CULTURE, IDENTITY AND THE LIBERAL NATION-STATE
EXPLORING 'DIFFERENCE' & THE POSSIBILITY OF CHANGE THROUGH
THE 'HARD CASE' OF GREECE

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PhD in Sociology – The University of Edinburgh – 2006
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is all my own work. All consulted resources have been acknowledged and referenced appropriately.

Anna Efstatthiou
July 2006
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This thesis sets out to enrich theoretical understanding of culture and identity in times when both concepts have resurfaced with increased potency both in relevant theoretical literature and in contestation over social and political action. The intractability in the real world of problems associated with culture and identity is reflected in impasses in theoretical understanding. This study was nourished by the belief that were a better understanding of the persistence of culture and ‘difference’ as sources of theoretical, social and political puzzlement to be developed, the intimate links between theory and practice in matters of culture and identity would need to be revaluated and those areas of theory with such concepts at their heart might be fruitfully reconsidered. Hence in this thesis a grounded theory approach to the study of difference in a particular context was chosen, with theories of the nation and aspects of the liberal theoretical framework setting the theoretical background for an illustrative case-study.

The case chosen here is that of Greece, a ‘hard case’ both for theoretical understanding and for social change. In this thesis, the complexity surrounding that specific context is brought into ever sharper focus, with each level of analysis revealing different aspects of the issues under consideration. First, important historical developments are presented, followed by an exploration of how those developments reveal the genesis and perpetuation of dominant discourses of Greekness. Within contemporary Greece, the institution of the Cultural Olympiad was selected as a pertinent environment in which to explore the current development of dominant ‘national’ discourses of identity. Within contemporary Greece, the institution of the Cultural Olympiad was selected as a pertinent environment in which to explore the current development of dominant ‘national’ discourses of identity. These latter are further analysed to identify whether they are perpetuated only in conventional ways or whether their varying manifestations reveal a changing differentiation within dominant understandings. Finally, the thesis revisits the issues that first prompted this detailed investigation of the case of Greece.

First, the ways in which relevant theory may be informed are examined. Then the substantive argument is advanced that change may be inherent within specific environments themselves (and should not simply be seen as a possible result of contact between differing traditions). Furthermore, if change inheres within a tradition, attitudes to ‘difference’ may also be open to internal negotiation and positive modification. To respect this insight, and to build on it for practice, would require a re-appreciation of the impact of group history and culture upon individual lives and the initiation of political action based on the potential for change in particular contexts.
INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with advancing theorising about the impact of culture in the construction and development of identity. To focus on discussions of culture and identity may seem out of theoretical fashion at a time when issues pertaining to either a globalised culture or postmodern hybridity are at the forefront of debate. Indeed, 'culture' and 'identity' are more often than not criticised by theorists as mere essentialisations. Paradoxically, though, a theoretical distancing from such concepts has coincided with their aggressive resurfacing in many people's everyday lives around the globe. Since the latter part of the twentieth century the world has witnessed changes that have dramatically altered both its map and its accessibility to differing people. Disorientation and disruption of traditional frameworks have brought to the surface sensitivity to particular group-memberships, especially when those groups are perceived as 'cultural', 'ethnic' or 'national', as well as to all identity-related categories. Real and symbolic anti-colonial struggles have exposed conditions of diversity even in places previously perceived as predominantly homogeneous, with that apparent homogeneity revealed to be latent hegemony. The context of analysis has thus been crucially modified in ways that analysis cannot ignore. This thesis is precisely concerned with those for whom identity and culture are still not negotiable, and their treatment in theory.

So a further concern of the thesis is to make particular links between theory and practice and explore the possibility of examining particularly 'hard cases' in order to inform some of the conundra which beset general theory, which so often has had universalising aspirations. In doing so, earlier approaches to theory in which culture was more readily appreciated may require revisiting. This implies some reconsideration of disputes within liberal theory and theories of the nation. For example, whilst categories such as culture and identity may be treated straightforwardly by some intellectuals or politicians in the name of terminological clarity and group differentiation respectively (with varying degrees of sophistication and subtlety), that clarity seldom obtains in practice. The task here therefore is to re-establish in theory those subtle complexities of both culture and
identity which are matters of contestation in the real world. In Robert Young’s words: “The question is whether the old essentializing categories of cultural identity, or of race, were really so essentialized, or have been retrospectively constructed as more fixed than they were” (quoted in Friedman 1999: 235).

