and nationalist discourses. The cases of similar ‘nationalising’ of contemporary dance forms are numerous and world ranging from Martha Graham and Mary Wigman, to the Taiwanese Cloud Gate dance theatre and still, Duncan’s example is exemplifying of the high position that Greek civilisation (always referring to antiquity) held for the ‘western world’ since the European Renaissance and what is more important, its consequent adulation and exoticisation. The acceptance and gradual embodiment of this western exoticism has been a crucial factor in the shaping of Modern Greek cultural identity and has been specifically linked to the over-evaluation and emphasising of the historical past. It is exactly its romantic and/or exotic appeal and its high position within western cultural ranking, which further elevated Greek antiquity within Greece and turned it into the cornerstone of the national(ist) discourse.

The quest for a ‘cosmopolitan Greekness’ haunted the early Greek choreographers, dancers and teachers, who saw in the principles of Duncan’s "basic dance” (Martin in Magriel, 1979) and Dalcroze’s *Eurhythmics*, the tools
they needed in order to represent the Greek idea, 'from the inside'. Characterised by a similar turn towards the "noble spirit of the Greeks" (Chalif, 1920, p. 9) the principles and aesthetics of the 'new dance', could easily be related to the Greek history and culture. Even though not always explicitly expressed, the 'Hellenistic' character of these dance (or 'rhythmic movement') experimentations 'invited' the Greek artists to adopt and develop them according to their (personal and national) artistic visions. After attending a performance by Dalcroze's students in Hellerau, in 1923, Pratsika writes in her autobiography:

Oh, God! What a vision! (...) Here in this corner, in this German village, they were teaching Greece: of Art, of Poetry, of kindness and humanitarianism. Greece: of dance, of rhythm, of music. Plato's Greece, the timeless Greek spirit (...) I had a shock deep and incurable. This! And nothing else!!

(Pratsika, Ursa Minor, 1991, p. 15 -translated by the author)

It was after this first encounter with expressive dance that Pratsika decided to study under Dalcroze, in order to "bring back to her country this education, which had its roots in the Greek ideals" (Alkali, 2000, p. 21).

As with their fellow American and European artists, Greek choreographers considered their connection with ancient Greek orhesis to be crucial for their recognition, within Greece, as well as internationally. In addition, they strongly felt the obligation to present an 'inside' and therefore more 'authentic' representation of the 'eternal Greek spirit'. In that way, the task of reviving their 'western past' was undertaken by the early Greek choreographers, who bore the weight of their prestigious heritage. However, the fact that this past had already been interpreted and represented by western dancers, choreographers and scholars, should not be underestimated. The 'classic' Greek ideal was already known, taught, and appropriated (as an inspirational source for artistic creations and/or as an ideological reference point) by the West. The western perception of classical Greece was already set. Its content had been defined, examined,
interpreted and projected filtered to the rest of the world, through a number of printed material, academic institutions and governmental policies.  

The Greeks, themselves, (even, or actually especially, the 'educated' ones) were inevitably overwhelmed by this western construction of 'Greekness'. While discussing her decision to study in Dalcroze's school, Pratsika explains that she had to "bring back to Greece, where we ignored the eternal teachings of Plato, the timeless spirit of Greece... which was blowing free in the European countries" (Ursa Minor, 1991, p. 15). Later on, describing her apprenticeship there, she exclaims: "The Europeans in the avant-garde of everything, Greeks!" (Ibid, p. 19). For Pratsika, it was Europe and not (the non-European?) Greece that knew how to evaluate, respect and develop the Greek spirit, to the benefit of humanity.  

It was Europe which was actually more Greek than Greece itself. The dutiful need to represent the national culture and the admiration and attraction for the western artistic avant-garde found within those remarks a meeting point, which marked Pratsika's course. The cosmopolitan and more specifically European cultural orientation of the Greek bourgeoisie (where Pratsika also belonged) merged with patriotic (and at times even nationalistic) feelings, as to create a 'Greek-yet-European' (meaning local and yet internationally acclaimed) theatrical dance tradition, rooted in the local history and culture.

Pratsika was initially interested in exploring and re-establishing the role of the ancient chorus within Greek tragedy. Her attempts focused on the study of the principles and aesthetics of ancient Greek dance, which would provide her with the required information to support an 'authentic', or at least legitimate, reconstruction of the chorus. In spite of its local/national character, the success of this task was to be estimated by its appeal to international -European- scholars, critics and audiences. Pratsika was aware that her nationality alone was not enough to ground her work with the authoritative 'authenticity', of the 'original'. Western education was thought to be essential, in order to provide her with a 'true' understanding of the 'timeless spirit of Greece', as well as with the methodological tools that would assist her revivalist attempts.
In that way, I argue that Pratsika's sense of 'Greekness' and consequently her artistic visions and teachings, had an auto-exoticised core character. Another decisive factor in the orientation of Pratsika's quest for 'Art' and 'Hellenism' was her acquaintance with another 'westerner', the American Eva Palmer-Sikelianos, who was to become her mentor and role model. Pratsika's apprenticeship and collaboration with Palmer-Sikelianos seems to have actually channelled her attention towards the richness of Greek culture. In fact, her decision to study in Hellerau and her understanding of Dalcroze's teachings, as well as her ideas on the role of the ancient chorus, were deeply influenced by her encounter with Palmer and her involvement in the preparation and presentation of the first Delphic Festivals, in 1926-'27, as a coryphaeus in the chorus. For Pratsika this was a very powerful experience that shaped her whole life and career. "Through the vision of Sikelianos, (she) experienced the values of ancient Greek civilisation as an unrivalled, universal and unique heritage with a global and diachronic range" (Karasmanis, in Alkali, 2002, p. 22). In her autobiography, she compares her experience in Delphi with the attendance of her first performance in Hellerau:

Here, in Delphi I get a new shock, as powerful as the one in Hellerau: Plato's Greece, of spirit, of study, of rhythm, of music of movement, of Europe under the enlightened guidance of the wonderful American, Frau Baer. And the living Greece that exists in the country, full of beauty and vivacity, always young, under the guidance of the other wonderful American, Eva Sikelianos.

(Ursa Minor 1991, p. 17-translated by the author)

Even though she later questioned Palmer's choreographic ideas and choices, she acknowledged her as her most influential teacher, "whose example had opened new, unknown routes and enlightened her whole life" (Ibid, p. 96). What is particularly interesting is that the most valuable lesson Pratsika (and other dancers and choreographers) were taught by Palmer, was the latter's (exoticised) vision of 'Greekness'. Choreologist Katia Savrami writes that even though the Delphic Festivals did not manage to actually start a school, "they revealed the symbolic, or semiotic, (ethnic) character of dance for the Greek community of the time" (Savrami in Gregoriou, 2004, p. 41). In her writings,
Pratsika often referred to Palmer with great respect and gratitude for her guidance. As she explains,

At that moment, between 1925-1927, who else had tried to show us, the new generation, the deep content of the ancient Greek civilisation? Who revealed to us the great spiritual heritage of the Greeks and their everyday life, as pictured in the ceramics, so close to contemporary Greek reality? (...) Under Eva's guidance, we were discovering an unknown Greece, whose existence we never even suspected, and that Greece was us, ourselves.

(Pratsika, Ursa Minor, 1991, p. 96 - translated by the author)

For the first generation of Greek dancers, their personal and, most importantly, their national 'awakening' and realisation, came through their contact with the 'real' Greece that Palmer had revealed to them. It was a self-identification and definition that was shaped from the outside and gradually sunk in, through a polymorphous educative process that included (except of the dance classes), excursions to the countryside and lessons of Byzantine music and ancient Greek arts and literature, as well as folk traditions, arts and crafts. The enthusiasm with which Pratsika, and the rest of the participants, embraced Palmer's passionate vision had originated (at least partially) in the prestige that their newly revealed Greek identity was carrying, as well as by the promising new opportunities that it had to offer.

After three years of learning and teaching Dalcroze's method Pratsika returned to Greece in 1930, in order to share this knowledge. She immediately started teaching (Rythmique Gymnastique as she used to call it after Dalcroze) in her house in Athens (with 350 students, Ibid, p. 20) and was hired as a teacher in the Royal Theatre School. For the following five decades she had been constantly teaching and choreographing for theatre plays (mainly tragedies), as well as for public celebrations and student performances (Ibid, pp. 9-46). In 1934 Pratsika's dance school -the first professional school in the country- started operating in the centre of Athens, in a building especially designed for this purpose by the architect Yiorgos Contoleon. This same school was later (in 1972) donated to
the Greek State and became the State School of Orchestic Art, which is until today the only public dance school in Greece.

Pratsika’s teaching method was very much influenced by Sikeliános’s ‘Hellenic vision’ and apart from the indispensable dance and music classes, she organised for her students a number of excursions to the Greek nature, as well as tours to historical sites. Her student Dora Iliopoulou says that

the aim of these excursions was the general education of her students. She wanted us to get used to observing the beauty of the Classical period, in relation to the contemporary one.

(Iliopoulou in Pratsika, p. 135 -translated by the author).

Much like the similar western tendencies of the time, Pratsika turned to the classical period of Greek antiquity, as a primary source of inspiration, in an attempt to draw some parallels with (and in that way celebrate) contemporary Greece and its artistic potential. More than that, the school held a series of lectures from Greek and foreign guest artists, architects, scholars and writers of the time. They were the representatives of the ‘generation of the (19)30’, or as Alcali (2002, p. 22) writes, the “Helleno-centric spiritual elite” that Pratsika had already met in Delphi, through the Sikeliános couple. The emphasis was – for as long as she remained the school’s director – given on the development of a general cultural education, and a profound sense of Greekness, rather than on the technical artistry of the students.

The way Pratsika envisioned Greek dance and the principles upon which she based her teachings and her school’s program also bore Duncan’s influence. Pratsika favoured applicants with general education and “usually those coming from families with influential power” as she was aiming to create an initial nucleus of teachers, who would then teach all over Greece, in order to “contribute to the general cultural development of the country” (Alkali, 2002, p. 51). That way of selection unavoidably “favoured applicants from middle and upper class families” (Ibid). It is only in 1962 that Pratsika adds an article in the School’s regulations, to state that applicants from the Greek province, will be
favoured, if they are planning to continue their career there, "so that the art of
dance can be safely transmitted in the whole of the Greek space" (1991, p. 77).
In fact, she chose to start a new course for these girls, as a separate department
of the school: The professional class of the province. Thus this 'inclusive' act
was actually seen as a separate project for the further development of the dance
itself and of her mission on the educating of the Greek people: It was a
transfusion –rather than a fusion– of this urban, bourgeois Culture to the 'non-
enlightened' ones, even though it had heavily drawn from the folk culture and
traditions alongside the ancient arts and literature and the European neo-
romanticism.

The emphasis on the educational and moral character of dance, which Pratsika
saw as a means of national cultural development rather than as a means of
personal expression and creation, resembles Duncan's vision of the
"remoralisation of American society" (Daly, 1995 p. 10), her schools, being less
concerned with the training of professional dancers and more with encouraging
children to a "beautiful and moral living" (Ibid). Similarly, Pratsika was
interested in the cultivation of a refined and 'Cultured' upper-middle class
'Greekness'. Although she paid great interest in the re-discovery of Greek folk
culture and traditional heritage, for her it remained a 'discovery' of an Other
Greece; And that was a Greece that Pratsika, as an upper class bourgeois
Athenian woman had not experienced and of which, as she often writes, "she
was not aware". Her contact with the 'authentic' (namely rural) Greek tradition
happened through her appropriation of a westernised exotic view of Greekness:
through Duncan's paradigm, Dalcroze's 'Plato-inspired' teachings and Palmer's
passionate guidance.

Pratsika's understanding and evaluation of 'Greekness' was based on an auto-
exoticised or, according to Said's model, auto-orientalised perception of a
National Self. Her work has been characterised as "an inspired civilising
attempt", (Murivilis, in Ursa Minor, 1991, p. 60), "ethnically beneficial"
(Kakouri, in ibid, p 71), "the flame of national education" (Karas, in ibid, p 57),
and herself as the "unquestionable "mother" of Greek dance" (Georgousopoulos, in ibid, p. 125). Her student Aleka Katseli (ibid, p. 141)
confesses “She (Pratsika) introduced the notion of Greek civilisation to our teaching”. Her main contribution to the local dance scene was the restoration and establishment of its profound ‘Greekness’, within Greece, as well as internationally (or at least in the West). This ‘national’ (and I would add class-conscious) character of the new dance, as taught and introduced to the public by Pratsika, was the element that allowed its recognition as an ethnically significant, and therefore ‘decent’ and prestigious art and profession. Nevertheless, together with a sense of ‘Greekness’, Pratsika introduced her students to the main international tendencies in dance education. Her “unquestionable” and “polymorphic” contribution is also acknowledged by Alkali who notes that “Pratsika brought back the ancient ideal of education. At the same time though, she familiarised her local students with the main tendencies in the international dance education” (2002, p. 31).

However ‘Greek’ Pratsika’s perception of dance was, [to such an extent that it has been questioned and criticised by the following generations as “nationalistic”, as Alkali (2002, p. 32) notes] it represented (at least in the beginning) an auto-exoticised national identity. The idea that modern Greeks were less aware (even though not less worthy) of their cultural heritage and identity than the western (European and North-American) peoples, is itself a very orientalist notion. It is also suggestive of the power of the ‘enlightened’ West, to define, elaborate and ‘return’ this new, more ‘authentic’ and prestigious cultural and national identity to the Greek people. Considering the huge influence that Pratsika had on the structuring of an educational dance system in Greece, it becomes apparent that her influence on the formation and development of Greek contemporary dance cannot be underestimated. Zouzou Nikoloudi (1917-2004), Pratsika’s student, as well as one of the most acknowledged Greek choreographers, wrote

She (Pratsika) opened new routes, upon which the younger (choreographers) still walk today, without probably suspecting, that she made the start. A very difficult start, for that time, which marked the course of dance for the next generations.

Apart from establishing the first professional dance school in Greece and providing a solid guideline for all dance teachers of her time, Pratsika’s preoccupation with the tragic chorus and her—as well as her students’—collaborations with all the major theatrical directors of her time and her extensive teachings resulted to the establishment of a theatrical tradition, rooted in these same theoretical principles. Reminiscing her teachings in the Royal Theatre Pratsika (ibid, p. 21) writes “All the old actors have passed from my hands during the ten years I worked there (...) All!” In the same way, while discussing her “contribution in the interpretation of the ancient drama in the contemporary scene” theatre critic Kostas Georgousopoulos writes:

Until today there has not been a single performance of ancient drama that has not been supported by one of Koula Pratsika’s students, or by a student’s student (...) All the (theatre) directors from the most conservative ones to the revolutionaries, have drawn ideas, in order to give solutions to the complex problem of the chorus in the tradition that Pratsika cultivated.

(Georgousopoulos in Ursa Minor, 1991, p. 125-127 - translated by the author)

Having embraced and embodied Pratsika’s vision, her students have continued to teach, perform and choreograph for ancient plays, shaping the course of modern dance and theatre traditions in Greece. In fact, as Steryani Tsintziloni suggests in her MA dissertation on Nikoloudi, up to the 1960s “the avant-garde dance activities in Greece were mostly related to theatrical productions, choreographies in Greek themes and collaborations between artists aiming to give a Greek morphology to their arts” (1997, p. 39). Most of her initial students like Maria Hors, Eleni Kefalou-Hors, Maria Kynigou, Lena Zaboura, Maria Diamadidou, Dora Tsatsou-Symeonidi and Agapi Euaggelidi continued their studies abroad, mainly in Germany, England and the USA under such tutors as Mary Wigman, Anna Sokolov, Rosalia Chladek, Harald Kreutzberg, Doris Humphrey, Hanya Holms, and even Martha Graham, Jerome Robins, George Balanchine and more. In that way, their dance education, filtered, developed and ‘domesticated’ by Pratsika, was consequently re-informed and updated to the evolving international (western) trends. German (or Central European)
Expressionist dance and American Modern dance continued to be the two major sources of influence for that generation of choreographers. Almost all of them have also extensively taught, performed and choreographed (mostly for the staging of ancient dramas and public celebrations and events) both in and out of Greece, have been distinguished with a number of national and international awards and have designed, founded and staffed the Greek dance education system.

6.3 Performing the ‘Exotic Other’, re-constructing an ‘Exotic Self’: following the ‘oriental(ist) strategy’ of national historicising.

The exoticised ‘return to the past’ and the historicising (through the connection with the ancient drama) of dance in the first half of twentieth century, aimed in its domesticisation or nationalisation, which can only be understood within the wider political context of the period. Like other politically and economically unstable, newly liberated or post-colonial states, Greece heavily relied on historicity to justify its contemporary self. Even though the turn to antiquity was employed in order to convey ‘westernness’ alongside national distinctiveness, it nonetheless appears as an ‘oriental’ rather than ‘western’ tactic, which further accounts for Greece’s ‘orientalist’ character.

While modernisation (usually linked to ‘westernisation’) and development are the most frequent economic and political targets of the so called ‘emerging’ economies, the advance and relative superiority of the western nations in those sectors create an unsurpassable precedence, which is hard –if not impossible– to reach. In addition, these terms have been so tightly associated with ‘western’ identities that would be impossible to successfully integrate them within any non-western national discourse, in such a degree as to be so distinctively associated with it that can convey nationality. However, national history and tradition can also be negotiated as ‘westernising factors’. As discussed above, a national tradition that bears a ‘proven’ connection with western culture(s) is granted with a value that exceeds the national boundaries. When ‘westernism’ and/or modernism (and hence development) are impossible to attain in socio-political and economic terms, Culture is called forth as a sign of social
refinement and national excellence. When this Culture (usually belonging in the far past) has been acknowledged, praised and studied by the ‘West’ (even more when it can present a connection with western history), it can account for the nation’s –at times remote or indirect– connection with it, enhancing its prestige.

Hence, whilst most advanced (western) nations have traditionally projected values and ‘national qualities’ tied to modernity, practicality, industrialism and economic as well as political autonomy, authority and affluence, the emerging (otherwise ‘western aspirant’) nations often rely on history and tradition to both establish and elevate their status. While this idea is further discussed in Part 4, I want to note here that this argument does not dismiss the importance of western national histories in identity policies. It does however stretch the importance that a ‘promising’ present and future played in the collective imaginings of these ‘advanced’ nations, which differs from those of the ‘orientalised’ countries. For such nations with authoritative histories, belonging to the far past, this re-turn to antiquity appears as their strongest and most prestigious asset in the process of identity-making. In any case, the heavy and single-directed reliance on antiquity as the main conveyor of cultural and national identity has been established as an ‘orientalist’ strategy.

As an ‘intermediate’ European country, Greece is more difficult to position on the side of the ‘orientalised’ nations and cultures. While its present status is far behind those of the ‘advanced’ world in power-hierarchy, its own reliance on History and Culture appears closer to the ‘orientalist’ model, than to western negotiations of national tradition. The auto-exoticisation and ‘antiqisisation’ of ‘Greekness’ within the local course of early modern dance resembles similar ‘nationalising’ cultural projects within other, more securely ‘oriental’ nations, such as post-colonial India. Discussing the political parameters of Bharata Natyam’s recrafting as (pan-)Indian Dance, O’Shea notes that it occurred in a way so that “it could express a national identity through its alignment with colonial gender forms...refigurating orientalist discourses in the interest of a nationalist agenda” (2001, p. 4), describing a ‘nationalist’/culturalist project, which drew from the same antiqued national histories, where the western interest seemed to focus on. This process resembles the ‘nationalisation' of
modern dance within Greece. Moreover it is indicative of the intricacies and complexities that come to play in the conceptualising and choreographing of national and local identities. In both Greece and India, the attempt to produce a contemporary-yet-historically ‘justified’ nationalised dance, included both an adoption and adaptation, according to national cultural standards, of a western dance form (whether ballet or modern dance) and the re-construction (or re-invention) of a ‘historical’ national genre, such as the Indian temple dancing and the Greek tragic chorus.

In that way both the ‘western’ and ‘oriental’ virtues of antiquated spirituality and modernity (always as defined by the ‘West’), have been employed, in order to gratify the dances, as well as the nationalist discourses within which they were located, with credibility and legitimacy that could be understood, acknowledged and valued in the ‘West’. Hence, for most newly-founded non-western nation states engaged in a ‘developmental’ process, which would assure national stability and international authority, the historicising of national culture has been a key-issue. This course appears even more intense in cases where this ‘historical National Self had already been located, analysed and valued by ‘West’. Hence, western conceptions of the exotic (‘oriental’, ‘ancient’ and at times even ‘primordial’) Other, as formed during the colonial period and evolved in the post-colonial times, have played a leading role in the histories and collective imaginings of most (whether post-colonial or not) non-western nations.

Re-examining the Olympic Opening Ceremony of 2004, the ‘historicising strategy’ appears clearer, contextualised within a wider and continuous national process of definition and re-definition. By turning to history in order to create a performance of nationhood, Papaioannou chose to follow (even if re-figured) the most ‘typical’ and anticipated narrative on ‘Greekness’. Both in a national and international level, Greece is expected to represent itself through its History and Culture: a diptych that refers a great deal to antiquity. Aware of this political economy of Greek History, as well as of its canonical presence in almost all public performances of Greekness, throughout the nation’s modern history, Papaioannou attempted to escape this ‘cliché’ tradition, by interjecting a
post-modern commentary in the narration. Hence, in the beginning of the Allegory, he acknowledges the inescapably dependant and surrogate relation of the present with past, with the awkwardness and perplexity that it often instigates. In that way, he manages to state the contemporary awareness of the situation, also subtly infusing his own agenda. Nonetheless, the comment is almost romanticised itself: This ‘awkwardness’ is presented through its artistic dimension (direct references to poetry, drama and the fine arts are all present in the scene, as signifiers of the bigger, socio-historical matter). The comment is subtle and politically ‘harmless’, since it ultimately adds to the re-presentation a more sophisticated and intimate idea of a contemporary-yet-diachronic ‘Greekness’. In that way, the ceremony retains its ‘mainstream’ and ‘politically neutral’ character, while distancing itself from previous historicising attempts. In other words, Papaioannou presented a ‘modern’ version of the ‘national historicising in progress’, which appears more appealing to the contemporary audience. Nonetheless, however re-contextualised, re-informed and self-aware, the Opening Ceremony was, it re-worked a set historically and culturally defined Greek profile, re-presenting a re-modelled and refigured contemporary image of national identity.
Similarly, discussing the Orientalising imaging of Japan within Australian drama, Alison Richards cites "the paradox of the West's double vision of much of the rest of the world as both a place, and a phantasm representing something at once mysterious and simple, desired and threatening" (Fensham and Eckersall, 1999 p. 140).

I prefer to use the term western-centric instead of Eurocentric here, as the latter excludes the North American expansionism -and exoticism- which coincides with the western European.

The exoticisation, or as Fensham and Eckersall put it, "the wilful fetishisation" of the Other, is not an exclusively western practice. As an example, they cite the commonplace (mis)interpretation and representation of 'exotic others', within theatres of Singapore and Japan (1999, p. 5).

Said distinguishes British and French involvement in the Orient from any other "European and Atlantic power" locating Orientalism within the Franco-British experience of dealing with the -colonial- Orient, from the beginning of the nineteenth century until the end of World War II. From that point on, America has dominated the Orient approaching it as France and Britain once did (1995, p. 4). From this 'western' (whether British, French, or American) closeness and up-down relationship with the Orient came a large body of 'orientalist' texts, sharing a backbone of historical generalizations such as the division between East and West.

Even though similar movements for national independence and freedom had started already from the nineteenth century (e.g. the decolonisation of Latin America, as well as the Greek revolution in 1821).

For a discussion of neo-colonialism and the American world domination after World War II see Psiroukis, 1980 and Said, 1978, as well as Noam Chomsky’s relevant articles and speeches.

I use the word 'Orient' here as in Said, referring to India and the Bible lands (which describes the dominant British and French understanding of the term till the end of World War II), as well as to the more extended post-World War II American perception of the term which is "much more likely to be associated very differently with the Far East (China and Japan mainly)" (1995, p. 1). However, this unequally large 'second half of the world' usually includes the whole of the former colonised world -even if this cannot be classified under 'Orient' in order to distinguish 'us' Westerners (Western Europeans and North Americans) from 'them' non-Westerners.

The boundaries between these categories are not always clear. Greece for example has lately fulfilled all the requirements in order to join the EU as a developed country. However it has long been classified as an emerging economy. What is important to note here, is that the standards that define and separate these categorisations are set by the ever-developed western economies. This automatically places them on a whole different level then the ones who try (even the ones who 'succeed') to comply with these standards.

Of course, this doesn't mean that there are not any related texts, e.g. Sally Ness on the "Philippinisation" of ballet (1997, pp 64-108) and Yatin Lin on Cloudgate Dance Company.

I use the term here with its literal sense and as described in the text rather than as a set economic term. See also Svoronos, 1999, p 12.

See Filias (1985) and Meriaklis (1983) on Greek bourgeoisie.

Although the geographical location is often a decisive factor in the history and politics of a country, while issues based on religion and race are often used to justify in people's minds alliances and rivalries as 'natural' facts.

Even today, the relations of a nation with the West (especially with the US) define its political positioning and international status.

I use the term here in its broader sense, as defined by Janet Lansdale (ed), 1999, in Intertextuality and interpretation.


This is not to suggest in any way that the complex network of relations and counter-actions between the colonial powers and their colonised sub-nations can be simplified into a linear chain of actions and re-actions. Least of all, that these relationships had the same form and
characteristics throughout the whole of the colonial world, at all times. However, some generalised categorisation is essential for the purposes of this study, in order to distinguish and frame the specific area under scrutiny.

17 See the History of the Greek Nation (2000), as well as in Svoronos, (1999), about modern Greek history and the role(s) of Europe (France and mainly England) and -after World War II- of America, within the Greek internal affairs since the first attempts for a national independence in the early 19th century.

18 The term non-western can be very problematic when used to describe Greece, which is a European ‘western’ country. However, it is this ‘in-between’ positioning of Greece that is of extreme importance here. Again, the crucial difference lays in the collective self-imaginings of the Greek people rather than the official governmental line. Even though the latter has always been western-oriented and usually dependent of English or American policies and guidelines, there is a strong resistance from the people who often sees the West (and mainly its politics) as an alien—often objectionable—force.


20 See p. 182 about the “Great Idea” and the Greek expedition in Asia Minor and its tragic ending for the Greek populations in Asia Minor.

21 Closing the prologue of his book A Review of Modern Greek History, Svoronos writes “The intention of the book was to follow the efforts of the Greek intelligencia on the definition of the elements that consist the real modern Greek civilisation, positioned within the whole of the European spirit, where it belongs” (1999, p. 24).

22 This argument is by no means intended to weaken the importance of the contemporary economic and political bonds that tie Greece with the rest of the West, and even less the determining—for the country’s international positioning—role of the clear and dense ranking of the Greek shipping capital within western economy. It is however suggesting that for the majority of the international imaginings on Greece, its prestige is drawn by its connection with a celebrated antiquity.

23 Said’s objection lies in Aeschylus’s idea to speak for the part of the defeated Persians. In that way, Said argues, he diminishes them, believing that he can represent their culture and thinking. For a very different interpretation of the play, see Dihle (1997, pp. 43-46) where Aeschylus’s choice is seen as an outcome of his admiration of the Persian world, while the whole play appears very sympathetic (and by no means offensive) towards the defeated, yet respected, Persians. In fact, the victory of the Greeks is not attributed to their natural superiority, but to the will of Gods who could not allow such a great disturbance of the world order. The two different but equally respected worlds (of the Greeks and the Persians) are represented in a dream of the Persian King’s mother by two female figures. According to the Gods’ will both have the same rights in existence and thus any attempt to enslave one of them opposes the divine world order provoking the intervention of Gods (The Persians, 181-199). Palmer-Sikelianou, believed The Persians to be the most “peace-loving” of all Athenian plays.

24 The same opinion is also expressed by Palmer-Sikelianos, writing: “Roman literary works . . . dwindle to insignificance when compared to the master works, which were their models. We have had enough of this second-hand culture. It is time to recover direct contact with the Greek language again” (in Anton, 1993, p. 230).

25 A phrase that capsulated the spirit of the time. Still, the term ‘Greek’ was mostly used in a non-racial and non-territorial sense, so as to incorporate every Greek speaking or Greek educated person. See Papadimitriou, 2000, pp. 56-64.

26 According to Dihle (1997, p. 19) the term barbaric is to suggest an unknown—for the Greeks—language.

27 For some in the fourth century B.C. See Dihle, 1997.

28 Asia is here identified with the Persian Empire, which was then covering almost the whole of the known (for the Greeks) eastern world (see also Touraix in Droit, 1992, p. 109). The generalisation thus in Aeschylus’s play comes from a very real fact, rather than from an “orientalist” attitude towards the East. It is well known that even before that period (but also later, during the Hellenistic years) Greeks were well aware of the various peoples and cultures of the East, as well as of the differences within them. There was not a single policy towards the whole of Asia as the political, cultural and commercial dealings and affiliations with each of them varied according to the circumstances (See Dihle, 1998 as well as descriptions and references in Herodotus’s scripts).
29 It is indicative, as Dihle (1997, p. 63) points out, that from the first stages of the Greek submission to the Romans in the 2nd century BC, till the 3rd century A. D. the Greek citizen of the Roman Empire never needed to learn Latin, while all educated Romans had to know how to speak, read and write in Greek.

30 I use the term here in its broad sense, as nationalism as a set term appears much later.

31 See in Papadimitriou, Z. (2000, p 57, footnote 74) about the use of the word “barbaric” in Egypt and China to characterise the non-Egyptian speaking and non-Chinese (thus non civilised) respectively.

32 According to Papadimitriou, “Biological racism, in contrast with the various formations of social racism that consist an everlasting phenomenon known in all the historical societies, is an outcome of European civilisation, as formed since the discovery of the New World”. And he points out that even though it appears as a practice, with the savage way the European conquerors treated the indigenous peoples, in the beginning of the 16th century, as an ideology it first appears in the mid-18th century. In that way, he considers biological racism to be a construction of European Enlightenment and of its “heavily contradictory theoretical principles” (2000, p. 19 –translated by the author).

33 Said discusses orientalism as “a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” describing it as a “corporate institution” that has the power to describe, talk about and for the Orient, as well as to “teach it, settle it and rule over it” (1995, p. 3).

34 An example of such approach is described and analysed in Part three, discussing the Delphic Festivals.

35 See Said (1995) about the western encounters with Egypt and India and generally about the model of knowledge and power.

36 This attitude is still representing the thinking of many western scholars, historians and archaeologists today. Indicative is the argumentation of the British Museum (and of all the related committees) against the return of the Elgin Marbles to Parthenon. One of the main arguments used, is the ‘inability’ of the Greek Archaeological Service to properly maintain and treasure them, in contrast to their ‘efficient’ British colleagues.

37 Orthesis is the ancient Greek term for dance, which however includes music and singing.

38 Even though Romanticism in ballet came later than to literature, music and the visual arts, as Au suggests, “it was perhaps the most important influence on the 19th-century ballet” (Au, 2002, p. 45).


40 About the life and work of Tortolla Valencia see Garland, 1995 and 1997.

41 See also Dounagh in Berbaw (ed), 1998, p vii, on ‘classic’ dance.

42 About the suggested de-eroticized way which has been established as the ‘right’ way of contemplating Greek High Art and the transfer of this same scheme to Duncan’s ‘chaste’ body, see in Daly, 1995 and Jowit, 1985-86, p26.


44 Indeed there seems to be a growing skepticism among historians and academic circles on the validity and utility of similar historical hypothesis on the basis of a linear temporal notion of a cause-and-effect successive influence, forwarded through history.

45 Francois Delsartre (1811-1917).

46 Technology was also occasionally celebrated within ballet. (Au, 2002, p. 58).


48 As Daly points out, “although often portrayed as a flagrant iconoclast, Duncan at the same time embodied the forces of moral and spiritual righteousness. For the woman who bared her flesh knew that in order for dance to be accepted in America as a legitimate art, as "Culture", it had to be accepted as moral” (1995, p. 9).

49 I use the term in its broader sense here, to include the physical, spiritual and social body. Examining Isadora’s body as “dancing”, “natural”, “expressive”, “female”, “politic” and “divine” (or idealised) as the accordingly titled chapters of Done into Dance suggest, Daly “conceptualised Duncan’s body as a practice through which a variety of cultural issues such as self, race, Woman, art, democracy and America were being negotiated” (Daly, 1995, p. xi) in order “to demonstrate the powerful ways in which the dancing body participates in the production of cultural identity” (Ibid, p x).
Daly notes that, "the progressivists embraced many traditional values" and she explains that "Progressivism ... rooted in Protestantism, was ultimately less an innovative than a conservative force, seeking to restate old-fashioned American ideals of morality" (Daly, 1995, p.9).

51 About Rousseau’s influence on Duncan, see Jowitt, 1985-86, p 27, footnote and 28.
52 About Duncan’s embrace of Darwin’s theory, see Jowitt, 1985-86, p 28.
53 Daly, 1995, p 171.

54 The capitalisation of these words was chosen as to refer to the way they were perceived by the turn of the century scientists and scholars, as well as by Duncan, as absolute and unquestionable "truths" with inherent meaning.


56 The late nineteenth - early twentieth century nationalisms also affect the ballet scene of the time. See for example Diaghilev’s aim to promote, through the tours of his Ballets Russes, the Russian culture in the West.

57 Daly also notes Duncan’s “echoing of the rhetoric of eugenics in her Dance of the Future” (1994, p. 25).

58 See about Duncan in Berbow (1998, pp 213-214), Alkali (2002, p 21), Magriel, (1979, pp 1-89), Anton, (1993 pp xvii, 181-190), Duncan, 1955. Chalif, 1920. Dalcroze’s system was also associated with the ancient Greek education. His emphasis on music, rhythm and movement provoked associations with the ancient Greek ideals of mind and body development through rhythm, music and gymnastics. It is indicative that in a number of texts related to Dalcroze’s system, have direct references to (or even quotations from) Plato’s teachings. See Harvey in Dalcroze, 1917, p. 7, as well as Pratsika, 1991, p. 15 and Alkali, 2002.

59 See also Anderson’s (1991) idea of print capitalism, and Said, (1995, p. 6) about the academic support of orientalism.

60 While describing her experience in Hellerau, she writes that they were teaching Plato’s Greek spirit, “in order to serve: man, with his rhythms, his body and spirit” (Pratsika, 1991, p. 15).

61 Alkali (2002, p 22) names a few of the representatives of the “generation of the 30’s, which “formed the development of neo-Hellenic culture”: writers Pantelis Prevelakis and Stratis Murivilis, painter Yiannis Tsarouhis, musicologist Simon Karras and architect Yiorgos Kontoleon.

62 Mark Franko describes a similar process, discussing Martha Graham’s turn towards the ‘Other’, ‘primitive’ America (1995, p. 52).

63 See in Pratsika (Ursa Minor, 1991, p. 44) about her performances outside of Greece.
Part 3

Historicising Folklore, validating History: the intervention of the ‘folk’ in the artistic makings of identity.

While the 2004 Olympic Opening Ceremony focused primarily on Greek antiquity, the Closing Ceremony staged the present, offering a glimpse into contemporary Greece. For that, Papaioannou turned to the local folk and popular traditions, which were employed in order to facilitate the transition from the past to the present. Apart from providing the performed Greekness of the Opening Ceremony with a ‘reasonable’ completion, this strategic choice also reflects a more profound relationship between the historicising and folklorising of the nation, as established through a chronic interaction of art and politics. The historicisation of identity, as discussed in Part 2, is not a single-faceted phenomenon, nor does it imply a process of national representation narrowly focused on Greek antiquity. Within any attempt for a coherent construction of identity based on history, continuity appears as a vital prerequisite. With Greece’s turbulent history, a connection between antiquity and the contemporary nation-state has not been self-evident. Through a parallel development of archaeology and ethnography, folklore was indicated as a dynamic carrier of prime cultural elements from antiquity to the present day, presenting a live link with the past. This prestigious quality of folklore (first established for its rural and later for its urban expressions) intrigued many local artists of the twentieth century, who both sought inspiration and wished to formulate (each in their own way) a nationalised artistic language. However, folklore –with its significance for the national discourse– was also appropriated, used and at times reshaped by various political forces, which added further meanings to it. Within this constant re-negotiation and re-contextualisation of folklore, dance holds a prevalent and significant position that shall be discussed in the following three chapters.
Chapter 7

The politics of Folklore: Culture, Art and Tradition negotiating Identity.

7.1 Sea, Sun, wine and the syrtaki: re-presenting the present.

The Olympic stadium is dressed in a warm golden light, which highlights a central spiral pattern defined by ear shafts. Two television commentators (Margarita Mutilinaiou and Alexis Kostalas) introduce the main themes of the ceremony that is to follow: the sun, the earth, wheat, birth and death, emigration and expatriation; “the bread and salt of life” according to Kostalas. They describe the event as a celebratory concert/festival of dances and songs, “that convey continuity” and turn the spectator’s attention to “the ancient roots of the songs and dances that (they) are about to witness”. The lights lower for the countdown that will signal the official beginning of the ceremony with another firework display, similar to that which opened the games. The show starts with a song by Dionysis Savopoulos Ας Κρατήσουν οι Χοροί (May the Dances Last), performed by five popular singers: Haris Alexiou, Dimitra Galani, Yiorgos Dalaras, Marinella and Yiannis Parios, on a platform in the centre of the spiral. The song signals the entrance of the performers, who are dressed in loose earth-coloured gowns and traditional folk costumes. They position themselves alongside the periphery of the stadium’s stage and address the audience, guiding and coordinating them into rhythmic applause to accompany the song. The lights are lowered again to introduce the celebrated folk singer Chronis Aidonidis, who performs a traditional welcoming ‘table song’ from western Thrace (N.E. Greece): Welcome my friends. The performers proceed to a harvesting scene and the song ends with the entrance of a group of masked men dressed with animal fur and metallic bells. Mytilinaiou explains that they come from Drama (in Northern Greece) and perform an ancient pagan custom, using the noise of the bells to exorcise the spirits that threaten their crops.

The bell carriers follow the spiral’s path towards the central platform where a group is performing a traditional Thracian dance as the harvesting scene is proceeding. The demotic reference is even more explicitly connected with antiquity, as a group of women in white tunics carrying large wine pots enter the stage, followed by a group of bare-chested men with grapes. In a direct reference to Dionysos, ancient God of Wine, Bacchus and the related ancient festivals, the men wear grape-leaf garland crowns and step on the grapes with overjoyed leaps and ecstatic gestures. At that moment the music
changes from demotic to urban-folk, with a hasaposerviko by Vassilis Tsitsanis Ta Máta του Αγαπώ (The Eyes I Love), written in 1949. Twelve men, each standing in a statue-like pose on a white-clothed table, symbolise the twelve months of the year. The men are bare-chested and dressed in military trousers and boots, with head garlands made from flowers and hay. Each one carries a different symbolic object, e.g. a small fishing boat, a basket of fruit, or pieces of wood, and they are holding their static poses on the tables, as they are themselves carried around the stadium by pairs of men in black moving the tables, in a slow parade. As Kostalas notes, the aesthetic of the scene is a direct reference to the painting of Yiannis Tsarouhis. The portraits of young soldiers and sailors were very common subjects within his work, which has been typified by its depictions of the time’s masculine, urban, working-class culture.

The referencing to folk Greek traditions is continued with a Tsamikos - a men’s dance from Epirus - presented by a folk troupe - followed by a Tsakonikos - a women’s dance from Peloponnesus (southern mainland). The spiral movement of the dance has been associated with depictions of Minotaur’s labyrinth in the myth of Theseus and Ariadne: a connection that Mutilinaiou immediately notes. The scene is followed by a performance of a Greek wedding, as Domna Samiou (another acclaimed local folk singer) interprets kalamatianos (song from the area of Kalamata, again in Peloponnesus). Right after, groups of children in white, and fishermen laying their nets introduce a nisiotikos balos (from the Aegean islands) performed by Yiannis Parios. The twelve tables are now transformed into sailing boats, with the table clothes raised, resembling open sails. The scene enacts typically tourist and expected Greek-island themes, with the white and blue colours framing images of carefree, happy fishermen and joyful children. Nonetheless, the folklorism of the image is offset with the entrance of a group of bathers. It’s the first non-idealised, non-mythic image of contemporary Greece within the ceremony, with people of all ages in colourful beach clothes carrying all the beach-culture paraphernalia: plastic chairs, life jackets, beach umbrellas, inflated water toys. Instead of presenting a tourist brochure image of a Greek island beach (empty, idyllic, with turquoise water and white sand, occasionally with a tanned young man or a bare-chested woman posing seductively on the background), Papaioannou presents an alternative, more common and prosaic pragmatic image of the popular summer tourist destinations.