It is therefore a starting point in this research that culture and identity are of much more than academic importance. They impact forcefully on how people conceptualise and construe their particular reality. As Friedman forcefully puts it: “Culture is supremely negotiable for professional culture experts, but for those whose identity depends upon a particular configuration this is not the case. Identity is not negotiable. Otherwise, it has no existence” (1992: 852). The difficulty, of course, lies in constructing theory in ways that remain sensitive to such ‘particular configurations’. In order to achieve this kind of sensitivity to particular contexts on the ground, an approach on four levels is chosen with each level concentrating on shedding a different light on the issues of culture and identity. In other words, each level of analysis approaches those difficult categories of culture and identity from a different angle. Were we to depict this kind of analysis, it could take the form of concentric circles with each subsequent level of analysis concentrating on a more concrete kind of information. In brief: first relevant theory will be located and explored. Secondly, the ‘hard case’ of Greece will be introduced through its contemporary history and the historiography and the discourses of ‘Greekness’ that this history supports. Thirdly, a specific institution within contemporary Greece, the Cultural Olympiad, will be chosen and described as an optimal field for the investigation of specific translations of culture and identity in the present. Fourthly, the theatre-projects developed within the framework of the Cultural Olympiad will be studied in detail, examining whether dominant discourses identified throughout the country’s history still remain pertinent, in what form and to what extent. The whole project moves out again in the final chapter where initial theory will be revisited based on the multiple levels of information obtained on the ground.
More specifically:

On a first level, the theoretical framework at the root of this thesis’ concerns will be explored. It is true of course that the same questions may be approached through theoretical frameworks different than those here proposed. Nevertheless a reconsideration of disputes within liberal theory and theories of the nation remains of primary importance. Quite clearly, the pervasiveness of ideas developed within these frameworks for both theory and practice is beyond dispute and it is those same frameworks that the writer wishes to revisit at the end of this work in order to investigate whether there is potential for reconsideration of the important theoretical questions at the heart of this thesis. In the first chapter then, the argument will open with a discussion on how liberal theory and theories of nationalism attempt to deal with those questions of culture and identity which are the focus of this work (questions which will be returned to as it progresses). Particularly at stake will be the potential of liberal theory to take adequate account of cultural context in the development of identity in conditions where a sense of culture is still both strong and pervasive. First, the theoretical treatment of concepts of culture and identity will be revisited. Then, since these questions seem to have their natural home in theories of nationalism, the importance ascribed by such theories to culture in general and ‘national culture’ in particular will be discussed. Next, the differing attempts of liberal theory to accord importance to ‘culture and identity’ without compromising its basic principles will be examined as will the potential of theories of nationalism to inform what appears to be an intractable problem for liberal theory. In pursuit of a deeper link between theory and practice that first chapter concludes with a discussion of the concepts of civil society and the public sphere, as well as the arguably more promising concept of public culture.

Within such a general theoretical framework, the case of Greece is chosen because it is a ‘hard’ one. It is a case in which culture is predominantly perceived in public rhetoric and theoretical investigation as very influential in the ways identity/-ies do and/or should develop. Complexity arises from the specific culture’s tight links to a very rich and complex history. And the Greek case reveals a series of dominant discourses with deep
cultural implications referencing that history. The perceived weighty historical legacy of Greece tends to have led theorists to overlook the potential of the Greek case to contribute to theoretical advancement in matters of culture and identity. However, this author believes that historicity does not have to coincide with fixity or inability to respond to changes in population and geopolitical situation. Despite their historical contingency, discourses rooted in a country’s dominant national narrative may still contain the germ for positive change in a more ‘liberal’ direction – liberal in its aspirations, that is, rather than in any particular political implementation.

The case of Greece allows us to “address major issues but from a Greek perspective” (cf. Gallant 1997: 214) and may allow development of theory which could be exportable to other contexts. It has been maintained in literature that “it is often difficult for native scholars to become conscious of, let alone, to liberate themselves from, the assumptions of their own culture. It is the burden of culture that conditions one to look at the world in one way and not another” (Karakasidou 1997: xix). However it should be said, since the author of this thesis is Greek, that being an insider to the culture under investigation does not necessarily present a problem – quite the contrary may be true. Being an insider may offer easier access to aspects of meaning which might escape a complete outsider (Indeed, to subscribe to a total conditioning by culture understood as a closed system of codes would go against some of the main principles upon which this thesis is based).

The second level of investigation consists in a schematic summary of the history of the chosen ‘hard case’, Greece. Besides important events pertinent to the country’s recent history, important discourses of cultural identity will also be discerned. Beyond historical facts these discourses are revealed as perpetuated through the ways history is narrated and understood or, to put it simply, through the country’s historiography. This level of approach highlights the importance of a particular environment’s historical development and the ways in which that development impacts upon the specific translation of the concepts of culture and identity.
In the second chapter then, the history of the environment being studied will be sketched. A brief and selective historical investigation of Greece aims both to highlight its historical particularities and to provide a 'thick description' of the case within the case; i.e. the Cultural Olympiad, an institution developed within Greece. The complexity of Greece’s past will point to the multiple ways in which this environment might inform some of the theoretical questions that lie at the heart of this thesis. It will be shown that this is an environment ‘rife with history’ with the latter creating and perpetuating, be it only in historiographical or popular imagination, a series of important discourses of cultural identity which are renourished in different times by distinct historical events.

In the third chapter, dominant discourses concerning Greek national identity will be unveiled. It will be claimed that these discourses are rooted in historical developments as identified in chapter two and that they are highly influential in the construction and development of contemporary Greek identity. First, the prominent local belief in Greek in-betweeness, i.e. in a geographical and conceptual positioning between West and East, is reported. Within this dominant paradigm, two sets of discourses are broadly identified: those linking Greekness to ‘the West’ and those linking it to ‘the East’. This move is useful for analytical purposes, although in practice interpenetration is the rule rather than the exception. That interpenetration refers not only to geography but also to those theoretical claims where geographical categorisation is implicated. Finally in that third chapter, the potential exportability of lessons which might be learned from the Greek case will be investigated.

Dominant discourses in contemporary Greece will be studied through cultural policy. A discussion of the tensions between a will for change and the actual implementation of change as demonstrated through specific policies will illuminate the difficulties in reconciling a national past and a multicultural present. The fourth chapter therefore turns to the institutional environment chosen to advance this study: the Cultural Olympiad. Hence, on a third level of analysis, a contemporary environment within the general case of Greece will be introduced. It is in this sense that the Cultural Olympiad is a case within the case. The suitability of the CO for a study concentrating on important discourses of
culture and identity will be demonstrated in chapter four. This institution was instigated by the Greek government when the Athens 2004 Olympic Games were in prospect. The Cultural Olympiad (which will be referred to below as the CO) was judged a very promising field of study for several reasons. First, it involved actors from different backgrounds and positions, with differing purposes and functions. Secondly, it was focused mainly on the portrayal and renewal of Greek culture and Greek identity. Thirdly, it exemplified the challenge, intractable as will be seen, of combining internationalism with quintessential Greekness.