The scene is forcefully interrupted when a Datsun open van loaded with watermelons enters the stadium, accompanied by a group of loud, dancing gypsies, while Marinella is singing a popular tsifteteli urban-folk song of 1956 Άναψε το Τσιτέλι (Light my Cigarette). The tables now form the setting for a Greek-music night-club also
known as Ellinadiko or bouzoukia\textsuperscript{9} with a group of partying ‘neo-Hellenes’,\textsuperscript{10} wearing shirts, suits and flashy dresses, dancing tsifteteli on the tables, throwing flowers and breaking plates representing the contemporary popular culture of the (kitsch?) neo-folk. The lights lower once more and a half moon appears as singers Dimitra Galani and Haris Alexiou each sing a song by Manos Hatzidakis: \textit{Μανούλα μου} (Oh, mother) and \textit{Πάμε μια βόλτα στο φεγγάρι} (Let’s Take a Walk to the Moon). The performers unfold from the spiral carrying torches and leave the stage. As the next scene starts, Mytilinaiou reminds the audience once again that they are watching “a festival of rhythms, images and traditions, which have deep roots in the past and yet are still alive today”.

Small fires are lit around the stadium’s perimeter and the performers jump over them as in the customary festival in the night of Ai-Yiannis\textsuperscript{11}. The music is a well know song by Stauros Xarhakos \textit{Ελα Απόψε στου θωμά} (Come tonight in Thomas’s), performed by popular singer Yiorgos Dalaras. A group of bouzouki players descend from the platform, through a number of successive wooden frames ornated with little white and blue flags and naked bulbs, and carried by pairs of male winged ‘angels’. The scene, both as visual image and contextual reference, reflects once again on Tsarouhis’s work, who—as Kostalas exemplifies—has celebrated the rebetiki culture. The last two traditional (demotic) regional dances performed, come from Crete and Pontos respectively: two distinct and renowned cultural entities most associated with Greek pride and dash. In fact, the Pontic dance presented is \textit{Serra} or \textit{Pyrrhios}: a war dance whose origins are located (by many Pontic and Greek dancers, teachers and scholars) in the Greek antiquity, and whose significance for the Pontic people has been of great importance.\textsuperscript{12}

The last image is focused on xenitia: the emigration of vast numbers of Greek peoples (mainly men) in search of work, which was a major problem for Greek society during the first half of the twentieth century. Dalaras starts with a short amane\textsuperscript{13} and performs with Alexiou a neo-rebetiko composed by Stavros Xarhakos’s in Nikos Gatsos’s lyrics \textit{Μάνα μου Ελλάς} (My Mother Hellas)\textsuperscript{14}

You told me the great fake words, you with your first milk
But now that the snakes awoke, you are wearing your ancient ornaments
And you never set a tear, oh mother Hellas, for selling your children as slaves.

(...)  

The great fake words, you told me with your first milk
But now that the fire has grown again, you are gazing at your ancient beauty
And in the world's arenas, oh mother Hellas, you still sell the same lie.\textsuperscript{15}

Scenes of people travelling, packed tightly in what could be ship-holds, or trains, are followed by the joy of re-unification and the setting of tables for a joined meal. The performers now carry the corn ear away, as the flying Eros from the Opening Ceremony reappears. With him, a male statue of Kouros, a Karyatis and a few tsoliades appear, accompanied by a group of excited foreign tourists with cameras. The staged part of the ceremony closes with Mikis Theodorakis's music for Zorbas the Greek: the famous syrtaki, where the ensemble dances together.\textsuperscript{16}

Following the unfolding of the Closing Ceremony, its character appears noticeably different than that of the Opening one, its re-presentation of a contemporary, vernacular Greekness functioning both antagonistically and complimentary to the initial ‘trip to the past’. The re-construction of a historicised Greek identity, which forwarded the Games, is now enhanced with depictions of a present, living Greece. The main pattern is inspired by the traditional harvesting, which bears a “double meaning” within the Closing Ceremony, signalling the end of summer, as well as the end of the Games. In that way, the seasonal celebration, “customary within agricultural tradition”, coincides with a festive closing of the Games (Eleutherotypia, 2004, p. 39). Elements from the local folk and pop cultures are interspersed as to present a mosaic of diverse cultural expressions, composing a pluralist, vivid and immediate contemporary national portrait.

The nation is staged as a non-mythic, live and diverse ethnoscape in its vernacular and often prosaic reality. The contemporary distance from the celebrated antiquity, already hinted in the Opening Ceremony, appears now more explicit through the counter-positioning of the Present. More importantly, the popular conscience regarding this distancing is once again explicitly stated, this time through a rebetiko song. In addition, the final co-existence of trans-historical national symbols (statues, tsoliades) for the tourist gaze, denotes an (at least semi) intentional self-exoticising display. Greece appears aware of the value of national Mythology, as a political (suggesting a specific international positioning), ideological (stimulating the national imagination and hence promoting a sense of belonging and elevating
the national morale, when necessary) and economic (through its tourist exploitation) asset. At the same time, it also appears aware of the scheme's limitations and its inability to account for all the shortcomings of the contemporary state. Finally, within this contemporary national imaging, the Folk and the Pop function as bridges with the past, connected both to antiquity and the present, as trans-historical and dynamic cultural continuums.

7.2 The negotiation of folklore within the ceremonies.

Both the Opening and Closing Olympic Ceremonies performed representations of Greekness in historical and contemporary periods, as well as in embodied/experiential and imagined terms. While the Opening Ceremony mainly focused on the distant artistic past, the closing one attempted to bridge the distance with that past by referencing everyday-images from contemporary Greece. Nonetheless, it touched on traditional and folk elements that have their origins in the past, adding to the historicity of the Opening Ceremony. This 'Dionysian' ceremony, as Papaioannou called it, juxtaposing it to the 'Apollonian' character of the opening show, presented romanticised images from the Greek provinces, such as the harvesting of the wheat, the stepping of the grapes and the making of wine. This rural context was intended to function as a natural setting for the staging and projection of the national folk element, which had been omitted in the opening part.

Since the Opening Ceremony focused on a High Art classicism, touching only momentarily the more recent artistic traditions through their urban expressions (e.g. the rebetika music and dance and karagiozis shadow-theatre), the performance of the folk face of Greece appeared as a necessity for the closure of the Games and the successful completion of the Hellenic referencing. In addition, the presence of the 'folk', as a substantial subject of ethnographic study, provides an immediate, 'real' historicity that completes and grounds the semi-imagined or semi-mythological ancient past. In that way, it contributes to the solidification of a national identity by providing it with a tangible cultural and historical (folk) base. Its exhibit of carried-forth antique traces establishes a strong connection with antiquity, whose feeble shape is also somewhat congealed by the showcased preservation of such traces.
The re-presented music and dances were carefully selected as to include references to as many regions and traditions of Greece, as possible. Hence, there were songs and dances from Epirus, Macedonia, Thrace, Peloponnesus, the Aegean islands and Crete. At the same time there was an acknowledgement of the wider Hellenic region, with references to Asia Minor and Pontos. This glimpse at the demotic tradition was framed by the romantic harvesting scene, which ran through the ceremony. As the television commentators noted throughout the transmission of the ceremony, the historicity of Greek culture was still underlined in the closing (as in the opening) ceremony by connecting the old with the new: the reference to Dionysian customs and beliefs, the pagan–ritualistic character of the bell-bearers, the ancient Greek roots of the Pontic war-dance (Pyrihios/Serra), the jumping of the fire, all contributed to the historicisation (and antiquisation) of the folklore. Between antiquity and the present day, folklore, as a collective cultural expression, stands as a mediator that connects the two. This link has been established by the attribute of certain folk elements and customs into pagan/ancient origins. While, this ascription is usually the outcome of substantial ethnographic and archaeological comparative research, it can also be arbitrary and intentional as to serve specific socio-political needs and purposes. Throughout the ceremony, traces of the past within contemporary folk traditions were demonstrated, reinforcing the idea of Greekness as a continuous and consistent force throughout the years, marking a long-lasting civilisation.

It is no coincidence that the Closing Ceremony opens with the masked bell-carriers, and the (re)presentation of a ritualistic custom, with attributed pagan-ancient origins. Following Turner's (1975, p. 95) distinction between transformatory and confirmatory rituals, Papakostas (2006, p. 8) places the Olympic Ceremonies in the second category, citing its political character, “its contribution to the national issue and its direct relation to the nation-state”, as a means through which “the glorified past of the community is confirmed”. Within that context, he examines the representation of ritualistic customs and folk traditions, such as babouyera, and traditional demotic dances and songs within the Closing Ceremony, as “temporal and symbolic thresholds of a uniformed cultural morpheme: Hellenic civilisation” (Ibid). As a Dionysian, (or Bacchic)-derived primitive custom, babouyera is
presented in the beginning of a long historical line of similar ‘national symbolic thresholds’, ending with contemporary pop singers (e.g. Sakis Rouvas) performing traditional songs.

Discussing the relation between ritualistic customs and the cultural identity of a community, Papakostas examines ritualistic customs as “a historically defined dynamic process, subjected to social and political manipulations and negotiations” (Nitsiakos in Papakostas, 2006, p. 2) focusing on the significant role of babouyera in the construction of the cultural and national identity of Kali Vrysi Dramas. Questioning the ‘authenticity’ of the ancient origin attributed to the custom, Papakostas highlights through this example the political dimension that often triggers and defines the historicising of folklore. Looking at the case of babouyera, in Papakostas’s study, it becomes apparent that the verification of the ancient —and indeed Dionysian— origin of the custom has resulted to the hyper-nationalisation of a historically troubled community. Archaeological and ethnographic research in the area has solidified a historical narrative, which ‘proved’ the ancient (and therefore unquestionably national) origin of the custom, as well as of the community itself. These scholarly theses have been welcomed, adopted and eventually performed by the inhabitants of Kali Vrysi, who incorporated into the traditional custom a new character: the figure of Bacchus, who has played a dynamic part in the ritual since 1994. As Papakostas notes,

the custom appeared so authentic that it ‘authenticised’ the cultural identity of Kali Vrysi. The evidences of a science as perceptible to the senses as archaeology, but also its ‘dialogue’ with ethnography, offer a solid ideological platform for the connection of the community with the neo-Hellenic identity, via the Greek antiquity.

(Papakostas, 2006, p. 6—translated by the author)

Furthermore, the ‘authenticity’, ‘historicity’ and ‘Greekness’ of the custom has attracted both scholarly and tourist interest in the area, while it also participates in an internal exoticism “energizing the structural nostalgia of the urban population of Drama, which exoticises the rural life and the related traditions” (Nitsiakos in
Papakostas, 2006, p. 7). The advertising of the custom's appearance within the Closing Ceremony by the local media, under the names 'bell-carriers', or simply 'the bells', and its proclamation as 'ancient', 'archetypal', 'primitive' and 'Dionysian' gave it a hyper-national dimension (Papakostas, 2006, pp. 8-9). The confirmation of the custom's Hellenicity through its appearance within the Closing Ceremony (and its consequent interpretation and contextualisation) was celebrated by the community of Kali Vrysi, as the most significant local success of the last decades (Ibid). This example contains a condensed version of most parameters of the dialogic relationship between antiquation and historicisation, folklorism, exoticism and auto-exoticism that are examined in this Part, also highlighting the important role of the Olympic ceremonies in the negotiation of identity, in both local and national levels.

The openness and joyful character of the Closing Ceremony, as well as the inclusion of a contemporary, live, and popular image of Greekness were generally acknowledged as pertinent for the completion of the show. Further to the Opening Ceremony, the closing one evoked the same spirit of inclusion, foregrounding a holistic image of Greekness. Hence, apart from the demotic elements, the urban-derived folk traditions of laika and rebetika were also represented in the ceremony, as parts of the wider net of Greek folk culture(s). Moreover, a touristic display and 'sale' of all the 'typically Greek products', e.g. Greek antiquity, folklore, and romance (Eros) is present throughout the ceremony, performed alongside other less idealised aspects of contemporary Greece, such as the gypsy water-melon vendors and the sea-and-sun experience in its unattractive pragmatic dimension. These interventions function antagonistically to the first category, in order to lighten its seriousness and distance the spectator from the essentialism of the projected national identity. In fact, these post-modern comments are both humoristic and ironic, stating once again the choreographer's (and indeed many Greeks') awareness of the semi-mythic origin of this prestigious national narrative, as well as its contemporary commercialisation and frailty. Both Gatsos's lyrics of the last song (My Mother Hellas) and the syrtaki finale with Theodorakis's music for Zorbas the Greek, exemplify this semi-conscious choice of the Greek people often
to ‘play along’, trust, embody, perform and most importantly promote and invest in the ‘Greek myth’, however prosaic their own reality may be.\textsuperscript{19}

In addition, the acknowledgement of the Greek gypsy community, through a very common and yet stereotypical and slightly romanticised image of the carefree gypsies dancing to popular songs behind the fruit-vendor’s truck also has another function: it represents a less-nationalised and under-represented cultural minority which, however, is an indispensable element of Greek countryside. Indeed, with the gypsy community occupying a distinct space within the provinces, the image of the watermelon-loaded Datsun trunk appears very familiar to the local audience. Moreover, this referencing further opens the projected idea of Greece and Greekness by offering a space for alternative and possibly repressed national narratives. In that way, it contributes to the inclusiveness of the ceremony. The image of a ‘pure’ essence of Greekness, as may be perceived through the intense historicisation of the Opening Ceremony is enhanced by the reference to a substantial minority, such as the gypsy community. Hence, by preventing the portrayal of a (racially, culturally and ethnically defined and delimited) essentialist nationalist identity, this opening assists the popularisation of the spectacle and secures its politically correct stance.

Wanting to include as much Greek imagery as possible to avoid elitism, Papaioannou presented many (rural, urban and mobile) popular Greek identities. Even the contemporary night-out in the bouzoukia, a non-mythic, secularised space even for the regular participants, had its part within the ceremony (although it appeared as a rather caricatured, comic scene). Nonetheless, all of these ethnic folk and popular elements were unavoidably de-contextualised, theatrically staged and performed according to Papaioannou’s artistic scope and aesthetic mediation. The sporadic criticism that Papaioannou was subjected to for the staging of folklore, mainly came from some traditional dance practitioners, teachers and scholars (like Papakostas). Their main objection arose from the inadequate and superficial representation of this rich and nationally significant part of Greek culture within the ceremonies. For some with a more profound and specialist interest in these cultural
areas, Papaioannou’s post-modernist visual approach appeared alienated from, and unsympathetic to their socio-cultural, contextual and aesthetic principles.

While Papaioannou’s works have often being cited for their inherent ‘Hellenic’ character, he has never specifically and directly worked with prime elements of the local folk traditions. Instead, his choreographed Hellenic images emerged through his familiarity and engagement with postmodern visual and theatrical streams and the ‘Hellenocentric Modernism’ as expressed within the local visual arts, which is discussed further in this chapter. This latter intellectual and artistic tradition has offered an additional possibility, to the artists dealing with national themes and issues, providing them with a secondary (in contrast to the first-hand folk and ancient-derived material) referential layer, which is however recognised as an equally valid portrayal of nationhood. Hence, besides a fundamental decision of dealing or not with ‘Greekness’, a further assessment of the means employed for such representation is also momentous. For a contemporary choreographer, the reliance on either primary sources or a filtered and interpreted second-hand deliverance of them can be a decisive criterion for the classification of their work (e.g. as modernist, or post-modern).

7.3 The ‘traditional’ negotiation of tradition: the example of Sofla Spyratou’s Roes.

While the overt and direct engagement with tradition (ancient, demotic-folk and popular) has been a characteristic of the earlier choreographic works, the use (or not) of folkloric elements is even today a critical choice for a choreographer. This choice, (however conscious), which may refer to the thematic orientation, as well as the aesthetics, kinesiology and style of his/her choreographic language, can indeed typify and classify the choreographer. The systematic preoccupation with the folk traditions, as well as with ancient (or ideas of ancient) forms of dance and theatre, indirectly positions a group (and/or a choreographer) either on the same, or the opposite side of a line drawn by the early choreographers, e.g. Eva Palmer, Koula Pratsika, Zouzou Nikoloudi, Rallou Manou between the ‘Hellenic/traditional’ or even ‘conventional’ and the ‘non-Hellenic’ and possibly
the 'new'. Although Papaioannou has often acknowledged the contribution of these pioneers, he has also made clear that similar works could not stand in today's scene and has distanced himself from their orientation and aesthetics. Still, other choreographers, such as Sofia Spyratou\textsuperscript{21}, have followed this focusing almost exclusively on the local traditions, from which they drew their inspiration. Describing the orientation and the aims of her dance theatre group \textit{Roes} (founded in 1989), Spyratou states in the Greek Choreographers Association publication \textit{Dance}:

All choreographies created by the group have included elements from the Greek culture and tradition, along with methods and techniques of contemporary dance and theatre. Moreover, the group aims in the projection of young artists and the organisation of music concerts in both the centre and the province.

\textit{(in Gregoriou, 2004, p 361)}

In her works Spyratou has often drawn inspiration from ancient historical and mythological themes (e.g. \textit{Holy Bacchus}, 1994, \textit{Taurokathapsia}, 1995, 2002, \textit{The hum of the myth}, 1996, 1998, \textit{The dancer Aristophanes}, 1999, \textit{Sapfo -the roses of Pieria}, 2001), as well as from the folk traditions, music, poetry, myths and cultural practices (e.g. \textit{Here is a beautiful table}, 1990, \textit{The hum of the myth}, 1998, \textit{Milk flows, Honey flows, Wine flows}, 2003 etc).\textsuperscript{22} Having also studied under Pratsika, Spyratou has been influenced by her choreographic principles, whose "nucleus was the achievement of a contemporary and authentically Greek expression" (Fessas-Emmanouel, 2004, p. 438). She founded Dance Theatre Roes in 1989 to research and experiment with the unification of theatre dance and music and to pursue the "search for a Greek-styled dance theatre (...) This is not negotiated as an external mimesis of traditional elements, but as a search for ways that the dancers can express themselves, e.g. their education, culture, literature, their aesthetic preferences etc" (Ibid, pp. 438-439). At the same time, Spyratou has also extensively choreographed for the chorus in the staging of many ancient tragedies, from 1979 to 2000 (Ibid, pp. 440-441). Similar interests have been expressed by most of Pratsika's older students, who focused on the Greekness of their works (manifested through the exploration of historical cultural elements from various historical periods from antiquity until today). In addition, they have shared an
interest in the modernisation of their choreographies and teachings, which they wished to align with western (European and American) artistic currents. Finally, they valued the idea of a unification of the arts, working on cross-artistic collaborations and have been intensely preoccupied with the contemporary staging of ancient tragedies.

However different in style, technique and aesthetics, Spyratou’s stated artistic aims are consistent with the principles and concerns of most of Pratsika’s students (as well as Pratsika herself and even Palmer-Sikelianou).\textsuperscript{23} Being one of the most productive and acclaimed Greek contemporary choreographers, Spyratou has collaborated extensively with the ministries of Culture and Education and has organised performances, events and seminars (often in schools), both in Athens and in the province. While there is no clearly stated official positioning favouring an ‘ethnocentric’ choreographic orientation over others, the association with a nationally acclaimed dance/theatrical tradition is nonetheless an asset for a contemporary choreographer, and likely to positively affect her/his reception by (at least some of the older, well-established) critics, as well as her/his chances for governmental funding and support. Indeed, while many choreographers with different interests and orientation are also acknowledged and supported (such as Constantinos Rigos and Dimitris Papaioannou), Spyratou’s company Roes, has been one of the longest running and best funded\textsuperscript{24} (and promoted) Greek companies.

Within Spyratou’s works and stated interests in the aesthetic, contextual, cultural and educational parameters of her perception of dance, lies a common base line that runs through the local dance affairs from the early twentieth century until the present day. Although divergent in style and character, I would identify this orientation as a ‘mainstream’ tendency, within Greek contemporary dance scene. This tendency is directed towards a Hellenocentric position focusing on the development of a Greek dance language, which draws directly from the national history and culture, namely from the folk traditions and the ancient arts and literature. Compared to Papaioannou’s choreographic style, Spyratou’s works have a more consistent, overtly Hellenic character. Nonetheless, in the urge of
choreographing or directing a national narrative (whether personally driven or contextually specified), both choreographers seem to move on the same grounds of history, culture and art that Papaioannou inhabited in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. However different in their aesthetics, thematic, kinetic, stylistic choices and ideological underpinnings, these two acclaimed choreographers still follow and develop, as I shall attempt to demonstrate, different strands of the same Hellenocentric modernist tendency that has typified the Greek dance affairs.

The crucial difference between the two approaches lies in the traditions that each choreographer uses as a source in their constructions of 'Hellenicity', and their distance from them. On one hand, Spyratou has been acknowledged for her negotiation of elements from the local ancient and folk traditions, such as myths and tales, music, dance, texts and even sites and artefacts. Hence, her Hellenic references rely on prime historical and ethnographic material, which trigger, assist or frame her own choreographic purposes. On the other hand, Papaioannou's staging of Greekness (as a core subject, as in the Olympics, or as an underlying reference) mainly draws from secondary sources, through the Hellenic-oriented works of previous artists, like the exponents of the 'Generation of the '30s'. In that way, Hatzidakis's music and Tsarouhis's paintings appear as self-contained Greek references, suggestive of a neo-Hellenic culture. Their modernist (and at times post-modernist) negotiation of prime sources, like folk and popular rhythms, painting techniques and subject matters, has created an intentional, cultural web, which is today considered an indicator of Greekness, in its own right. Hence, while Spyratou appears to be continuing the Hellenocentric Modernist tradition (with post-modern influences), Papaioannou uses this same tradition as a referential ground, in order to re-present recognisable ethnic symbolisms.

At this point, it is important to review the significance of folklore within the national discourse on identity, in order to understand better the origins and justifications for these tendencies within the contemporary Greek dance scene. The different phases of the Neo-Hellenic political and cultural identity from the beginning of the twentieth century until the present day have shaped (and have been shaped by) the relevant movements within the arts. The evaluation of the
Greek folk and popular culture (and the definition and delineation of what these consist of), as well as its recognition as a significant aspect of nationhood, has followed an intricate process of abrupt denunciation, romantic idolisation, and gradual acceptance, and re-evaluation. This process has not been the same at all times within the arts as in other sectors of social life and yet, the interaction between the spheres of official politics, the popular sentiment and the artistic expressions of each period have created a referential ground that informs the contemporary perception of the folk tradition as a dynamic element of identity. It is upon that nexus of interrelated socio-political, historical and artistic conditions that contemporary Greek choreographers often base their understandings of their art, and its positioning within (outside of, or in opposition to) the official, mainstream or marginal national narratives on identity.

7.4 Folklorisation as a re-nationalising process in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

While Greek antiquity was, nationally and internationally, unquestionably recognised as both Greek and western, its connection with the neo-Hellenic identity as shaped in the early twentieth century was heavily questioned by western travellers and scholars. As discussed, in the nineteenth century, Greeks needed to demonstrate a distinct identity that would in turn justify their independence struggle against the Turks, and establish Greece’s status as a sovereign nation. The historicising of a national narrative rooted in antiquity required a validation of this connection of the old with the new. Hence, the intermediate historical periods had to be re-nationalised, in order to showcase the recurrence of specific cultural elements that would prove the unbroken continuity of Greek civilisation. The return to the folk arts came ‘naturally’, as they enclosed lasting characteristics from earlier periods, which further informed and gratified the historicising of the National Self. At the same time, however, the newly established local bourgeoisie went through a long phase of denial and rejection of anything that reminded of their peasant -and hence ‘vulgar’ and ‘oriental’- origin, in favour of the admired European modernity (Filias, 1985).
The historicising of the National Self, alongside the parallel political and cultural identification with Europe, did not however follow a linear path from the East to the West. It is a fact, that the westernisation (and modernisation) of Modern Greece appears as a strong and lasting underlying driving force in both the nation's political and cultural affairs. Still, the changing socio-political conditions (both nationally and internationally) that marked Modern Greek history have inevitably affected the local perceptions, creations or re-constructions, of a (geographic-political and cultural) national identity, which balances between East and West, tradition and modernity, developed and developing. Nonetheless, the first decades after the nation's liberation, the character of the new state was explicitly 'western': The local turn to Europe and the reliance on the western allies during the liberation fight, as well as during World War I, had created a network of foreign interests in the area that shaped national politics. Moreover, these political orientations of the new state have at all times reflected, promoted and been generated by local tendencies within the arts and literature, as the following discussion shows.

7.4.1. Poetry and literature: the demotic language and the return to the folk tradition.

As historian Nikos Svoronos writes, during the first years after the establishment of the Greek state, and up to the 1880s, the ‘antiquity-worshiping’ philologists attempted to 'purify' the modern Greek language and re-form it according to the classical prototypes, which they wished to revive. This tendency, self-defined as 'nationalist' and 'orthodox', was aligned with the Great Idea and denounced all western influences (1999, p. 92). The Great Idea was a utopian vision that started with the intention to free all the Greek-populated lands, which were then parts of Turkey. As the borders of the newly liberated (and still in the process of the completion of its contemporary shape) Greek state were blurred, the Great Idea tended to be identified with the royal nationalist aspirations of regaining the lands of the Byzantine Empire. Psiroukis gives another dimension of the Great Idea, focusing on its role for the promotion of the specific political and economic interests of the royal and upper bourgeois classes, expressed through “the contradictory dual ideology of the civic state”: while it cultivated a feeling of
national weakness and helplessness, which justified the nation's overt foreign patronage by the western European states, it also promoted the creation of 'Great Greece', through the re-establishment of the Byzantine Empire. The turning of local patriotism into a-critical nationalism, would secure the state's hegemony of the 'national movement'. Moreover, it promoted the local bourgeoisie's capitalist interests in the wider area, acquiring an increasing partaking of the colonial exploitation of the periphery. (Psiroukis, 1981, pp. 101,103). The Idea finally evaporated with the catastrophe that followed the expedition in Asia Minor, and the massacre of the remaining local Greek populations by the Turkish Nationalist army (Skoulatou, Dimakopoulou, Kondi, 1999, pp. 259-262).

Nonetheless, the proclaimed positions of Orthodox Nationalism were highly contradictory, as they reproved the 'filthy character of Byzantium' and favoured the literature schools of the time26, which, as Svoronos argues, relied on the "superficial re-production of schemes drawn from French literature, the eighteenth century neoclassicism and the following romanticism" (Ibid), hence favouring foreign, European prototypes instead of local ones, as the title Orthodox Nationalism suggested. Indeed, the first post-Revolution poets and intellectuals were inspired by the facts, histories and mythologies of the seven-year Revolution fight of 1821, in an alignment with western Philhellenism. Most of them wrote in the official archaic-like Greek (katharevousa-καθαρεύονοσ) but were informed by western literature. More than that, they were heavily influenced by another school of poets, the Fanariotes: these intellectuals came from Constantinople and other big centres of Asia Minor, like Smyrna, where they had played a crucial role within the diplomatic affairs of the Ottoman state, as well as in the promotion of European Philhellenism, which supported the Greek revolution. Through a long term relation with western European cultures (mainly French), they also held onto a linguistic conservatism, insisting on the archaic Greek forms. Conservative and Romantic in nature, they had embraced western Philhellenism (which focused on antiquity), and visualised the rebirth of ancient Greece. They completely disregarded the folk heritage, which seemed different, 'oriental' and not equal to the ancient tradition, and embraced the Revolution in the same way as the European Philhellenes: as a first step towards the revival of the classic antiquity (Meraklis, 1983, pp. 17-24).
As a reaction to that increasingly sterile tendency, detached from contemporary Greek reality, came the literary generation of the 1880s, who supported the vernacular demotic language and escaped romanticism by introducing (often in a satirical/comic mood) elements from everyday reality (Ibid). Identified as the New Athenian School, these poets have been characterised by their intense preoccupation with popular/national themes. Svoronos suggests that this return to the demotic language and the folk tradition was initiated by the earlier Eptanesian poets. Hence, while tradition was officially abandoned in the freed mainland, it had been being valued and cultivated within the Ionian islands (under the direct influence of the West), with poet Dionysios Solomos (1798-1857) signalling “a new phase of national consciousness, which was gradually transfused to the mainland through its transfer from poetry to history and the social life” (Svoronos, 1999, p. 92). Following that, both the Eptanesian and Athenian schools focused heavily on rural Greece and drew from its traditions, still in accordance with the Romantic paradigm. Neglecting the newly founded urbanism, they identified Greece with the folk traditions of the province, which appeared (however influenced by the various invasions and the Ottoman occupation) as a “treasure-keeper of Tradition” and more true to the historicity of Greekness then the new civil classes (Meriaklis, 1983, p.31).

Still, some of the 1880s Athenian poets, like Zaharias Papadoniou and Yeorgios Drosinis, eventually started to introduce an ‘urbanism’, originating in their own understanding of the province and their engagement with “urban bourgeois personal psychological states” (Ibid, p. 6). Most importantly, the Athenians exceeded both the earlier Eptanesian school and the idealistic romanticism by re-discovering through their contact with these rural traditions elements from the pre-Christian pagan Greece, which openly expressed a worship of life and nature and a denial of the afterlife. Hence, the worship of the body in its physicality, mortality and sensuality (as opposed to the ethereal idea of the body of the Eptanesian poets) was embraced as another Greek element (Ibid, p. 32). This post-Christian return to the living body and its glorification, also facilitated the introduction of the meta-traditional dancing body, with the performances of Isadora Duncan and the later
initiation of a local theatrical dance scene. The return to pre-Christian values and ethics in relation to the body also relied on the prestigious artful chastity and ‘classical beauty’ of the nude statues of antiquity. This intellectual positioning was used as a reference, by the early Greek dancers and choreographers, forming a base upon which they built their image as ‘high-artists’ and re-contextualised the free, meta-traditional movement of the body, within a ‘proper’ and acceptable (high-) artistic sphere.

The re-evaluation of folk traditions and their projection as significant bearers of cultural historicity and nationhood, appear with the foundations of ethnography by Kostas Papaioannou (1815-1891) and later Nikolaos Politis (1852-1921) in the late nineteenth century, which came as a reaction to the theories of politician-historian Jacob-Phillip Fallmerayer (1790-1861). Fallmerayer denied the existence of a specific Modern Greek identity proclaiming that there was absolutely no relationship between the contemporary Greeks and classical antiquity. Instead he identified them as Slavic tribes, who had re-populated the area. This triggered reactions from many European and Greek historians, who felt the emerging need for validation and historicisation of the Greek identity. Intellectual Spyridon Zabelios (1815-1881) defended the continuity of Hellenism, turning to folk language and songs and to Byzantium in Demotic Songs of Greece, under (the prism of) historical study on Middle-Ages Hellenism (1852), while historian Konstandinos Paparigopoulos wrote his History of the Greek Nation from the ancient years until today (1860-1874), elaborating on the cultural and historical continuity of Greek civilisation. Following this argument, Politis researched the life, literature and ethics of the Greek people. In 1871 he publishes the Study on the life of Modern Greeks, establishing ethnography in Greece, “as a quest in search of the remains of the past within contemporary everyday life. In that way, he counterposed to the idea of the return to the past, the discovery of the past within the present” (Svoronos, 1999, pp. 93-94). The establishment of a present-day identity through referencing the past was embraced and further elaborated by the artistic generation of 1930s.
Addressing a German audience, Stilpon Kyriakides (a student of Politis), introduced his study *Modern Greek Folklore: Folk poetry, folk religion and folk art with references to German folklore*, noting

For as we know well, folklore is simply the picture of psychical and material life of a preliterate race, unconscious of its origin and future. It is the picture of the life of historical nations, in which all older periods of history have more or less left their ineradicable traces, a picture which is uniformed and versatile, colourful, and mosaic-like, into which history has repeatedly inserted a little stone from time to time.

(translated from German by R. A. Georges, 1968, p. 16)

As Georges notes, Kyriakides's writings on modern Greek folklore present a paradox: they include views that seem overtly nationalist and even chauvinist, alongside statements, “which could have only be written by a staunch comparativist who has no time for ethnic biases” (1968, p. 8). George locates this inaccuracy in Kyriakides’s disdain for the employment of “extreme generalisations to account for peculiarities in folk culture” (Ibid). And he further explains that Kyriakides would be as critical of the nomination of Greece “as the great reservoir from which all of Europe drew its traditions”, as well as of the proclamation that Greek folk culture had been “radically affected or completely supplanted by the cultures of invaders and immigrants” (Ibid), hence trying to maintain a balance between the two extreme scholarly positions of his time.

Kyriakides (like many other scholars of the time) felt the need to defend Modern Greek culture against the extreme positions of Fallmereyer and other scholars. While his 1936 study attempted to create a link between Greece and (the cultivated and established) Germany, drawing parallels in both the folk and ‘higher’ cultures of the two nations, his study *The language and folk culture of Modern Greece* (written in 1943), is more defensive and ethnocentric than the former. This second monograph came as a reaction to the theories with which the German occupation forces indoctrinated their soldiers during the Second World War, as well as by the theories of the Nazi theoretician, Alfred Rosenberg. Continuing Fallmerayer's
thesis, Rosenberg, in his book *Der Mythus des 20 Jahrhunderts* (Munich 1936), "proclaimed the extinction of the ancient Greeks calling their descendants weak Levantines" (Katranides in Kyriakides, 1968, p. 47). Kyriakides intended to publish his study within Germany (which was impossible), to prove the 'purity' of Greek race, on the grounds of language, culture and social behaviour. Relying on the mediatory role of folklore, between the ancient and Modern Greek cultures, he highlights its significance for Greece (and Europe in general), writing:

Such a survey is even more necessary for Greek culture because not only the layman, who learns what he knows in schools, but often even the scholar, admires only the works and accomplishments of the Greeks of the classical era, forgetting the long historical periods which have followed. These historical periods lack the unique beauty of the classical epoch, but they are not less glorious because of that. In fact, they are of greater importance to modern European culture and especially to Modern Greek culture than the classical era is.

(Kyriakides, 1968, p. 4)

Thus, while he cannot go so far as to elevate these intermediate historical periods to the higher realms of 'beauty and uniqueness', where classical antiquity is situated, he nonetheless underlines their major significance for the understanding of Modern Greek culture. Nonetheless, while his writings are defensive of Greece against foreign (especially German) anti-Greek theories, they still exhibit an immense admiration for western (German) academic culture, which he adopted and used as a guide to his own study and readings of Greek culture. In this treaty, of 1936 he praises German scholars for their "contribution to the revival of Hellenism", placing Germany in front of all the "western nations that, during the Turkish domination, took over Greece's homeless culture and developed it into a newer, splendid culture" (1964, p. 43). This idea that Greek culture was homeless for four centuries, transferred and cultivated in the West and re-planted within Greece after its liberation, was indeed a very common perception both within western Europe (where it was initially expressed and established) and Greece itself. Kyriakides's ideas resemble Pratsika's positioning, as addressed in Part 2, who also praised her
German teachers in Dalcroze institute, for teaching her what Greece really was: a scheme that she felt the need to introduce to her own students in order to enlighten them and introduce them to their 'real' identity.

For those (scholars, artists or intellectuals), who sought to define, develop or even defend Greekness in its continuity, historicity and coherence, the already established western literature and scholarship on Greece was perceived as an undeniably valid and prestigious reference ground. Hence, they often developed westernised and at times auto-exoticised self-portrayals, creating a network of interlaced nationalist, and supra- (or even contra-) nationalist positions. This referential network has in turn informed (positively or negatively) the approaches of the subsequent dance artists.

7.4.2 Westernisation, classicism and exoticism in the visual arts.

The importation and establishment of a Bavarian royal family (1833-1862), which followed the foundation of the Modern Greek state, established a cultural link with German artistic traditions, which cultivated a local 'German-fed academism' (following the principles of the Academy of Munich, where many of the time's Greek artists actually studied under governmental scholarships)\(^{33}\), which typified the local fine arts. While the themes were largely drawn from Greek history, (most commonly depicting heroic incidents from the Independence Fight, and/or romantic moments of everyday rural life), the character and style of the time's 'official art' remained distinctively western. Even though the classic, romantic and beautifying style was gradually enriched by further imported modernist tendencies, its character remained highly mimetic, re-producing foreign established forms and patterns (Daskalothanasis, 2000, pp. 29-38).

Apart from their portrayal through western painting techniques and styles, the contextual negotiation of Greek themes, also appeared filtered through the western gaze, as form seems to have also influenced the character and orientation of these works. The local painters often adopted a 'European' stance towards the local reality presenting accordingly romanticised or exoticised images of it.\(^{34}\)
Furthermore, they have often been identified with the “nineteenth-century arrogant European perception of the Eastern nations”, embodying (and reproducing) other orientalist stereotypes, such as the “nonchalance, apathy, cunningness and hedonism” of the Oriental man (Dascalothanasis, 2000, pp. 37-38). In all, Dascalothanasis suggests that the adoption of the Munich Academism by the Greeks, “condenses a group of relationships of dependence, reflected within the artistic sphere” (Ibid, p. 32). The uncritical affiliation with the West and the unconditional embodiment of the time’s western (both political and artistic) values, ethics and aesthetics continued, as it had after King Otto’s fall in 1862, into the twentieth century as the mainstream official artistic guidelines.

The first deviations from the Academism (as this phenomenon has been known within Greek art history) appear in the first two decades of the twentieth century, but the first open confrontation with that model came with the Generation of (19)30’s (Ibid, pp. 39, 54-58). While national(ist) and-or self-searching tendencies have been sporadically expressed much earlier, it is in the 1930s that the search for Hellenicity appears particularly strong, typifying a whole stream of artists, writers and intellectuals, which formulated their positions around this core demand (ibid, p. 55). Even though the need for the definition of a distinct national identity appears much earlier, being periodically intensified and lessened for more than a century, Eleni Vacalo (1983, p. 15) points out that it was actually the Generation of ’30s, which defined and established the shape and content of Greekness, for the following generations (also: Alkali, 2002, p. 22, and Daskalothanasis, 2000). Their intense preoccupation with representations of Greekness typified their works, which have often been acknowledged as a historical reference point within most arts. Thus, even though one cannot interpret all the artistic manifestations of that century as mere extensions of the arts of the 1920s and 1930s, it is still important to examine that period with its core features, as well as its impact on the future generations.
7.5 Positioning the National Self ‘above’ East and West: The significance of the Byzantine tradition as a locator of identity.

The most significant position of the Generation of (19)30s was the search for a unique Greek identity, which differentiated from both its ‘western’ and ‘eastern’ neighbours. The national defeat (known as the catastrophe) in Asia Minor, generated the need for a new clarification of national borders and for the healing of the wounded national morale. Besides the opposition, now rejuvenated, and disassociation from the Orient (as represented through the Turkish state), the realisation of the nation’s peripheral and disadvantageous positioning in relation to the developed West, generated a nationalist tendency, which aimed to elevate the nation above all ‘foreigners’. For that, the solemn reliance on antiquity was no longer sufficient; as the majority of the western-educated artists realised, any revivalist attempt would have to be further supported in two ways. Firstly, by an engagement with the international artistic scene and secondly through the location of a distinct and alive core of Greekness that would also re-nationalise and enhance antiquity. Dascalothanasis stresses the political significance of this artistic shift explaining:

because the Great Idea had, as a historical probability, collapsed, the choice of a more recent past that could be associated with the –now ‘imagined’– possibility of Greece’s expansion beyond its tight contemporary national borders, was being offered as a reaction to the national catastrophe in the best possible way. For the fulfilment of this role, the Byzantine past was called forth.

(Daskalothanasis, 2000, p. 56)

Similarly, Vacalo summarises the artistic pursuits of the time in three main points: “a cosmopolitanism, a pessimism of neo-romantic nature and at the same time a positioning of the Greek root in Byzantium” and attributes this turn to the Byzantine heritage, as an expression of the anger the Greeks felt about “Europe’s responsibility for the disaster in Asia Minor” (1983, p. 15). Both Vacalo and Dascalothanasis note that the previous neglect and even rejection of Byzantine
history by the supporters of the country’s monolithic “westernised development” further influenced the new artists’ choice of this specific era as a national cornerstone. According to Vacalo’s interpretation, Greece’s Byzantine heritage appeared as non-western in contrast to its ancient history, which had been ‘discovered’ and ‘appropriated’ by the West. In that way, the shift towards an ‘eastern’ part of Greek history and culture operated as a reactive, defensive mechanism, triggered by the role of the West in the biggest national tragedy of the Modern Greek history. Of course, this shift towards the east by no means implied an affiliation with the Turkish ‘Orient’; in fact Byzantium, in its historical and religious significance, has always appeared as diametrically opposite to the (antagonistic) rising Ottoman Empire.

Furthermore, I argue that the turn to Byzantium can also be seen as a result of the internal artistic and political schism of the time. In the early twentieth century the dichotomy of Greek language was already intense, dividing writers and scholars into the conservative katharevousianous and (more or less) liberal demotikistes, the first promoting the formal, ancient-like Greek language and the latter supporting the official use of the popular, demotic language. As Vacalo points out, the extensive referencing to antiquity was already appropriated by the katharevousianous and even though there were still unexplored aspects, it led many of the artists of the 1930s towards the (still untouched) Byzantine and folk art. With Greek antiquity having being valued by the West, the local official emphasis on it, which prompted the supporting of katharevousa, can be interpreted as yet another case of adaptation to western values and ideals. In that way, the initial model of a self-identification through affiliations with, or opposition towards the West is once again present. Still, the main representatives of both linguistic styles came from rising urban middle and upper classes, which identified themselves with the Western European bourgeoisies. The two different strands, expressing the conservative and liberal forces of the local bourgeoisie do not appear profoundly different when examined further.

The study of Byzantine tradition (perceived as continuous with antiquity) aimed at the projection of a set of diachronic Hellenic elements that had survived the
contemporary era. Hence, this shift was accompanied by a parallel turn to an equally understudied area that neither artists nor historians had recognised: folk culture (Daskalothanasis, 2000, p. 57). Already in the mid 1920s several studies on the Greek folk art had appeared, while in 1931 the association Greek Folk Art was founded, together with the first publications on folk architecture. One of the leading figures in this tendency, artist Angeliki Hatzimihali (1895-1965) proclaimed that “the folk art is a resistance power against the foreign (western), evolved rhythms, non-familiar to the psycho-spiritual powers of the nation” (Filippidis, 1984, pp. 153, 156-159 in Daskalothanasis, 2000, p. 57). Within that quote, the ‘anti-western’ spirit appears as anti-modern, exemplifying the neo-romantic and rather mystical inclination of the local bourgeoisie to return to a deeper (national) self. These ‘psycho-spiritual powers’ appear as essentialised qualities, inherent in both the individuals and the society that form the national web. The re-discovery of these national (and personal) roots and the reconnection with them was believed to be the way to restore the lost balance of those national powers, at a moment of a deep political crisis. The location of this mystic core somewhere outside the modern life (in the past?) dictated their recalling through the folk arts: a ‘pure’ and therefore ‘safe’ channel to the national past. Hence, the triptych of neo-romanticism, pessimism and the location of the Greek root in Byzantium and the folk tradition is clearly articulated here.

However anti-western these tendencies may have appeared to be, it is important to note their parallel alignment with similar pursuits within the West: the establishment and development of European nation-states had generated a similar turn towards the history of the middle-ages, as well as towards the folk traditions, to legitimize their sovereignty and distinctiveness. Hence, the identification of folk traditions as locators of identity was a common practice within most western nation-states during the nineteenth century, but one which was carried forth into the twentieth. Moreover, the ‘return to the roots’ was also a main axiom of (western) European neo-romanticism, which favoured similar artistic pursuits; a tendency that many western-educated Greek bourgeois artists were fully aware of. Finally, the imaging (and imagining) of the National Self, had been already influenced by
western imaginings on Greece, established through travel literature\textsuperscript{39}, scientific
treaties in Greek civilisation and ethnographic expeditions.

7.6 Western readings of Greekness: denouncing the present and celebrating
the past. The intermediation of folklore.

The gradual discovery\textsuperscript{40} and exoticisation of Greek civilisation appears to have
begun in the middle of the eighteenth century with the appearance of the first
western romantic travellers, whose expeditions were usually accompanied by a
commercial activity and/or an illicit trade in antiquities (Voutira, 2000, p. 140).
During the nineteenth century, a growing number of Western European travellers
attempted to approach, study and delineate Greece, mainly through its ancient
monuments, but often with a parallel interest in the folk arts, ethics and morals and
the everyday life of the modern Greeks.

Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a growing
romanticised exoticised interest in the ideals, aesthetics and educational values of
ancient Greece appears. Having studied and idealised Greek antiquity, western
travellers systematically tried to connect ancient and modern Greece. Nonetheless,
the reality of Modern Greece disappointed these travellers and scholars, who could
not always trace the 'nobility' of ancient Greece in the wrecked, impoverished and
'vulgar' countryside. As Maria Tondorova suggests, the Philhellenism that
"conquered Europe" in the decade of the 1820s was followed by an anti-Hellenism
which came as a result of the final disappointment of the West by the contemporary
Greeks (1996, p. 73). In fact, anti-Greek sentiments had been eloquently expressed
much earlier by Western European (and especially British) scholars, such as Henry
Blount, and John B.S. Morrirt of Rokeby (Todorova, 1996, pp. 78, 74). As
Todorova suggests, coming from a rising Empire themselves, they tended to
affiliate with an already established one. Hence, they favoured the Ottoman
Empire, instead of the enslaved agricultural populations that inhabited its territories
(1996, p. 80). Romantic descriptions of the 'classical landscape' of the Balkans are
intervened with degrading comments on the meta-layers of cultures that lay upon
them.\textsuperscript{41} Moreover, Morrirt openly express his disgust for his contemporary Greeks,
who, unlike their aristocratic Ottoman rulers, are described as “vulgar, vile, slimy, unreliable and slavish”, able to enrage any English-blooded gentleman (Ibid, pp. 81-83).

Greeks are often compared to their noble ancestors, to whom they appear unworthy and totally differentiated from. While attending a local feast in Peloponnesus, Morritt writes “Good Lord! If a free ancient Greek could for a minute attend this scene, I am sure that, if his fate in the underworld was not particularly tough, he would beg to return back there” (in Todorova, 1996, p. 81). Interestingly, and consistently with the Orientalist model, Greek women are exempt from these negative descriptions and described as incredibly beautiful, expressive and aristocratic (Ibid, pp. 81-82). In addition, the association of aristocracy with beauty, honesty and refinement and the identification of peasantry with vulgarity, unreliability and ugliness were common perceptions that defied national borders. As Rebecca West suggests, the nineteenth-century English traveller tended to condemn the Christian subordinate populations of the Ottoman Empire as dirty, uneducated, slavish and unrefined, associating them with the inhabitants of the newly developed industrial centres of Lancashire and Yorkshire, who were also described as smelly, drunken and vulgar (1969, p. 105).

Within that climate, Todorova suggests, the development of ethnography in the nineteenth century, which focused on the peasant life and customs, was not appreciative of the peasant, but of the “Volk” itself. As she notes, the academic research on the Balkan area developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, alongside the romanticism and evolutionism of that time. In that way, it inherited the romantic “passion for the folklore and the language” central and in the relevant German academic tradition, as well as in the Darwinist classification which mainly prevailed the Anglo-Saxon tradition, and located the Balkans in the dawn of civilisation (Ibid, p. 90-91). At that time, the folk art and culture of modern Greece was explored, and valued when found to present a remarkable historical continuity and coherence in its various manifestations, presenting a validating link with the longed-for antiquity. This reflected a general tendency for a “(re)turn (and re-connecting) to the sources”, which characterised European and American
modern art in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Vacalo 1983, p. 16). 42

In order to exemplify this tendency through a number of examples, Vacalo (ibid) further notes Henri Matisse's influence in painting and the attempts to connect "popular and ancient art", as well as the general emphasis on the originality of the naïf painting within modern art. At that time, a parallel interest in modern Greece is expressed by several (western) artists, in the domains of architecture, the fine arts and even literature: Le Corbusier exhibits a great interest in popular Aegean architecture, while the Greek self-taught naïf painter Theophilos (Hatzimichalis, 1867/73? -1934) was discovered and exhibited in Paris (and consequently within Greece itself) in the late 1920s -by Y. Gounaroppoulos and Sratis Eleutheriadis-Terriad- being highly praised for his conveyance of an unbroken and continuous folk sentiment of Greekness. Similarly, Greek novelists and poets (like Angelos Sikelianos) are been translated and published in different countries and gain respect outside Greece.

7.7 Establishing the national as a passport to the world.
The local turn to the roots followed this western quest. Hence, while the 1920s and 1930s were for Greece a period of "restlessness and search" (Alkali, 2002, p. 21) characterised by a general tendency for recuperation, they were also typified by a newly experienced opening to the world. The restless search for identity and self/national reassurance that typified the arts still required the location and/or construction and projection of a national profile to the rest of the world. For the Greek artists, the detection and establishment of a distinct Greek identity was not only intended to fulfil an inner (or social) need for inspiration and self-definition. The widespread return to the roots also offered the Greek artists a chance to align with (western) international artistic movements and assure their place within them. As Vacalo suggests, those who first used 'Greekness' as a critical evaluation point for the legitimacy of an artwork were at the same the ones who were "opening their horizons to the international movements and ideas and wanted to lead Greece to them" (1983, p. 14). The fact that Greek folk culture still included primary
elements of these same roots that were now re-explored by western modern art, allowed Greek artists to enter the international scene, with a distinct—and yet totally aligned with the spirit of the time—proposal.

On the other hand, in the twentieth century, Byzantine history also gradually started to attract some western scholarly attention. This western interest alone would indeed be enough to raise the status and the prestige of a long neglected historical period, not only within the West, but also within the rest of the world, including Greece itself. Thus, it could be argued that the Greek artistic shift towards Byzantine arts was an auto-exoticised escape from its ‘western’ roots, through the adoption of a non-western origin, but still as defined and classified by the West. Most importantly, the easily traceable relation of the Greek folk art to Byzantium offered an opportunity for artists to underline the existence of continuity within Greek culture, bridging a historical ‘oriental gap’ between its ‘western’ ancient and contemporary character, which could justify the country’s modern identity.

Thus, the re-creation and export of a Greek culture to the West was facilitated by a combination of external and internal socio-political factors. The so-called artistic Generation of the 30s has been especially credited for its nationalising of the foreign currents, achieving international recognition for the Greek arts. Going back to Vacalo’s triptych of cosmopolitanism, neo-romanticism and Greekness, these—at first site contradictory—tendencies, are all interrelated. The need for a recognisable national identity is related to the need of establishing a position within the newly discovered western (artistic) world, which now seemed more approachable to the Greek artists. In contrast to Dascalothanasis’s analysis, Vacalo interprets the time’s tendency as an increasing artistic self-assurance, at a time when Greece was “starting to believe in its equality with Europe (...) no longer questioning the possibility of an alignment with it” (1983, p. 14). Still, this remark only seems relevant to the artistic affairs, as Greece was going through an intense economic and political crisis and it was apparent that it could never fully follow the rapid developmental rhythms of advanced Europe. In fact, this belief appears rather as a reactive plasmatic act of self reassurance, at a time when the national morale desperately needed a boosting injection.
Within the arts, this national ‘confidence’ was mainly drawn from both the contact and familiarisation with western artistic streams, as well as from the possibility of an alignment with them, through the re-negotiation and export of an authentic (meaning historically aware and yet contemporary) Hellenic artistic suggestion. Indeed, the widespread neo-romanticism of the time, which favoured both nationalist distinctiveness and the engagement with the exotic ‘authenticity’ and ‘primitivism’ and the naïf/folk, seems to have facilitated this integrative attempt. The new tendencies and ideas, however, still revolved around the same crucial schemes of identification with and/or differentiation from the West, as described in the previous entity, invoking issues of (auto) exoticism, which are central within the complicated idea of Greekness as expressed in the Hellenocentric arts of the 1920s and 1930s. The same issues still emerge in any contemporary endeavour of identity refiguration. Within Papaioannou’s staging of the Olympic ceremonies, the exoticist attachments that still haunt the national identity discourse were negotiated (and manipulated) as intrinsic aspects of Greekness, since their surfacing was unavoidable. Moreover, and similarly to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century artistic undertakings, almost a century later, the ‘national’ was still employed as a ‘passport to the word’ within the 2004 Olympic Ceremonies, while folklore occupied a distinct position as a coherent identifier of nationhood. To further comprehend the specific weight of folklore within this enterprise it is essential to trace its role within the local artistic affairs of the twentieth century, examining its interplays with the emerging concept of national ‘modernisation’. 
Chapter 8
Negotiating Modernisation and Folklore within Dance, Film and Music: staging a twentieth-century Greek identity.

8.1 The Delphic Festivals.
The negotiation and artistic delineation of identity in the first part of the twentieth century (and up to the 1980s approximately) is closely connected to the exploration and configuration of the local folk and pop cultures. Artists of all spaces (aesthetic, political and ideological) have gradually developed an interest in these previously under-privileged traditions, which they often merged with western-derived techniques and styles. Within such diverse spaces as the visual arts, poetry and literature, music, dance, theatre and later film, folklore is re-discovered and merged with the institutionalised ‘high-arts’ to present new and distinct forms of expression. Nonetheless, this fusion was only confined within the spheres of High Art; popular music, dance and cinema took onto this tendency, presenting new hybrid styles of folklore, some of which have been gradually established within the national repertoire (e.g. the syrtaki from Zorbas Dance). Within dance, the re-discovery of the ‘folk’ was related to the intense preoccupation with antiquity that prevailed the first choreographic attempts. Its contemporary presence and its connection with both antiquity and the Byzantium, offered a chance for the presentation of a complete and diachronic image of Greekness.

The attempts to locate and/or construct a coherent national and cosmopolitan identity, through the projection of the nation’s cultural continuity characterised the first choreographic projects. This lead to the examination and (partial) artistic re-appropriation of the demotic culture, which was perceived as a live link with antiquity. Indeed, the first turn to folklore, which typified the Delphic Festivals (1927, 1930) was tied to the need for historicisation and the exotic engagement with the antiquity. The Delphic Idea suggested the revival of an ‘eternal Greek spirit’ and its connection to the world, in order to create a pan/human and hyper-national artistic and intellectual network around an essentialised Greek nucleus. Again, this concept was in accordance with the neo-romantic (or exotic) spirit of
the time, which suggested a “return to the roots of civilisation” (Anton, 1993, p. xii)).

The Festivals included the staging of ancient Greek plays and dances, as well as an exhibition of folk art, crafts and costumes from all over Greece, held in the nearby villages. Sikelianos believed the ancient tragedy to be “the highest form of social and spiritual creation” (Hartnoll (ed), 1983, p. 351) and so, for the A’ Festivals, the couple chose to stage Aeschylus’s *Prometheus Bound*, in two scheduled performances: the first day was meant to be for the guests (Greek and foreign bourgeois and intellectuals) and the second day was for the nearby villagers (Fessa, 2004, p. 23). Palmer undertook the organisation and staging of the performances. Her vision was to “reunite tragedy and the art of dance” (Anton, 1993, p. xiv) and revive (as accurately as possible), the original character of the tragic chorus in a way that would allow it to express the ‘true’ substance of Greek culture. Moreover, the couple’s intention of creating and presenting a pan-Hellenic spectacle, in a manner that would be compatible to the foreign (Western) artistic and intellectual pursuits and expectations, is evident in the conception and organisation of the festival, as well as in the choreographing and staging of the chorus. Palmer attempted to link elements from different eras of the local history and culture, in order to present the very essence of Hellenism according to her personal mythology, Sikelianos’s vision and the established foreign literature and consequent imaginings.

While Isadora Duncan’s influence can be easily traced in Palmer’s primary interest in the role of the chorus, as well as in her reliance on the aesthetic and spiritual principles of ancient Greece, their connection with the Byzantine and demotic traditions reveals her intention, which differed from Duncan’s artistic aims. Living and working in Greece, Palmer (together with Sikelianos) wished to revive an ancient national form by diachronically linking it to contemporary Greek reality. Hence, kinetic and rhythmic phrases from folk dances were combined with archaic poses. In that way, the highlighting of the chorus’s inner dynamics was processed through their engagement with other (more recent) elements of the national tradition. The Byzantine-inspired music, commissioned to a known researcher of
Byzantine music and hymns, composer Konstandinos Psachos, was chosen for its mediatory character between the ancient rhythmic styles and the recent demotic and ecclesiastic traditions. Indeed, Palmer turned to the Byzantine heritage believing that the combination of rhythmic movement and speech with the simple spirituality of Byzantine music would be the optimum way of reaching the original essence of the Greek chorus. As she writes,

I would give lessons on the theory of Byzantine music, alternating with gymnastic exercises which I considered a basis for the sort of dancing that I would teach them later; and we would go all together quite often to the National Museum to study, and especially to make copies of the infinitely varied poses and figures on the ancient vases. These three things would be a foundation for the chorus I was imagining.

(Pamer in Anton, 1993, p. 109)

Furthermore, the ancient text was translated to Modern Greek and hence the staging of *Prometheus Bound* became a testimony to the coherence and continuity of Greek culture. The perception of Hellenism as an unchanging, timeless ideal actually validated the blending of various cultural elements in the composition of a trans-historical performance of the National Self. Indeed, during the festival, re-creations of ancient dances were performed alongside folk (demotic and island) dances, while the folk art and craft fair that accompanied the event included exhibits from as many different regions of Greece as possible, in a unifying spirit. Furthermore, the ancient sanctuary of Delphi, chosen for its mystic/religious significance, was re-contextualised through its connection with the contemporary lives and cultures of the nearby villagers.

The restoration and the linking of the ancient and Byzantine heritage within the realities of the modern Greeks, was an additional aim for Palmer, who was determined to re-establish and underline, through the *Delphic Idea*, the significant historical continuity of Greek civilisation and culture, and the presence of the ‘classic Greek spirit’ within modern Greece. In a text celebrating the completion of the thirtieth anniversary of Pratsika’s Dance School (in 1957), writer Pantelis Prevelakis writes:
An inspired poet and his comrade were then (in 1927) shaping the foundations of a neo-Hellenic Renaissance. Assenting the ancient tragedy, allowing the Byzantine 'melos' to be heard alongside its 'chorika' (choirs), organising the first exhibition of Greek folk art (...) the Sikelianos were announcing their faith on the unbroken continuity of Hellenism.

(Prevelakis in Ursa Minor, p. 51 -translated by the author)

Similarly, Palmer explains that they “wanted to show, not so much the beautiful work of about a hundred years ago, but the living talent of today” (in Anton, 1993, p. 112) and at the same time “to establish the fact that Greek is not a dead but a living language” (Ibid, p. 108). A statement that, once again, reveals the urge for national reassurance and the disbelief of the West - the ultimate receiver of any local attempt for national definition- for this national definition and re-appropriation of history. This also recalls a similar national urge as expressed within the Olympic Opening Ceremony of 2004. The importance of foreign (western) approval, as well as the need to demonstrate both the continuity of Greek civilisation and its contemporary value framed both the anticipation and reception of the Games, and of the Opening Ceremony in specific. Praising Papaioannou for the Opening Ceremony, Georgousopoulos writes that he feels grateful to him for sending the world the message that “Greece ‘Is’, not just ‘Was’” (2004, p. 79). In a similar tone, journalist Socrates Tsihlias, writes:

We had a unique opportunity to remind the whole of humanity the essence of our country, and Papaioannou grabbed it. He did not narrate our history. Using history as a vehicle, he created a spectacle of high aesthetics, of senses and sentiments. A poetic universe, created today, by contemporary Greeks (... ) Forgotten symbols and lasting myths (... ) spelled the Greek adventure.


While situated within a different socio-political and temporal context, the political investments on the Ceremony’s cultural representation of identity, parallel those of the Delphic Festivals. The nature of the Delphic project and Palmer’s specific aims, are indicative of the pressing need for an (inter)national recognition that Greece
was experiencing at the time, which was an especially important issue for the Greek government. The political significance of the Delphic festivals was noted by the state, as Palmer writes:

The Greek Government exhibited interest. One Minister stated that, for the first time since the Greek Revolution, Greece had held up her head abroad; and they said that the Delphic movement could balance the Greek budget; another that we had demonstrated the creative capacity of the Greek people today.

(Palmer in Anton, 1993, p. 121)

Since the projection of a cultural and historical continuity within the Greek space appeared as a priority, the festivals included cultural elements from different historical periods, in an attempt to underline the “eternal and timeless values of its civilisation within one celebratory event”. As Anton notes, “Palmer was convinced that Greece was carrying in its primordial currents the true substance of culture that had survived the vicissitudes of time. It could be found in the richness of Byzantine music, the domestic crafts of the villagers and the authentic ritual of celebrations” (Anton (ed), 1993, p. xvii).

Palmer actually appears very conscious of the importance of a western consensus for the Festival, which could grant it with the desired level of ‘authenticity’ and prestige. As she writes, “it would be well for the Festival to obtain the approval, as it were the patronage, of the foreign (American and European) Archaeological Schools”. Even though staged in Greece and visualised as a celebration of Greekness, which Prevelakis (in Ursa Minor, p. 51) describes as a “holy celebration” of Hellenism, the Festival was carefully planned in order to attract a large foreign (mainly western) audience, which was the ultimate receptionist and judge of its ‘Greekness’. In that way, Palmer’s decision to favour the rendering of the plays in Modern Greek rather than using the original text was, among other reasons, triggered by her concerns about the problems that the pronunciation of the ancient text would raise. Indicatively she writes: “if we chose the Erasmian method, the Greeks would be dreadfully shocked: but if we pronounced it as the Greeks do their ancient language, European or American scholars would think it quite
horrible" (in Anton, p. 108). Hence, even though authenticity (in the sense of accuracy and 'truthfulness') had been a key issue of this attempt to represent Greece 'from the inside', the final word still belonged to the "foreign Archaeological Schools". Even for Palmer (herself a westerner), the legitimisation of her and her husband's vision and, most importantly, of the Greek culture in general, was directly related to the verdicts of such authoritative 'experts'.

Similar concerns related to the impression of the festivals on the western guests, were shared by many of the Greeks involved in the organisation of the Festivals, as well as by the local authorities, who thought it to be a matter of national pride. Palmer describes her meeting with Mr Petrakopoulos (then director of Grande Bretagne, one of the premium hotels in Athens) in order to "ask him if he would announce the Festival to his various correspondents abroad". Mr Petrakopoulos's negative reply illuminates this attitude: he explained that although he believed that the Festivals would "interest exactly the kind of people" that he had been "striving (...) to bring to Greece", the accommodation provided in an "almost inaccessible village" could never be appropriate for these people, who were not used to "any sort of primitive hardships". And he concludes "and so, in a single day, you could destroy the effort of my whole life, which has been given entirely to the advance of tourism in Greece" (Ibid, p. 114). Clearly, for him, the discovery of a 'real', rural and therefore 'primitive' Greece, was considered a threat to his attempts of representing to the foreign western –and therefore more refined–tourists, a noble, Europeanised, 'civilised' Greece.

Nonetheless, the first attempt at choreographing the chorus for Prometheus Bound in the A' Delphic Festivals did not meet either Palmer's or the audience's expectations. Palmer insisted on highly stylized and static archaic postures, which alienated the dance from the rest of the stage action distorting its original role as an integral element of the play, which promoted the plot. These poses, which were copied from wall and vase paintings, were linked together with simple steps, often in the rhythm of syrtos or balos to create movement phrases (Tsarouhis in Tsatsou-Symeonidi, 2003, p. 177). Moreover, Palmer insisted that the chorus girls would always appear with the torso facing front and the head and legs in profile.
throughout the play to retain the archaic style of the original models. The result was "inferior to its prototypes" and devoid of any dynamic elements confining the dancers into a "decorative role" (Fessa, 2004, p. 360). Even though the rehearsals for the chorus lasted three years the final performance still suffered from its lack of coordination with the orchestra and the choir, while Palmer later also admitted to have neglected to work on the unification of the chorus with the actual actors. Furthermore, the performing of the Byzantine-style musical score, composed by Psahos, by a full orchestra gave it a different twist to Palmer's initial idea losing its ascetic character, as well as its role as a means of promoting and colouring the speech. As Tsatsou-Symeonidi notes, the Delphic Festivals did not manage to connect with a wide audience nor did they found a school. Instead, they excited "an international group of intellectuals, who were influenced by the western-imported Hellenic-mania" (2003, p. 178). However, the Delphic Festivals were acclaimed by the local government, upper-class intellectuals and art-lovers as a significant national 'high-art' event. This atmosphere is exemplified in Miliadis's evaluation of the Festivals:

Eva's dance was a wise dance. She lived within the "classicist" spirit of Isadora Duncan (...) but beyond that it was full of nobility, fine taste and excellent quality. It was an archaic frieze that moved in front of our astonished eyes... a fine aesthetic aroma and a delight of high spirituality. Nonetheless, it surely was not the chorus of an Aeschylean tragedy.

(Miliadis in Sideris, 1976, p. 355 -translated by the author)

The Sikelianos's efforts were indeed supported by the local authorities, as well as by a number of wealthy upper class Athenians. Fessa lists a number of individuals who sponsored the B' Delphic Festivals, including Antonis Benakis, Elena Venizelou, Penelope Delta and Alexandra Horemi, as well as certain banking organisations, while they also received a donation by the Greek government. Moreover, in 1929 the couple received two silver medals for their "brave attempt to revive the Delphic games" (Fessa, 2004, p. 361). Hence the second Festivals of 1930 were even more successful than the first. They lasted three days and included, besides the staging of two tragedies (Aeschylus's Prometheus Bound and the


Suppliants), archaeological tours with local and foreign guides, a pan-Hellenic exhibition of folk arts and crafts (organised by the Association of Art-lovers) Pythic Games in the Stadium of Delphi, organised by the Military School of Gymnastics and dedicated to the heroes of the Greek Revolution, as well as more athletic games, marches and speeches, a Macedonian war-dance, gymnastic performances and even a presentation of the Pyrrhic Dance (Ibid). The Delphic Festivals were seriously considered as a Greek ambassador to the world, and therefore had to include as many and as varied Pan-Hellenic elements as possible. In fact, the Delphic (or Hellenic) Idea had a strong influence on a number of artists, poets and writers of the time and guided the re-turn to (the folk and demotic) tradition. Musicologist Simon Karras writes characteristically

For us, Eva Sikelianou was a radiant guide. All of us who have been preoccupied with the national tradition of Greece (...) got our initial induction from Eva, because Eva really adored the Greek tradition, “the soul of Greece”, as she used to say, and she believed in the universality of Greece and Orthodoxy.

(Karras in Fessa, 2004 p. 40 –translated by the author)

8.2 The particularity of Greek traditional dances within the national discourse on the historicisation and politicisation of folklore.

The European neo-romantic movement, which favoured such re-turns to the ‘untouched’ province as a ‘pure’ bearer of the national Past, stimulated Palmer’s interest in it and her embrace of traditional arts, crafts and everyday practices, which in turn inspired the local ‘enlightened’ bourgeoisie. The turn of the Athenian upper class to the folk arts and crafts originated in their projection as diachronic cultural elements, which inherently bore traces of the past (whether that was the antiquity or the Byzantine period) carried forth through the generations. This ‘unconscious’ preservation of history that the folk traditions implied granted them a certain credit, at least amongst scholars, artists and a specific ‘art-loving’ upper class circle. The ancient currents that run through these traditions graced them with a ‘historical credibility’, which nominated them as prime carriers of an ‘everlasting’ core of the national civilisation. Together with the language, the folk arts have been
the main conveyors of Greekness presenting a remarkable continuity and coherence, which seemed lost in other sectors of social life. As exclusively rural genres, they could still invoke images of the pastoral serenity of a romantic and ‘pure’ bucolic life. To the extent that these traditions bore distinguishable traces of the ennobled antiquity, they were explored and even treasured by (mainly) artists and scholars concerned with the discovery of a ‘Hellenic core’.

Tyrovola suggests that the ‘false urbanisation’, which characterised the course of the Modern Greek state, did not eliminate all the cultural traces of the past. Many of these material and technical elements have been preserved within the popular arts and culture and expressed through “the contemporary merger of personal and social artistic forms” (2003, p. 54). Dance and dance related practices were found to be more resistant to change than other cultural forms. The incessant presence of what is today known as traditional dance, throughout Greek history, its significant role and position within society and its unyielding core characteristics, encouraged its study as a “field of social interaction, as well as a conveyor of cultural identity” (Ibid). As Tyrovola points out, whereas Greece has been since antiquity an area of great racial, music, dance and linguistic admixtures through the moving of populations, the various invasions and the foreign influences and loans, it still presents a “persistence in a number of basic melodic, rhythmic and dance prototypes” (2003, p. 54). Hence, Tyrovola further argues that, in all its manifestations, Greek traditional dance has been profoundly connected with previous dance forms (1996, p. 82 in ibid). Moreover, Dimitris Lekkas further suggests that the flexible nature of Greek dance, its corporeal directness and inclusiveness, as well as its ability to “re-adjust new meanings in old signifiers”, has functioned as “a stable and connective spine cord for the rescue of polymorphic cultural fluids from the arts, the language and the social life, that would have otherwise extinct” (2003, p. 57).

In that way, the ethnicity of traditional dance was also addressed within a defensive re-search on the historicity and distinctiveness of a Hellenic cultural identity, and “used as a cultural token against Fallmerayer’s theories” (Lekkas (ed) 2003, p. 21). Hence, the first interest on folk dancing is expressed in the turn of the previous
The first big folk dance association (school and company) Lykio Hellenidon (Λύκειο Ελληνιδον) appears in 1911 and gradually other schools and associations open, for the promotion of regional identities through the preservation and cultivation of specific dance forms. Traditional dances are used to promote both localised or ethnic and Pan-Hellenic cultural identities both in and out of Greece and their national significance is increasingly highlighted. As urbanisation intensifies in the following decades, the learning of traditional dances within the public schools, as well as within specific associations becomes a common practice and part of a cultural/national education.

Besides the national significance of traditional dancing, further meanings have been ascribed to it, this time political. As Irene Loutzaki points out, “in Greece, text, melody and movement have often been used as an important element in the struggle for freedom or resistance” (2001, p. 1). However, they have also been used for power and propaganda, or as mechanisms of accommodation, incorporating elements of dominant powers for maintaining national identities, or expressing populist policy. Through the manipulation of these cultural symbols, those in power impose on dance an intensive and strong political character.

In that way, “public cultural events”, like religious feasts, were often transformed into “public political events” and as “arenas of power, or confrontation by different socio-political groups” (Ibid). In the early twentieth century, a main distinction was drawn between folk, popular and urban-folk dances, which did not only refer to their stylistic and contextual differences, but also to their level of 'appropriateness' and 'Greekness'. As the cultural value of traditional (e.g. demotic) dances is recognised as ethnically significant, their promotion becomes a concern of the state, which fosters their study and performance. The presentation of traditional dances by schools, dance troupes, peasants and workers within national events and festivities had become the norm in Metaxas's dictatorship. The ‘spontaneous’ participation of politicians and government officials in traditional dancing was promoted as a proof of their connection with the country they ruled, its people and
its customs. At the same time, Metaxas's regime banned many rebetika (urban-folk) songs of the Asia-Minor refuges, which often manifested their struggle and resistance against the state (Ibid).

Alongside ‘ancient-derived’ spectacles, like many of Pratsika’s commissioned choreographies of the time, folklore was employed by Metaxas’s regime as a further nationalist symbol. Apart from their staging, folk dances were also promoted within the audience, demanding their bodily participation to the regime’s feasts. As Alkis Rigos notes (in Loutzaki, 2001, p. 2), the regime “desired the public to be not only an audience, but also a participant in the performance that was rehearsed and put on”. The ‘spontaneous outbursts’ of musicians and dancers “forming circles to dance syrtos, kalamatianos and tsamikos” (ibid) within the streets and stadiums where the celebratory events were held, were indispensable to the regime’s nationalist and populist profile. Within these appropriated, by the regime, “public cultural events”, and the additional “ceremonies that Metaxas ‘invented’, for the purpose of preserving the Greeks’ relationship with the past, by reviving their heroic spirit and religious fervour”, such as the Youth Festival, the Festival of Pioneers and the Festival of the 4th August Festival” Metaxas added his own corporeal presence, “styling himself as “the First Peasant”, or the “First Worker” the “Leader”, and the “National Father” in an ideological delirium” (ibid).

Similar pursuits were followed by the dictatorship of the Colonels. Ancient Greek Ideals were thoroughly projected and promoted, alongside rural traditional dances, within the regime’s festivals. The infamous “Greece of Greek Christians” slogan summarised the dictators’ persistence on the re-turn to tradition, religion and nationalism (as defined and represented by the regime). However, the appropriation of tradition by the Junta, was not as total as in Metaxas’s period. The regime banned, among other things, the staging of specific ancient and other plays that were considered to promote resistance, as well as the works of many composers, poets, writers and actors, who were send to exile. As a reaction to the dictatorships oppressive rule, the folk tradition was re-discovered and appropriated by the people as a means of resistance (e.g. to the uniformed dress-code, or to the official
katharevousa language), while “a movement for a popular music of protest against the junta” was developed (Ibid, p. 1). While the Junta embraced and promoted (and ultimately distorted) many such expressions of popular culture, in a grotesque and exoticising manner, it never managed to fully absorb and re-popularise this re-contextualised popular/folklore as I will discuss in the following chapter.

Within that formation of a popular culture of resistance, dance also got specific political ascriptions. The participation of governmental personae in the dance taking place in major social events, like Easter, has been the norm for all regimes. As Loutzaki notes, members of the former Royal Family (until 1967), the Prime Minister (since then), the President of the Republic, leaders of political parties and even the Dictators (in both Metaxa’s and Junta’s dictatorships) joined the soldiers’ dance at special celebrations, performing a ‘ritual of bonding’ with the ‘common people’ (2001, pp. 5-6). The dances taking place in such events were demotic (rural traditional) dances, such as syrtos, kalamatianos and tsamikos (Ibid), while the urban folk genres, of rebetika and popular dances were officially ‘ignored’ (and in some periods banned) until the Junta. Hence, it is no surprise that the representatives of the post-dictatorial Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PA.S.O.K), which won the 1981 elections, embraced, amongst other characteristics of that popular culture of resistance, such as its dress-code (jeans, jumpers and no wearing of tie even for politicians), music, poetry, literature, theatre (with the previously banned and exiled artists been celebrated) and even behavioural patterns (like the employed language and the way of standing and moving –more freely than before and ‘de-militarised’), the previously discharged urban folk dance genres. Hence, as Loutzaki further observes, while demotic dances (within the wider left-wing re-appropriation of tradition, which developed during the Junta) were still celebrated, the new socialist political personae were more likely to perform urban-folk dances, within public events, such as zeibekikos and tsifteteli (2001, p. 7).

Apart from the socially and politically contextualised significance of the socialist parties’ turn toward the urban folk, the characteristics of these dances, regarding their form, bore further semiotic undertones. The inclusive circular shape that typifies the demotic dances, preferred by the dictators, encouraged mass
participation and uniformity in movement. In that way, they promoted within their public festivities and spectacles, a submissive and populist atmosphere of 'social consensus' performed through the people's 'joyous' corporeal participation in the regimes' policies. Discussing the body politics in Fascist Italy, Patrizia Veroli cites Ellias Canetti (1992), noting that the 'rhythmic' masses constituted a superior and refined instrument of propaganda: their strict geometrical regulation favoured control over individuality" (Canetti in Veroli, 2006, p. 56). While Veroli refers to the choreographed performances taking place within Fascist Celebrations, the Greek peoples non-choreographed, and therefore 'spontaneous', participation in the dance, added to the 'voluntary' and 'natural' character of the exerted social control. Moreover, "the circular form and the open-air context, which evoked the myth of nature and naturalness, lent themselves to being interpreted as the manifestation of a primordial, eternal order" (Ibid).

Considering the established archaeological character of Greek folklore and the special weight of folk dances within the local discourse on identity, as discussed in Chapter 7, the connection between the mythic and primordial' origin of the performed dances and the sense of 'natural' and 'eternal' order, which they invoked appears even stronger, revealing its value for the Dictators' wishing to nationalise and essentialise their rule. Hence, while the circular form of demotic dances is usually interpreted by both performers/participants and viewers/ researchers, as a reference to democracy, equality and social interdependence,55 the totalitarian and conformist ascriptions on folk dance during the Junta, were particularly strong. In this way, the latter turn towards urban folklore and the participation of socialist politics in urban folk, or rebetika, dances, is also linked to their form, which contrasted the 'rhythmic mass' aesthetics. Zeibekiko, as well as tsifteteli are solo, improvisational dances, hence promoting an image of individuality, independence and freedom of movement (in its physical and social sense), which was particularly welcomed by the post-dictatorial Greek society.

Within this context, the official acknowledgment of these genres and their transfer from the margin to the 'mainstream', which occurred rather late if compared to the re-discovery and establishment of folklore in the beginning of the twentieth
century, is better understood. Nonetheless, the elevation of folklore was neither a progressively smooth, nor linear process. In the course of its intellectual, political, ideological and artistic negotiation, folklore underwent a long period of underrating, dismissed by the European-aspired Greek bourgeoisie. Referring to the re-turn to tradition as a means of resistance against the Junta, Loutzaki writes that it “flourished after a period of silence” (2001, p. 1). Literally speaking, this “silencing” refers to the dictatorship’s heavy censorship of all ‘dangerous’ artistic and cultural expressions. On the other hand, the period of silence for tradition can also refer to its abandonment and disownment by the post-war emerging urban classes. It is the period when the discourse on modernisation, and consequently urbanisation, and Europeanisation intensifies, tearing the traditional bonds with the, until then common, rural lifestyle.

8.3 Tradition versus modernity: the improbable national dilemma.
Apart from its ennobled connection with antiquity, folklore also implied the existence of a primordial or even primitive character. Moreover, for most people it equalled ‘orientality’ and, even worst, ‘balkanism’: a synonym, as Todorova (1996) suggests, for both political instability and vulgarity. Associated as it was with the rural, agricultural Greece rather than with the westernised imported culture that the new Greek civil bourgeoisie struggled to adopt, the folk tradition was appreciated only when de-contextualised and disassociated from its pragmatic, non-exotic dimension: the village life and the peasant. As noted in chapter 8.1, the folk and rural aspirations of the Delphic Festivals, had been strongly opposed by hotel director Mr Petrakopoulos. His fear that the ‘primitive’ conditions of the nearby villages could appal the western bourgeois guests, is quite indicative of this stance. While the folk arts, crafts and cultural practices could be exhibited, admired and evaluated by (both the local and foreign) bourgeois intellectuals, the actual contact with their original, rural environment seemed inappropriate. Hence, while folklore, as a source of artistic inspiration, a national grounding factor and/or a romanticised exportable cultural commodity, fulfilled specific roles within the neo-Hellenic bourgeois national (and class) imagery, the province itself, where the local folk culture emerged, clearly had no place in their vision of a modern/western Greece.
Similarly, while Palmer favoured and promoted this 'authentically Greek' culture, her stance towards the Greek province appears in fact also quite elitist. However impressed she may have been by the villager's arts and crafts, she still though it necessary to not merge the local and foreign bourgeois audiences and to stage a separate performance for each of them. In a way, the villagers' invitation partially removed the boundaries between the (upper-class local and foreign bourgeois) spectator, intended to gaze at, judge and evaluate and the provincial plebeian 'exhibit', meant to be looked at, produce and perform for the first. Nonetheless, the separation of the two 'worlds' reveals their perception as not only different, but also incompatible, with an unmistakable primacy of the 'literate' first.

The intense 'modernising' and 'Europeanising' political discourse, which was already established in the first decades of the twentieth century, represented a distancing from 'peasantry' -and consequently from tradition- which created a severe schism that still afflicts Greek contemporary social, cultural and intellectual life. During its modern history (mainly with the end of World War II and up to the 1970s), Greece changed quite abruptly from an agricultural society to a service-based economy as vast numbers of the population moved towards the city centres and especially around Athens and Piraeus. This period of intense urbanisation has been characterised by local historians, social and political analysts, as a cultural shock for Greek society. Within this period they also locate a disruptive schism, or a cultural discontinuity, which marked the course of Modern Greek history. Naturally, its impact on the orientation and character of the local economy, as well as on the social web itself, has been particularly strong.\footnote{216}

The mass exodus from the province and the re-arranging of the population around the big city centres signalled a parallel desertion of the rural, traditional way of life, in favour of a newly adopted urban culture. The new work and living conditions demanded the apprehension and adoption of social codes and norms, whose character was alien to the embodied experience of the communal life in the villages. Hence, since the abrupt and delayed\footnote{57} character of the transition did not allow the evolution of a gradual and organic growth of a local urban culture, an
imported ‘European’ (this time modern rather than ‘classical’) city-lifestyle was unconditionally adopted and externally worn—often in an absurd and distorted way—as a sophisticated bourgeois façade. The old customs, ethics and morals and even the interpersonal relations and daily routines, as formed and developed within the small agricultural communities, were no longer compatible with the requirements of the urban setting. More than that, they were no longer socially accepted by the newly formed bourgeoisie, who set the new standards according to a desired European prototype. Bearing in mind the almost exclusively folk character of the Greek art and culture until almost the mid 1950s, the importance of this shift becomes even more apparent.

Disowning every reminder of the ‘vulgarity’ of peasant life in favour of the ‘elegant’ mannerisms, which characterised the European upper classes, even the least powerful and economically viable social groups appeared eager to adopt—or be adapted to—those touchstones of modernity and (Western) civilisation. In that way, anything ‘Greek’ was devalued as grotesque, old-fashioned and ‘village-like’, while anything foreign (or foreign-like)—from industrial to cultural products, trends, habits and mannerisms—was automatically valued and admired. A relevant display of ‘foreignness’ was essential to convey aristocratic upbringing, elegance and class, as the level of one’s (or even better, a family’s or a social circle’s) westernisation and modernisation accordingly defined their Culture and social rank.

8.4 The modernising and nationalising process as featured in the local popular cinema in the 1950s and 1960s. The mainstream popular film industry of this period reveals plenty of references, suggestive of this social trend. Indicatively I cite two comedy films, which almost border those years. The first one is The Aunt from Chicago (1957), produced by Finos Film and directed by Alekos Sakelarios (probably the most famous and productive director of this period) who also wrote the script. The storyline was inspired by the “invasion of the American way of life, within Greece during the 1950s” (Delaportas, 2001, p. 108). The film featured the comedy actress Georgia
Vassiliadou in the role of a long lost rich aunt, who has lived most of her life in America. After becoming widowed she decides to return and stay with her brother’s family in Athens and the comedy is set on her attempts to ‘modernise’, ‘inform’ and ‘upgrade’ their conservative and modest lifestyle according to the American ethics. Her efforts include the exchange of the family’s traditional handcrafted wooden furniture with modern plastic items, of the old gramophone with a record-player (with a collection of modern American records) and of the girls old-fashioned clothes with trendy, mini skirts and small bikinis. Her ‘foreign air’ and mannerisms and her certainty that Greeks should at last follow the example of the modern and civilised West are projected throughout the film leaving little space for arguments to the both the cinematic family and the real-life audience. Interestingly, the righteousness and validity of the new way of life that the aunt represents is validated towards the end of the film with her undeniable triumph: the ‘successful’ weddings of her five nieces. The securing of a girl’s future was, at this time, pretty much related to her marriage, and thus every family’s ultimate concern was the settling of the daughter or daughters as in the case of the film. In that way, the value of the modern foreign ethics, as introduced in the film by Vassiliadou, is ultimately justified and celebrated through their linking with at least some of the traditional Greek values of the time.