The case of the Cultural Olympiad is further developed in chapter five, where particular focus on the development of theatre projects will be explained and defended. A fourth level of investigation then consists in examining the manifestation of different discourses identified in Greece’s history/historiography through a study of the development of theatre projects within the framework of the Cultural Olympiad. In chapter five, the choice of theatre as an analytical field is defended and its ability to function as a paradigmatic field of study for both Greece and the CO is shown. The sixth chapter pursues the discourses in question through CO documentation on the development of theatre-projects, looking at just how such discourses are deployed. After outlining the methodological principles applied in the investigation of specific discourses, it will be suggested that as well as the primary discourses of Greekness, differing manifestations of such discourses within the environment studied should also be identified. The contention is that dominant national discourses do not remain unchanged through time despite their roots in history or historiography. Rather they are influenced by changes in the environment in which they unfold, developing in ways either oblivious or sensitive to such changes. Also, the diverse manifestations of dominant discourses may be either conventional or unanticipated and whilst both historical and institutional frameworks seem to reflect particular understandings, there is still room for creativity. Indeed current concerns and conditions prompt variation in how discourses manifest themselves. That variation, even if not dominant, must be acknowledged as it has implications for the development of dominant discourses today and for the different levels of exportability of the specific case studied here.
The multi-layered approach is brought together in a final chapter which highlights the relevance of each level of consideration for a better appreciation of the theoretical framework under scrutiny. Thus the thesis concludes with a review of how far the thesis as a whole, the ‘hard’ case of Greece and the ‘case within the case’, i.e. the Cultural Olympiad, can contribute to a better understanding of how we might theorise culture and identity for the world of today, with chapter seven returning to the questions that first prompted the investigation. Suggestions are made there for developing a more context-sensitive theoretical framework for understanding identity construction, with the influence of ‘the nation’ a key element, based on a constructive critique of the theorising investigated in chapter one, combined with a revalidation of the pervasiveness of potent national discourses in the construction of identity. That chapter also attempts to further refine theorising about the potential of identities to redefine themselves and an approach is proposed which would be based on the investigation of the unpredictable ways in which people express and use their understanding of identity.

The intention of this thesis is that the proposed analysis, although complex, should serve to inform theory based on what is happening on the ground in a hard-case context. It is also hoped that the approach taken in this thesis may be exportable to other contexts.
CHAPTER 1: INITIAL THEORY DISCUSSION: UNRAVELLING CULTURAL IDENTITY

1. Introduction

As noted in the general introduction, this thesis as a whole hopes to advance theorising about the importance of culture in the construction and development of identity. Therefore a consideration of previous theoretical work on 'culture' and 'identity' and of the broader theories of nationalism and those aspects of the liberal framework pertaining to debates on 'culture' and 'identity' is required. The broader theoretical context and the assumptions to which it has given rise form the framework against which any exercise consisting in the study of a specific case and/or a specific environment must proceed.

*Culture* is a term with a rather long and complicated history in the social sciences. On the other hand, *identity* rather recently entered the world of social analysis, in comparison to other categories. Hall, for instance, notes that "the introduction of "identity" into social analysis and its initial diffusion in the social sciences and public discourse occurred in the United States in the 1960s (with some anticipations in the second half of the 1950s)" (1990: 2). The proliferation of work on both terms, though, has been such that in a matter of decades both terms seem to have come full circle: from bewilderment, to infatuation, to intensity, to malaise, to repudiation. Admittedly, that fall from grace concerns 'identity' more than 'culture'. However, when identity is referred to as cultural, critique of the former often serves also to discount the latter. Both terms and their even more problematic combination have been accused both of essentialising certain types of belonging and of offering analytically too little for areas of analysis which are in reality vast and differentiated. This situation is frequently further aggravated by the introduction of the category of 'the nation' into discussions of identity and culture. This chapter will first attempt to expose the reasons why identity and culture have increasingly become the objects of so much theoretical frustration, then will interrogate areas of social theory in which considerations of identity and culture are prominent. These are theories of nationalism and some of the basic tenets of liberalism.
In their article *Beyond “identity”*, Brubaker and Cooper write:

“Social analysis – including the analysis of identity politics – requires relatively unambiguous analytical categories. Whatever its suggestiveness, whatever its indispensability in certain practical contexts, “identity” is too ambiguous, too torn between “hard” and “soft” meanings, essentialist connotations and constructivist qualifiers, to serve well the demands of social analysis” (2000: 2).1

The tone is clear and does not allow any misunderstanding. ‘Identity’ and ‘culture’ give too little for too much. However, already five decades ago Deutsch perceived that: “The kind of thing that is transmitted through the channels of culture is exceedingly hard to describe” (1953: 90). And as recently as in 1990 Hall re-echoes this:

“Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a ‘production’, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. This view problematises the very authority and authenticity to which the term, ‘cultural identity’, lays claim” (1990: 222).

So how did this change from considering these terms as relatively unproblematic to realising their complexity occur? It is not only the realisation that in practice considerations of identity as fixed have been damaging, but also that in theory they have tended to overlook the point that “no terminology should try to be more accurate than life” (Deutsch 1953: 89).

The prerequisite of non-ambiguity referred to above by Brubaker and Cooper, as well as the intensification of efforts to distinguish between what they call (broadly drawing on Bourdieu) ‘categories of analysis’ and ‘categories of practice’, has led to a situation where references to identity and culture and their even more problematic combination are seen to require justification and qualification. Brubaker and Cooper clarify the fact that what they are criticising is the use of the term ‘identity’ as an analytical category, problematic in including too much or too little, especially in the latter case. However, it is

1 Also Hearn writes: “Culture and identity are slippery concepts, often drafted into service when the processes under consideration are poorly understood” (2000a: 9).
hard to see how categories of practice and categories of analysis can be so neatly separated. Rather, features of practice penetrate analysis in ways of which we may not be aware and this is unavoidable since the worlds of practice and analysis are interlinked. Indeed, by concentrating too much on terms, we run the risk of reducing our understanding of what makes lives meaningful. Of course the parallel use of the same words both inside and outside the academy is an issue which bedevils most sociological terms. However, with ‘culture’ and ‘identity’ it reaches its peak. And yet, culture and identity cannot be considered as purely theoretical terms, divorced from how they are used by people in their everyday interaction and from their importance to them. It is not to endorse any essentialising of perceptions of ‘the people’ to assert that ‘culture’ and ‘identity’ form part of most individuals’ self-understandings – even if only to distance themselves from very particularistic positions. Indeed, dispensing with notions of culture and identity probably runs counter to our intuitions regarding the ways the world is currently developing.

Although in much theoretical work the tendency has been to underestimate the importance of culture and identity as mere essentialisations (though the seriousness with which they are considered varies), in this thesis on the other hand earlier theorisations of culture and identity which have recently returned to the fore will be considered, in an attempt to remain sensitive to the situation and interests of those for whom ‘identity’ and ‘culture’ are not perceived as entirely negotiable. It is arguable that in both practice and theory, in both experience and its problematisation, we still live to a great extent with the legacy of previous times and previous debates. Therefore, before trying to advance or even see beyond these latter, they must be acknowledged and presented, since in those debates ‘identity’ and ‘culture’ had not yet acquired their later connotations.

Since ‘culture’ and ‘identity’ are concepts implicated in many debates, this thesis will try to take our understanding forward by bringing into particular focus theories of nationalism and some aspects of the liberal framework of social and political theory. This is appropriate because debate about the salience of ‘culture’ and ‘identity’ lies at the heart of key controversies in nationalism theory and of intractable problems within the liberal
framework which are impossible to ignore in the geopolitical conditions of today's world. Those controversies and problems are further exacerbated by various dialogues of the deaf, caused in part by a tendency to conflate questions which should be distinguished and in part by the failure entirely to repudiate universal solutions. These theoretical problems have consequences, in turn, for the ways in which we conceptualise the discourses and structures of culture and identity. Consequently, it should be acknowledged that if progress is to be made in inquiries into culture and identity, that can most usefully start from the difficulties (often acknowledged) that these concepts present for both nationalism theory and liberalism itself. Indeed, some of those debates offer both powerful insights and complex attempts to illuminate the issues which are at the heart of this thesis. Hence relevant aspects of those areas of theory provide 'sounding boards' against which findings from the present work are measured as well as being the theoretical frameworks within which their importance can be assessed.