In the second film under the title An Italian from Kypseli (1968), written and directed by Christos Dimoulas, a Greek student in Italy (Alekos Alexandrakis) falls in love and secretly weds his fellow student, also Greek, (Maro Kontou) despite his family’s opposition. However, both his life and studies are sponsored by his controlling elder sister, whose recent entree into the realms of the rich upper-class Athenians is marked by her expressed despise of anything that has to do with the (‘oriental’ and/or ‘Balkan’) Greece and exceeding admiration of everything foreign and western. Thus, with his return home Alexandrakis decides to introduce his wife as an Italian, who –being ‘foreign’– immediately wins the respect and admiration of the family. The comedy starts with his unsuspected sister praising the looks, manners and style of her ‘Italian’ sister-in-law, favourably comparing her with the ‘unrefined’, ‘unsophisticated’ and ‘common-looking’ local girls. The truth is
revealed to her towards the end of the film when she finally realises how wrong her presumptions were and regrets disowning her own people and culture.

While in the first film the joke is on the backward ‘village’ mannerisms of the traditional, narrow-minded Greek father, who cannot understand the modern way of life, as indicated—and forced—by his Americanised elder sister, in the second film, the unconditional approval of the elder sister for the ‘Italian’ newcomer (accompanied by such comments as “A Greek girl could never be so pretty”, or “so refined”, or “with such class” throughout the film) turns the farce against her. In fact, the viewer is informed—and often reminded during the film— that her absurd xenomania came as a result of her sudden enrichment. In that way, it is suggested that her eagerness for foreignness—and again it might be useful to remind once more that ‘foreign’ here is only used as a synonym to ‘western’—was only part of her intense efforts to adopt the values and codes, which corresponded to her new social position—this of a wealthy, cosmopolitan Athenian lady. As the film was released within the second year of the General’s Dictatorship (1967-1974), its ‘patriotic morale’ can also be contextualised within the dictator’s wider nationalist discourse. What is most interesting is the difference between the two films in the way each chooses to deal with what appears as a noticeable social phenomenon: the xenomania.

While Sakelarios was not appreciative of the ‘Americanism’ that was gradually invading the still-traditional Greek society of the 1950s, he nonetheless accepted some of its manifestations that facilitated the modernisation of Greece. Hence, while the preservation of the local identity appeared necessary, the selective abandonment of some of the traditional (often perceived as backwards) ethics and aesthetics, was perceived as part of the nation’s modernising/westernising route towards progress. Within the second film, the westernised urban bourgeois aesthetics are by then established and remain unquestioned. Still, the film is attempting to boost and elevate the national morale by exemplifying (through a superficial and comic commentary), its equality (if not its superiority) with its western prototypes. Nonetheless, the differentiation of the two films merely lies on the directors’ personal choices and ideological positions. As both films have been
very popular, mainstream movies, they were much in tune with the popular sentiment and social orientation of their time, targeting to a very wide audience. As cultural products, they were not merely responsive to, but also formative of the public opinion but still remained within specific limits, as not to offend, scandalise or provoke the dominant political, social and ideological sentiments and aesthetics. Thus the different perspectives within the two films are indicative of a changing era, signalling a gradual shift out of the turn of the century's xenomania. The restoration of a certain level of national pride and the re-evaluation of the Greek traditions and cultural heritage becomes in fact more overt during the period of the Junta, when the mainstream local film industry reaches its low point with a series of nationalistic-yet-westernised films.

8.5 The 'dictatorship kitsch' and its impact on the popular film and music industries.

Another distinct feature of the local popular cinema was its particular connection with music and dance. Indeed, the presentation of new songs to the public through the films had been a common practice, as throughout the peak of the Greek film industry, well known composers (with Manos Hatzidakis being the most popular), singers and musicians have produced and performed commissioned works for the films. These songs and music themes became popular through the film and found their place within the national repertoire. In fact, the presentation of at least one song had been a standard canon for all films. The song was either incorporated within the film's plot, or functioned as an interval from it and was often performed by the principal actors (usually aiming to establish their particular state e.g. being in love, sad, excited etc).63 The other common technique, was the presentation of the song in its natural setting (of a bar-restaurant, a tavern etc), performed by the original musicians and singers. Such scenes were parts of the film-characters' (usually upper-class bourgeois) 'night out', which was almost mandatory for both the forwarding of the plot and the presentation of the music interval. Mainly set in Athens or Thessaloniki, these films offered to their non-urban (or merely non-upper-class) audiences a glimpse on the 'glamour' of the city's night life.
Those music intervals were almost always accompanied by dance. In the early films the dance would be part of the cabaret show that the characters enjoyed as spectators, often performed by well known dance duets of the time. When the song was performed by the principal actors, the dance was mainly theatrical and stylised, based on pantomime, ballet, jazz and vaudeville steps and gestures. Later on, the choreographed parts gradually shifted towards the rising urban-folk genres, which were gaining increasing popularity within the local audiences. Choreographed versions of syrtaki, zeibekiko, hasapiko and hasaposerviko appear altered, through their metallaxis by the ballet and/or jazz aesthetic of the choreographer. The main exponent of this style was the dancer and choreographer Fotis Metaxopoulos. As noted above, this tendency was heightened during the years of the Junta and the exoticised ‘ethnic’ folklore appears dominant within the films, informed by both the tourist gaze and the dictators’ nationalistic aspirations. Films like Διπλοπενιές (Diplopenies), 1966, Δημήτρη μου (My Dimitris), 1967, and Το πιο Λαμπρό Αστέρι (The Brightest Star), 1968, directed by Kostas Karayiannis, as well as Η Θεία μου η Χίπσσα (My Aunt the Hippy), 1970 directed by Alekos Sakelarios, (all choreographed by Fotis Metaxopoulos), are indicative of this shift towards an exoticised folklorism.

In fact the dictators’ revived nationalist and populist discourse, which (at least rhetorically preached the return to the ‘common man’) cultivated the phenomenon of the ‘kitsch folklore’, which was adopted and further promoted through the mainstream film industry of that period. The dictatorship’s rhetoric focused around the promotion of a Hellenic-Christian ideal through a kitsch aesthetic, as defined in Chapter 1. As Christos Lazos suggests, Junta searched for the aesthetic shape of this ideal in the earlier military marches and vast celebrations of Metaxas’s dictatorial regime, the Nazi coordinated and disciplined spectacles and the popular Hollywood musicals (2006, pp. 30). But Junta’s celebratory shows did not even retain the glamour of Metaxas’s Nazi-inspired parades, which were transformed into cheap imitations of carnival-like spectacles, with student parades and thousands of soldiers dressed as Marathon-fighters, Byzantines, or simulating the Italian’s curbing in 1940, and the right-nationalists’ victory in the Civil War (Ibid). Lazos further describes the cheap imitations of luxury, the flamboyant nationalism,
the solemn reliance on antiquity and the childish slogans of the paraded tableaux vivants, as products of a "pure-blooded kitsch", with heterogeneous and de-contextualised stylistic elements, being re-contextualised and synthesised together for the dictators' purposes, in a non-homogenous final product. This product was deciphered as an original and unique ideal, aspired to generate a positive aesthetic reaction.

The "Greece of Greek Christians" (Ελλάς Ελλήνων Χριστιανών) dictatorial motto included as many representations of 'Greekness' as possible, in a superficial, stylised theatrical and 'tourist' manner (hence the carnival-like enactments that Lazos describes). The middle-class's new interest in the culture and mannerisms of the lower urban classes was distorted by Junta into an exaggerated neo-bourgeois kitsch folklorism, which however did not manage to gain a wide popular appeal. Still, its impact on the mainstream cinema and the popular music and dance spectacles cannot be overlooked. The re-appropriation and de-contextualisation of folklore, intended to "satisfy the bourgeoisie's desire for exoticism" (Papakostas, 2006, p. 7), created an endoscopic exoticism, blending the western-European aspirations on modernity, progress and aristocratic eclecticism, with the tourist consumption of folklore as an exotic national commodity.

The auto-exoticisation of 'Greekness', the bourgeois identification with Western Europe and the patronising and sympathetic downwards gaze towards the local folklore resulted in its de-contextualisation and 'touristicisation'. Films like Μια Κυρία στα Μπουζούκια (A Lady in the Bouzoukia), directed by Yiannis Dalianides and released by Finos Films in 1968, exemplify this tendency for exaggerated fun, a false western mimesis (in the clothing, ideas, manners), and an engagement with the folk element as a bourgeois gateway to the catharsis of primitivism and, as a statement of a nationalist sentiment, the re-engagement with the autochthonous 'authentic' ethnic culture of the 'simple peoples', according to the populist rhetoric of the dictators. This folklorisation of the bourgeois, was mainly expressed through their engagement with (mainly the urban-) folk music and dance, which resulted to the formation of the hybrid genre of arhontorebetika (αρχοντορεβετικά). The occasional performance of an urban-folk dance, such as zeibekiko, would mostly
signal an atavistic personal escape to national primitivism (which therefore appears as an inherent, racial, essentialised quality). However, it was the traditional demotic (rural) dances, which started being taught by special institutions and performed by trained dancers, as part of the local heritage.

8.6 The balleticisation and urbanisation of traditional dance.

While the interest on the demotic tradition had been slowly cultivated between local researchers and scholars, already from the beginning of the century, its popularisation within the urban bourgeoisie occurred few decades later. Almost up to the late 1950s, the urban bourgeois and upcoming middle-classes would perpetually remove from their lives the traces of the rural past, systematically replacing traditional clothes, home-wear and other everyday apparatuses with imported ‘modern’ ones (favouring for example plastic, nylon and synthetic materials over the ‘parochial’ traditional ones such as wool, wood, cotton. The entertainment revolved around imported music genres, from ‘Latin’ songs to ballroom and ‘modern’ dances such as waltz, rumba, cha-cha, Charleston, etc (Koutsouba, 2003, pp. 185-216) and the flourishing of vaudeville and cabaret shows, while traditional dances, (often alongside folk arts and crafts) were exhibited in public performances and national celebrations, as signifiers of (a past, or somewhat primitive core of) Greekness. During the post-war years, the urban upper and middle-classes re-discovered the traditional demotic culture. As Loutzaki notes, “the 1950s have been a shifting point for our perception of Greek dances; with the opening of Dora Stratou Greek Dances Theatre in 1954 and the gradual integration of traditional dance teaching in schools and associations, folk dances have been detached from their original context and transferred to the cities as spectacles” (in Tzartzani 2001, pp. 62-63).

This change was assisted by the participation of Greek dance troupes in the international (and mainly Balkan and eastern European) folk festivals of the period, which initiated a new type of choreographed (often called ‘artistic’) presentation of the traditional dances. This staged dance prototype, which was eventually adopted by most schools and companies in the 1960s was also a result of the familiarisation
(both in terms of spectatorship and embodiment) with the ballet and modern dance techniques\textsuperscript{70}, which accounted for the ballerisation of folk dance performances (Ibid, pp. 63-64). Indeed, this resulted to their upgrade into 'art' and their alignment with the western-defined aesthetic preferences of the newly established local bourgeoisie. The popularisation and appreciation of the traditional demotic dances within the urban milieu, was facilitated by their theatrical ‘virtuosic’ representation by specially trained dancers, and their consequent exoticisation and ‘neutralisation’, since the decontextualised ‘artistic’ staging promoted their consequent cultural objectification (ibid, pp. 62, 66).

The removal of the dances from their traditional context resulted in their idealisation and exoticisation by the civil bourgeois. As Meriaklis suggests, this was the time when “the hybrid bourgeoisie got excited by the exoticism of folklore” (1983, p. 61). The re-appropriation of the traditional heritage by the (civil) upper classes, whose aesthetic criteria were formed by the western oriented institutionalised education and culture, endorsed a high level of auto-exoticisation. The western lenses, through which the local bourgeoisie understood and evaluated the traditional culture, resulted to an incorporeal and distanced engagement with it. During the 1960s there is also a great interest in Greek folklore by many western European and American scholars, whose research resulted in the ‘stabilisation’ of specific folk elements and their projection outside Greece, contributing to their exoticisation and auto-exoticisation (Loutzaki, 1992, pp. 30, 34). In that way, the gradually typified specific folk elements became international symbols for Greece and Greekness. As Savigliano eloquently explains describing the re-nationalisation of Argentinean tango

\textbf{the Exotic is not an item exclusively for the delight of the imperial West; it is in turn exported in its new, colonised package to the rest. When exported to the (neo)colonies of “origin”, practices of autoexoticism develop conflictive as a means of both adjusting to and confronting (neo)colonialism. Through these complex activities of autoexoticisation carried out in the periphery’s internal political settings, the exotic/exoticised representations end up becoming symbols of national identity.}

(Savigliano 1995, p. 2)
The nationalisation of the folklore and the idealisation and exoticisation of tradition have been common practices within most nation states worldwide, including the ‘western’ nations. As Kate Ramsey notes, discussing the staging of voodoo performances in Haiti, “the folklorisation of national identity through performance has played a part in twentieth-century nationalisms more generally” (1997, p. 346). In fact, the staging and exoticisation of folk dances had occurred earlier in Europe, at times when “the dance of the peasants was rediscovered and celebrated” (Lange, p. 70 –no date cited). Moreover, “during the Renaissance and Baroque periods, the mainstream culture has been enriched by elements of the demotic culture but transformed in order to suit the aesthetics and values of the ruling class” (Ibid). Hence a certain level of exoticisation, originating in the distancing and alienation from the aesthetic and socio-cultural context of the dance has been inevitable. Still, the complexity of this internal exoticism is heightened in cases where the (neo)colonial gaze (however direct or indirect) is actively involved, and indeed adopted by those subjected to it. In the case of Greece, the implications of western exoticism, founded in the socio-political and economic conditions described in Part 2, have been diffused and incorporated within the popular culture through the mimetic westernism of the local bourgeoisie (‘false urbanisation’), the import and establishment of foreign ideological artistic streams as High Art prototypes and the development of tourism.

8.7 The ‘artistic’ appropriation and elevation of rebetika and of the urban-folk culture.

While the demotic traditions –however ‘primitive’ may appeared– bore the romantic connotations of the countryside life with its traceable connections with Byzantium and Greek antiquity, the urban-folk streams (rebetika and later laika) were perceived as a expressions of a ‘vulgar’ working-class (sub)culture. Rebetika is a musical genre that flourished amongst the Asia Minor refuges, who settled in the cities and especially in Athens around the port of Piraeus and is played mainly with bouzouki and baglamas. The themes of the songs often dealt with love and betrayal, as well as with drug use, imprisonment and, resistant to the dominant laws
and ethics, illegal behaviours. Hence, the *rebetes* (the people involved in this (sub)-culture) were stigmatised as drug users and out-laws while their music was degraded as crude. Not having any apparent romantic, ethnic nor historical attachments, this genre presented no excuse for its low-class origin or its ‘orientality’. Being associated with low-class immigrants and marginal behaviours, rebetika were considered offensive to the ethics, values and aesthetics of the middle and upper classes. More than that, they were often perceived as a Turkish-derived, degenerated sub-cultural form, which eroded the coherence of the wished-for national portrait: that of a modern nation with a western contemporary presence, which was still rooted in an authoritative national past. In that way, the acknowledgement, study and appreciation of these genres, as a distinct yet equally valid facet of the national folk tradition, came long after the re-evaluation (even if not popularisation) of the demotic tradition.

Within the arts, the re-appropriation of tradition in the 1960s is part of a tendency to align the national with the international: the western-educated, re-educated (or merely informed and affiliated with) bourgeois artists, attempt to graft traditional Hellenic elements, styles and forms onto the foreign artistic streams. While the post-war artists mainly elaborated on the 1930s nationalising schemes (further informed by the artistic voices of the Resistance) the 1960s signalled a new era in this long encounter with tradition.73 This new turn to the local culture included apart from the demotic elements (already partially established in certain circles as bearers of tradition), the urban-folk genre of rebetika. As Hassioti notes, a similar course of action was undertaken by the local choreographers. While the first Greek ‘school’ of dance (right after World War I –and mainly the above mentioned ‘Generation of ‘30s) “sought to revive the past”, the second one (after World War II) turned towards its “Oriental affinities” (1995, p. 45). Both Palmer and Pratsika were concerned with the folk element within their works (as a choreographic practice, educational means, or aesthetic intervention) and the same orientation was followed by their dancers and students. Still, the urban-folk element, as expressed both through the rebetika music and the related aesthetics and cultural practices, such as *Karagiozis* shadow-theatre, were for the first time acknowledged as significant elements of the Greek culture by Pratsika’s students.
Rallou Manou (1915-1988) and Zouzou Nikoloudi (1917-2004), were two of Pratsika's students, who took on her vision of creating a 'Hellenic/High-Art' dance tradition and gave it a slightly different twist. Both performed with the School's group and taught in its classes while continuing Pratsika's tradition of choreographing for theatre plays, (again mainly for ancient dramas). They embraced the interactive cross-collaboration with major artists of their time and worked for the establishment of a holistic and most importantly 'Hellenic' dance education. While Nikoloudi mainly focused on the musicality and rhythmic accuracy of the tragic chorus, Manou was more directed towards the folk, demotic and popular culture, in order to re-present and connect through them, the core meanings and aesthetics of the ancient tragedies to the Neo-Hellenic social and cultural realities. Both Manou's and Nikoloudi's stylistic, aesthetic, choreographic and historical approaches to choreography (and ultimately to what constitutes 'Greekness' or 'Greek Dance') were each slightly different than Palmer's and Pratsika's romantic visions, re-informed by the evolving national and international artistic and socio/political tendencies and realities.
Chapter 9
In-between Folklore and ‘Art’: The development of Hellenocentric Modernism and its impact on the contemporary dance-theatre scene.

9.1 Six folk paintings
Rallou Manou has been probably the choreographer the most associated with the turn to the folk and demotic traditions, which also typifies Spyratou’s works, but most importantly, with the acknowledgement of the working-class, urban-folk cultures. Manou choreographed for theatre plays (mainly for ancient tragedies) and operas in the National Theatre, where she remained as a resident choreographer until 1951 when her school started operating as a professional school for dancers and dance teachers. In her school, she introduced her students to Graham’s technique, in an attempt to provide them with a more solid technical training. Moreover, in the same year she founded the Hellenic Choreodrama, the first contemporary dance group in Greece, which attracted many of the local avant-garde artists. Fessa describes it as “an artistic association, which gathered in its bosom the cream of the crop of the local intellectual and artistic life” (2004, p. 270). In the same way, poet Odysseus Elytis wrote in 1956:

It is not accidental that the most important, the most energetic painters, poets and musicians, who were on the lead of the artistic agitations of our era and gave with their personality the tone to our intellectual life, are today gathered around Rallou Manou and her School.

(in Fessa 2004, p. 270 –translated by the author)

The element that actually drew all those artists together was their shared interest on ‘Greekness’ and its potential expressions within the contemporary arts. While Manou was deeply influenced and inspired by German and American modern dance and especially by Graham –whose technique became the basis for the dancers’ training, as well as for the development of her choreographic language– her choreographies had an intentional Hellenic character. In her school, Manou taught both Ballet and Modern dance technique (which she perceived as one dance
genre) explaining that although it is an “international genre” that follows specific rules,

technique is only the means. Art is the objective. How can—as I think it should—our art be Greek? This does not mean that our dancers will be wearing tsarouhia and foustaneles (rustic wear).76 Greekness is not an external feature, neither a matter of citizenship. It is something you carry in your blood. You either have it or you don’t. Neither the theme, e.g. of a choreography, plays always a substantial role. Many foreign choreographers are inspired by Greek themes without the outcome to be necessarily expressing Greece. I often refer to a phrase from a text by Martha Graham: our blood remembers. Hence, I carry tradition within me, subconsciously.

(Manou in Fessa, 2004, p. 274-275 –translated by the author)

The style and thematic of her works, as well as of the avant-garde artists with whom she repeatedly collaborated were inspired by Greek tradition (Ibid), while she often broke the modernist character of her chosen dance techniques with gestures, steps and positions drawn from Greek traditional and folk dances. Her concern was to find a way to “maintain our own character, style and our particular features, those who distinguish us and allow us to create an original work” (Manou in Fessa, 2004, p. 275). In that way, originality appears here explicitly as a synonym of identity and nationality: a thesis that has indeed dominated the history of the local dance affairs. Her concerns again resemble Graham's77 thoughts on the course of American modern dance, as she stated: “it is worth retaining our Hellenic features and not become bad or mediocre imitations of a foreign civilisation” (Ibid). Together with composer Manos Hatzidakis, Manou actually described her company as

a company of artists each of whom confronts, from his own individual point of view, the issue of dancing, with the specific requirements that it presents within our land. Afterwards, all decide together, agreeing along some basic lines, to contribute to an organised Hellenic dance event.

(Hatzidakis and Manou in Fessa, 2004, p. 270 –translated by the author)
The 'problem of dancing' that Manou refers to, was in fact the same problem that most artists of the decades between the 1930s and late 1960s confronted: the combination of modern arts with the local national tradition. The turn to folklore as a source of inspiration and grounding within Greek reality, was therefore a common strategy for many artists (e.g. Tsarouhis and Moralis). Within the dance affairs the 'problem' appeared even stronger, as there was no relevant concert dance tradition that could support, inform or enhance with a 'local colour' the imported species of modern dance. Hence, apart from the theatrical chorus (as a staged movement form), which supported and justified the antiquation and therefore the nationalisation of the early dance performances, the more recent demotic and folk traditions appeared as diametrically opposite to the bourgeois 'nobility' of ballet and modern dance technical repertories. In an attempt to bridge this historical and cultural gap between the ancient and the modern and realising the need for a refreshment of the archaic prototype, Manou turned to tradition attempting a more substantial choreographic engagement with it. At the same time, she also turned her attention to the urban neo-Hellenic music and dance traditions of the urban-folk, rebetika.

With *Elliniko Choreodrama* Manou staged some of her most acknowledged choreographies, inspired by popular and folk traditions, dances, and cultural practices. In the 1950s, Manou was probably the most representative choreographer to have engaged with "her oriental affinities" as Hassioti suggested. In fact, by oriental Hassioti referred to the cultural elements that came with the Greek refuges, (who came in extremely large numbers to Greece after 1922 and the catastrophe in Asia Minor) and had just started to get assimilated towards the 1950s. In 1951 Manou choreographed one of her most acclaimed works and a landmark for the neo-Hellenic artistic wave, under the title *Six Folk Paintings*, inspired by (urban-folk) songs of Tsitsanis, Mitsakis and Kaldaras. The music of the performance was composed by Hatzidakis, and the settings and costumes designed by painter Yiannis Moralis. Inspired by the urban working class culture, the choreography projected a neglected (or actually rejected) side of 'Hellenicity', less glorified but more 'factual' and close to modern Greek reality.
In the same spirit, Hatzidakis's music was deeply inspired by *rebetika*. Although *rebetika* later became very popular and are now widely acknowledged for their musical artistry – as well as for their relation with Byzantine ecclesiastic music– at the time when Hatzidakis decided to include bouzouki in his orchestra and compositions, both *rebetika* and the instruments associated with them, were signifiers of a 'low classes' marginality. Hatzidakis’s (and later Mikis Theodorakis's) acknowledgment and 'appropriation' of the genre signalled its gradual reinstatement. He was the first ‘high-art’ composer to incorporate bouzouki in his orchestra and elevate its sound to the realms of the 'artistic'. Within this process of elevation, the performances of Manou's *Elliniko Choreodrama* were significant.

Apart from the music, Moralis's settings and costumes for *Six Folk Paintings* also referred to the aesthetics and culture of the urban working classes, beautifying or at least alleviating their effect through their artistic re-presentation. In that way he smoothly introduced –in a picturesque, unthreatening way– this culture to the 'Europeanised' urban upper classes, while Manou also incorporated in her choreographies postures, gestures and steps by *rebetika* dances, such as zeibekiko. Through this modernist inter-artistic collaboration, *Elliniko Choreodrama* presented to its -mainly upper class– audiences another, more realistic, contemporary and corporeal image of 'Greekness', beyond the customary references to antiquity. During the following years Manou presented many works in the same spirit, such as *Karagiozis and the Cursed Snake* -inspired by the popular shadow theatre- once again to Hatzidakis's music and with costumes designed by Nikos Hatzikyriakos-Gikas and the *Greek Carnival* (1954) with music composed by Theodorakis and costumes by Spyros Vasiliadis.

9.2 *Ornithes* 'reloaded': political issues within the Post-War Dance and Theatre scene.

Apart from being a major source of inspiration and gratification for those artists who sought to understand, capture and re-present a live and dynamic, as well as historical, idea of ‘Greekness’, the engagement with the folkloric (both demotic and
urban-folk) traditions and cultures was into a certain extend a political, as well as artistic positioning. The above mentioned dichotomisation of the language was connected to an equally profound dichotomisation of class, culture and political affiliations. The archaizing official language excluded the syntactic forms and idioms of the spoken popular language. Since the archaizing language was officially set and preferred by the conservative (right wing) ruling class, the vernacular had been mostly associated with left-affiliated people up to the Colonels' Dictatorship, when it got further politicised. 78

In the same way, the officially established status quo was intensely focused on antiquity, 'ignoring' the more recent history and the related formulated neo-Hellenic popular, as well as the more traditional folk culture. The political reasons behind this 'official neglect' of a long (and especially significant for the formation of the neo-Hellenic identity) part of history were related to the political orientation of the new nation state. In its first period after the liberation almost up to World War II, the nation's 'oriental' aspects, and most importantly the catastrophe of the expedition in Asia Minor and the decisive role of the western allies in its outcome, had to be put aside in order to promote the western-affiliated and European face of Greece. Since the ruling class associated itself more with Europe (and through that with the 'European' Greek antiquity), than with the local tradition, the engagement with the folk elements of Greek culture, from the part of many artists, also signified a removal from this 'westernised' bourgeois context, with a parallel re-location towards the more 'authentic' Greece. In that way, (and since most of the progressive artists of the time actually came from upper class bourgeois environments), this shift was often part of a romantic quest rather than a conscious political comment. In any case, the support of these undervalued cultural elements by upper-class artists, as in the case of Manou and Hatzidakis (actually right-wing in his political positioning), facilitated and even initiated their gradual recognition as significant national artistic forms. A performance that marked this artistic/political discourse was the staging of Aristophanes's Birds (Ornithes), by the progressive Theatro Technis, (Art Theatre) under the direction of Karolos Koun.
Founded by Koun in 1942, the *Art Theatre* was inspired by Stanislavski’s methods and represented the avant-garde left-wing theatrical stream, in opposition to the tradition of the National Theatre (founded in 1932), as formed through Dimitris Rodiris and Fotos Politis, which was characterised by an “increasingly conservative” style (Hartnoll, (ed). 1983, p. 351). Both the conservative National Theatre and Koun’s revolutionary productions with the Art Theatre were mainly concerned with the staging of ancient plays. While Rodiris mainly focused on the stylising of rhythm, pace and quality of the actors’ speech, Koun aimed in locating diachronic human truths within the Greek drama in order to re-present and re/contextualise them within a modern setting. In a very similar to Pratsika’s, Manou’s and Nikoloudi’s aspirations, he described his artistic vision, as an attempt to “create a far-reaching, spiritually rich civilisation of the highest integrity for our country” (Koun in Rubin (ed), 1994, p 410). In addition, Koun also believed in the interaction and collaboration of different arts, while “his artistic manifestations included anachronisms and the use of folk elements in music (Hatzidakis, Theodorakis), in the design (Tsarouhis) and in movement (Manou, Nikoloudi, Kynigou)” (Tsintziloni, 1997).

Aristophanes’s comedy *Birds* was first staged by the Art Theatre in 1959 directed by Koun and choreographed by Manou. For that performance, the original ancient text had been translated in the vernacular neo-Hellenic demotic language by the poet Vassilis Rotas. This first performance, which was of great significance for the Art Theatre, resulted to an artistic/political scandal; it was enthusiastically received by the left wing (in its majority student) audience and rejected (indeed jeered) by the more conservative (in both their political positioning and artistic preferences) one. The translation of the text to the spoken ‘new’ Greek and Koun’s persistence on the inclusion of folk elements in the play shocked the more conservative spectators. Manou’s choreography, also aligned with the direction of the play, attempted to incorporate elements from demotic dances, which the performers did not fully understand, nor comply with. Nonetheless, the contemporary character of the performance was considered a huge social scandal and an offence to the impenetrable and rigid ‘seriousness’, with which the ancient national history and tradition were been preserved. In fact the play only premiered once and the Art
Theatre was immediately banned from further performances “in the name of decency and respect for tradition and religion” (Bacopoulou-Halls in Rubin, 1994, p. 410).

The second version of the play, in 1962, was staged again in the Art Theatre by Koun, this time choreographed by Nikoloudi, with the music composed by Hatzidakis and the settings and costumes designed by Tsarouhis. This time the performance met a huge success. Ornithes was presented in Paris (winning the 1st prize in the Theatre of Nations, London (World Theatre Season, 1964, 1965), and toured both in and out of Greece, in Moscow, Leningrad and Warsaw (1965). The play met a huge success and was added to the Art Theatre’s (and later in Nikoloudi’s Chorica Dance Theatre Company) repertory. Until today, Ornithes is considered to be a landmark not only in Nikoloudi’s career but also in the country’s theatre and dance history, as an epitome of the Helleno-centric modernism, which shaped modern Greek arts (Daskalothanasis, 2000). In fact, as Stergani Tsintziloni suggests, in her MA dissertation on Nikoloudi, this second production of the Birds was “successfully accepted by the Greek audience” after having received an international acclaim in Paris and London” (1997, p. 33). Hence, once again the foreign consent functioned as an assurance of the quality, artistry and worth of a local cultural product.

9.3 Domesticating the foreign, staging the local: forwarding a Hellenocentric modernism within the arts.

Preoccupied with the chorus’s appearance within the contemporary theatre, Nikoloudi attempted to modernise it and make it resilient to the contemporary staging of the tragedies. Instead of integrating actual folk kinetic motifs within her choreography, Nikoloudi focused on musicality and rhythmic accuracy of the performers. Her choreographies were based upon the music, closely following the structure, rhythm and melody of the score. Similarly, even though Manou did not exclusively focus on the choric dance, she had repeatedly choreographed for theatre and many of her choreographies were based on ancient dramas. Her main point of interest had always been ‘the inner meaning of tragedy’ and the orchestric rendering
of its characters’ pan-human feelings, which was also in accordance with Graham’s modernist psychoanalytical approach to the Greek myths and tragedies. Within her works, Manou attempted to unite the plasticity of the ancient theatre with the firmness of ballet (and/or modern dance) technique and the vigour of the folk traditions, in order to enhance her art with expressions of Greekness (Manou in Fessa, 2004, p. 272). Even though her work had a great appeal and Manou had been repeatedly awarded for her artistic contribution both nationally and internationally, her ‘Hellenicised modernism’ was later seriously questioned.

While Nikoloudi also choreographed ‘Hellenic’ works, like her famous choreography for Ornithes, Manou’s nationalising attempts were more overt and explicit. Hence, while Nikoloudi’s works are still re-staged today, (with Ornithes enjoying a special acclaim), Manou’s productions have been eventually overthrown by the new dance aesthetics, even though her contribution in the development of Greek dance is undeniable. In addition, as the dance education progressed, the technical artistry and competence of her initial dancers was also questioned. More importantly, the merging of ballet and modern dance techniques with local (both demotic and urban-folk) forms of movement, has been characterised as superficial and found to be often falling into unfortunate choreographic shortcomings and clichés (which mainly referred to her representations of Greekness). In that way, her work reached a point when it started seeming rather parochial and superficially ‘ethnic’. Nonetheless, similar endeavours have been a common place choreographic/political/ideological line in many nations all over the world, especially at times of political and/or national re-definitions. Two known such examples are the baleticisation of Bharata Natyam in post-colonial India with its parallel elevation into a national symbol and a cornerstone of tradition and the folklorisation of ballet within the Taiwanese Cloud Gate dance Theatre, (contextualised within a wider effort for national definition, distinction and westernisation)

The baleticisation of tradition, and/or the folklorisation of ballet, refer to the domestication of the (western?) ‘global’ and the westernisation of the (non-western) ‘local’. Within Greece, the relation between theatrical dance and the
ancient chorus, as established by the first choreographers, in a way dictated the turn to the folk tradition. As Tsatsou writes, even though a direct relation between the dances of antiquity and the folk dances of today cannot be securely established, these traditions appear as the closest possible genre to the ancient forms. Furthermore she suggests that as products of a continuous (at least until recently) collective creation, within the same geo-climatic space, they have to be approached not merely as bearers of rhythmic and kinetic traces of the past, but most importantly as careers of a —however changing through time— distinct demotic culture. In that way, she suggests that the study of the deeper qualities and principles of folk dances would greatly benefit the contemporary choreographing of the chorus (1993, pp. 162-173). The folk tradition has been considered as the most appropriate source for dealing with the problem of the chorus by the majority of the choreographers and directors involved in the staging of ancient plays, even though their level of engagement with it may vary. 87

In that way, when contextualised within the very specific temporal and socio-political parameters within which it developed, the significance of Manou’s works becomes more perceptible. With all its flaws, Elliniko Chorodrama was the very first contemporary dance group to also provide a ballet and modern dance training to its dancers. Moreover, Manou’s attempt to domesticate a manifestly foreign art by fusing into it musical, rhythmical, aesthetic and kinetic elements from local popular and traditional dances and practices gave a slightly different twist to the solemn ceremonial character of Palmer’s 88 and even Pratsika’s works. Finally the company’s memorable collaborations with an elite of avant-guard artists, promoted a creative interactive discourse between them, which resulted to the formation of a distinct artistic, aesthetic and ideological stream. Both Manou’s and Nikoloudi’s works, represent within the dance field the main tendencies of ‘Hellenocentric modernism’, which characterised the Generation of the ‘30s, epitomising one of the stronger currents within the history of modern Greek arts.

Through their collaborative works, this group of artists (choreographers, painters, composers, theatre directors, poets), promoted the removal of the common-place boundaries between ‘high’ (institutionalised and western-like) and ‘popular’ (or
folk) art. By attempting to develop a 'high quality' Hellenic artistic network, they have enriched their works with institutionally unprocessed elements from the local traditions. Further to the demotic cultural heritage, their study and use of urban folk elements has contributed to their re-evaluation and acceptance from the middle classes. Nonetheless, the gradual nomination of rebetika and laika (as both music and dance forms) into symbols of Greekness was pushed forward by their international projection. The gradual blending of rebetika with laika and their increasing popularisation within the urban middle classes came alongside their popularisation outside Greece. Together with their export came their trademarking as 'Greek', which further boosted their local production and projection, to the extent that today, the sound of bouzouki and the rebetika are the most internationally recognised Hellenic sounds, overthrowing other more traditional forms. The exportation and promotion of a specific Greek image through the international success of Greek-themed films, such as Zorbas the Greek, was heightened with the rapid development of tourism, which further standardised and nationalised these cultural elements.

9.4 The implication of tourism: the 'folklorisation' of folklore and the exoticisation of tradition: the phenomenon of Zorbas the Greek.

The elevation and recognition of rebetika as a significant national cultural parameter was mainly forwarded by two interrelated socio-political and cultural conditions: their discovery and re-evaluation by the urban 'enlightened' bourgeoisie and their appointment as touristic emblems of Greekness. The post-War artistic search of a re-defined ethnic identity that would elicit a distinct 'Hellenic quality' within the local arts, covered a much larger cultural area than ever before, as many post-war artists turned to the urban popular (sub)cultures, as a new source of inspiration, alongside the demotic traditions. At the same time this orientation signalled an acknowledgment of the Asia Minor immigrants and the local proletariat populations as legitimate social groups, and their gradual acceptance and inclusion. This social inclusion was forwarded by the cultural inclusion and upwards fusion of formerly marginal genres within the middle classes. This urban working-class culture was appropriated and distorted, as
discussed, by the populist political discourse of the Junta and re-contextualised within the post dictatorial era, as to be identified with the raising socialist ideology, reaching its 'completion' in 1981 with the election of the first socialist party (PASOK).

Parallel to the internal political conditions, the abrupt growth of tourism that Greece met since the 1960s and the development of a related tourist industry had a strong impact in the cultural affairs and ethics of Greek society (and mainly of the province). The standardisation, nationalisation and exportation of these 'newly discovered' ethnic elements and the exotic folklorisation of the local traditions and customs triggered their internal re-evaluation and autoexoticisation, often alienating their original character and social function. The sudden growth of tourism in the 1960s has been a decisive factor for the restructuring of Greek economy, as tourist services have replaced agricultural or farming activities in most parts of Greece. The tourist demand for authenticity and picturesqueness, within the Greek landscapes and archaeological sites, as well as within the demotic tradition and the folk art, signalled a major shifting point for the Greek society. The creation and promotion of a touristic Greek portrait occurred in an ongoing dialogue between foreign and local industries, as well as between local collective self-imaginings and foreign expectations, formed around personal mythologies and well established Greek icons (as set by historical accounts and scholar bibliography, literature and travellers' notes, the visual arts etc). This tourist interest and its consequent (both local and foreign) investment on Greek culture, resulted to the solidification of specific elements as the main axes of Greekness, which could be easily exported to the foreign tourists and performed/embodied by the Greeks. Again, the focus and stated interest on specific national themes, triggered their re-interpretation, re-evaluation (and when needed, their invention) within Greece itself.

Interestingly, the main axioms of the touristic sense of Greekness are captured in two other films of the 1960s, this time intended for an international audience: *Never On Sunday* directed by Jules Dassin (1960) and *Zorbas the Greek* by Michalis Cacoyannis (1965). As Lisbet Torp (1992, pp. 207-210) notes, both these two "apparently different movies" attempted to introduce and represent "the Greek
spirit" to an international (western) audience. The first takes place in the port of Piraeus and presents a romanticised and beautified image of the otherwise poor and underdeveloped area. Within the film, the “devil may care” spirit of the main character (a spirited prostitute living in the port) played by Melina Mercouri appears as a core quality of the Greeks in general. The second film, which met a much bigger success, is located in a traditional remote village in Crete, whose strict social codes and norms collide with the carefree character of Zorbas (Alan Bates), who performs the exact same ‘Greek’ qualities introduced in Never on Sunday.

While different in character, with Zorbas the Greek presenting a rough, unpolished and non-romanticised image of the time’s Greek province, both films “attempt to picture the Greek spirit to non Greeks” (ibid, p. 207). Moreover, Never on Sunday introduced some “‘typical Greek qualities’, that were to be further explored and popularised through their re-appearance (and solidification) in Zorbas the Greek.

As Torp points out, in both films, Greece, its ethics and culture are being presented and exemplified to a western foreigner, who visits Greece for the first time. As these two characters explore and familiarise themselves with the ‘exotic’ Greek space, so are the cinematic audiences, who are invited to endeavour a similar journey. The film’s music scores are composed by the two most acknowledged (and indeed ‘Greek’) local composers of our time: Manos Hatzidakis in the first and Mikis Theodorakis in the second. Both composers have been heavily influenced by the rebetika music, and they have contributed greatly in its legitimisation and establishment as a respectable music genre. As Torp explains, the ‘Greekness’ that both films promoted was based on the contemporary (based in rebetika) music, which is what most tourists would identify today as ‘truly Greek’ (ibid, p. 207). Indeed, Zorbas’s music and Zorbas’s dance have been major themes in the local tourist industry according to the shaped foreign expectations and mythology. This demand for the ‘authentic Greek Zorbas’s dance’ lead to the creation and establishment of a previously non-existent dance form, the syrtaki, as well as to its gradual establishment as a pan-Hellenic dance. The impact of the tourist exploitation and often distortion of the Greek history and culture, here symbolically located in the ‘Zorbas phenomenon’, has had serious implications in all sectors of the local socio-cultural affairs.
Re-discovering the advantages of their new exotic self, the Greeks adjusted their identity to fit the tourist expectations. The image of the ‘typical Greek’, the spontaneous Zorba, with his primitive (and therefore ‘real’ and appealing) eroticism and joy of life started to haunt not only the western tourists but also the Greeks themselves. The western nostalgia for a lost (even though never experienced) paradise, shaped under the ‘Greek Myth’ was eventually adopted and embodied by the Greeks who had to distance themselves from their realities in order to feel this foreign (and therefore prestigious) nostalgia for their present. Hence, when the Athenian bourgeois danced and grew merry in the sounds of bouzouki, they were indeed staging a personal performance: that of Zorbas’s passion, abandonment and joy of life: the ‘typical Greek’. As the display of a certain ‘couleur locale’ seemed to be a necessary ingredient for the entertainment of the European visitor and/or tourist, it gradually became incorporated in the pass time activities of the local bourgeoisie.

With ideas on the importance of a re-connection with nature and with man’s primmer instincts and needs, as well as of a performed individuality rapidly growing in the West, the connection with a ‘primitive’ aspect of one’s national culture was perceived as an active engagement with these modern/foreign ideas, conveying the even more profound Europeanisation of their bearer. The exodus to the bouzoukia became a moment to release one’s deep primitivist instincts, as a way of connecting with man’s nature, while still retaining his/her own distinct and superior place. In fact, the bourgeois’ occasional engagement with the national folk roots implied an external and detached (as well as superiorly positioned) stance. The feeling of supremacy that allowed the ‘understanding’ and hence the occasional and selective engagement with a different –lower– culture, is in itself a colonial concept, here adopted within the national class-hierarchy frame. Hence, the popularisation of folklore within the urban middle classes retained a superficial and exoticising character.

Indicative of this auto-exoticised and touristic perception and re-presentation of the National Self, which followed the tourist growth and the dictatorship’s nationalism,
is Metaxopoulos’s touring in Australia with the music-dance spectacle *Zorbas comes to Australia*, a performance that met success and was repeated again in 1973 (Fessa, 2004, p. 292). This process of exoticisation and auto-exoticisation has characterised Modern Greek history. Expressed through an admiration of anything foreign (meaning western) and modern and its complementary counterpart, a parallel resistance to westernisation and an attempt to re-evaluate, protect and promote the local, mainly folk, culture, it has had an obvious impact on the everyday aesthetics and values, as well as on artistic movements. In that way, it would be safe to argue that within the modern Greek nationalist discourse “elements of nostalgia and social and cultural atavism collide with notions of modernity and progress” (Roy in O’Shea, 2001, p. 20). The history of contemporary Greek dance has also been characterised by artistic and ideological positions and oppositions that mostly revolve around this crucial conflict/scheme.

In the introduction of her book about the formation of the sense of Greekness in the post-War Greek art, Vacalo explains:

> It is a net that roots in our land, how the foreign peoples see us. And our relations with them, or theirs with us, usually influence the image we give to our identity. Our rush to level with them, but also our frequent opposition to them, based on our (different) origin, both come from this same preliminary netting.

(Vacalo, 1983, pp. 13-14 –translated by the author)

Similarly, while discussing the character of Modern Greek art, Tsarouhis attempts to locate the “eternal element of Greek art” by identifying these things that have attracted non-Greeks towards it (1986, p. 20). Still, it is important for this study to avoid an over-simplistic interpretation of all Modern Greek artistic expressions according to their ideological positioning in relation to western culture or their responsiveness to the western gaze. These relations co-exist and interact with a number of factors related to the internal characteristics of highly localised cultures and sub-cultures, as well as occasional (local or global) situations and historical events, which influence the intensity and the effect of their impact.
9.5 To be (‘Greek’) or not to be? A note on the choreographers’ agency.

In that point I would like to underline that, however implicit the manifestations and roles of (auto) exoticism seem to be within Greek reality, I do not suggest the attribution of one’s (whether a person’s, a nation’s or a practice’s) own understanding and defining of the ‘self’ to a number of external factors that operate beyond the sphere of the willing and/or cognitive self. In contrast I want to stretch the importance of decision-making in dealing with a number of options, as well as with non-controllable factors, such as embodied experiences, aesthetic and ideological preferences and socio/political, or even economic realities. It is this conscious and continuous process of decision-making and the responsiveness (and that can be positive, negative or neutral, all in varying levels of engagement) to a number of external as well as internal (or personal) facts, ideas and aspirations as to what constitutes (or what is wished to constitute or represent) the ‘National Self’ that is been under scrutiny in the present study. Setting the framework for her study of Bharata Natyam O’Shea discusses what she calls “the politics of representation” within the choreographic process and suggests that dancers (or choreographers) put forth their versions of history and politics in order to grapple with the exigencies of their social, cultural and temporal contexts. Political concerns therefore operate not only as discursive frames that inform Bharata Natyam but also as tactics, expressed through choreographic choices, through which Bharata Natyam performers negotiate their own historical and local positionings.

(O’Shea, 2001, p. 6)

I chose here to approach the choreographic choices of modern Greek choreographers in a very similar way to O’Shea, as ways of negotiating “historical and local”, national, socio-cultural and ideological identities. In that way, instead of a “single hegemonic version of nationalism that dancers illustrate in choreography” there is, as O’Shea suggests, “a number of divergent (and often competing) representations of nationhood” that come to play (2001, pp. 8-9).
Within this choreographing of identities, national, local and individual mainstream and alternative voices seem to be involved in an endless discussion with similar transnational (or other national) selfhoods, producing and reproducing notions of Selves and Others, which are constantly re-informed, re-shaped and re-performed. Yet, even within this apparently neutral transnational (or transcultural) discourse ground there is a number of regulative laws and conventions stemming from a solid global power structure, whose role cannot be underestimated as they set the ground upon which these transnational interactions take place. Hence, the western precedence in the global political and economic arena and its consequent cultural and artistic authority, as described above, is interconnected with localised cultural affairs of (western and not) realities. Within this nexus of interrelated interests and policies, divergent cultures and ideologies emerge (whether embodied, adopted and/or imposed, created, reproduced). Whilst the choreographer can often be an especially dynamic factor within the shaping, re-shaping or abolishment of these tendencies, his/her agenda is at all times informed by these conditions (even if disinterest or ignorance characterises the artist) and formed accordingly.

To return to the paradigm, folklorisation, both as an official political line and artistic/intellectual positioning, has been a conscious tactic in order to convey national identity. At different times, the embracement of tradition has functioned either as a 'revolutionary' social and political statement, as an act of resistance, or as a means of conformity and promotion of an official line. For a contemporary Greek choreographer, dealing with tradition also means dealing with the way it has formerly being called forth and re-presented within the local dance history. In addition, the choreographer's choice is also influenced by the political economy of folklore, as well as by personal, national and international expectancies on what 'Greek' dance (should?) consist(s) of. Hence, the 'confrontation' of tradition has become a complex task for the choreographer, who has to take into account both local and foreign performances of (Greek) tradition, in relation to the socio-political semiotics that surrounds and contextualises it. In that way, the choice of dealing (positively or negatively), as well as of not-dealing with tradition is a conscious political –as well as choreographic– act. While the occasional reference to the folk
tradition does not necessarily imply a specific positioning, a consistent stance towards it can characterise, and accordingly classify, a choreographer.

Following that, I can roughly distinguish three different approaches to the 'issue of tradition' according to a choreographer's (or a company's) level of engagement with the folk and popular elements:

a) **the direct approach**, where the choreographer-researcher is concerned with the studying and understanding of primary cultural sources, drawing directly from them. Ancient texts, sculptures and architectural buildings and landscapes may be explored together with folk tails, myths, dance motifs and movement or rhythmic qualities and music particularities in order to be actively embedded within the performance. Those elements are intended to interact and merge with contemporary dance and theatre performative techniques and aesthetics in order to produce a contemporary, open and yet characteristically Greek dance/art form. Spyratou's work is probably the most representative contemporary example of this tendency.

b) **The indirect approach**: Instead of a direct relation and engagement with the folk and the popular, these cultural traditions are negotiated, referenced or merely touched upon, within the choreographic text, as filtered through the 'Hellenocentric Modernist' artistic stream, as discussed later in the chapter. The perception and representation of the folk and popular cultures through the 'Hellenocentric Modernist' artists (mainly painters) has indeed added another layer to the neo-Hellenic identity, especially tight to the 1930s, (and with variations to the 1940s, '50s and '60s) artists' engagement and re-connection with tradition. Acknowledging their input on the national discourse and understanding of tradition and further informed by post-modernist aesthetics and ideological principles, as well as by the post-dictatorial denial of the 'authoritarian nationalist kitsch' and the more recent hyper-national or trans-national dialectics on globalisation, choreographers, such as Papaioannou, chose to present (when wished or needed) an indirect, and charged with all those meta-traditional layers image of 'Greekness'. Commenting on the successful portrayal of Greek images within the Opening Ceremony, painter Alekos Fasianos noted both the significance of Hellenocentric
artistic streams in the creation of an additional layer of tradition, as well as the Ceremony's reliance on this meta-layer of tradition, in order to perform Greekness. He says:

With this celebration that Papaioannou created, it was proved that there is a significant Neo-Hellenic civilisation with great creativity in all artistic sectors, in painting, music, poetry and dance, shaped by Elytis, Seferis, Tsarouhis, Moralis, while Theodorakis, Hatzidakis, Xarhakos and Savvopoulos, with their great songs, drew attention to the folk music, through which, Greeks developed ethnic conscience. I think if they had not created in that 'Hellenic' way, after the War (World War II), this Ceremony would not have occurred in this way, as we wouldn't have a modern tradition.

(Fasianos, 2004, p. 9)

b.ii) A strand of this category can also be described as occasional: This in fact presents another dimension within the second category, with which it overlaps. Here the formulation of a consistent Hellenic choreographic language is not an end in itself and while the referencing to tradition often functions as a conveyor of nationality and identity, it is occasional, and serves the specific needs and aims of a choreography. In this case, the Greek referencing appears both as a way of engagement with the audience (by domesticating an 'unfamiliar' dance form) and as a recognisable symbolism: a signifier, familiar to the local spectator, which supplements the dance action, exemplifying the issues raised by the choreographer. The Hellenic symbolism can be drawn from either the source itself, e.g. a folk tale, a demotic dance or song, or from its depictions by the artists of the 'Hellenocentric Modernism'. Hellenic themes, such as myths and stories (mostly drawn from antiquity rather then from the most recent folk tradition), are usually negotiated as panhuman symbols, that exceed the national or the local. The situations and characters are usually negotiated as archetypal symbols employed to depict perpetual emotions and situations. Many (indeed most) contemporary choreographic works fall in this category. Indicatively I designate here two examples:
Persa Stamatopoulou’s *Penelope waiting* and *Penelope and Ulysses meet* (1997) is an example of such approach: the symbolic personae of Penelope and Ulysses are used to negotiate the distancing of a couple (literal or emotional) and the anticipation, expectancies and fantasies that this vacuum creates. Their collapse when reality emerges often gives a tragic sense of futility to the wait. Similarly Lia Meletopoulou’s *Small Dance theatre*, has presented works on ancient/classic themes, such as *Electra* (1987), *Clytemnestra* and *Medea* (video-dance) (1989), *Electra (New version)*/Medea (video-dance) and *Two Dance Pieces and a Video: Cassandra, The ring or the myth of Sisyphus and Medea* (video-dance), *Jocasta’s Suicide* (1995), *Clytemnestra, the Story of a Woman Who...* (1998), *Persephone* (2000) and more. Here too, instead of attempting to convey a specific image of nationhood, the subjects are chosen as depictions of womanhood under Meletopoulou’s feminist approach, alongside other similarly oriented works presented by the *Small Dance Theatre*, such as: *Woman Dance* and *Four women* (1983), *The Bath Tub: you didn’t leave early* (Apostolia Papadamaki), *Woman Giving Birth* (Antigone Gyra), Vade Retro (Kiki Baka), *In dreams* (S. Kalinikidou), (1994), *Four women* (Charles Cre-Ange), (2001) and more.96

Nonetheless, the choice of a Greek symbolic figure, instead of a similar character drawn from a different mythology and/or tradition, is not accidental nor naïf. However international or panhuman specific historical and mythological symbols may be, they still are part of a national history and culture, which is often charged with additional (or merely different) meanings for the local audiences. Hence, while the representation, preservation or furthering of the national tradition and identity are not included in the core aims of these works, the intentionality of the referencing is acknowledgeable of their specific national weight.

c) Finally, a third tactic is the conscious distancing from tradition: this can either refer to the complete absence of any cognisant national reference in the movement, music, visual aesthetics, or its perpetual deconstruction and ‘demolition’. Still, this stance can also be a result of a mere lack of interest and/or ignorance for that domain, rather than representing a conscious antithetic opposition to it. Many of the later dance groups of the late 1990s and early 2000s97 seem to belong to the first
sub-category, with their themes and choreographic concerns mainly revolving around personal interests and/or endoscopic kinetic experimentations. The focus is on contemporary urban life in its personal and collective experiences and could apply to most western urban middle class realities. Moreover, the engagement with (the national) tradition is missing either because of its absence from the choreographer's experiential reality (and hence out of her/his area of interest), or because it is perceived as a limitation to the artist's creativity and originality. The negotiation of tradition is considered parochial, conservative and/or nationalist, or merely distanced and alien to the artist's (and his/her target audience's) reality.

As an alternative expression of this last thesis, another tendency appears: the employment of the grotesque and the perpetual kitsch in order to approach, perform and therefore critique the (both contemporary and historical) national popular culture(s) and symbols negatively. Instead of their complete absence, the popular and traditional elements appear over-emphasised and distorted through their exaggeration, as caricatured and most often tragic states of being. Constantinos Rigos, presents an example for this sort of dealing with tradition, while he has repetitively stated his indifference for any kind of perpetual source-studying - whether in dance, literature, popular culture (Hassioti 2001). His works are typified by a persistence on the grotesque pop and the over-exaggerated, both as an aesthetic and kinesiological principle, as well as a thematic choice (multi-directional, uncontrollable and deviant sexuality, violence, desperation, psychological dead-ends and human wrecks often appear within his works). Hence, while his choreographic style appears influenced by international currents like Pina Bausch's dance theatre, Maguy Marin and Mats Ekk's kinetic stylisation and psycho-analytical deconstructive approach to established narratives, he is usually engaging with an urban pop (often club-like) vocabulary.

Within these mixes 'the kitsch' appears as a deliberate choice and means of critique of everyday life situations and personal dramas, as well as of established norms and traditions, and even cultural signifiers of nationhood. With personal freedom being one of his main and recurring underlying themes, all the above mentioned institutions are perceived and performed negatively as symbols of restriction. Quite
indicative of Rigos's anti-national disposition is his (mis)use of national ideological symbols, such as the flag, carried arbitrarily on stage by a group of gender/less, confused and wretched, often humiliated people, within his last work Draft [B] – Free Besieged. While the choreography has been inspired by a nationally significant poem (Dionysios Solomos's homonymous poem, referring to the siege of Messolongi during the Revolution of 1821) Rigos proclaimed that his version of the Free Besieged

has nothing in common with the false or monolithic interpretations that we learn in school. It is not simply about heroism. Taking the siege of Messologi as a reference point, (the performance) speaks of something else, of man's transgression and of the agony of the creator.

(Rigos in Kaltaki, 2006, p. 29 -translated by the author).

Still, the national reference here is not only used as an occasion or a metaphor for something else; it is also beaten in its very symbolism. Rigos also admits that the first ten minutes of the performance were

a pure political statement and was decided to be so. Because when you use “dangerous” symbols, like the flag or the tsolias, which can annoy some, you have to be sure of what you are doing and why, and to be able to support your positioning.

(Ibid).

It is also indicative that Rigos's first performance with Octana Dance Theatre, in 1990, was titled Have you Seen the Acropolis Yet (original title in English), playing with national auto-exotic and touristic stereotypes. Still Rigos does not always maintain an anti-national(ist)/critical stance and he has also been inspired by Hellenic themes e.g. Orpheus and Eurydice (1997). Hence he can be also 'positioned' within the second category of the 'occasional' preoccupation with tradition.
9.6 Conclusion

In any case, the disposition of a choreographer towards tradition and its treatment within his/her works is not solely a personal choice but also an ideological and socio-political one. Inevitably, the wider negotiation of tradition in other sectors of social life, as well as within the dance scene itself, informs and influences the choreographic activity. In this chapter I chose to compare Papaioannou’s conception of the Closing Ceremony with Spyratou’s works, as they both ‘belong’ in the first two categories: they represent two ways of dealing positively (instead of not-dealing) with tradition and nationality through their negotiation of the folk and popular cultures. Both Papaioannou’s conscious approach and performance of Greekness within the ceremonies (as well as within some of his earlier works) and Spyratou’s continuous cultivation of a Hellenic dance form, purposefully employed tradition in order to construct a choreographed national identity. The intentionality of these works alongside the underlying belief that identity is something historical rather than purely ephemeral and most importantly that identity is indeed something worth negotiating or at least referring to, in a way positions them on the same side of the coin. In other words, this chapter deals with what could be described as Hellenocentric or Greek-oriented tendencies within the local dance scene.

Nonetheless, I fully acknowledge the fact that the deconstruction of identity through the negation, or critique of tradition as a way of attacking and/or exceeding the national and the local, has the potency to present alternative, negative, and equally valid analysis of this peculiar relationship and its interrelation with the arts. Still, the intention of this Part was to study the ways in which folklorisation functions as a conveyor of identity within the positive and intentional depictions of Greekness, like in the case of the Olympic ceremonies. In that way, the examples of Spyratou’s works alongside Papaioannou’s ceremony can be used to exemplify this relationship between folklore and national identity. I believe that Papaioannou’s negotiation of the neo-Hellenic identity was formed with regard to, and with full comprehension of, the politics of folklorising. Similarly, Spyratou’s engagement with tradition carries the knowledge of the previous (and present) discourses on the subject. Hence, re-examining Papaioanou and Spyratou’s approaches, there is a
traceable connection with previous Hellenocentric tendencies, even though they
have been further developed with regard to the more recent post-modern and dance-
theatre (by now established) traditions, and re-informed by the latest socio-political
and cultural discourse regarding the negotiation and role of the folklore.

Much like her predecessors, Spyratou favours the inter-collaboration, interaction
and ultimate amalgamation of dance, theatre and music, choreographing almost
exclusively narrative performances, where speech plays an important role in the
unravelling and understanding of the choreography and musicality is always
emphasised as the movement rarely deviates from the tone, rhythmic patterns and
texture of the music. Moreover, she has choreographed extensively for theatre,
while for her works for ancient dramas, in the period between 1998 and 2000, she
was awarded the Kotopouli-Pratsika prize in 2000. At the same time, her
preoccupation with national (however personalised may often be or appear)
mythologies, ranging from ancient tales, plays, myths and historical anecdotes to
the demotic fairy tales, histories and oral traditions is tight to her vision for the
development of a profoundly Hellenicised dance theatre. Hence the folk element,
once again perceived as an expression of a national culture and as a live link with
the past, is perpetually staged (as a theme, musical composition, and –less often–
kinetic motif), characterising Spyratou’s works with Roes Dance Theatre.

The nationally-oriented character of the company and the consistent negotiation of
ethnic cultural elements has granted the company with an extended governmental
support, accompanied with a favourable treatment by most dance critics. Apart
from the company’s funding, Spyratou’s preoccupation with the “development of
dance and the performing arts in general” (Fessa, 2004, p. 442) triggered her close
collaboration with the ministries of culture and education, which supported and
sponsored her company’s appearances in schools (1998, 1999), as her as the
organisation of a series of seminars and performances throughout Greece and her
participation in the Ministry of Culture’s (ΥΠ.ΠΟ) annual Festivals (since 1991).
The governmental financial support and promotion of Spyratou’s works as
‘educationally beneficial’ are indicative of the state’s evaluation of her Hellenicised
choreographic style, which continues an official performative and educational
dance/theatrical tradition as established by Pratsika and her students. Indeed, the overt cultivation and projection of a clear national style within the arts, still appears today as a priority issue within the governmental artistic policies. While Papaioannou's works have not been explicitly branded as Hellenocentric nor advertised as such by the choreographer, they still bear a distinct 'Hellenic' character, which, however different may appear from Spyratou's works, still shares a common base line.

Papaioannou's occasional negotiation of Hellenic subjects (e.g. Media, 1993, Iphigenia on the old bridge of Arta and Xenakis' Orestreia, Aeschylus' Suite, 1995) and his sporadic incorporation of Hellenic elements in his works, has often been noted by critics. In fact, the most common remark is his association with the Hellenocentric Modernism of Tsarouhis. The artistic movement of the Hellenocentric modernism (as opposed to the Consistent Modernism) is described by Daskalothanasis as an adoption of the stylistic characteristics of (western) Modern Art with a parallel incorporation of elements that refer either to the ancient, the Byzantine or the folk art "as emblems of an aesthetic citizenship" (2000, p. 90). Through the "quest towards modernism", the exponents of this movement within the visual arts of the mid-war period (the '30s Generation') achieved a "transfer to Greekness, empowering a Greek (artistic) prototype ... within a general climate of mimesis" (G.E.KAR, 2007, p. 33). Also belonging to the first post-modernist painters, Tsarouhis is considered to be one of the main representatives of this style. His extensive collaborations with similarly oriented choreographers, like Manou and Nikoloudi contributed to the development of a parallel aesthetic and ideological stream within the theatre and dance affairs. Indeed, while Papaioannou has been mainly known from his works as a choreographer (rather than as a painter or commix artist), his engagement with some of the thematic and aesthetic principles of this Hellenocentric Modernist stream seem to be more attached to its painting rather than dance background. Hence, while he usually does not use directly any traditional kinetic elements or movement qualities within his dance motives, he has presented works that have been distinguished for their profoundly Greek character.
The most characteristic example—and probably Papaioannou’s most acknowledged and popular choreography until today—is his staging of Medea, in 1993. In fact this is also the work that presents the greatest resemblance to Tsarouhi’s aesthetics. Hence, apart from the obvious Hellenism of the theme, the imagery of the performance also referred to ‘Greek’ aesthetic qualities. For example: Jason often appears in an ‘Egyptian’ stance with the head and legs in profile and the torso en face, much like ancient Greek wall paintings (mainly Minoic and Cycladic). The flatness of the depiction also refers to the local naïf painting of the early twentieth century, when the classical perspective laws of western painting were purposefully defied in favour of the ‘oriental’ two-dimensionality which also characterised the Greek folk arts. Moreover, Jason is often dressed in an old fashioned pompous suit and wears well-trimmed moustache, resembling the rebetes, as well as (being the head of the Argonautic Expedition) in a high-ranking sailor’s suit, reminding of Tsarouhis’s paintings. Throughout the choreography, such Greek references occur regularly, re-contextualising the myth into the neo-Hellenic reality. While the folk element is generally absent, the connection between modernity and tradition is still achieved. The post-modern, post-national (if indeed) Greece is re-connected with antiquity bridged not with the demotic and folk, but with their modernist negotiation during the reconstruction of a neo-Hellenic identity. A production initially commissioned by the Cultural Centre of the Municipality of Athens, Medea is the work that established Papaioannou’s leading place within the local dance scene and initiated a long line of commissioned works which ties with his commissioning of the 2004 Olympic ceremonies.

Within the Closing Ceremony, Papaioannou consciously employed the ‘folklorising strategy’ to further account to the nation’s historicisation, as established in the Opening one. The re-presented customs, songs and dances were chosen for their disparity within the Greek space, as well as for their (however underlying or explicit) connection with antiquity. In that way, the continuity of Greek civilisation (an issue that has been for Greece historical in itself) was constantly projected throughout the ceremony, further exemplified by the commentators’ reminders. Moreover, the occasional comic and satiric references were also organically incorporated within the chosen tactic of the show, accounting for its directness,
contemporaneity and political-correctness. In that way, even though informed by
the past and present political concerns on identity and (the folk) tradition, which
inevitably "operate", as O'Shea suggested, "as discursive frames", Papaioannou
indeed chose to follow a specific strategy that allowed him to successfully unfold
his narrative on his "own historical and personal positioning". Selectively engaging
with the folklorising strategy, he played with its divergent semantic strands,
composing a Hellenic imagery, which met both his personal mythology and the
collective expectations of it.

Through his consistent referencing on traditional, ancient and/or primitive, modern
and post-modern, as well as on overwhelmingly romantic/idealistic and
cynical/pragmatic aspects and imaginings of Greekness, Papaioannou acrobatically
balanced between all those tendencies and positions involved on the folklorising
discourse. In that way, the attempt was in general terms considered successful. The
show could be indeed read as 'artistically complete' and 'original' in both the
above mentioned definitions of artistry: in the more traditionalist sense of the
original being a work with a distinct (national as well as artistic) character, as well
as a post-modern, or meta-traditional and de-constructive comment on identity. The
ceremony presented a recognisable version of the 'folkloric (experiential, created
and/or imagined) self', dispersed with equally recognisable references on the post-
traditional and even post-national meta-self. In that way, much like the opening
one, the Closing Ceremony can be better described as a 'mainstream avant-garde'
spectacle.
Savopoulos belongs to the so-called ‘new wave’ artists. A performer, composer and poet, he has become gradually popular since the Junta. His early works have been associated with the left-wing student generation of the 1960s. His music has been inspired by traditional demotic rhythms, as well as by the rebetika and the songs mainly dealt with familiar everyday situations in an engaging poetic way. Today he is considered to be one of the main representatives of the new wave Greek song, with his oeuvre being representative of the neo-Hellenic reality.

The table songs (μή τάξιλας) are traditionally meant to be sung while sitting at the table, usually after a meal.

The commentator refers to the custom of Babouyera (Μπαβούιέρα) from the area of Kali Vrysi (Καλή Βρύση) in Drama. However, similar customs also appear under different names in other parts of Northern Greece, like the arapides in Monastiraki (Drama) and in Nikissiani Pagaiou, as well as in the carnival of Soho (Papakostas, 2006 p.8).

As Tyrovola explains, ‘traditional’ music is performed by specific localised groups within a specific context related to their origin. “The ‘popular’ refers to a certain area of expression and entertainment of a general urbanised population, regardless of locality”. In between these stands the “mediatory and borderline” category of urban folk (αστυπολακτικά), which is most often identified with rebetika (in Lekkas, 2003, pp. 127, 147).

Invoking more specifically images from the four seasons (1969) while the theme seems more tied to the twelve months (1972). These two works come from Tsarouhis’s later period where he gradually moved from the Hellenocentric Modernism of the mid-war (and even post-World War II) period towards western painting. While the themes of his works are still mainly drawn from Greece the techniques are mostly drawn from western painting, from Pompeii and the European Renaissance to his contemporary artists. This shift has been interpreted as a critique of the weaknesses of Modernism and during the 1970s Tsarouhis produced some of the first post-modern works internationally (Kotidis, 2000, pp. 111-112).

Parios’s voice was identified with these songs during the 1980s.

While this type of open van has been preferred by many farmers, it has also been identified with the gipsy nomad vendors.

A popular singer, who made a name for herself in the late 1950s and early 1960s through her collaboration with the known singer Stelios Kazatzidis, on laika (a popular urban folk genre that succeeded the rebetika) and continued with a solo career on the ‘elafrolaika’ (ελαφρολαϊκά: ‘light’ laika).

‘Ellinadiko’ is a paraphrased word, coming from Elliniko (Ελληνικό, Greek) stating the Greek repertory of the club. Similarly, ‘bouzoukia’ (μπουζούκια, plural for bouzouki) denotes again the club’s music orientation. Generally speaking, while ‘Ellinadiko’ is a club with a disk-jockey, ‘bouzoukia’ usually present live bands on stage.

If connected to the Neo Hellenic state, the term Neo-Hellenes literally refers to the Greek citizens of the Modern Greek state in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, the prefix neo- into various Hellenic expressions, (i.e. culture, literature, art, politics) has created combined words of different temporal references. For example the Neo-Hellenic literature dates back to the fourth century and the Byzantine Empire. The neologism Neo-Hellenes is also commonly used to describe the post-war Greeks in their new, middle-class urbanised conditions. While the term is in common currency in Greece, it often bears a degrading underlying nuance, suggesting a ‘light-headed’ material, atomistic and somehow vulgar lifestyle, developed around this newly acquired ‘social welfare’ since the 1950s. A showing-off nouvel-rich (even though in reality middle class) behaviour would be often described as neo-Hellenic, with the negative sense of the term.

Ai-Yiannis’s celebration is on the twenty-fourth of June and it has been a custom for youngsters and children to light fires and jump over them. Many other customs are related to this (such as ‘magic’ practices to predict one’s wedding date), which slightly differ from one area to another. The custom is considered to originate in pre-Christian practices.

For the national significance of the Pyrrhic dance and its re-appropriation as a Greek-Pontic national symbol see Tzartzani, 2001.

A long-drawn-out love song (Savropoulos, 1988).

Gatsos is a well known poet. Hatzidakis had almost exclusively set his poems to music, creating some of the most well-known popular songs within Greece. This song was composed by
Xarxhacos, as part of his works for *Rebetika*, a film re-presenting the rebetiki scene. The film was directed by Kostas Ferris in 1983 and became an all-time favourite. The storyline is of a young female singer of rebetika, starting in 1919 in Smyrna to end up in Athens in 1956, featuring the events that played an important role in the history of Greece, in the first half of the twentieth century. Interestingly, the cover of the record with the film’s soundtrack was painted by Tsarouhis (verifying once again his association with the depictions of the rebetika culture).

The translation here is basic, without any poetic aspirations, solely intended to highlight the popular consciousness regarding the national mythology, as exemplified in the song. It is referring to the Great Ideals promoted by the newly founded Greek state (largely based on the projection of the glorified antiquity) and their annihilation by the political events of the early twentieth century, which also led to the impoverishment and uprooting of large populations (both towards Greece with the arrival of the persecuted Greek populations of Pontos and Asia Minor, and out of Greece, with the wave of financial migration towards Germany, America, Australia etc). The choice of song is significant for the purposes of the thesis, supporting the present reading of the ceremony. The lyrics highlight eloquently Modern Greece’s reliance to antiquity to enhance a contemporary status deprived of glorified prestige and power. The contrast between the hardships of everyday life and the grandeur of the ‘Hellenic’ vision is also revealed (the song refers to the first decades of the twentieth century), while, as a rebetiko, popular song, it also showcases Greek people’s awareness of its utopic nature.

The second part of the ceremony was a concert staged by composer Dionysis Savopoulos and will not be addressed in this analysis.

In her article titled *Folkloric Ethno-party*, Popi Diamadakou criticised the merge of diverse cultural elements within the Closing Ceremony, which she characterised a “glossy ethno-pulp” and argued that Papaioannou relied on a “Tsarouhian” (and therefore recognisably Greek, as discussed) aesthetic, in order to “exorcise the antitheses of local culture, reshaping the images with the sentimental sweetness of a Greek Disneyland” (2004, p. 10-11).

As the author notes, the local Slavic idiom that the inhabitants of Kali Vrysi spoke during the first years that followed their liberation from the Turkish rule, created problems to the newly founded Greek nation-state, which based its sovereignty on the grounds of a common religion, language and culture. Moreover, these areas were issues of debate between Greece and Bulgaria in various critical periods (1912-13, 1916-18 και 1941-44) and their national identity had to be re-justified and reinforced after every war, foreign occupation and turbulent political condition (Lykio Ellinidwn 1998, p. 498 in Papakostas, 2006 p. 3).

Hence, the engagement with a heroic national mythology is not always the outcome of a nationalist ideological positioning. It often serves as a dressing for ceroscopy supporting a specific business activity, or a comforting fall back, to enhance the non-as-glorified contemporary reality.

From the beginning of the twentieth century up to the late 1970s, Spyratou studied dance (graduating from the State School of Dance in 1977), theatre and vocal, and has continued her studies abroad in the US, Stuttgart and Paris, on state scholarship (Fessa, 2004, p. 438). She has extensively choreographed for theatre and has worked in public television and education. She founded her dance theatre company *Roes*, in 1989.

In most cases the recent and ancient historical, cultural and mythological references (and/or inspirational sources) are juxtaposed and interlaced within the pieces, as to create a consistent transhistorical Greek dance-scape. The distinction here is mainly based on the titles’ referencing.

Marika Rombou-Levidi places Spyratou alongside the previous generation choreographers, such as Pratsika, Manou, Hors, Nikoloudi and Tsatsou, concerned with the relation between “modern dance and tradition in Greece (ancient and recent)” (1992, pp. 215-218).

Of course, this is within the limits of the local governmental budget for dance, which is by general acknowledgment inadequate (see also the article *Money for dance*, in Eleutherotypia, 29.8.2005, p. 22).

In the text αρχαιολότρες (archaeolatres).

Svoronos identifies these schools as represented by Fanariotes at first (1800 to 1860 approximately) and the New Athenian School (1840 to 1875 approx). However the New Athenian School is usually located in the period between 1880 and 1922 (Politis, 1993, Gregoriatis, Karvelis, Milionis, Balaskas, Paganos, 2000 ).

Coming from Eptanisa (*Επτάνη*): the then Italian occupied Ionian islands.
The first verses of his poem *Hymn in Freedom* were later chosen to be the lyrics of the Greek National Anthem.

Meriaklis indeed suggests that it is in fact “anti-Christian”.

Papajoannou also relied on this ‘Greek’ characteristic for the Opening Ceremony’s praise of the body.

Kyriakides (1887-1964) focused on the study of Greek language and folk culture. In 1918 he was appointed director of the Folklore Archive at Athens. From 1926 until his retirement he held the Chair of Ancient Greek Religion and Greek Folklore at the university of Thessaloniki, while at the time of his death he was president of the Society of Macedonian Studies and the Institute for Balkan Studies, in Thessaloniki [R. A. Georges and A. A. Katranides (translators) in Kyriakides (1968, p. 7)]. The study was first presented in Germany (Munich, Berlin Dresden) in 1936, under the title Neugriechische Volkskunde: Volksdichtung, Volksgläube, Volkskuns.

As Katranides notes, the old theory of Fallmerayer was recalled, in order to disconnect modern Greeks from the ancient ones, re-introducing them as “descendants of the barbaric Slavic tribes that flooded Greece during the Middle Ages. An assertion that was discarded long ago even by Slavic scholars”. “For the sake of the temporary friendship with the Bulgarians”, many German scholars embraced these positions, which were solidified through their cross-referencing in various “scholarly publications”. The ultimate purpose of this claim was to disassociate, within the minds of the German soldiers, who had learned to praise ancient Greek civilisation as the basis of the Aryan, modern Greeks from their ancestors, in order to prevent any feelings of sympathy towards them. Furthermore, “they tried to evoke contempt and derision toward the Greeks who fought in Albania and in the mountains of Macedonia with a valour worthy of their ancient forbears” (1968, p. 48). A comparison that had dominated most western European references on these fights.

See for example Theodoros Vruzakis (1814-1878) and Nikolaos Gyzis (1842-1901). The choice of Munich as a cultural lighthouse for the Greek affairs is by no means accidental. The links between the Greek state and Bavaria (through the establishment of the royal family) were reinforced by the personal beliefs of Ludvich A, who “in the context of the 19th century Philhellenism, cultivated cultural liaisons with Greece, aiming to function as a determining factor in the romanticized rebirth of the ancient Greek spirit, within the Greek soil” (Daskalothanasis, 2000, pp. 31-32). Likewise, he raised a number of classicist buildings within Munch, which was intended to be the “Athens of Bavaria”. This flamboyant ‘ancient-loving’ tendency also inspired the idea of the raise of Othon’s palace, in-between the ruins of Parthenon, in the hill of Acropolis, as well as the construction of a number of neo-classical buildings in central Athens (Fillipides, 1984, p. 78).

As an example Kotidis refers to the painting of Nikolaos Lytras, which he describes as “emotional and beautifying” according to the prototypes of the Academicism. Indicatively he refers to his portrayal of a peasant Greek family, in his painting: Return from the panyyri (festival) of Penteli” in 1870, where the family appears beautiful, happy and youthful, in contrast to the real harsh reality (and consequent appearance) of the time’s rural populations (2000, p. 83-85).

As an example Dascalothanasis indicates Gyzis’s portrait of the Oriental with a pipe, in 1873.

See about poet A. Sicelianos, writer S. Murivilis, painter Y. Tsarouhis, architects D. Pikionis and G. Kontoleon and more.

The word here refers to socio-political, cultural, ideological and artistic rather than geographical relations.

As Todorova (1996, p 74) notes, *The Cambridge History of English Literature* describes the genre of travel literature as the kind of writing that expresses and influences, probably more than any other, the national preferences and the national character (1922, p. 255).

The publications of traveller’s voyages in Greece and the near East had grown considerably within the 18th and 19th centuries. “From 1700 to 1749 we have approximately 75 titles. From 1750 to 1799, approximately 115 and from 1804 until 1853, almost 450” (Savidis, in Voutira, 2000, p. 10 and Weber (1952,1953), in ibid).

As an example Gyzis’s portrait of the Oriental with a pipe, in 1873.

Writing about the modern artists (around 1920s and 1930s), Palmer observes a tendency to reject Greek arts and an attempt to distance from it. Still, she believes that “The moment an artist knows the rules, throws off the tyranny of useless ornament and creates from within, in
accord with the human needs of himself ... he is as Shelley said of Hassan “Greek at Heart”. In
fact, Palmer perceives modern art of the time to be an “unconscious homage” to Greece and she
locates Greek elements in diverse artistic works, from Picasso’s paintings to American

Still, according to Vacalo this is a rather superficial interest, expressed mainly by the ‘30s

See also Dascalothanasis, 2000, p. 55.

Palmer first heard demotic songs and Byzantine ecclesiastic hymns by Penelope Sikelianos-
Duncan, who had in turn learned by Constantinos Psahos. Later Palmer also attended a series of
classes by Psachos in the Athens Music conservatory and collaborated with him for the Delphic
Festivals (Fessa, 2004, p 358-360).

Anton, 1993 pp. 93-101. Tsarouhis (1986, p. 140) writes that the most important thing that
Palmer brought to Greece was probably her immense respect for Byzantine music. Both Palmer
and Pratsika also documented the former’s (not entirely successful) efforts to teach Byzantine
music to her Greek students (Ursa Minor, 1991, p. 22).

Balos is a traditional rhythm and dance, which varies in its form according to its place of origin
(northern mainland (Thrace) or the Aegean islands).

Dora Tsatsou-Symeonidi has been a student and close collaborator of Rallou Manou. She has
taught in many dance and drama schools (including the State dance School KSOT) and has
choreographed herself for ancient plays.

Such as knitting and weaving the garments for both her performances and her personal life
herself, according to the traditional way.


See also Marcel Mauss (1973) and Norbert Elias (1982) about the notion of habitus, as well as
Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1984) on the role of practice and embodiment in social dynamics and

Similarly, exploring, the social manipulation of the body in Fascist Italy Patrizia Veroli (2006)
cites Mussolini’s own corporeal representation of the ‘Fascist Ideal’.

In the television show Look what you did (Koita ti Ekave) celebrating the eighty years of
Chronis Aidonidis (Alpha, 24/3/07), Dionysis Savvopulos mentioned that during the Junta he
co-performed demotic songs with Domna Samiou, triggered by the total appropriation of
demotic songs and dances by the dictators, which had turned them into an anathema for the
younger (at least urban) generations.

Choreographed versions of traditional dances were also performed by folk dance groups and
associations, a swell as by pupils and students during both Metaxas’s and the Colonels’
regimes.

However, as any researchers, like Loutzaki, have noted, within the traditional context (e.g. not
within dance schools, companies and associations), the dancers’ position in the circle (most
often a semi-circle) is usually highly significant, revealing of their social status within the
community, or of their role within he specific event (e.g. a wedding).

For internal migration see also The History of New Hellenism (1770-2000), 2003, pp. 186-187
and Svoronos, 1999, pp. 146-147. Svoronos in fact argues that the deep changes in Greek
society had already started right before World War II (ibid, p. 147).

Being under Turkish occupation, Greece missed the fundamental cultural and socio-political, as
well as economic changes that resulted to the rise and establishment of an intellectual and
progressive upper class within Western Europe, during the Enlightenment. Hence, after its
gradual liberation and establishment as an independent nation, Greek society appeared
profoundly different than the European ones. This resulted to the rise of a parasitical ‘foreign’
upper class, which was completely detached from Greek reality and culture, and uncritically
mimetic of the western European bourgeois manners and ethics ([Filias, 1986, pp 44-49 and

Vlachiko (βλαχικα): until recently a degrading and almost offensive -not to mention
semantically incorrect- characterisation.

The Greek film industry flourished during the 1950s and 1960s. During those years, Greek
cinema established its own stars, who competed in (local) popularity the Hollywood ones.
During the Junta the industry became increasingly ‘light’ and kitsch, according to the dominant
aesthetics of the regime and faded right after its fall, with the reinforcement of independent,
political films.

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60 Kypseli is a high-populated middle-class neighborhood in central Athens. When the film was shot Kypseli was still considered a ‘nice’ location for the –then luxurious– apartments of the new bourgeois.

61 From the words xenos (ξένος): foreigner and mania. An unconditional worship (literally a mania) of anything foreign with a parallel degrade of everything local, which has been a strong current within Modern Greece.

62 Some of his movies are nostalgic, featuring an era that was rapidly fading. The famous *laterna* (a street organ), *poverty and pride/honour* (Λατέρνα, φτώχεια και φιλότιμο), in 1955, was inspired by the slow disappearing of the wondering street-musicians.

63 The positioning and role of these clips within the film, which imitated the early Hollywood musicals, also resembles the role of music and dance within today’s Indian film industry of Bollywood.

64 Like Vangelis Seilinos-Elena Prokopiou, and Linda Alma-Yiannis Flery.

65 Similarly Metaxas’s proclaimed: “your prototypes must be types and forms authentically Greek. You have to go close to the people that labour hard and listen to all the range of their feelings” (in Trivizas, 1996, p 147, cited in Dascalothanasis, 2000, p. 67).

66 The Greek term is *archaiolatria* (αρχαιολατρεία). A term used to identify this common, within the local socio-political and ideological affairs, attachment to the ancient past. It literally means: worship of the ancient.


68 Dictator Yeorgios Papadopoulos, in *Free World* (10.2.1968), exemplifies the regime’s vision for a “Greece that will be for the Greeks (their) life itself” (Lazos, Ibid).

69 From the words arhondas, (lord, master, nobleman, rich man) and rebetika.

70 The undertaking of ballet and classical music lessons is until today a very common practice for young children (especially girls) and it is considered to be a necessary supplement in their education (Tzartzani, 2001, p. 63).

71 As Lange explains, “During the periods when the demotic was idealized … according to the evolutionism and historicism of 19th century, by the aristocrats and the bourgeois, these dances (of the peasants) were considered to be the precious heritage of the past and were used as static and unchangeable … by other social groups and later by schools” (Ibid).

72 As rebetika are defined today only the songs of the early twentieth century’s immigrants, while all the rest are classified as *laika* (literally: popular). Indicatively Gregoris Bithikothis, one of the most popular singers most associated with those genres stated “I served the laiko song, I don’t want to hear anything about rebetiko” (2001, p. 11).

73 In her article *The ‘new wave’ wedded the Greek with the Foreign*, ‘new wave’ singer and composer Arleta writes “the 60s was the first era to deep its hand and take something from the treasures it had inherited” (2001, p. 11).

74 Apart from performing, teaching and choreographing, Manou also published two books and a number of articles related to dance and gave a series of lectures, interviews and seminars in Greek and foreign universities and television channels, such as BBC. She also administrated a five-hour television documentary on Greek dance, while her works have been filmed and broadcasted on Greek, German, Iranian and Egyptian television. She was an active member of the Greek Theatre Institute and of the actors’ association as well as a president of a committee set by the Ministry of Culture to assure the assure the good functioning of the local dance schools. In short, Manou set the foundations of dance in Greece as we know it today, while her school and company endorsed and revealed some of the most active and talented contemporary teachers and choreographers.

75 Savrami in Gregoriou (ed), 2004, p. 46. 

76 The exact same metaphor was used by Spyratou in 2003, to describe her preoccupation with Hellenic motifs (in Klefsoyanni, 2003, p. 21).

77 In her article *In Search of an American Dance Art*, in 1930, Martha Graham raises similar questions regarding the identity of American Modern Dance, which seemed imitative of foreign (European) prototypes.

78 The demotic language was finally appointed as the official language of the state right after the fall of the Junta, in 1975, with the Educational Reform of Yeorgios Rallis. During the Junta certain ‘folk’ referencing was also read as ‘left-wing’. For example, together with the imported jeans and the woolen cardigans, the ‘tagari’ a woolen handbag usually held by shepherds, had
been the 'trademark' of left wing students during the 1960s. Such dressing could alone typify – and stigmatize – a person as a 'communist'.

Coming from a wealthy upper-class Athenian family – as almost all of Pratsika's initial students and collaborators – Nikoloudi combined her dance education in Pratsika's school with extensive studies in music theory, composition and piano. Musicality was actually one of the most characteristic elements of Nikoloudi's works, expressed most elaborately in 1962 with her choreography for Aristophanes' 'Birds' (Ornithes). In the 1950s, Nikoloudi met Mary Wigman, Rosalia Chladek and Harald Kreutzberg, in Zurich, with whom she befriended, studied and collaborated during the following years. Wigman was actually the one who urged her to perform in public with the phrase "you have wings. Fly!" (Tsintziloni, 1997, p. 1). Much like Pratsika, Kanelos and many others (Greek and not) before her, Nikoloudi felt this (western) approval to be the final authorising act and followed Wigman's advise.

Nonetheless, she also used some gestures and mainly some elements concerning the style, rhythm and movement qualities of demotic dances.

Manou says "I am fascinated by the deep inner meaning of tragedy and I am trying, as much as I can, to perform through orhesis (dance, music, speech) the panhuman feelings of the characters of the ancient drama" (Manou cited in Fessa, 2004, p. 272).

Fessa criticises the "new critics and choreographers, who have the tendency to discharge, with a-historical dogmatism, Manou’s oeuvre and to distort its meanings" (2004, p. 274).

However, Manou’s professional dance school still operates today and is classified within the five most popular schools in Greece.

Tsatsou refers for example to the staging of Euripidus’s Elektra by K. Tsianos in 1992, where he directly used demotic dances for the appearance of the chorus. (Ibid, p. 172).

Even though Palmer used some steps from traditional dances to link the postures she had recovered from ancient vases and sculptures, they served only as a variation to the usual walking that allowed the passing from one position to the next. Manou’s preoccupation with the traditional Greek dances, together with her modern dance training lead her to a more substantial choreographic reference to some of their rhythmical, stylistic or kinetic elements.

Extracts from both film’s soundtracks were heard within the Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

The Greek verb is meraklono (µεράκλονα) and accounts for an abandonment (to the music, the drink or the dance), which is however not always an expression of happiness. It can even appear as a result of sadness, or pain. The noun, meraki (µέρακι) can also account for desire and passion, as well as for (good) taste and artistry.

See also Lekkas (2003, p. 56-57). As Lekkas also notes, “the cosmopolitan performance of the dance of Zorbas for a single-person “audience” of a foreign bourgeois, who is invited to participate, is proclaiming new dynamics of individual agency, as well as of the dialectic extension of difference and historicity and of the final cancellation of the three".

By “foreign” Vacalo is referring to the 'West' as later in the same paragraph she suggests that "for as long as the order within Greece is kept by the foreigners, such tendencies (related to auto-exoticisation) float around" (ibid).

As I mentioned above the ‘self’, as well as the ‘other’, can be a person, or an art form, a practice, an ideology, a nation etc.

As in sine qua non's use of folk elements in the Buck’s Night (2001).

Still, it seems that even the thematic reference to a 'Hellenic source' can be interpreted as an expression of 'Greekness'. In fact, the piece “Clytemnestra, the story of a woman who..." (1998), is the only commissioned work, by the European Cultural Centre of Delphi. Considering the significance of Sikelianos's vision for this organization, the funding of a 'Hellenic' theme cannot be interpreted as a coincidence and it is safe to assume that it was the stated 'Greekness' alongside (or even rather than) the (feminist) politcality of the work that must have attracted their interest.
97 See for example the groups Aeorisi (1997), A Kin (1996), Ad Lib (2001), Quasistellar (2002), Yelp (1996), Griffon (2000) Iasis (1997), Landscape (2002). Metakinisi (1994), Met’Embodion (1999), Prooxima (1996) etc. However, this tendency initially appears earlier during the 1980s by groups like Lathos Kinisi (1988) and Okiroi (1987), both focused on improvisation. On the other hand, choreographers that are most known for this trans-national or hyper-national tendency, like Maro Gregoriou, (whose works are often driven by Cunningham-inspired kinetic experimentations), have also presented some early more ‘localised’ works, like Pygmalion in 1988 (the choice of the specific mythic figure is here of specific significance as Gregoriou comes from Cyprus). Moreover, within her company Magnitis (1986), she has collaborated and presented works by guest choreographers, inspired by Hellenic themes, like Kavafis’ poetry (“My Kavafis” (1988) K. Stavrianos), Theopilos’s painting, (The ballad of the high ladder-an incident from the life of painter Theophilos, 1990, E. Kouroupi) as well as by historical/mythological characters and situations (Persephone’s Return, 1990, S. Tsaridou etc). This is a different, newer (and rather reactive to the previously established one) perspective on the relationship between originality and tradition, which is here perceived negatively, in contrast to the earlier choreographic (and wider artistic) views as expressed above by Rallou Manou.

98 Rex Theatre, 25-26, June 2006, Athens Festival. The first draft of the Free Besieged was presented earlier in Thessaloniki, where Rigos worked with the State Theatre of Northern Greece, exploring “the issues raised by Solomos’s poem in their collective dimension” In Draft B, these same issues have been negotiated in closest relationship to the individual (Rigos in Kaltaki, 2006, p. 29).

99 Spyratou is used here as an example, as she runs and directs one of the most well known dance theatre companies in the country. Moreover, her intense and over stated preoccupation with the folk traditions served the analytical purposes of this chapter. Nonetheless, other choreographers and directors (like Ersi Pitta and Isidoros Sideris), have worked towards the same direction for years and have developed their own distinct style. Once again I want to clarify that I do not suggest that this is the only qualitative virtue of Spyratou’s works. Instead I argue that her stated choreographic aims and interests inevitably provoke an—at least initial—interest for the works, as they deal with issues of apparent national significance. Apart from being approximately contemporaneous to Jason’s myth, both placed in antiquity, the ‘heroic’ pose also caricatures Jason’s irresponsible, superfluous and arrogant character, which will set in motion the drama that is to follow. Similarly, zeibekiko, a part of Papaioannou’s work Human Thirst (1999), danced by Fotis Nikolaou, can also be seen as a connection with the preoccupation of many of the representatives of the Hellenocentric Modernism with the culture of rebetika, and even more specifically with Tsarouchis’s inspiration by the masculine urban-folk culture of his time.

Part 4

**Employing the inductive method: universalising the nation.**

The designation and solidification of a national identity, which suggested the promotion of a distinct and prestigious idea of Greekness, relied both on the localising (on the grounds of history and tradition) and opening of this identity, towards larger cultural entities, such as ‘the west’. Hence, the ‘universalisation’ of national history and culture did not initially aim at its de-construction, towards a post-national model, but rather at its glorification, as a ‘hyper-nation’. Instead of challenging the authority of the nation, this hyper-nationalisation suggested the nation’s elevation into a mythic sphere, as an archetypal model. In that way, Greece, as a transgressive ideal, claimed both universal applicability and international prestige. Nonetheless, the positioning of the nation in the core of an essentialised ‘universal’ Culture, or Civilisation¹, involved an additional parameter: its identification with the ‘primitive’ and the ‘primordial’. This latter portrayal functions antagonistically to another, most important urge of the nation, which is even more critical for the securing of the wished-for internationally acclaimed positioning: its modernity. Thus, in a further attempt to combine the two national aspirations, universalisation was connected to the emerging discourses on globalisation and post-nationalism tied to modernity, hence acquiring an additional role. As the following chapter argues, Papaioannou took under consideration both these parameters of ‘universalisation’ and negotiated them within the Opening Ceremony, in a way that served its particular purposes within the Athens Olympics.
Chapter 10

Celebrating the nation as a transnational and transcultural archetype.

10.1 Globalising the local: nationalist and metanationalist histories.

Analysing the ‘roots of terror’, as the subtitle of the book suggests, political scientist and anthropologist Mahmood Mamdani discusses the rebound of Orientalist theories within western scholarship, explaining that

there are two forms of history writing: nationalist and metanationalist. If nationalist history writing has been mainly about giving the nation —a very modern and contemporary political subject— an identifiable and often glorious past, metanationalist writings have given us equally glorified civilisational histories, locating the nation in a global context.

(Mamdani, 2005, p. 28)

Mamdani’s definition of nationalist and metanationalist historiographies addresses his examination of the relationship between the writing of history (and geography) and forms of western power. Nonetheless, this model accurately describes the course of historicisation of Greek identity, as well as similar ‘national’ and ‘metanational’ historicising processes within other, more ‘typically oriental’, or non-western nations, such as India and Egypt. While Mamdani employs the term metanational to delineate a shift from (national) History to Culture that suggests a temporal succession, I argue that within Modern Greek history, these two tendencies co-existed, each enhancing and validating the other. The ‘glorified past’ was further celebrated via its positioning within a global context, while this position had rendered it its prestige on the first place.

Within the Olympic Ceremony, Papaioannou made it a point to stage both national and trans-national aspects of Greekness, as interlinked and inseparable conveyors of identity. While conventionally the main function of the Opening Ceremony is to re-present —and often celebrate— the hosting nation, it also functions to recall and underline the transnational and pan-human ideological
principles of the Olympic institution. In the Athens' Olympics, the transnational, or post-national profile of Greece was projected through a series of techniques which appear throughout the ceremony as interludes to the (art-) historical Hellenic narrative. Pan-human sentiments and experiences, such as nostalgia for a lost childhood, an era or even a never experienced imagined past and an exoticised present, Eros and motherhood, as well as references to the common origin and future of all mankind, all work alongside an explicit globalist imagery.

Such globalist references occur throughout the ceremony and can be found in almost all its sections. To begin with, the layout of the stadium's stage was designed to support a panhuman, transcultural and transnational atmosphere: the oval shape of the stadium was further emphasised by the lighting design and the circular 'closed sea' that prevailed in most parts of the Opening Ceremony. The spectators' use of torches that created the starry-sky effect, further defined this inclusive shape, which suggested everyone's embracement within a simulated archetypal universe. The recurring referencing on the basic elements of water and fire, as prime rudiments of life and human development, also suggested an archegonal 'common origin'. The scene of the Allegory, presenting the 'beginning of civilisation' to be emerging from water, with the surfacing of the Cycladic Head, supported a similar reading. In addition, the scene ended with the projection of alternating juxtaposed global images of peoples, artefacts and human body details on the 'broken' idol's floating pieces.

Further to that, more explicit images supported the focus on the individuality and sameness of peoples, such as the allegoric carrying of humanity's 'bright' future by the pregnant woman and the projection of the DNA symbol in the accordingly titled section, the mosaic-like (and again inclusive and archetypal spiral-shaped) image of the Athletes' Parade, as well as Bjork's matriarch figure in her 'infinite' and embracing wavy dress. Even the section of the Olympic History is used as an opportunity to cite transnational 'common experiences' with the reference to World War I and II. Moreover, the constant presence of Eros, from the Lovers scene to the end part of the Lighting of the
Olympic Flame and the erotic interludes, which appear strategically throughout the ceremony -in the Lovers scene, as well as twice within the Clepsydra- hint to the sameness of human nature in its unpredictability, which evades, defies and transgresses social contracts and conventions (such as the celebration of Greek arts in Clepsydra or the performance of Greekness within the Opening Ceremony).

Besides the direct referencing, the ‘vision of universalism’, contextualised a priori within the Olympic Games, explicitly embraces and defines the whole spectacle. Papaioannou and his directing team made it a point to emphasise and give a reminder of the unifying, transnational and cosmopolitanist aspirations of the Games. The mosaic spiralling image of the athletes' parade, which is the final scene of the Opening Ceremony, is explicit in its aim: it presents a colourful image of diversity and unification, with all its variants connected through the athletes’ common efforts and their common goal (the Olympic vision) in a joyous event. The ceremony presented a most explicit and appropriate to the Olympic context depiction of the ‘global village’ ideal, celebrating human aptitude as both an individual and pan-human triumph, within a purposefully hyper-ethnic and transnational frame. At the same time, the celebrated and emphasised internationalism of the Games, also functions as an underlying reference to the ‘Greek origin’ of this ideal, hence forwarding the promoted (both through the ceremonies and the local politics) ‘open’ portrait of Greece.

Most importantly, this current of universalisation, which ran through the whole of the ceremony, was also employed for the designation and re-presentation of the national identity. Greece and Greekness were projected as pan-human archetypal values or ideals. Looking again at the part of the Allegory, as analysed in Part 1, this tendency can be easily noticed: According to Papaioannou, this section presented the (Greek) dawn of man’s journey to knowledge. The Allegory references the beginnings of Greek philosophy, art and science, which are celebrated via their universal appeal. The scene narrates the history of Greek civilisation, but connects this ‘national moment’ with the dawn
of (all) Civilisation. Perceived and performed as a unified entity, Civilisation then becomes transhistorical and transnational, as spacio-temporal and cultural particularities and specificities are set aside in order to highlight this ‘initiating moment’ of commonality. Connected with an entity higher than the nation, Greekness appears essentialised, significant and impressive, transcending the nation’s narrow locality. This sharing of history with the rest of the world, through the globalisation of the local, is of course not a solely national aspiration; being firmly based on the western (European and later North American) perception of Greece as the birthplace of its civilisation, this initially artistic hypothesis had been thoroughly explored and cultivated during the European Renaissance and was broadened and solidified during the years of the Enlightenment. Nonetheless, Greece itself (as an ethnic entity at first and as a nation-state later), took on this –initially western– thesis and consistently promoted it throughout the years.

In that way, the universalisation of local history and culture is not solely a particularity of the 2004 Olympic Ceremonies. Instead, it is a much more significant strategy than that, appearing in most sectors of the local socio-political life serving specific (however evolving) needs and aims of the Modern Greek nation-state, throughout its history. While both the internal and international political and social scenes have changed considerably since the state’s foundation, specific state policies have steadily employed, exploited and promoted the ‘universalisation of Greekness’. Nonetheless, while this strategy remained more or less unchanged, the political intentions, which have been invested in it at different times, varied considerably. The idea of Greece being a cultural crossroad between East and West, as examined in Part 2, has been a popularly accepted identification by various (Greek and foreign) scholars, artists, politicians and intellectuals and appears often within the local popular culture (e.g. in rebetika and popular songs). Justified in Greece’s history as well as in its culture and geographical positioning, this mediatory character also suggested a superior positioning. Feeding sentiments of national excellence and uniqueness, this positioning allowed the Greek ‘imagined community’ to elevate
itself above such pre-defined entities, as the Orient and Occident, and create for itself a highly prestigious and distinct profile, as discussed in Part 3.

Nonetheless, a conscious and chronic relocation towards the ‘West’, as analysed in Part 2, typified the first attempts at national definition during the Greek Liberation Struggle and the consequent establishment of a sovereign state. Within these first conscious and organised efforts towards national identification I also locate the first expressions of Greek *culturalism* based on a notion that Appadurai links with the emergence of the modern nation-states.

*Culturalism* suggests something more than either *ethnicity* or *culture*, both of which terms partake of the sense of the natural, the unconscious and the tacit in the group identity. When identities are produced in a field of classification, mass mediation, mobilisation and entitlement dominated by politics at the level of the nation state, however, they take cultural differences as their conscious object.

(Appadurai, 2000, p. 147)

Hence, identities that may have been based on shared embodied experiences, traditions (often including language and/or religion), habits and the sharing of oral histories between a (usually ethnic) group of people, are reinforced by conscious tactics, which re-contextualise and promote them within the borders of a nation-state. The conscious cultivation of those cultural elements that both unify the group and differentiate it from others (*culturalism*), usually falls within the responsibilities of the state that wishes to define, establish and preserve itself. Similarly, discussing the politics of Culture, Mamdani notes

states are territorial; culture is not... we need to think of culture in terms that are both historical and nonterritorial. Otherwise one is harnessing cultural resources for very specific national and imperial political projects.

(Mamdani, 2005, p. 27)

What Mamdani describes, the political nature of any conscious ascription of culture into specific national territories, is the political phenomenon that
Appadurai calls culturalism, and which accurately describes cultural policies within (probably all) nation-states. Within Greece, the establishment of a distinctively national cultural identity relied heavily on the historicisation of Greekness. Moreover, it further secured its universal and hence High-character, by promoting its fundamental connection with 'westernness'. In that way, culturalism, which in this case both designated Greek identity and linked it with a prestigious and powerful Other, has continued to serve the local political affairs until today.

10.2 Universalisation and westernisation
The westernisation and through it the universalisation of Greek antiquity, as it emerged from western scholars and artists and settled through the institutionalisation, print and distribution of this thesis, coincided with the political affiliations and socio-cultural aspirations of the Modern Greek state and was thoroughly promoted, embodied and enacted in both arts and politics. Within this context, the value of Greek civilisation was established as a hegemonic and authoritative global (even though specifically located in the 'West') tradition, through the 'universal applicability' of its ideals. Connected with ideas on Democracy, equality and human-centrism, as well as with notions of High-Art, Nature, Beauty and Culture, in their most essentialised sense, Greekness claimed a global character that superseded ethnic, national, local or cultural specificities. Nevertheless, this transcendence was still connected to western culture, which in turn also appeared as hyper-local: its acceptance and adoption by non-western peoples and nations has been promoted as a sign of enlightenment and progress rather than as a product of cultural imperialism. Hence, Greece's connection (even as an ancestral spiritual motherland) with such a powerful culture further established its own universality.

From its association with western 'high-art' civilisation, Greece gained a prestige that had the power to elevate the country above other 'oriental' nations, whose ancient hegemonic traditions were still more indirectly -if at all- linked with western civilisation. Hence, Greece appeared as the closest-to-the-west orient, aiming towards a complete and incontestable assimilation with it, which
would ensure its European, Modern and hence 'civilised' and prestigious profile. Within the arts, this tendency has been expressed as a quest for a 'cosmopolitan Hellenism', which both nationalised and hyper-nationalised the art works. Much like Pratsika's, Nikoloudi's and Manou's visions on the development of a Greek-European dance scene, both national and aligned with the international (western) artistic and ideological techniques and tendencies, other artists in the first half of the twentieth century have also followed the same route: by projecting 'trans-national' national elements, they claimed their position within the western (yet rooted in Greek-art) cultural landscape. In that way, a certain display of Greekness and the artists' engagement with the local artistic traditions, were used as a passport, which would allow them to exceed the nation and partake in modern artistic affairs, not as mere imitators of western techniques, but as the appointed bearers of the missing link of its Greek past. At the same time, orientalist notions, such as some modes of eastern spirituality, were also selectively embraced and performed by the local artists, since they seemed to add to the exotic and often mystical appeal of their works. The conception and realisation of the Delphic Festivals, offer a lucid example of how the universality or transnationality of Greek culture was perceived and performed by intellectuals and artists in the first decades of the twentieth century.

10.3 'Universal, Unique and Timeless'... equals primordial?
The Delphic Idea proposed a universal humanitarianism based on the 'timeless' principles of Greek civilisation (Alkali, 2002, p. 21). Discussing the impact of this idea on Pratsika, Karasmanis suggested that "through the vision of Sikelianos, (she) experienced the values of ancient Greek civilisation as an unrivalled, universal and unique heritage with a global and diachronic range" (in Alkali 2002, p. 22). Indeed, the projection of Greek culture through the Festivals aimed at an international collaboration around a nucleus of art and spirituality. Palmer writes that

the establishment of the first nucleus could not be a matter of chance, or personal preference. It should be identified with one
of these sites which history has chosen to further the spiritual advance of human race.


For Sikelianos, this site was Delphi; the ancient Greek oratory, which seemed to capture symbolically all that he and Palmer strove for: mysticism, wisdom and a hyper-national status. Hence, Delphi was perceived as one of the most significant 'enlightened' sites that History had chosen to advance its course. Interestingly, history appears here as an autonomous, independent force, essentialised and deterministic, carving the evolutionist course of "human race" via specific selected sites, peoples and moments. It is thus History that chooses the significant landmarks of this course and, for the neo-romantic and humanist intellectuals of the time, the location and restoration of those landmarks would assist this striving towards the "spiritual advance" of humanity. With Delphi being a significant spiritual centre of (its surrounding) ancient world, Sikelianos believed that the revival of the Delphic Idea was destined to represent a similar inspirational centre for modern world. Palmer further explains how Delphi seem to have been the basis of Greek culture. But also to the extent to which Greece has influenced all European countries, all of America, North and South and even to a certain degree Asia and Africa, to all these, whether consciously or unconsciously on their part, this site is a mother country.

(Ibid, p. 64).

Palmer broadens this idea of Greece being a 'mother country', similar to its characterisations as the birthplace, or the cradle of (most usually western) civilisation, as to encompass the whole globe. The Greek ideal, as represented through the symbolic landmark of Delphi, is promoted into an almost mythical and mystical archetype: it epitomises the essence of humanity, which Palmer also perceives as an indistinguishable entity with a singular destiny. This essence appears unchangeable, universalistic, transcultural and timeless. In other words, Delphi, and by extension Greece, is presented as the primordial core of humanity.
Palmer and Sikelianos chose the location of Delphi because they believed that its “ancient sanctuary had made the only serious effort in history, to unite the East and the West” (Palmer in Anton, 1993, p. 64). Hence, the perception of Greece as a mediator, or a cultural bridge between East and West, as described in Part 2, also appears in the very core of the Delphic idea. In fact, Sikelianos’s vision was in a great degree in line with the dominant (at least intellectual) streams and tendencies of the time towards the advance of a transnational humanitarianism. In the years that followed World War I, the nineteenth-century demands for social welfare and public education were brought forth together with additional demands for peace and humanitarianism. Within that widespread neo-romanticism, the ‘oriental’ aspects of Greece seemed to add to its mystical spirituality, as perceived by the couple. Furthermore, this mediation between East and West (as well as North and South) elevated Greece above the characteristics and capacities of these classified entities, turning it into a transcendent and hence transnational and universally applicable ideal.

Prior to the conception of the Delphic idea, Raymond Duncan and his wife Penelope Sikelianou⁶ had taken a similar course, which placed Greekness in the core of a naturalistic and humanistic primordial (in the sense of archegonal and archetypal) trans-cultural and trans-national lifestyle. Even though their contribution has not been widely acknowledged, Raymond and Penelope Duncan were two influential figures for the Greek dance and theatre affairs. Drawing inspiration from ancient vase figures and sculptures, whose poses he used to sketch and study in Louvre, Raymond Duncan developed a passionate interest for the ancient Greek civilisation. In fact it was him who supported Isadora on her ‘Hellenic expedition’ and arranged their first visit in Greece, in 1903, drawing her attention to its living culture and contemporary presence. Still, his approach was more holistic, and at the same time more focused and formalised than Isadora’s free interpretations of the Hellenic ideal. Raymond attempted to compose and standardise a theatrical movement language based on combinations of postures depicted in ancient vases. In Greece he gave a series of classes based on this material, which functioned as a guideline for many of his Greek students and associates, such as Vasos and Tanagra Kanelou. Even
though his technique failed to evoke the expressivity and vividness of the prototypes, it still provided his students/followers with a more concrete, standardised method, which was therefore easier to follow than the more improvisational and abstract material presented by Isadora.

Raymond and Penelope Duncan had visualised an alternative way of life, based on the ethics and culture of ancient Greece, which were believed to be essentially pan-human and thus globally applicable. Raymond saw ancient Greece as an anthropocentric and yet ecologic social system, which harmonised man with nature. Together with Penelope, he repeatedly visited Greece, pursuing educational, artistic and teaching activities, while also volunteering for charity work. They both studied ancient and folk traditional arts and crafts and tried to be self-reliant by manufacturing their own clothes, shoes and utensils. In 1911 they founded in Paris a coenobium Academy, where they embarked on studying the philosophy, arts and handicrafts of ancient Greece, emphasizing their ecological aspects and their harmonious relation with nature. Along with the arts crafts and sciences of Greek antiquity they studied the demotic music and folk traditions of modern Greece focusing on Byzantine music. Palmer’s relation to this philhellenic couple and their circle in Paris (since 1905), as well as her acquaintance with Isadora Duncan, defined her later course towards the Hellenic Ideal as manifested within the arts, sciences and literature of antiquity, as well as in the Byzantine heritage and the demotic tradition.

Apart from the abstract humanitarian-globalisational aspirations that formed the idealistic base of the Delphic Festivals, their organisation also supported an additional, more concrete aim: the promotion of Sikeliános’ proposal on the foundation of an international university and the organising of international conferences, exhibitions and cultural events in the area of Delphi. As Fessa points out, this idea of putting Greek spiritual heritage forward, to the benefit of humanity was in line with the time’s appeal for global peace and cultural enlightenment. At the same time it was meant to recover a sense of national confidence and pride in the gloom period that followed the catastrophe in Asia Minor (2004, pp. 23-30). The coexistence of national(ist) feelings with
cosmopolitanist aspirations, which characterised Greek intellectuals and artists of the first half of the twentieth century shaped the core of Sikelianos’s ideas. Indeed, Angelos Sikelianos is widely acknowledged today as one of the main exponents of this neo-romantic, ethnocentric yet internationalist movement. Palmer, who was already searching for universalistic and pan-human ‘truths’ even before her relationship with Sikelianos, found in his ideas an intellectual and artistic ideological base, which further informed and supported her own endeavours.

In her autobiography Palmer expresses her firm belief in the necessity of studying and familiarising herself, as well as her Greek dancers, not only with the theatrical texts, but also with the culture and aesthetics of ancient Greece as a whole. Pratsika (Ursa Minor, 1991, p. 96) also mentions that Palmer had spent months in the Archaeological Museum of Munich copying poses that matched her interpretation of Prometheus Bound, from ancient ceramics. Nonetheless, for the staging of ancient tragedies, within the Festivals, Palmer wished to surpass the archaeological facts, in order to reveal the more esoteric and embodied –and therefore, according to her more Hellenic– aspects of them. Hence, she was less concerned with an accurate reconstruction of the exact steps and formation of the ancient Greek dances, and more with a stylistically free but ‘spiritually accurate’ interpretation. She admitted that after reading about Greek theatre, she only held on two short phrases by Plato and Aristotle and she writes:

I did not feel I knew anything about Greek plays, but I did believe that no one else did either. All I got out of it then was that outside help from scholars and archaeologists seemed to bring no one nearer to the goal, and that the true way of representing a Greek Tragedy would have to come somehow from within, rather as an enlightenment than as knowledge acquired from books ... I will follow what I myself feel.

(Ibid, pp. 106-107)

Once again the idea of Greekness (Greek culture, art and philosophy) appears here as a mystic, inherent primordial core, which lies somewhere within the depths of every human soul. In that way, it is perceived as something that has to be
discovered and drawn from one’s own self rather than through acquired knowledge of a subject for study. Describing her arrival in the island of Lefkada (Sikelianos’s homeland) Palmer writes “For me also it was a return home, but from what, and to what? From things familiar, which had always seemed strange, to things unknown which were the blood in my arteries” (in Anton, 1993, p. 67). She also describes Greek language, as “an unknown language, which was simply music to the Schopenhauerian sense: a thing-in-itself, unattached and free, I felt at home” (Ibid, p. 61). These passages reveal both an almost nostalgic, exotic perception of an unknown ancient (and therefore prestigious) language and civilisation, as well as a sense of familiarity, evoked by the ‘return’ to a primordial (and therefore easily understood, familiarised and identified with) Home. This sentiment seems to fall into what Appadurai described as “imagined nostalgia” (2000, p. 77) “for things never lost” (Halbwachs, 1980 in ibid). However, the alleged archetypical primordialism of Greekness, gives her nostalgia an identifiable object, through an atavistic evocation of an essential pan-human core.

For Palmer, her relationship with, and eventual marriage to Sikelianos provided her with a live link that enabled and guided this return. Strongly influenced by the ideals of Penelope and Raymond Duncan, Palmer enthusiastically embraced Sikelianos’s Helleno-centric humanitarian vision. Moreover her relationship with the Greek poet gave her the confidence to authorise herself (as a non-Greek) to lead the realisation of such an ambitious national project. Indeed, the Delphic project was not only outwards reaching; it also had a clear national purpose in re-educating the Greeks. Apart from being an international invitation for intellectuals and artists who were meant to partake in this endeavour, it also aimed to the ‘awake’ of Greek people, who were in “total ignorance of (their) deeper roots and capacities” (Palmer citing Sikelianos. Ibid, p. 68). This dual purpose of the Delphic Idea was the motivating force of the Delphic Festivals. Describing the first Festivals Palmer writes that “the Greek people were (at last) truly awake”, while later in the text she writes, “during the following summer, the thing I had foreseen took its course. The wave of awakening consciousness in Greece, the zeal of many from abroad seemed to increase rather than diminish” (Ibid, pp. 119, 121).
Yiannis Tsarouhis (1986, p. 139) notes how much Palmer admired Sikelianos and that she persistently refused to take credit for the Delphic Festivals. Again according to Tsarouhis, Palmer used to state that “everything really ingenious” within their attempt was coming from him, while she, being American, had a “practical spirit” that allowed her to materialise his ideas. Although Tsarouhis cites this information to emphasize Palmer’s self-effacing, modest character, it is also indicative of her commitment to traditional orientalist values, such as the spirituality of the East versus the practicality of the West, as described above, in this case personified in Sikelianos and Palmer respectively. Hence, while Palmer believed that an ‘authentic Greek’ ideological base was necessary for the legitimacy of the Festivals, she also assumed the mediation of a western practical spirit to be necessary, in order to interpret, materialise and present these ideas first to the Greeks and then to the rest of the world. In the preface of her biography, Anton suggests that it was Palmer’s “western practical reasoning” and her husband’s “Greek poetic idealism”, which enabled the task of restoring this “true idea of Greekness” within the modern world (1993, p. xv). Interestingly this seems to reflect his own view, rather than being just a mere description of Palmers thoughts, as Anton further explains: “the restless spirits of the couple merged into a solid desire to conjoin the vitality of the New World with the universal vision of Greek humanism”. Considering that the book was published in 1993 it is interesting to note the persistence of such orientalist notions and their duration through time.

Examining the core ideas upon which Palmer and Sikelianos built their panhellenic/panhumanitarian vision, a number of recurring themes reveal a consistent orientalist ideological base line. The suggestion, that somewhere within the primordial Greek culture lay the true substance of (a universal) Culture, that had to be re-discovered and exposed, “as that alone possessed the unique means left to us for the recreation of a genuine humanism” is indicative of Palmer’s essentialising and exoticising approach to Greece. This immense admiration for a great (past) civilisation was accompanied by a parallel understanding of it as primordial and exotic, locating in it in the foundations of (both western and eastern) civilisation. Since the Sikelianos couple saw this dawn of contemporary
civilisation as perfectly harmonious with nature (both human-nature and nature as a cosmic force), the envisioned Delphic mission aimed at the restoration of this natural past way of life, within the modern world. Moreover, consistent with Said's model, modern Greece appeared to them asleep, not yet aware of its significant past and future role in the global affairs. In that way, Greekness appeared as a 'primordial current' that Greeks unwarily carried within them throughout the ages, until a foreign, western 'objective' eye revealed it to them. While Greekness appears as a panhuman quality, Palmer—as an educated westerner—could immediately recognise and locate it within her, when triggered by an external stimulus (e.g. her visit in Lefkada). Ironically, most Greeks are described as unaware of this force, in need of a “practical” western spirit to recover—from the ancestral written and/or crafted texts—interpret and explain the ‘true essence’ of Greekness, to them. Indeed, even the ‘enlightened’ and aspirational, like the foreign educated and cosmopolitan Sikelianos, still appear to require external help to pin down and make practical use of their idealism.

I review the Delphic Festivals, as an example of the way that Greek artists and intellectuals shaped, developed and applied a universalising strategy, from a very early period. Moreover, it brings out effectively the relation of this discourse with what Appadurai defined as culturalism, as the conscious exploration, nationalisation and exportation (projection or performance) of the local culture involved both state and private identity policies. Moreover, by employing this archaising/historicising discourse to identify the nation, there seems to be a silent acceptance of the traditional western-centric evolutionary narrative of world history. Hence, Greece, alongside other ‘ancient’ cultures, rests in the base of western civilisation (like Egypt and the Middle East). While this may be a valid historical claim, if politically contextualised, it also suggests an adherence on the part of these nations or cultures to this ancient core. With most of the universally acclaimed ancient histories belonging to nations that are in the present day categorised as second or third world economies, their identification with their (glorified) past states is rarely an advantageous one: while the glamour, power and prestige of the past seems irreversibly gone, the present appears not only as powerless and degraded, but also as ‘backwards’, or
primordial. In that way, these cultures emerge alienated from the refinement and sophistication of the past, but still inescapably connected to it through their inability to surpass and outgrow it.

Under these circumstances, national imagery often adopts a nostalgic stance towards its valuable past, which nonetheless evokes sentiments of a declining course (opposite to the traditionally positivist developmental and evolutionist perception of national histories in most of the advanced western nations), which they effectively camouflage by boosting nationalist rhetoric.\textsuperscript{10} The inability of both the present and the foreseen future to invoke promising visions on a national plane, has most often lead to systematic attempts to re-unite with the past. Nonetheless, the problematic representation of a nation through a sole reliance on antiquity is usually balanced by a parallel turn towards modernity. Hence, while the universalisation of Greekness was initially linked to its historicisation, with Greek antiquity being the initial referential basis for the establishment of a sovereign national, western and transcendent hyper-national identity, this same strategy took on a different twist during the more recent years: it aligned with the newer visions on globalisation and contributed to the modernising imagery of the nation-state.
Chapter 11

Modernity and globalisation: from nationalism to post-nationalism.

11.1 The ‘revolution’ of Greek contemporary dance, in the 1980s and 1990s. Questions related to globalisation and the preservation of national identities are today more timely than ever, as the era of the nation-states, described by Benedict Anderson as “imagined communities”, seems to be moving towards an era of larger scale imaginings, such as this of the global village. Political and economic fusions and coalitions like the European Union seem to be representative of the new world order. A growing scepticism concerning the aims and side effects of this new order has been articulated and expressed by intellectuals, sociologists, political analysts and activist groups in most Western countries. It is however within the smaller and less powerful states that such concerns have become part of the everyday political and social life as ‘globalisation’ is often identified with ‘westernisation’ raising fears of a new type of economic, political and cultural imperialism.

The impact of this international political climate has been felt intensely in Greece, where internal affairs over the last three decades have been closely related to, and sometimes even dictated by, the principles and guidelines of globalisation/Europeanisation. The country’s complete integration in the European Union has been the aim that motivated the economic and political life in Greece since the mid 1980s (having started even before, in the 1950’s), while terms such as modernisation, reform and Europeanisation have become essential parts of the everyday political vocabulary. The political immovability that characterises these years (with the two leading central-right and central-left parties dominating the political scene) has resulted in an almost uninterrupted and strong governmental line which, together with a relative rise and stabilisation of the average family income, has consequently affected large areas of the social and cultural life. The gradual opening of Greece towards a wider global, or more specifically western, market has had an impact on the lifestyle, as well as on the values and ethics of Greek society.
The growing scepticism concerning the country's role and positioning within this 'open market' cites a possible loss of any national autonomy regarding the internal economic and political, as well as cultural affairs. The pressure for a complete assimilation and subscription to the inter-national laws and regulations could prove to be rather unfavourable for the emerging Greek economy. However, these concerns coexist and are often overshadowed by a widespread feeling of delight and ethnic pride originating from the comforting thought of the country's entry into the privileged community of the West.

This socio-political and economic climate characterised by a combination of promising plans and intensive developmental or reformatory programmes (with all of their inherent contradictions and malfunctions), has been accordingly expressed and often promoted or challenged through the arts. It is however within the dance scene that many of its core features can be clearly traced. The formation of the first low-budget dance-theatre companies coincides with the socio-political and economic changes of the mid 1980s, while the majority of these groups only appeared during the 1990s. In addition to this, the increased opportunities for travelling, studying and working abroad, together with a parallel invasion of foreign cultural products and ideas, have resulted in the development of a new field-area in dance.

A number of young dancers and choreographers have adopted some of the most influential techniques, ideologies and philosophies of the western intellectual and artistic world, (re-)introducing them to the Greek audience. With a repertory which incorporates principles and ideas from the modernist and post-modernist theories, as well as styles that vary from Graham's and Cunningham's structured work to release and contact improvisation techniques or Pina Bausch's Tanztheatre, the Greek (mainly Athenian) dance troupes have tried –although not always successfully– to capture, embody and transmit this artistic blooming of the west, which was leading the dance avant-garde for years. Hence, while many choreographers have at some point felt the need to connect their art not only to their personal experiences, but also to the particular cultural heritage and aesthetics of Greece, the new wave of the 1980s was also characterised by an
internationalist spirit. The preoccupation with Greekness, which was the main concern of the earlier choreographers has been replaced by a growing interest in transnational, pan-human states of being, such as love and death, as well as in social ideological currents, such as feminism. In addition, many choreographers engaged an indirectly political stance, embracing the dogmas and thesis of contemporary American and European dancers and choreographers (under which they have studied) as developed from the 1960s to the 1980s.

In that way, instead of dealing overtly with specific social or political issues, such as the previous quest for identity, the emerging choreographers of the 1980s and 1990s dealt with global issues on equality, individual freedom, justice and social interactivity. These concerns mainly emerged indirectly through their choreographic choices that ranged from Cunningham’s chance theories, to Pina Bausch’s feminism and the principles of the Judson Church, further embracing the ideals and employed techniques of inclusive dance and contact improvisation. In all, this era suggested a turning point for the local dance affairs, introducing a direction away from national concerns and towards a post-national, anthropocentric focus on the individual. The international currents, directly experienced and embodied by the dancers that travelled abroad, and the local political climate that superseded the “nationalist delirium” of the Junta, prompted this thematic, aesthetic and methodological shift.

For some (exponents of that generation) this was interpreted as a revolutionary rejuvenation of the local dance scene, away from parochial prototypes towards inspiration, independency and open-mindedness. The ‘transnational’ came to replace the ‘national’, which had by then been stained by its role in the dictatorship’s rhetoric. In addition, the international appeal for transgression of any kind of cultural, national and territorial borders, emphasising individualism freedom of expression and the solidarity of the peoples, as formulated in the 1960s and evolved in the following two decades, further informed the choices of the local choreographers. Within this context, universalisation took a different meaning and aim, as a means of opening towards the global not for the nation’s sake, but for the sake of globalisation itself.
In the more recent political history, a new dimension has been added to the original context and orientation of the 'universalisation of Greekness': engaging with post-modern discourses on ethnic primordialism, as well as with the visions of globalisation and trans-nationalism, Greekness has been promoted as an open, hyper-national idealistic (artistic, aesthetic, philosophical and political) system. The implied openness of this scheme, already employed and highlighted at previous periods to reinforce the national profile, was used anew within a new post-national context, as a conveyor of modernity. Indeed, an inverse proportion between a nation's level of modernity and the intensiveness of what Appadurai (2000, p. 111) called "the erotics of nationhood" has been gradually established within western academic and political circles. Hence, new national narratives on the grounds of shared interests, common wealth and trans-national affiliations have slowly replaced (or are being expected to do so) the traditional national (and quite often nationalist and even racist) rhetoric of the nation-state. 11

11.2 Modernism and transnationalism: escaping the primordialist stigma.
In the recent years, for a nation-state to be included with the economically and technologically advanced or 'civilised' ones, it needed to justify its existence and sovereignty (a process usually relying on histories), but most importantly, to declare and prove its modernity. In other words, an appropriate national profile, in accordance to the dominant global imagery, is that of the modern nation. Hence, compliance with the global guidelines of modernity appeared as an urgent need for the developing nations within recent history. Nonetheless, modernity does not refer only to economic progress and industrial development, but also to the embracement of specific modernist values on the part of the nation-state. These values usually translate in particular state policies, which are meant to establish specific socio-political conditions within the borders of the nation-state. These 'modern' standards vary from establishing a certain level of consumerism, to the engagement of modern educational techniques and specific
modern state policies, as Appadurai noted (2000, p. 140). A refusal or inability to comply with such modernising policies is considered antimodern.

Going back to the first example from Greek popular cinema, the film The Aunt from Chicago, as addressed in Chapter 8.4, the 'Aunt's persistence on her task of modernising her brother's family, appears further contextualised. It is noticeable, that already in 1957, when the film was released, the brother's resistance to modernisation and westernisation (here Americanisation) is interpreted by the Aunt as an antimodern behaviour that needs to be tamed at any cost. The brother's stance appears within the film as a mixture of both refusal and inability to comply with the imperatives of modernity. While in some scenes he comes across as stubborn and dismissive of the 'new ethics', in others he appears vulnerable and unable to catch up with the change of times, trapped in his old age and settled values. Within the film, as well as within Appadurai's analysis, there is no distinction between inability and resistance to conform to the principles of modernity. In contrast, Mamdani (2005, p. 18) makes a clear distinction between premodern and antimodern societies, as "contrasting narratives of Culture Talk".

Within 'Culture Talk', the interpretation of both global and local conflicts as a mere outcome of a clash of Cultures (between the West and the Rest) has established, as Mamdani suggests, a clear distinction not only between modern and non-modern, but also between premodern and antimodern. The first category indicates a retarded process of modernisation, hence suggesting incapability, while the second denotes a conscious resistance. In that way, while the cultures, nations or societies, that fall within the first typology require assistance and guidance towards the 'right path', the antimodern groups appear threatening to Modern way of life and thus they "encourage relations based on ... police or military action" (Ibid). Similarly, within the film the Aunt from Chicago, addressed in Part 3, the aunt's stance towards her brother's pre- and anti-modernity is accordingly premeditated, as a combination of open confrontation and firm imposition, as well as sympathy and contempt ("my poor brother"). Greece's position within Mamdani's scheme appears equally mixed:
officially, the Greek social and political conditions denote a state on the route to Modernity and hence, any shortcomings appear as typical manifestations of premodernism. At the same time, people’s resistance to specific ‘Modern’ local and international policies, often position it on the verge of the precarious space of antimodernism.

What seems to be the most blatant indication of anti-modernity for a nation-state is, as Appadurai suggests, “the symptom of primordialism”. As the author notes, Modernisation theory, “especially as it was applied to the new postcolonial nations by American political scientists”, most coherently defined this antimodern symptom, linking it to the “primordialism of ethnic violence”. In that way, resistance to modernity has been gradually identified with primordialism, becoming also suggestive of violence rooted in ethnic (and often religious) strife. According to the primordial axiom

all group sentiments that involve a strong we-ness, draw on those attachments that bind small, intimate collectivities ... Ideas of collective identity based on shared claims to blood, soil or language draw their affective force from the sentiments that bind small groups.

(Appadurai, 2000, p. 140)

As the author further notes, “this thesis … is usually cited to account for certain aspects of politics, notably those that show groups engaging in various forms of behaviour that in terms of the model are considered irrational” (Ibid). Appadurai locates two distinct categories of ‘irrational’ and hence antimonodern social behaviour, which are often perceived as one: the first is related to "group violence, ethnocide and terror" and the second one can be summed up as “the refusal to comply with modern state policies”, as discussed above. While attempting to understand and explain ethnic violence, “the two explanatory targets of primordialist theory have become subtly fused” (Ibid). In that way, resistance to modernity and ethnic violence have been gradually identified and merged under the single-meaning label of primordialism. Moreover, an additional connection has been recently established between religious fundamentalisms and
political violence or terrorist acts, which further supported the primordialist
theories; as the author notes, this tendency has been immensely intensified and
gained a new strength after the bombings at the World Trade Centre in New York,
(and much more so, after the attacks of 11th September 2001).

In the recent years, Greece has not experienced ethnic violence or terrorism (at
least not in a way considered threatening for public security, as is the current
situation in England, for example). This was also exemplified in the smooth and
untroubled operation of the 2004 Olympics in an internationally turbulent period,
despite the widespread tourist anxiety (external tourism was actually low instead
of increased that summer). Within Greece, the prospect of a terrorist attack is not
considered likely; hence no such fear is affecting the local people's everyday life.
Nonetheless, the fear of being black-listed as a 'dangerous' country (the U.S. had
for years included Greece in the unsafe tourist destinations, also releasing
warnings to American citizens that lived in Greece to evacuate the country at
specific periods) and thus risk an identification with similarly defined
'primordial' nations, is affecting the local politics. In that way, the arrest of the
local terrorist organisation 17th November, in 200212, was both an internal matter
of social security and an external one, of proving to the West (and the USA in
specific), the modern state's efficiency in dealing with terrorism. The local
government's course towards modernity and westernisation (which often opposed
the local people's political sentiments, as noted in Part 2) is often justified to the
nation's need for conformity in order to ensure its place in the 'modern West' and
through that, peace in the area. As Mamdani argues,

it is no longer the market (capitalism), nor the state
(democracy), but culture (modernity) that is said to be the
divining line between those in favour of a peaceful, civic
existence and those who inclined in terror.

(Mamdani, 2995, p. 18)

Within the West, peace in the first world is considered crucial and almost a
matter of course. In contrast turbulence is seen as normality for the 'primordial',
non-advanced nations and it is dealt with understanding (and at best with compassion) by the majority of the citizens. Appadurai also cites "a sense of special destiny in regard to peaceful multiculturalism", in the US, as opposed to the 'primordialism' of non-modern nations, which he describes as "intelligent multiculturalism for us, bloody ethnicity or mindless tribalism for them" (2000, p. 171). Mamdani (2005, p. 4) maintains that modern sensibility is not appalled by violence in general, but by 'non-justified' violence, in specific. As violence within premodern (or antimodern) societies is explained on the basis of culture, violence within the 'modern' world is considered arbitrary and unjustifiable and is often attributed, according to Mamdani, in "theological terms" (e.g. an 'inexplicable evil', which is often personified e.g. Hitler, or more recently Bin Laden). In this way Mamdani explains the shock that terrorism and genocide within the West invoke, that is not provoked by similar incidents within the premodern parts of the world.13 Being situated in an unstable area, sharing borders with Albania, FYROM, Bulgaria and Turkey, the possibility of a military confrontation (such as the invasion of Turkish forces in Cyprus under the ATTILAS 1 & 2 military plans, in July and August 1974) has been a constant fear throughout the history of the Modern Greek state. Within people's conscience, the identification with Europe and the West somehow lessened this possibility of open confrontation with the -often aggressively expansionist- neighbouring nations. Hence, modernity and westernisation do not only serve the collective imaginings on identity; they are also triggered by a pragmatist account of political reality, assessed within the present global context of power distribution and according to the set criteria of distinction between powerful and powerless.

As Appadurai notes, the 'primordialist stigma' is often attributed "with the greatest comfort to the nations of the non-Western world", bringing together ontogenetic and phylogenetic ideas about human development" (2000, pp. 140-141). The immaturity, or primordialism, of groups is therefore associated with the infancy of individuals: it is seen as a developmental stage that has to be overgrown, so that the group can mature towards modernity. This atavistic behaviour also appears as an unchangeable primitive core, which tends to kick in

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when the circumstances allow it.\textsuperscript{14} The crucial stage of maturity, the ‘rite of passage’ for the modern nation, has been located for the West in the years of the Enlightenment. According to the primordialist theories, the nations that did not have the opportunity to work on the Enlightenment project have remained in an infantile socio-political stage, which separates them from the modern (western) world. Hence,

those countries who have had time to work out the Enlightenment project of political participation —based on the idea of an educated, postethnic, calculating individual, substituting on the workings of the free market and participating in a genuine civil society— are able to stave off the disorders of primordialism. Par excellence here are those societies that hewed longest and closest to different versions of the civil-society model, namely the societies of Western Europe (pre-1989 NATO societies) and the United States.

(Appadurai, 2000, p. 142)

In that way, developing or “aggressively pre-capitalist” nation-states (like Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Japan), which aimed at an alignment with the modern, developed world have been required to engage with specific economic and socio-political policies according to the western developmental model (ibid, p. 143).

The biased nature of this model (which has often resulted in further destabilisation and dependence of those “experimenting” states, as in the case of Argentina) is also exposed by “the active involvement of the United States in various forms of economic, political and economic subsidy to these societies”, most often accompanied by “a strong dose of state authoritarianism” (Ibid). Hence, in most cases, modernisation seems to be a process of external guidance and surveillance rather than an internal elaboration on the Enlightenment program. In any way, primordialism appears as an inherent non-Western characteristic, which needs to be overcome by the “contaminated” societies. The way out of primordialism and into modernity appears obligatory for the nations wishing to acquire a competent position within the international economic and
political stage. Hence, modernity must be attained at all costs, and most often under the guidance of the (already 'Enlightened' and progressed) West. In other words, as Appadurai cynically notes the bottom line is that “if you cannot educated societies out of primordialism, you can certainly beat it out of them” (Ibid).

Interestingly, when discussing his model of categorization, Appadurai (2000, p. 142) defines as West the US and all the pre-1989 NATO societies, hence including Greece.\(^\text{15}\) However, Greece unmistakably missed both the European Renaissance and Enlightenment periods, being under the Ottoman occupation from 1453 to 1830 (since the fall of Constantinople and until its final establishment, with the Independence Fight declared at 1821). Indeed, this historical period of Ottoman occupation had resulted in Greece’s complete identification with the East, for western Europe, as discussed in Part 2; a label that Greece strove to surpass already from the first years of its independence. Still, while Greece did not have the time to ‘work out on the Enlightenment project’, its ancestral connection with the political and ideological values of this project has granted it with a slightly more advantageous position in the modernity scale than other ‘primordial’ or non-western nations.\(^\text{16}\)

Nonetheless, this western identity is always at stake, as modernisation has been a incessant project for the Greek state. Besides the compliance to modern state policies in terms of socio-political and economic structuring, this process eventually required an additional re-figuration of the ‘imagined’ national identity. Since nationalist feelings have been mostly connected with primordial –and hence non western and non modern– ties, the westernisation and modernisation of Greece, dictated the fitting of the image of the traditional nation-state into the more western/modern model of the post-nation. Indeed, while most contemporary ‘advanced’ nation-states safeguard their territorial, economic and political borders, as well as their interests (both in and out the assigned space of the nation), they have nonetheless adopted the recent social discourses on identity formation. The re-definition of the meaning and context of the nation-state and its grounding on the basis of shared interests rather than national mythologies related
to blood, soil and language or religion, as Appadurai suggests, has automatically connected these latter referential links with ethnic primordialism.

Hence, such ‘ethnic’ factors of national identification are largely attributed to ‘third world’ and/or ‘oriental’ nations, assuming a retarded evolution towards the modern post-nationalism (or hyper-nationalism). The modern nation-state appears susceptible to larger alliances and most importantly defines itself in full acknowledgment of the ethnic diversity of its subjects. Hence, in the official political correctness employed by most western nations, ethnic cleansings, wars, genocides and even internal conflicts on the grounds of religion, race, or territory, appear as typical signs of the under-developed world. Nonetheless, within the recent history, the employment of ‘primordial’ ties, to justify the distinctiveness of both national identities and specific political choices, have been increasingly common within the political discourses of some of the most prominent—and dominant—western nations, such as the US and Great Britain. While the external politics of these nations are still being justified on the grounds of global justice, democracy and the fight for human rights, references to ‘primordial’ and ‘typically oriental’ values, such as ‘holy wars’ and Godly interventions seem to have become the norm for George Bush’s speeches in the last years. More than that, even within nations with traditionally much less overt interference between religion and politics, such as the United Kingdom, such referencing has recently appeared, raising internal concerns on the apparent similarity between Tony Blair’s speeches and the American-Bush model.

Still, a similar rhetoric within non-western nations, is perceived by the West as backwards, typical of the ‘oriental narrow-mindedness’, which traditionally served as the opposite force to the much praised ‘western’ virtue of reasoning and critical thinking. Hence, for a nation that wishes to present itself as advanced, western and modern, the distancing from such ‘primordial’ characteristics appears necessary. As a traditionally religious nation where the church has been historically actively involved in the state affairs, and with a history whose ‘western’ past had been disrupted by a long term ‘oriental’ period, Greece promoted its westernised profile by relying on its antiquity, as well as on
its contemporary conformity with modernity. A series of public works, reformatory social policies and an active involvement in large scale international events (such as the Olympic Games), as well as a declared loyalty to new alliances that exceed the nation-state (such as the EU and NATO), conveyed this compliance. Within that context the modern imperative of postnationalism has been also embraced, promoted and performed by specific state policies. 

In general terms, a nation-state that seeks to be recognised as developed needs to prove and constantly re-declare its modernity, or better its compliance with modern-state policies as defined by the western European and North American nations. To avoid the primordialist stigma, in itself the most evident sign of antimodernism, the nation-state has to appear as post-national or, to follow Appadurai’s terminology, transnational. Hence, the contemporary nation-state is confronted with a challenge: to maintain—and indeed reinforce—its sovereignty and at the same time convey a globalisational mood. To put it in a different way, the ‘primordial’ attachments to blood, soil and language are enhanced by the display of new transnational loyalties: in practice this also refers to specific external politics, like the joining of international economic, political and cultural allegiances, charitable organisations, and international cultural, artistic and sports events. In figurative terms, this intension (the will to become modernised, or the pleasure of being modern) has to be explicitly stated in every possible opportunity, since, as Milan Kundera sarcastically notes, “authentically modern is only he who is happy to be modern” (2005, p. 72).

11.3 Olympic transnationalism, ethnicity and modernity
To return to the example of the Olympics, the presentation of this hyper-national, modernist intention within a joyous context, can now be better understood as part of this conscious and continuous journey towards modernity. Facing the same challenge as that confronted by the ‘modern’ nation-state, the Opening Ceremony had to overcome this contradiction gracefully, and stage both the nation and the post-nation in a seemingly natural, effortless way. Hence, elements of Greek
history and culture with ‘transnational applicability’ (e.g. democracy) were carefully highlighted in their transnational nature, in order to indicate the globalism and openness of Greekness. In other words the national culture is celebrated through its amplification into transnational or universal. Moreover, the Olympic Games offer the opportunity to the hosting country (and in fact demand from it) not only to project its particular national profile, but also to express and declare its loyalty to modernity. Hence, the hosting of the Games was for Greece a chance to present and establish its modern and therefore western identity, within the international community.

In an article challenging the originality, as well as the aesthetic value of the Opening Ceremony, Christos Yiannaras notes ironically:

In this year’s allegedly Olympic Games, Greeks spent lavishly our scanty savings, mortgaging our future for several years to come. Why did we do that? Well, to demonstrate how great we have been in the past and how modernised we are today.

(Yiannaras, 2004, p 18–translated by the author)

The state need to align with the western imperatives of modernity, is here tied with the unsurpassable national reliance to the celebrated past. With their Greek origin and their contemporary modern character, the Olympic Games presented an ideal opportunity for a showcase of prestigious national profile which combined the two. Ancient legacy and modernity, both as defined and evaluated by the West, were easily merged within the Opening Ceremony to perform a westernised Greek portrait. The demonstration of technological competence alongside the historical national referencing, as analysed in Part 1, contributed to the presentation of “an Olympic Ceremony between History and technology”, as the Italian newspaper Repubblica wrote (in Abatzis, 2004, p. 6). In that way it assisted the Olympic Games balancing between History and Modernity.

Discussing the emergence of “delocalised transnations” (that can be ethnic, religious, financial, political, artistic bodies etc), which emerge both within and
beyond the borders of the traditional nation-states, Appadurai describes the Olympic movement as

the largest modern instance of movement born in the context of European concerns with world peace in the latter part of the nineteenth century. With its special form of dialectical play between national and transnational allegiances,\(^{18}\) (it) represents the most spectacular among a series of sites and formations on which the uncertain future of the nation-state will turn

(Appadurai, 2000 p. 16).

The constitution of the Olympic Games, in both its ancient and modern formations, has been founded on the grounds of transnationalism: originally, the Olympic truce dictated the compliance of the smaller units of the different states to a higher law that exceeded their individual interests and needs. Even though this basic principle retained a rhetorical character in the contemporary revivals of the Games, it is still considered to be fundamental, defining their profile. In any case, the Olympic movement does indeed belong in a group of organisms that stretch in-between national and transnational allegiances, as Appadurai notes. Whether or not the nation-state will eventually be outgrown and mould into similar allegiances is still to be seen.\(^{19}\) Nevertheless, the Olympic movement seems to feed (and be fed by) specific national and nationalist sentiments, as well as both pragmatic (e.g. economic) and theoretical (political, ideological, imaginative) realities that fall within the particular scope of the nation-state, as discussed in Part 1.

Falling into the wider category of organised sport, The Olympic Games have the power to “mobilise simultaneously powerful sentiments of both nation and humanity” (MacAlloon, 1984, 1990 in Appadurai 2000, p. 110). Hence, the conjunction of national and transnational affinities within the Opening Ceremony appears harmonically contextualised within the wider frame of the Olympic movement. More than that, the ceremony itself, as an intentional artistic representation of nationhood, can be examined as a specific manifestation of culturalism. The employment of specific historical, artistic and cultural narratives
in order to re-construct (as a spectacle) a recognisable national profile, presents a small scale example of the mechanics of culturalism. In addition, a supplementary reading of the ceremony through the particular prism of the scheme of universalisation/nationalisation, constructs a showcase for how discourses on the post-nation have tied in with specific national concerns. The engagement with ideas on globalisation and hyper- (or post-) nationalism, has nonetheless promoted specific national claims to modernity and development. Moreover, the re-affirmation of Greece’s positioning in a global scale and its presentation as an open unit of a wider transnational entity is accompanied by its promotion as a dynamic and distinct part of this entity. Hence, while declaring the nation’s universality (and therefore its modernity), the ceremony was also meant to boost the national morale, suggesting a coherent and optimist national imagery.

The enterprise bears several resemblances to the venture of the Delphic Festivals, almost a century prior to the Athens Olympics. Many of the core principles and aims that initiated and supported these two -different in their aesthetics, orientation and aspirations- events, have originated in the same ideas on national re-presentation through art, history and culture, and with reference to notions of internationalism and cosmopolitanism. Both were large scale enterprises, each in its own context and addressed both a local and (mainly) an international audience, enjoying an appreciable level of state support (even though on a different scale). Moreover, the stated and performed aims of these events harmonically aligned themselves with the mainstream official (governmental) ideological and political lines of their time. In that respect, issues regarding the re-figuration and constant re-establishment of national identity, the universalisation and westernisation of the nation and the engagement with modernity emerge as crucial and timeless, as much within Greek politics as in the arts. While Sikelianos’ and Palmer’s romanticised and exoticising vision aimed at a literal re-construction and revival of the past, Papaioannou’s post-modern ceremony appeared more critical, at times even sarcastic and subversive of the same picture that it was performing and thus ultimately of itself too. Papaioannou avoided revivalism and represented Greece not only as idealistic, but also through its contradictions and malfunctions. Moreover, the recent theories and experiences of globalisation, the revised
requirements of modernity and the new context of transnationalism and post-
nationalism have further informed the Opening Ceremony, which in that respect
can be placed in a very different position than the early twentieth-century Delphic
Festivals.

11.4 Culturalism in the service of ‘defensive’ and ‘aggressive’ nationalisms:
the political agenda of Greek culturalism.
To sum up, the universalisational strategy has been dictated by, and has served,
specific national needs which have been mainly responsive to both internal and
external changing socio-political conditions. As a strategy of representation,
universalisation encompasses and employs other modes of national and cultural
identification, addressed in the thesis as historicisation and folklorisation. While
discussed as distinct strategies, in order to elaborate on their specific socio-
political, ideological and artistic parameters, they all appear within the local
discourse on national and cultural identity as interlaced strands of the same,
however multifaceted, process. The historicisation of Greek identity justified its
folklorisation, while at the same time being carried forth to the contemporary era
through the latter. The initial reliance on antiquity was solidified by the tracing of
its continuity up to the present, through the folk traditions. Conversely, the
significance of folklore for the designation of a national identity was
acknowledged through its connection with Byzantium and antiquity. Although
examined as a different strategy, folklorisation is a manifestation of the
historicising process. Finally, the universalisation (and westernisation) of
Greekness has functioned as an underlying current that shaped and informed its
historicising of identity, at all times.

I have chosen to present these strands in that specific order within three separate
Parts of the thesis, for a number of reasons: firstly, this order seemed to
correspond to a temporal layout that facilitated an understanding of their
emergence and role within specific socio-political and economic national
circumstances. In addition, while each relied to the others for its validation and
contextualisation, there seemed to be a built up of overlapping ideas, which were
easier to unfold and analyse if examined in this particular sequence. Finally, the prominence of historicisation with the extensive references in antiquity, within the Opening Ceremony, which allowed the subsequent folklorisation of Greekness within the Closing one, dictated a similar sequential negotiation within the thesis. It is also suggestive of the particular weight of the two discourses, with a slight advance of the former, which is indicative of both Papaioannou's assessment of them, as well as of his estimations on the audiences' evaluation and consequent expectations regarding their readability as Greek icons. The employment of these three strategies in any attempt to stage Greekness, from the beginnings of the twentieth century and the Delphic Festivals to the present day and the 2004 Olympic Ceremonies, appears unyielding in its value for the director/choreographer.

In addition to the employment and negotiation of these 'traditional' techniques of representation, the political issue of nationalism, as configured in the introduction, appears as a strong underlying current throughout the thesis, emerging as a most significant parameter of the contemporary negotiation of Greek identity. The national(ist) discourse has been submitted to intense politicisation, linked to specific ideologies and forms of power and resistance, throughout the history of the Modern Greek state. Initially developed as a means of ethnic re-grouping, promoting resistance against the oppressive Ottoman rule, Greekness was defined through the 'primordial' liaisons of history, language and religion, which functioned as differentiating (from other ethnic and cultural groups) and hence unifying elements. Within this effort, which continued in the first years after the emergence of Greece as a nation-state, culturalism emerged as a response to the pressing need for identity. Historicisation, folklorisation and universalisation, all originate in these early state attempts for national and cultural grouping, emerging as important ingredients of the culturalist process.

Nonetheless, culturalism was also strongly cultivated by the dominant powers in periods of dictatorship (as a significant manifestation of both Metaxas's and Junta's regimes, as discussed) promoting a fascist and oppressive nationalist line. In that way, national(ist) expressions have been identified within Greece as direct
references to totalitarianism. However, culturalism has also emerged in times of ethnic strives for autonomy and freedom, both within the Revolution of 1821, and later during World Wars I and II, as well as during the Balkan wars (1912-1913). The difficulty in the delineation of a specific political agenda on the local national(ist) discourse emerges stronger when culturalism is employed to support internal social conflicts. While the development of a pompous nationalist rhetoric was cultivated by the dominant powers in both dictatorships, as well as during the Civil War (with the systematic persecution of all left-affiliated and communist peoples as 'national traitors'), counter-culturalisms of resistance have also been developed as to counteract the official ones.

Hence, while the ‘nation’ was appropriated by the National Front (the official state army) in the Civil War, the left partisans (the Democratic Army of Greece), which had formed the main force of resistance against German occupation after World War II, still retained their vision for a free Greek nation, holding on to specific national and social positions. Similarly, while the Junta tried to appropriate all national symbols, including ancient and folk history, culture and religion, the ‘trademarks’ of the communist party (KKE), and of the students who resisted the regime also included Greek cultural elements drawn from demotic and urban folk (in the dress code, music and aesthetics) and ancient traditions (as discussed in Part 3 the staging of certain ‘revolutionary’ ancient plays was banned by the Junta). In that way, the political agenda of local culturalism, is not easily traceable and its negotiation for the designation and performing of a local identity, requires an in-depth knowledge of the political history of specific cultural manifestations, with a parallel understanding of their contemporary significance and value.

Discussing culturalist movements, Appadurai notes that

(they) can take a variety of forms: they can be directed primarily towards self-expression, autonomy, and efforts at cultural survival, or they can be principally negative in form, characterised largely by hate, racism, and the desire to dominate or eliminate other groups. This is a key distinction
because culturalist movements for autonomy and dignity involving long-dominated groups are often tendentiously tarred with the same brush as those they oppose, as being somehow racist or antidemocratic.

(Appadurai, 2000, p. 15)

This observation is particularly noteworthy, as it assists the argumentation that I have developed throughout this thesis. Appadurai’s distinction between culturalist movements for autonomy as opposed to those formed by racist and expansive aspirations, correspond to my distinction between defensive and aggressive nationalist manifestations, as described in the introduction. As I have argued, within contemporary Greece, the term nationalism has been mostly associated with racism and fascism, while the defensive nationalist discourse developed in times of resistance is usually described as patriotism. Still, the negative ascriptions on nationalism in the post-Junta years, have resulted to the inculpation of all national referencing (including apart from nationalist, terms as patriotic and ethnic) within many socialist, communist and extreme left and anarchist parties and fractions.

Returning to the discourse on modernisation and post-nationalism, the denial of the national, in favour of internationalism appears politically re-contextualised. The state’s recent preoccupation with modernity, which suggested a political alignment which its imperatives, of which postnationalism is a crucial one, has re-appropriated the, formerly left-wing and communist, discourse on internationalism, giving to it a different meaning. In that way, a manifested international, and often even anti-national, stance can be today either indicative of a post-colonial, post-Marxist view-point or of a conformist alignment with the time’s dominant political line. Re-examined under that prism, the local choreographers’ distancing from the previous national(ist) orientation, which started in the 1980s, appears to be the outcome of two different and yet seemingly converging tendencies. As a reaction to decades of dictatorial and totalitarian oppression, the internationalist tendency indicated the democratisation of Greek society, especially aligned with left-wing and communist ideologies that
flourished in the post-dictatorship years. In addition, it has also become suggestive of a gradual governmental shift towards modernity.

In that way, the nation-ness of late modern and namely post-modern Greek choreographers was in fact in accordance with the new culturalist projects of the state. Overcoming the local in favour of internationalism, which most often translated into westernism, through the embracing of western European and American dance styles, methods, techniques and even aesthetic and ideological principles, appears in agreement with the politics of the Modern Greek state, as analysed in the previous chapters. Furthermore, the other common choreographic tendency, the connection of the local to the global in an effort to be assimilated with the other post-national, meaning non-ethnically and culturally defined companies, not only presents a similarity with the orientation of the early choreographers, but it also still connects to the same mainstream political line. Hence, the contemporary dance scene appears less revolutionary and marginal, as it is often alleged by many choreographers and critics.

Nonetheless, this remark does not intend to strip off the dance changes of the 1980s and 1990s of their significance and originality, which actually marked a shifting point within the local dance affairs. Instead, I argue that the course of dance in Greece has not been as radical as those of other arts (such as music, poetry and theatre), which often challenged the official status quo. In general, dance has followed a less ‘politically threatening’ and somewhat conventional path, which often coincided (intentionally or accidentally) with official orientations. While this does not dismiss the value of specific examples that resist that model (such as the choreographing of the Aristophanes’s Birds for Koun’s Art Theatre by Manou and Nikoloudi, discussed in Part 3), it nonetheless drafts a general tendency. While lacking, an overtly confrontational political character, the contemporary dance scene has developed a distinct profile, with the development of a different kind of politicality, through an often indirect social commentary. Personal ideological and political manifestos emerge commonly, through individual choices of expression, challenging established social norms or bringing
forth under-represented and oppressed behaviours, hence providing a social, if not political, commentary.

Looking at the programme of the 6th Dance Festival, organised by the Greek Choreographers' Association featuring performances by thirty-seven dance groups, the choreographers' stated subjects can be categorised as follows: 20 a. esoteric/psychological wonderings on human nature, such as love, death, sexuality, loneliness and isolation, friendship, competition, expectations, desires, power and abuse, shortcomings and inner struggles. b. Philosophical wonderings around abstract notions and 'cosmic' forces, such as blue, the horizon, the route, light, water, fire and earth. c. References to social concerns and issues, such as feminism, domestic violence, disability and social power and d. referential: the performance relies on a written text (a poem, a journalistic text, a novel, random thoughts) or on a theatrical play, a music composition, another dance form (e.g. tango), a myth, tales, songs, and even a historical or mythic personality. In the majority of the performances, dance is interlaced with another art, such as theatre, painting, sculpture, literature and video, while speech is a very common feature. Another interesting observation is the non-overtly political character of most works, even within category c. Out of the socially focused choreographies only one (YELP danceco's Scale 5:1) directly refers to forms of social and political power.

11.5 Afterthoughts.
Looking back at the Olympic Opening Ceremony, I would attribute a great part of its popularity in Papaioannou's successful negotiation of Greekness by cautiously choreographing his way around the political intricacies of the relationship between cultural and national identity, while also acknowledging his own position within contemporary Greek culturalism, as director of a commissioned performance of major political significance. In that way, the Ceremony's popular and conventional character comes as no surprise, even though Papaioannou was previously situated in an 'enlightened' and somewhat
marginal, dance avant-garde. The fact that the staging of the Opening Ceremony has been commissioned by the state in a way defined its character, as discussed in the Introduction and Part 1. Similarly, it is significant that most dance groups today rely firstly on (a very limited) governmental funding, or on the commissioning of works by other public carriers, such as municipalities, and secondly in private sponsorships, as the local dance audience is not yet wide enough to support their endeavours. While ensuring the viability of a number of dance groups, which are not self-sufficient (such as Papaioannou's own Edafos Dance Theatre), this dependency of dance may be also partially held responsible for their non-politically-radical character.

The promotion and popularity of the Opening Ceremony, brought contemporary dance in the proscenium of the local artistic affairs, introducing it to a wide public. Contextualised within the Olympics, this introduction bore a social prestige, establishing Papaioannou as an acknowledged 'high' artist, and contemporary dance as an equally prestigious and acclaimed art form. The Opening Ceremony contained symbolisms and coded images, such as the paper boat and the Allegory, which were straightforward enough to be recognised and de-coded by most people, while also retaining the preface of the expected 'inaccessibility' of High Art. Hence, the understanding of the performed images gave the spectators a sense of pride originating in their ability to read a 'difficult' and 'exclusive' art, like contemporary dance, and their inclusion and participation (through this sharing of information) in it. Within that process of decoding artistic (and hence allegedly mystic) messages, the continuous presence of Kostalas's commentary was catalytic.

The narrators' intention to inform and include the Greek television audience in the stage acts was so overwhelming, that it was later criticised, as it somehow spoiled this sense of personal achievement for the 'knowing' spectator. In his article Hints for the 'Initiated', Yiannaras heavily criticised the persistent interpretation of the narrators, who 'irrepressibly parroted naif stereotypes of state Greekness'. Furthermore, as the title suggests, Yiannaras castigated the over-explicit and self-explanatory, didactic globalist referencing, citing specifically the
images of the pregnancy, the DNA and Eros, which were still "more decent" than the "much obvious jarring note of Mrs Bjork". As he argues, the signifier was the signified itself and hence there was no symbolic representation but mere depiction of "hollow, common-place ideals", rendering the supposedly symbolic –and hence initiating– character of the ceremony without a subject (2004, p. 18).

Nevertheless, the Olympic Ceremonies popularised dance, signalling a meta-Olympic period of a new 'dance boosting'. While dance had already been in an 'ascent', already since the 1990s, after the Olympic Games its audience has grown considerably and performances have multiplied. The yearly Festival of Athens, lasting approximately from June to September each year, which had partially lost its popularity, was refigured. While the dance performances within the Festival had lately been limited in number (and almost exclusively ballet) the new artistic director of the Festival, Yiorgos Loukos (artistic director of the Lyon dance company in France) gave it a different dimension. In 2006, the first festival under his directorship presented a very powerful and diverse program, with new, contemporary dance and theatre works from all over Europe and a number of other events. Within that new programme, dance held a central position and apart from the customary theatre of Herodes Atticus, other venues were hired, to support the increased number of performances and the hosting of parallel events. The festival was a great success, which was noted in almost all newspapers of the time. Moreover, almost all dance performances were sold-out days before their opening, whether staged in Herodes Atticus Odeon or in the other venues. Considering that summer is the period of dance festivals, e.g. the Festival of Greek Choreographers' Association, also known as the Month of Dance, in May, and the International Dance Festival of Kalamata in July and August, whose audiences attendance remained high, this public turn towards contemporary dance appears noticeable.

In addition to that shift, Papaioannou's own rising post-Olympic popularity, which was partially responsible for this change, was strikingly manifested with the staging of his first meta-Olympic work, 2, this winter. The performance, which premiered in the 24th November 2005, was extensively advertised in all
media, with reports in the biggest daily journals and frequent promotional clips in television and radio stations. In addition, 2 also inaugurated the opening of the renovated theatre of *Pallas*, in Athens. The daily performances were initially scheduled to last for twenty days and the immense public attendance, which filled the theatre each night, resulted in the performances’ extension for almost four months, finally closing in the 18th of March 2006. This is actually an impressive record for the contemporary dance scene, as most performances are staged for a week (usually two or three days and maximum two weeks in some of Papaioannou’s latest pre-Olympic shows). This unprecedented audience’s attendance is indicative of the newly emerged interest on dance, which (as manifested by the importance that was given on 2) was triggered by the success of the Olympic Opening Ceremony.

The social and artistic impact of the Opening Ceremony is therefore particularly significant, as it exceeded its specific political and national role within the Olympics, having a wider impact on the local dance affairs. Papaioannou’s Ceremony drew the public attention on contemporary dance, drawing and establishing a new artistic icon of Greekness. The conciliatory, ‘non-nationalist’ and ‘high’-artistic (hence ‘refined’) character of the Opening Ceremony managed to dis-inculpate the national-referencing, incorporating it into the new political modern and post-national climate. In that respect, the Ceremony offered a ‘mainstream with artistic and political sensitivities’ national portrait, which caught up with the local and foreign audiences, re-introducing the nation, in favour of transnationalism. Greek cultural identity, as negotiated in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, has created an additional reference point for all future artistic negotiations of identity. Finally it is still left to see how this newly emerged public interest on dance will affect its course. On one hand, the growing audience may reach a point where it will be enough to provide financial support for the local choreographers, hence giving them extra freedom of expression. On the other hand, the dependence on a wide public support may result to an aiming towards a mainstream-popular style, rounding, instead of encouraging, any radical edges. In any case, the prevalence of dance within the biggest instance of national representation within late Greek modern history has re-figured its place within
Again here, the capitalisation of the word suggests its evolutionist perception as an essentialised trajectory.

Appadurai (2000, p. 77) discusses the evocation of nostalgia “for things never lost” (Halbwachs, 1980) as a consumerism mechanism, which he identifies as “imagined nostalgia”. This “creates experiences of duration, passage and loss that rewrite lived histories of individuals, families, ethnic groups and classes”. Another term that also provides a useful insight for my argument is the “nostalgia for the present” (F. Jameson cited in ibid).

A shape that was repeated in the Closing Ceremony, with the spiral positioning of the ear shafts.

I am talking of universalisation instead of westernisation for two reasons: firstly, ancient Greece is believed by Arab, Greek and European scholars and historians to have equally influenced other, non-western civilisations, such as that of the Arab world (see Part 2). The connection with western civilisation was emphasised more because Europe was the first to claim, underline and incorporate ancient Greece in its history and also because the Greek nation-state prioritised this connection over any other, since it was of greater benefit to the country’s politics. Secondly, and most importantly, western civilisation has itself appeared as universal: whether imposed, proposed as a prototype par excellence, or merely assumed to be transnational—and hence ‘higher’ than others—its account has been traditionally projected as ‘the’ history of civilisation (for that latter notion see also Savigliano, 1995).

J.T. Schnapp (1996) also notes that “the marriage of political power with aesthetics remains an anthropological fact; every political regime is by definition also a mass-media regime” (Schnapp in Veroli, 2006, p. 46).

Penelope was the sister of Angelos Sikelianos and it was through her and her husband that Palmer met and eventually married Sikelianos.

Their action is cited as it was much more direct and factual than most upper-class charitable activities and foundations. Penelope Duncan actually died in Switzerland after being infected by tuberculosis while helping the Greek refugees in Agioi Saranta, in Albania, after the end of the Balkan Wars. (Sideris, p. 323 and Raftis, pp. 20-21, cited in Fessa, 2004 p 76, note 55).

See also Anton (1993, p. xv). As Janet O’Shea observed, this personification of practicality and spiritualism through Palmer and Sikelianos respectively, presents a reversal of the traditional Orientalist model of female oriental spirituality and mysticism versus a western male reasoning. However, with Greek civilisation being located in the origins of western Culture and thinking, Greekness has been mostly identified with ‘male’ rather than ‘female’ qualities, as expressed above. This is an additional controversy to the (western) designation of Greek identity, which is related to the discussed intermediate, and hence complex and often confused, positioning of Greece, in between East and West.

This sentiment of decline is cited by Yiannaras in the end of his article on the Olympic Opening Ceremony. Attributing the hosting of the Olympics to a national need for showcasing a glorious past and a modernised future, he further interprets this tendency, as “a torturing need of descendants, fallen to the role of the middlemen, without a hint to where to trace a creative recovery” (2004, p. 18).

Appadurai (1996) has also elusively noted the role of transnational migration and of the growing mobility of large groups of the world’s population in the refiguration of national and post-national identities.

This also mainly targeted specific persons rather than aiming at civilian casualties, avoiding ‘blind’ attacks and mass murders.

Indicatively he discusses the assumed uniqueness of the horror of the Holocaust, within the west, accompanied by a parallel ignorance of similar genocides in other parts of the world, most of which occurred during Europe’s imperial expansion. As an example Mamdani (2005, p. 6) cites the “near decimation of Native Americans, through a combination of slaughter, disease and dislocation”, which was “the first recorded genocide in modern history”. In addition he refers to “the first genocide of the twentieth century under German annihilation” rule, of the Herero people in South West Africa, in 1904, who were the first to
be confined within mass concentration camps for genetic experimentations lead by German
genetist Eugen Fischer. Mamdani argues that “the Holocaust was born at the meeting point
of two traditions that marked modern Western civilisation: “the anti-Semitic tradition and
the tradition of genocide of colonised peoples”. The difference in the fate of the Jewish
people was that they were to be exterminated as a whole. “In that way they were unique –
but only in Europe” (ibid, p. 7). Citing Aime Cesaire, Mamdani notes that what “the
European bourgeois cannot never forgive Hitler for, is that he applied to Europe the colonial
practices that had previously been applied only to the Arabs of Algeria, the coolies of India
and the Negroes of Africa” (Ibid, p. 8). In that way, as Fanon argues, “Nazism turned the
whole of Europe into a veritable colony” (in Mamdani, 2005, p. 8).

14 As Appadurai notes, this theory has been used to explain the explosions of ethnic violence
within the non-western world (Ibid).

15 Discussing the common experiences that somehow unify Europe, Eco cites –amongst the
experiences of wars, dictatorships and a close relationship with the East– the “failure of
colonialism and the loss of the relevant empires”, which “we all had in common” (2006, pp.
58-59).

16 The connection of Greek (mainly shipping) capital to western economic activity has also
been crucial for this positioning. As Svoronos notes, the Greek bourgeoisie was the first to
be established of all Balkan and Near-East countries and until the end of the nineteenth
century approximately its activity span in all these areas. Hence, “a considerable part of
Hellensism was distinguished from the other ethnic communities of the Ottoman Empire not
only ethnically, but also socially since for a long time period it formed these countries’
bourgeoisie” (1999, p. 16).

17 The recent political issue regarding the newly emerged need for the foundation of a mosque
in central Athens, was culminated with a proposal of the Minister of Culture (from right-
wing, governing party Nea Demokratia), Mrs Dora Bakoyianni, for the donation of an old
mosque, which has been converted to a museum of folk arts, in the most central tourist area
of Athens, in Monastiraki. The whole debate, in which a great emphasis was given on the
promoted postantional profile of modern Greece, was indicative of the discussed political
orientation. Even more indicative is the recent debate on the sixth grade’s new history book,
which –in the name of postnationalism- severely de-emphasised significant historical
events.


19 Discussing the concept of ‘hybridity’, or ‘creolisation’ of identity in an intra-cultural level,
Fensham and Eckersall cite Aschcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1995), arguing that hybridity is
“not predicated upon the idea of disappearance of independent cultural traditions but rather
on their continual and mutual development. The interleaving of practices will produce new
forms even as older forms continue to exist” (1999, p. 7). I believe that in an inter-cultural,
or even inter-national level, a similar process is likely to take place. Rather than the nation
‘disappearing’ within larger allegiances, a hypothesis expressed by scholars like Benneditc
Anderson, which has already ‘proven wrong’ by the re-emergence of nationalisms, triggered
by processes of globalisation, the emergence of new forms, or allegiances, alongside
developing older ones, seems more apt.

20 Out of the thirty-seven groups only twenty-four provided an explanatory text.
Appendix A

Greek Cited Materials:

Introduction

p. 2
Από τότε που πήρε η Εθνική μας το πρωτάθλημα, προϊδεάζοντας μας για την εξαιρετική τελετή έναρξης της Ολυμπιάδας και όσα μας περιμένουν, εμείς οι Έλληνες τρέχουμε. Νοώθουμε ότι τρέχουμε εμπρός και στην ένταση της ταχύτητας εισχωρούν άλματα του παρελθόντος, των δεκαετιών που είχαμε προσπεράσει.

(Maragou, 2004, p. 17).

p. 5
Μια χούφτα νέοι Έλληνες δημιουργοί, άγνωστοι σχεδόν στο ευρύ κοινό, αλλά ευρύτατα γνωστοί σε όσους παρακολουθούν πιστά την εγχώρια πολιτιστική παραγωγή της τελευταίας δεκαετίας.

(Barka, 2004, p. 15)

Να εξεταστεί τη δειλία που συνήθως έχουν οι καλλιτέχνες της αβαντικάριντ να διαχωρίζουν μονίμως την θέση τους.

(Papaioannou interviewed by Aggelikopoulos 22.8.2004, p. 16)

p. 9
Ο Δημήτρης Παπαϊωάννου, κάνοντας χρήση μας «κουζίνας» που αναμφίβολα γνωρίζει καλά, ενορχιστρώνει εναπόκρισης και δεξιότητες προς μια κατεύθυνση μάλλον απεικονιστική, με αναφορές οι οποίες απλώνονται σε ποικίλες περιοχές και περιόδους των οπτικών τεχνών.

(Legakis, 2006, p. 28)

p. 12
Μα ξανά η αρχαιότητα; Ξανά τα κλίσει που μας ταλαπωρούν και μονίμως αποτελούν τη δικαιολογία και την ασπίδα μας για να κρυφτούμε κάτω από την καθημερινή μας μετριότητα; Η απάντηση είναι ναι. Γιατί στην αρχαιότητα γεννήθηκαν οι Ολυμπιακοί Αγώνες και γιατί καθετί παραχημένο είναι μπανάλ, όχι επειδή δεν υπήρξε σπουδαίο, αλλά επειδή έχασε μα λειτουργεί με ένα συγκεκριμένο τρόπο.

(Papaioannou in Karouzakis, 2005, p. 28 -translated by the author)
pp. 14-15
Η οπτική πρόσληψη της «πραγματικότητας» από τα μέλη μιας κοινωνίας, τα οποία μέσα από εκπαιδευτικούς μηχανισμούς έχουν αποδεχθεί τις αξίες της, διαμορφώνεται, συνεπώς και σε μεγάλο βαθμό κατευθύνεται, από φορτισμένες με νοηματα εικόνες. Η δυνατότητα των εικαστικών τεχνών να επιδρούν στη διαμόρφωση του θεατή, μέσω της αναπαράστασης, αποτελεί και τον κύριο λόγο της πολυεπίπεδης σχέσης-εξάρτησης από την εξουσία, στο πλαίσιο πάντα της θεσμικής οργάνωσης της κοινωνίας.

Στην Ευρωπαϊκή Πρώιμη Νεώτερη Εποχή, περίπου από τον 16ο ως τα τέλη του 18ου αιώνα (...), τα «έργα τέχνης» εκπαιδεύουν διαμεσολαβητικό ρόλο για την ενδοκοινωνία των κόσμων και του εξωραϊσμού των συγκεντρωτικών μηχανισμών, των πολιτικών και εκκλησιαστικών κέντρων εξουσιών.

Με ελάχιστες (...) εξαιρέσεις, η παραγωγή και η ισχύς των περισσοτέρων καλλιτεχνών ήταν στενά συνδεδεμένες με την αποδοχή της κοινωνίας που τους στήριζε (...). Εξαιρέσεις θεωρείται την «παράδοση» και τη «συνέχεια», μετέδιδον το κυρίαρχο γεύμα, προβάλλοντας (...) ένα πρότυπο διαβίωσης (...) και προλάβανε ή εξουδετέρωνε ενδεχόμενες αντιστάσεις.

(Ioannou, 2005 pp. 2-5).

p.17
Οι πολιτικές προτεραιότητες καθορίζουν στο εξής τις καλλιτεχνικές επιλογές (...) τα, στον βαθμό που η δημιουργία και η στερέωση ενός πολιτικού κέντρου εξουσίας προσβλέπει αποκλειστικά προς τη δυτική Ευρώπη, ως επίσημη τέχνη του κράτους επιλέξθηκε και αρχής η φιλελληνική (κλασσικοτεχνική) ζωγραφική και γλυπτική, παραγόμενη από Ιταλούς, Γερμανούς ή από τους Έλληνες μιμητές τους (...) που θα υλοποιήσουν και τις πρώτες παραγελίες δημοσίου χαρακτήρα.

(Ioannou, 2005 pp. 4-5).

p.21
(...) σφράγισαν όχι μόνο τους συνεργάτες της, αλλά κυρίως τις γενιές των σπουδαστών της, οι οποίοι με τη σειρά τους διαμόρφωσαν την εξέλιξη του χορού και της χορευτικής (και κινητικολογικής) εκπαίδευσης στη μεταπολεμική Ελλάδα.

(Alkali, 2002, p. 31).

p. 30
Η πολιτιστική ταυτότητα (αποτελεί ...) μια αναστοχαστική πράξη αυτο-ορισμού και αυτο-επιβεβαιώσης, που αξιοποιεί το ιστορικό βίωμα και το πολιτιστικό ρεπερτόριο της κοινότητας, σύμφωνα όμως με τους όρους των συμβολικών ιεραρχήσεων και αξιολογήσεων που ορίζει το είδος και το διακύβευμα του ανταγωνισμού που αντιμετωπίζει.

(Pashalidis, 2000, p. 81)
contemporary *culturalism*, fundamentally influencing both future artistic negotiations of identity, as well as dance’s role in the recent socio-political stage.


**Part 1**

**Chapter 1**

1.1 p. 43

Η Ελλάδα στον κόσμο με νέο πρόσωπο: Διεθνή εγκυμιαστικά σχόλια για την αισθητική των αγώνων.

*(Kathimerini, Sunday, 15 August, 2004)*

Θρίαμβος και στη λήξη –Διήθραμβοι ξένων και δημοσία συγνώμη από CNN: «Κερδίσατε!»

*(Eleutherotypia, Monday 30 August 2004)*

Οι διήθραμβικές κριτικές από την συντριπτική πλειονότητα των μέσων ενημέρωσης στον κόσμο (...) αποτελούν την καλύτερη απόδειξη για την θριαμβευτική επιτυχία της Αθήνας στη διοργάνωση των Ολυμπιακών Αγώνων του 2004. Το πρώτο στοίχημα λουκόν κερδήθηκε και με τον καλύτερο δυνατό τρόπο!

*(Ta Nea, Monday 30 August, 1994)*

1.2 p. 54

Ο ποιητής, χορογράφος, ζωγράφος, ο μάγος ποιητής της εικόνας, Δημήτρης Παπαϊωάννου, μας προτείνει μια διάφανη, λιτή τελετή, όπως και ο ελληνικός πολιτισμός τον οποίο γιορτάζει. Μας προτείνει, αγκαλιά με τις μνήμες μας, ένα ταξίδι στο όνειρο, ένα ταξίδι πίσω στον χρόνο του χθές, που καθορίζει το σήμερα και προσδιορίζει το αύριο. Μας ζητάει να βιώσουμε και πάλι τον πολιτισμό μας, διαχρονικό, επίκαιρο, τα σύμβολα μας και τις αξίες του, που διδάξαν, επιρρέασαν και επηρεάσαν πάντα την ανθρωπότητα. Αλλώστε, όπως είπε η Μελίνα Μερκούρη, ο πολιτισμός μας είναι το μεγαλύτερο και πολυτιμότερο αγαθό μας.

*(Kostalas, 13/8/2004)*

1.2 p. 55

Και ως θέαμα υψηλής τέχνης γνώρισε τη λαϊκή απήχηση. (...) Ανθρωποί όλων των ηλικιών και των κοινονικών τάξεων, που έχουν –μοιραία- συνηθίσει να βλέπουν στην τηλεόραση εύκολα προγράμματα, συγκινήθηκαν, χάρηκαν, κατάλαβαν και θαύμασαν ένα πρωτοποριακό, μοντέρνο και ελλιτιστικό θέαμα.

*(Barka, 2004, p 15)*

1.2 p. 56

Η Τελετή Έναρξης ήταν εμπνευσμένη από τις τελετές του Απόλλωνα. Η Τελετή Λήξης, από τις τελετές του Διονύσου. Η πρώτη είναι το φως, το πνεύμα, οι ιδέες. Η δεύτερη, το θαύμα και το μεθύσι της ζωής. Η μία είναι η γιορτή στο ον-
άνθρωπο. Η δεύτερη είναι ο άνθρωπος που γιορτάζει. Η έναρξη είναι σαν να δίνεις το φυλή της ζωής σε ένα άγαλμα. Η λήξη είναι σαν να αγκαλιάζεις έναν άνθρωπο.

(Papaioannou, 2004, p 9)

Chapter 2

2.1 p. 63
Μόνο αυτή εξηγούσε και την καθήλωση στα τουριστικά κλισέ για την Ελλάδα: Όσο δεν ξέρουμε οι Νεοέλληνες θα να κάνουμε με το «Βυζάντιο», η πρόσβαση μας στην Αρχαία Ελλάδα θα γίνεται με ιδεολογήματα (αερογράφους πάνω από είκοσι πέντε αιώνες) ή με μεταπρατικούς πιθηκισμούς της δυτικής πλαστογραφίας.

(Yiannaras, 2004, p. 18)

2.1 p. 65
Επελέγει η άμεσος, απλός, αποκαλυπτικός λόγος ενός βαθύτερου «είναι» των Ελλήνων. Ο Σεφέρης, σήκωσε στους όμοιους του ένα αίσθημα κοινό. Η απόλυτη και μοιραία σχέση μας με τα μάρμαρα είναι μια κληρονομιά που ζητεί από κάθε γενιά να την αναδείξει μέσω της δικής της σκέψης.

(Nikolakopoulou in Hatziadoniou, 2004, p. 61)

2.1 p. 66
Κάθε Ελληνας δημιουργός κρύβει μέσα του την αιμομικτή επιθυμία να τεκνοποιηθεί με την μητέρα του, που είναι η ελληνική αρχαιότητα, καθώς και την τάση να σκοτώσει τον πατέρα του, που είναι και πάλι ο αρχαίος πολιτισμός, για να ελευθερωθεί.

(Tsoklis in Spinou, 2006, p. 19)

2.2 p. 73
Τα κοστούμια φοριούνται σα μάσκες, μεταμοντέρνα (...) πρέπει να τα βγάλουμε για να βγούμε από το παρελθόν προς το άγνωστο μέλλον. Έτσι αποφεύγεται η αναπαράσταση και το κίτρο. Φοράς την τέχνη του παρελθόντος: έτοιμομ χιόνιας, εκμαγείο; Οχι χιτωνάκι στον άνεμο.

(Papaioannou, 2005)

2.3 p. 77
Οι τελετές θα διηγηθούν στον κόσμο μια πανάρχαια ιστορία, χρησμοποιώντας σύγχρονες τεχνικές. Θα παρουσιάσουμε ένα θέαμα εμπειρικό από την ελληνική ιστορία και τέχνη, το οποίο όμως προσεγγίζεται από μια σύγχρονη σκοπιά και με την χρήση της τελευταίας τεχνολογίας.

(Papaioannou in Aggelikopoulos, 2004, p. 6)

307
Chapter 3

3.1 p. 80
Γκρίνια όχι κριτική. Ωραίο υπερτονίσαμε το ελληνικό στοιχείο. Δηλαδή, οραίο το τραγούδι σου, αλλά... τραγούδαγες!


3.1 p 82
Τόση μπάλα και τόσους μπάτσους είχαμε να δούμε απ’ τη χούντα.

[graffiti on the wall of a street in central Athens (Exarheia)]

Γκοοοοο! Αγαπητοί τηλεθεατά, υπερήφανοι Πανέλληνες!

Σας ζημίζουν τίποτε όλα αυτά; Μήπως πρόσφατα σας συγκλόνισαν κι εσάς από επικές εικονογραφήσεις της τρισχιλιετούς ιστορίας μας;

(Stefanidis, 2006, p. 30)

3.1 p 83
Δεν χρειάζεται βέβαια να είναι κανείς ειδικός στη σημειολογία του ναζισμού για να αντιληφθεί ότι όλο το τελετουργικό κίτος που συνοδεύει την τελετή αφίξης της «ιερής φλόγας» (με τις ίδρειες, τις πραδιέρειες, τους βιομοί και τους θεούς-ήλιους) δεν είναι τίποτα άλλο παρά επανεισαγωγή της χιτλερικής άποψης για την Αρχαία Ελλάδα και τις τελετές της.

(Virus 2004, p. 54)

3.2 p 95
-Σας χειροκροτούν μέχρι και οι πιο συντηρητικοί και εθνικόφρονες Έλληνες.
-Αν ισχύει αυτό που λέτε, θα μου έκανε μεγάλη εντύπωση. Γιατί νομίζω πως το μήνυμα της αγάπης και της σωματικής και αισθητικής απελευθέρωσης που έφερε η τελετή, το μήνυμα ότι πρέπει να παραδεχθούμε το πραγματικό στίγμα του πολιτισμού μας, είναι κάτι που θα έκρειτε μάλλον να προκαλέσει τους φορείς τέτοιων απόψεων.

(Papaioannou interviewed by Georgakopoulou, 2004, p. 20)

note 3
Πριν διαδοθεί ο όρος (κις) ως συνόνυμο της κακογουστίας, (υπήρξε) ένα συνειδητό καλλιτεχνικό ρεύμα στο χώρο των εικαστικών τεχνών και στην υψηλή ραπτική.
Σε διάλογο με τις τάσεις της πανκ και της ποπ κουλτούρας, η κις καλλιτεχνία αμφιβολίστησε τον βαρύγυδο ακαδημαϊκό και τις περιχαρακτικές των πρωτοποριών στις οποίες καταλόγιζε σοβαροφάνεια και αλλαζονεία.
Η ιστορία του ελληνικού κις έχει μια πολύτελη διαφορετική αφετηρία: Έχει την κρατική σφραγίδα της δικτατορίας των συνταγματαρχών, η οποία στο πλαίσιο της τόσο σαθρής όσο και επιθετικής ιδεολογίας μιας εθνικόφρονος τάξης του κόσμου, σταχυλογούσε (...) με δεσπόζουσα παράσταση μια εμφυλιακή εικόνα στρατοπέδου, τα πιο επιφανειακά στοιχεία του εθνικιστικού αποθέματος της χώρας μας.

(Panagiotopulos, 2006, p. 32)

**note 5**
Η κυνική ματιά απέναντι στα πράγματα είναι κάτι το οποίο έχει σχεδόν σπουδάσει. Μπορώ κι εγώ να δούμε την άλλη πλευρά. Είναι ζήτημα επιλογής με ποιο τρόπο θα κοιτάξουμε τα πράγματα.

(Papaioannou in Kormaris, 2003 pp. 38)

**note 6**
Πάνω απ’ όλα ήταν η Τέχνη –με τον κεφαλαίο. Δεν διαλέξαμε να αναπαραστήσουμε τίποτα από τις ιστορικές εποχές. Διαλέξαμε να ζωντανεύσουμε μονόχρηστη τέχνης, τα οποία έχουν συμπικνώσει μέσα στην φόρμα τους την ενέργεια και τη μυρωδιά κάθε εποχής. Δεν υπήρχε ούτε μια εικόνα που να μην είναι βγαλμένη από ένα πίνακα ζωγραφικής, από ένα μωσαϊκό, από ένα φρέσκο, από ένα άγαλμα ή από μια ασπρόμαυρη φωτογραφία εποχής.

(Papaioannou interviewed by Georgakopoulou, 2004, p 20)

**Part 2**

**Chapter 4**

**4.1 p. 110**
Η πολιτιστική ταυτότητα κατασκευάζεται λουπόν μέσα στο πλαίσιο του συμβολικού ανταγωνισμού μιας κοινότητας με τους Σημαντικούς της Άλλους, αποτελώντας μια αναστοχαστική πράξη αυτο-ορισμού και αυτο-επιβεβαίωσης, που αξιοποιεί το ιστορικό βίωμα και το πολιτιστικό ρεπερτόριο της κοινότητας, σύμφωνα με τους όρους των συμβολικών εισαρχήσεων και αξιολογήσεων που ορίζει το είδος και το διακόμβωμα του ανταγωνισμού που αντιμετωπίζει. Η πολιτιστική ταυτότητα συνιστά έστις μια συμβολική διεκδίκηση μέσα στο πεδίο του Άλλου, αποτελώντας ένα εγχείρημα αλληλένδετα αγανοικίτικο και διαλογικό.

(Pashalidis, 2000, p. 81)

**4.2 p. 111**
Σημείει αφετηρίας για κάθε κοινωνική ανάλυση του ελληνικού χώρου είναι πράγματι το θεμελιακό γεγονός ότι τα στατικά στρώματα ευθύς εξαρχής κατά από την άδηση της οικονομικής δραστηριότητας στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο των δυτικών δυνάμεων, από τις οποίες παραμένουν άμεσα εξαρτημένα και τούτο σ’ ένα χώρο όπου οι σχέσεις του με τις κεντρικές οικονομικές δυνάμεις του δυτικού
καπιταλισμού έχουν το χαρακτήρα μιας οικονομικής, αν όχι άμεσα πολιτικής, αποκινοκρατίας.

(Svoronos, 1999, p. 14)

4.2 p 119
Οι Έλληνες ας θυμούνται πάντα πως η χώρα τους είναι αυτή που γεφυρώνει την Ευρώπη με την Ανατολή και χρέος τους είναι να κρατούν κάθε ανατολικό στολίδι.

(Andersen in Tsarouhis, 1986, p. 268)

4.2 p. 120
Για την σύνθεση όλων των μουσικών μερών προσπάθησα να δω τι είναι ο ελληνικός χώρος, που ενώνει τρεις ηπείρους, την Ανατολή με τη Δύση.

(Koumentakis in Karouzakis, 2004, p. 20)

4.2 p. 122
(... έναν τρόπο αντιμετώπισης των προκλήσεων της σύγχρονης εποχής, που αναζητούνται νέες απαντήσεις σε παλαιά ερωτήματα όπως: «Τι σημαίνει να είσαι πολιτισμένος;», «Τι σημαίνει διεθνοποίηση;», «Ποιο είναι το περιεχόμενο της δημοκρατίας σήμερα;», «Τι σημαίνει να είσαι Ευρωπαίος;» το ελληνικός πολιτισμός, με τις συνέχειες και τις αποτέλεσμα που τον χαρακτηρίζουν, αναμφίβολα παρέχει ένα ιδιαίτερα ιστορικό υπόβαθρο για την διερεύνηση αυτών των ερωτημάτων (...) καθώς αποτελεί ένα μεγάλο ιστορικό δυνάμεως που αντιστέκεται σε εύκολες κατηγοριοποιήσεις.

(Naz in Barka, 2007, p. 23)

Chapter 6

6.2 p. 155
Θέρε μου! Τι όραμα! (...) Εδώ σ' αυτή τη γωνιά, σ' αυτό το γερμανικό χωριό, εδίδασκαν την Ελλάδα: της Τέχνης, της Ποίησης, της καλοσύνης, της ανθρωπιάς. Την Ελλάδα: του χωριού, του ρυθμού, της μουσικής. Την Ελλάδα: του Πλάτωνος, το αιώνιο ελληνικό πνεύμα (...) Έπαθα έναν κλονισμό βαθών και αγιάτρευτον. Αυτό! Και τίποτε άλλο!!

(Pratsika, Ursa Minor, 1991, p. 15)

6.2 p. 156
(...) να φέρω στον τόπο μου, εδώ που αγνοούσαμε την αιώνια διδασκαλία του Πλάτωνος. Το αιώνιο πνεύμα της Ελλάδος, το πνεύμα που φυσούσε ελεύθερο στις ευρωπαϊκές χώρες.

(Pratsika in Ursa Minor, 1991, p. 15)

Οι Ευρωπαίοι πρωτοπόροι σε όλα Έλληνες!

(Ibid, p. 19).
6.2 p. 157
Μέσα από το όραμα των Σικελιανών, η Κ. Πράτσικα βλέπει τις «αξίες του
αρχαίου ελληνικού πολιτισμού ως αξιόπεραστή, πανανθρώπινη και μοναδική
παρακαταθήκη με παγκόσμια και διαχρονική εμβέλεια».


6.2 p. 158
Εδώ στους Δελφούς παθαίνω έναν καινούργιο κλώνσιμο, ισχυρόν όσο και αυτόν
στο Hellerau: Η Ελλάδα του Πλάτωνος, του πνεύματος, της μελέτης, του ρυθμού,
tης μουσικής, της κίνησης, της Ευρώπης, κάτω από την φωτισμένη καθοδήγηση
tης εξαισθαίος Αμερικανίδας Frau Baer. Και η ζωντανή Ελλάδα που υπάρχει στη
χώρα, γεμάτη ομορφιά, και αφρίγος, πάντα νέα, κάτω από την καθοδήγηση της
ώλης εξαισθαίος Αμερικανίδας της Εύας Σικελιανού.

(Pratsika in Ursa Minor 1991, p. 17)

6.2 p. 159
Εκείνη τη στιγμή, ανάμεσα στο 1925-1927 ποιος άλλος είχε ασχοληθεί να μας
dείξει, σ’ εμάς τη νέα γενιά, το βαθύ περιεχόμενο του αρχαίου ελληνικού
πνεύματος, ποιος μας ξεσκέπασε τη μεγάλη πνευματική κληρονομιά των
Ελλήνων, και την καθημερινή ζωή τους, απεικονισμένη στα αγγεία, και τόσο
πολύ κοντά με τη σύγχρονη ελληνική πραγματικότητα. (...) Ανακαλύπταμε, κάτω
από την καθοδήγησή της Εύας μια Ελλάδα άγνωστη, που δεν υποπτεύομαστε καν
την υπαρξή της, και η Ελλάδα αυτή είμαστε εμείς, οι ίδιες.

(Pratsika, Ursa Minor, 1991, p. 96-97)

6.2 p. 159
Ο σκοπός αυτών των ξεναγήσεων ήταν η γενικότερη μόρφωση των μαθητών της.
Ήθελε να συνηθίσουμε να βλέπουμε την ομορφιά της Κλασικής εποχής σε
συσχέτιση με την σύγχρονη.

(Iliopoulos in Ursa Minor, 1991 p. 135)

6.2 p. 160
Μια εκπολιτιστική προσπάθεια μεγάλης πνοής.

(Murivilis, in Ursa Minor, 1991, p. 60)

(η Σχολή) διδάσκει το ωραίο, το χρήσιμο, το εθνικά ωφέλιμο.

(Kakouri, in ibid, p 71)

(η Σχολή) ... κρατεί άσβεστη τη φλόγα της εθνικής παιδείας
(Karas, in ibid, p 57)

(Η Πράτσικα) για πενήντα χρόνια ήταν η αναμφίβολη «μητέρα» -τροφός του
ελληνικού χορού.

(Georgousopoulos, in ibid, p. 125)
6.2 p. 160
Εισήγαγε την έννοια του Ελληνικού πολιτισμού στη διδασκαλία μας.

(Katseli in ibid, p. 141)

6.2 p. 161
Η Πράτσικα επανέφερε το αρχαίο ιδεώδες της παιδαγωγικής. Ταυτόχρονα όμως, εξοικείωσε τους Έλληνες στους επικατούσες τάσεις στη διεθνή εκπαίδευση.

(Alkali, 2002, p. 31)

Ανοίξε δρόμους καινούργιους, τους οποίους πατών οι νεότεροι σήμερα χωρίς ίσως να υποτεύχουν ότι εκείνη έκανε την αρχή, μια αρχή πολύ δύσκολη για την εποχή εκείνη και η οποία σημάδεψε την πορεία του χορού στην πατρίδα μας.

(Nikoloudi in Ursa Minor, 1991, p. 151)

6.2 p. 162
Δεν υπάρχει έως σήμερα ούτε μια παράσταση αρχαίου δράματος που να μην έχει υποστηριχθεί από μαθήτρια της Κούλας Πράτσικα ή από μαθήτρια μαθήτριας. (…) Όλοι οι σκηνοθέτες, από τους συντηρητικότερους ως τους εικονοκλάστες άντλησαν ιδέες για να δώσουν λύση στο πολύπλοκο πρόβλημα του χορού, στην παράδοση που καλλιέργησε η Πράτσικα.

(Georgousopoulos in Ursa Minor, 1991, p. 125-127 )

note 32
Ο βιολογικός ρατσισμός, σε αντίθεση με τις διάφορες μορφές του κοινωνικού ρατσισμού που αποτελούν διαχρονικό φαινόμενο σε όλες τις ιστορικές κοινωνίες, είναι από τον ευρωπαϊκό πολιτισμό όπως αυτός εξελίχθηκε από την ανακάλυψη του Νέου Κόσμου και μετά.

(Papadimitriou 2000, p. 19)

Part 3

Chapter 7

7.1 pp 174
Τα ψεύτικα τα λόγια τα μεγάλα, μου τα 'πες με το πρώτο σου το γάλα Μα τώρα που ξυπνήσανε τα φίδια, εσύ φοράς τα αρχαία σου στολίδια Και δεν διακρύζεις ποτέ σου, Μάνα μου, Ελλάς, που τα παιδιά σου σκλάβους ξεπουλάς.

(…)

Τα ψεύτικα τα λόγια τα μεγάλα, μου τα 'πες με το πρώτο σου το γάλα Μα τώρα που η φωτιά φουντάνει πάλι, εσύ κοιτάς τα αρχαία σου τα κάλλη
Και στις αρένες του κόσμου, Μάνα μου, Ελλάς, το ίδιο ψέμα πάντα εσύ πουλάς.

[Gatsos, Μάνα μου Ελλάς (My Mother Hellas)]

7.2 p. 177
Μέσα από αυτή (την τελετή έναρξης) επιβεβαιώνεται το ένδοξο ιστορικό παρελθόν της κοινότητας, η συνεισφορά της στην εθνική υπόθεση αλλά κυρίως, η άμεση σχέση και η σημασία της για το εθνικό-κράτος.

(Papakostas, 2006, p. 8)

7.2 p. 178
(. . .) τόσο «αυθεντικά», ώστε να «αυθεντικοποιούν» την ίδια την πολιτισμική ταυτότητα της Καλής Βρύσης. Τα τεκμήρια μιας επιστήμης τόσο απτής στις αισθήσεις όπως η αρχαιολογία, αλλά και η «συνομίλια» της με τη λαογραφία προσφέρουν μια στέρηση ιδεολογική πλατφόρμα για τη σύνδεση της κοινότητας, δια της ελληνικής αρχαιότητας, με τη νεοελληνική ταυτότητα.

(Papakostas, 2006, p. 6)

7.2 p. 178
Ταυτόχρονα, το εθνικό ενεργοποιεί τη δομική νοσταλγία των αστών της Δράμας, που εξωτικοποιεί την αγροτική ζωή και τις σχετικές παραδόσεις.

(Nitsiakos in Papakostas, 2006, p. 7)

7.4 p. 194
Επειδή η Μεγάλη Ιδέα είχε, ως ιστορική πιθανότητα, καταρρεύσει, η επιλογή ενός εγγύτερου παρελθόντος που μπορούσε να συσχετιστεί με τη «φαντασιακή» πλέον δυνατότητα επέκτασης της Ελλάδας εκτός των στενών, σύγχρονων εθνικών της ορίων, προσφέροντας, ως αντίδραση στην εθνική καταστροφή, με τον καλύτερο τρόπο. Τον ρόλο αυτό κλήθηκε να παίξει το βυζαντινό παρελθόν.

(Daskalothanasis, 2000, p. 56)

p. 194
Ένας κοσμοπολίτισμός, ένας πεσιμισμός νεορομαντικής φύσης, και συγχρόνως μια στροφή του ρωμαϊκού στο Βυζάντιο.

(Vacalo, 1983, p. 15)

p. 196
Η λαϊκή τέχνη αποτελεί μια δύναμη αντίστασης έναντι των «ξένων, εξελιγμένων ρυθμών, μη οικείων προς τις ψυχοπνευματικές δυνάμεις του έθνους».

(Hatzimihali in Daskalothanasis, 2000, p. 57)
Chapter 8

8.1 p. 205
Ένας μεγαλόπνευστος ποιητής και η συντρόφισσά του, έριχναν τότε τα θεμέλια μιας νεοελληνικής Αναγέννησης. Ανασταίνοντας την αρχαία τραγωδία, κάνοντας να ηχήσει το βυζαντινό μέλος μαζί με τα χορικά της, οργανώνοντας την πρώτη έκθεση λαϊκής τέχνης (…) οι Σικελιανοί διακήρυξαν την πίστη τους στην αδιάσπαστη συνέχεια του ελληνισμού.

(Prevelakis in Ursa Minor, p. 51)

8.1 p. 205
Είχαμε μια ευκαιρία μοναδική να θυμίσουμε σ’ ολόκληρη την ανθρωπότητα την ουσία της πατρίδας μας κι ο Παπαϊωάννου την άρπαξε. Δεν διηγήθηκε την ιστορία μας. Με όρκο στην ιστορία δημιούργησε ένα θέαμα υψηλής αισθητικής, αισθήσεων και αισθημάτων. Ένα ποιητικό σύμπαν, φταιμένο σήμερα, από σύγχρονους Έλληνες. (…) Σύμβολα ξεχασμένα, μύθοι ανθεκτικοί (…) συλλάβισαν την ελληνική περιπέτεια.

(Tsihias, 2004, p. 20)

8.1 p. 209
Για μας η Εύα Σικελιανού ήταν ένας φωτεινός οδηγός. Όλοι όσοι ασχολήθηκαμε με την εθνική παράδοση της Ελλάδας (…) όλοι από την Εύα πήραμε τις πρώτες καταβολές, γιατί πραγματικά η Εύα λάτρευε την ελληνική παράδοση «την ψυχή της Ελλάδας», όπως έλεγε, και πίστεψε στην παγκοσμίωτη της Ελλάδας και της ορθοδοξίας.

(Karras in Fessa, 2004 p. 40)

8.2 p. 210
Μέσα από την πρωτεύκι αικανότητά του να διατηρεί και να αναπροσαρμόζει νέα σημαντικά σε παλαιά σημαίνοντα (…) ο ελληνικός χορός στους αιώνες έχει λειτουργήσει ως η κατ’ εξοχήν σταθερή και συνδετική σπουδαίκη στήλη για την διάσωση πολύμορφων πολιτισμικών ρευστών από την ζωή, την τέχνη και τη γλώσσα, τα οποία διαφορετικά θα είχαν χαθεί.

(Lekkas, 2003, p. 57)

Chapter 9

9.1 p. 228
Δεν είναι τυχαίο ότι οι κυριότεροι, οι πιο ζωτικοί, ζωγράφοι, ποιητές και μονακοί, που προτοποτάστησαν στις καλλιτεχνικές ζωικάς της εποχής μας και δώσανε με την προσωπικότητά τους τον τόνο στην πνευματική μας ζωή, βρίσκονται σήμερα συγκεντρωμένοι γύρω από τη Ράλλο Μάνου και τη Σχολή της.

(Elytis in Fessa 2004, p. 270)
9.1 p. 228
Η τεχνική, όμως, είναι μόνον το μέσο. Η τέχνη είναι ο σκοπός. Πώς μπορεί, όπως νομίζω πως πρέπει, η δική μας τέχνη να είναι ελληνική; Δε θα πει αυτό πως οι χορευτές μας θα φορούν τσαρούχια και φουστανέλες. Η ελληνικότητα δεν είναι εξωτερικό γνώρισμα, όπτε θέμα υποκοστίτας. Είναι κάτι που το έχεις στο αίμα σου. Το 'χεις ή δεν το 'χεις. Ούτε το θέμα π. χ. Μιας χορογραφίας παίζει πάντα ουσιαστικό ρόλο. Πολλοί ξένοι χορογράφοι εμπνέουνται από ελληνικά θέματα, χωρίς το αποτέλεσμα να εκφράζει αναγκαστικά Ελλάδα. Αναφέρω συχνά μια φράση από το κείμενο της Μάρθας Γκράχαμ: το αίμα μας θυματά. Υποσυνείδητα δηλαδή φέρνω μέσα μου την παράδοση.

(Manou in Fessa, 2004, p. 274-275)

Πώς θα κρατήσουμε το δικό μας πρόσωπο, το στυλ μας, τα ιδιαίτερα χαρακτηριστικά μας, εκείνα που μας ξεχωρίζουν και μας επιτρέπουν να κάνουμε έργο πρωτότυπο;

(Manou in Fessa, 2004, p. 275)

9.1 p. 229
Το ελληνικό χορόδραμα είναι μια ομάδα ανθρώπων της Τέχνης, όπου ο καθένας αντιμετωπίζει από την προσωπική του περιοχή την υπόθεση του χορού με τις ιδιαίτερες απαιτήσεις που παρουσιάζει στον τόπο μας, και αποφασίζουν κατόπιν ολοί μαζί, συμφωνώντας σε βασικές γραμμές, να συμβάλουν σε μια οργανωμένη ελληνική χορευτική εκδήλωση.

(Hatzidakis and Manou in Fessa, 2004, p. 270)

9.4 p. 241
Είναι ένα πλέγμα που ριζώνει στον τόπο μας, το πώς μας βλέπουν οι ξένοι. Και οι σχέσεις μας μαζί τους ή οι δικές τους σχέσεις μαζί μας, επηρεάζουν συνήθως την εικόνα που βάζουμε μπροστά στην ταινία μας. Η βιάση μας να τους στάσουμε, αλλά και η αντιπαράταξή μας συχνά μαζί τους με βάση την καταγωγή μας, προέρχονται από το ίδιο αυτό αρχικό πλέγμα.

(Vacalo, 1983, pp. 13-14)

9.5 p. 245
Με αυτή τη γιορτή που δημιουργήσε ο Παπαϊωάννου αποδείχθηκε ότι υπάρχει και μεγάλος νεοελληνικός πολιτισμός με μεγάλη πνευματική δημιουργία σε όλους τους τομείς της τέχνης, της ζωγραφικής, της μουσικής, της ποίησης και του χορού που δημιουργήσαν ο Ελίτης, ο Σεφέρης, ο Τσαρούχης, ο Μόραλης, ο Θεοδωράκης, ο Χατζιδάκης, ο Ζαρχάκος, ο Σαββίδουλος με τα μεγάλα τους τραγούδια και που ανέδειξαν τη λαϊκή μουσική, που με αυτή απέκτησαν συνείδηση οι Έλληνες. Νομίζω ότι αν αυτοί δεν είχαν δημιουργηθεί με ελληνικό τρόπο μετά τον πόλεμο, δεν θα είχα χάσει αυτή τη γιορτή με αυτό τον τρόπο γιατί δεν θα είχαμε νεώτερη παράδοση.

(Fasianos, 2004, p. 9)
Οι Ελευθεροί Πολιορκημένοι μου δεν έχουν σχέση με τις λανθασμένες ή μονομερείς ερμηνείες που μαθαίνουμε στο σχολείο. Δεν μιλούν απλώς για τον προοιμό. Με αφορμή την πολιορκία του Μεσολογγίου μιλούν για κάτι άλλο, για την υπέρβαση του ανθρώπου αλλά και την αγονία του δημιουργού.

Το προκλητικό μέρος της παράστασης, τα πρώτα δέκα λεπτά, είναι καθαρό πολιτικό statement και είναι αποφασισμένο να είναι έτσι. Πιθανές χρησιμοποιείς «επικίνδυνα» σύμβολα, όπως η σημαία ή ο τσολάς, που μπορεί να ενοχλήσουν κάποιους, πρέπει να είσαι σίγουρος γιατί το κάνεις.

(Rigos in Kaltaki, 2006, p. 29)

**note 4**

Η έννοια του παραδοσιακού (traditional) που ασκείται από ομάδες οριζόμενες με βάση την τοπικότητα της καταγωγής τους και η έννοια του δημιοφύλου (popular), που αφορά ένα συγκεκριμένο επίπεδο έκφρασης και ψυχαγωγίας του γενικού αστικοποιημένου πληθυσμού ανεξάρτητα από τοπικότητες. Ανάμεσα σε αυτές τις κατηγορίες (...) έχει εμφάνιση την ενδιάμεση και μεταχειματική περιοχή του αστικολαϊκού.

(Tyrovola in Lekkas, 2003, pp. 127)

**note 17**

Εμφανής η τσαρουχική αισθητική. Σε αυτή βασίζεται ο Παπαϊωάννου για να εξορκίσει τα κραγαλές αντιδεότα της ντόπιας κουλτούρας, αναπλάθοντας τις εικόνες με τη συναισθηματική γλώσσα –ή γλυκεράδα- ενός πάρκου ελληνικής ντίσνεκλαντ.

(Diamadakou, 2004, p. 10-11)

**note 65**

Τα πρώτα τέσσερα απο τον κοντά; μπορείτε στο λάντου μοιχεί, που χαροπαλέυει και να ακούσετε όλη την κλίμακα των συναισθημάτων του.

(Metaxas in Trivizas, 1996, p 147, cited in Dascalothanasis, 2000, p. 67)

**note 81**

Με γοητεύει το βαθύ, εσωτερικό νόημα της τραγωδίας και γυρεών, στο μέτρο των δυνατότητών μου, να αποδώσω με την όρχηση τα πανανθρώπινα συναισθήματα των χαρακτήρων του αρχαίου δράματος.

(Manou cited in Fessa, 2004, p. 272)

**note 91**

Η κοσμοπολιτική εκτέλεση του χορού του Ζορμπά μπροστά στο μονοπρόσωπο «θεατήριο» ενός αλλοδαπού αυτού που καλείται να συμμετάσχει, δηλώνοντας έτσι νέες δυναμικές όχι μόνο της ατομικής ταυτότητας, αλλά και της διαλεκτικής
προέκτασης της ετερότητας και της ιστορικότητας και της τελικής αναίρεσης των τριών.

(Lekkas 2003, p. 57)

note 93
Όσο την τάξη στην Ελλάδα την κρατούν οι ξένοι, οι τάσεις αυτές επιπλέουν.

(Vacalo, 1983, p. 13)

Part 4

Chapter 11

11.3 p. 289
Στους φετινούς τάχα και Ολυμπιακούς Αγώνες οι Έλληνες δαπανήσαμε αφειδόλευτα το πενήντα μας κομμάτια, υποθεκάδεντας και το μέλλον μας για κάμποσα χρόνια. Γιατί το κάναμε; Μα για να δείξουμε πόσο σπουδαίοι υπήρξαμε στο παρελθόν και πόσο εκμοντερνισμένοι είμαστε σήμερα.

(Yiannaras, 2004, p 18)

note 16
(....) έτσι που ένα σημαντικό μέρος του Ελληνισμού να διαχωρίζεται από τις υπόλοιπες εθνικές κοινότητες της Οθωμανικής αυτοκρατορίας όχι μόνον εθνικά αλλά και κοινωνικά, αφού αποτέλεσε για μεγάλο χρονικό διάστημα, την αστική τάξη των χωρών αυτών.

(Svoronos, 1999, p. 16)
Appendix B.

The Ceremony's Structural Layout: Two Versions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>DVD</th>
<th>Thesis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Countdown</td>
<td>Countdown</td>
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<td>Welcoming</td>
<td>Welcoming</td>
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<td>National Anthem</td>
<td>Presentation of the Flag</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centaur</td>
<td>Allegory</td>
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<td>Eros</td>
<td>Lovers</td>
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<td>Historical Retrospection</td>
<td>Clepsydra</td>
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<td>Birth</td>
<td>DNA</td>
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<td>Athletes' Parade</td>
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<td>Greek Team</td>
<td>Olympic History</td>
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<td>Olympic Cities</td>
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<td>Olympic Flag</td>
<td>Lighting of the Olympic Flame</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flame</td>
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</table>
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**Video-DVD.**


__________ *The Triumph of Will (Triumf des Willens)*, [film], 1935.