The two areas of theorising to be considered have differing relevance for the problems in hand. Although nationalism took some time to come to theoretical prominence, due in part to its catastrophic and guilt-infused connotations during the first half of the last century, its various forms and understandings have since been discussed voluminously. Liberalism and the adequacy of its different forms, on the other hand, have preoccupied theorists for decades. Theories of nationalism are of interest to the present discussion because of their concern with 'the nation' or one of its derivatives – nationalism, nationality, nationhood etc. – which unavoidably imply some acknowledgement of 'milieu' and 'belonging'. Through the concept of 'the nation', 'culture' and 'identity' often enter discussions of nationalism – the former as some kind of community (imagined or not) and the latter as being affected by the existence of this community (admittedly in various forms and degrees). Meanwhile, liberal theory is of particular interest to this work in its struggles to take culture and identity seriously without detriment to the autonomy of the individual. Furthermore, of particular pertinence are the difficulties which arise when theories of liberalism are applied to conditions of diversity, since such cases do not allow blindness or indifference to culture. For liberal theory since its inception has had practical aspirations, hence its importance to this thesis.
The alleged tension between the specificity of national identities and the universality of liberal ideals had led many theorists in recent decades to attempt a reconciliation of the two. Thus, those two areas of theory – nationalism and the liberal framework – often find themselves in dialogue. Furthermore, in an attempt to address, in both principle and practice, the problems posed by multicultural (nation-)states with regard to cultural allegiance and its respect, both areas of theorising have turned to the possibility of a twofold conceptualisation of nationalism: the civic and the ethnic. As Hearn puts it, “it has been common to make the distinction between ‘ethnic’ and ‘civic’ forms of nationalism, the former involving beliefs in biological and cultural essentialisms, the latter involving commitments to ideas of citizenship and the rule of law” (2000a: 7). Even when a position between these two poles is taken, which acknowledges a certain overlapping or coexistence of civic and ethnic elements in real life situations, the distinction itself seems to reflect an implied judgement of ‘civic’ as ‘good’ and ‘ethnic’ as ‘bad’, or ‘civic’ as ‘inclusive’ and ‘ethnic’ as ‘exclusive’. That, in turn, often arises from attempts to address the question of how a group (nation or other) might desirably be bound together – thus straying from description to prescription. The distinction is further often mapped along geographical lines which identify ethnicness with the East and civicness with the West.2

After questioning the adequacy of that distinction, the last section of the chapter addresses the practical applicability of theory across the spectrum of the triptych state – society – individual, since this work aspires to being a sensitive approach to particular contexts. The concepts of civil society and the public sphere as ways of portraying public participation in society will be examined, and the concept of public culture is suggested as more promising for examining the ways in which a shared understanding of identity is maintained and nurtured in the public domain. (Such a public culture will be shown later in the thesis both to inform and be informed by public policy).

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2 Such mapping is also important to this thesis in view of the popular pervasiveness of a belief in Greek in-betweeness.
It is necessary to be clear at the outset what is intended here by the key concepts of 'identity' and 'culture'. Clarity is important although stipulative definition must be avoided, since clearly this skews debate and influences perceptions of differing contexts. The experience of everyday life is of course much messier than theory can often portray, as in real life a complex individual positioning between different aspects of identity is both conscious and unconscious. Indeed, for most concepts implicated in discussions of identity there is a complicated interplay between what 'I' believe about 'me', what others believe about me and what others believe about themselves.

Further difficulties lie with identifying important identity-constitutive factors and their relative preponderance. Race, religion, community or culture, class/social background, gender and age are some of the most commonly accepted constituents. To disentangle the relative influence of such factors on different individuals might be an impossible task but a range of possible influences which each factor offers in particular conditions (some more open than others) can be discerned. In this project the parameters available in relation to the cultural/national context will be examined. To say that, however, is not to presume that context is unalterable. What is mainly called into question by accepting that identity formation is necessarily embedded in some or other cultural context is the degree to which the impact of that context can be an object of choice, for context is something which neither subjects nor objects of analysis can escape. Despite this, cultural embeddedness is not necessarily restrictive. It can be both fortunate and creative for subjects and objects of analysis alike. Identity then is considered "not as a 'given' but as a 'task'" (cf. Bauman 2001: 124).

Denotations of 'culture' range from a restricted understanding of culture as artistic production to conceptualisations which consider culture as a repertoire of ideas, beliefs, sentiments, prejudices, norms, values, symbols, icons etc. As Friedman puts it, the problem often "is not the attribution of a fixed set of properties to a given population, but the assumption that this set of properties is somehow not the result of practice but an inherent property of the individual members of the population" (1999: 235). With respect to this it may well be that a contextual consideration of both organisation and history can
challenge the static perception of culture which Friedman draws attention to and can also account for both the persistence and the transformation of cultural features. Parekh, for instance, defines culture as "a way of both understanding and organising human life"; as a "historically created system of beliefs and practices in terms of which a group of human beings understand, regulate and structure their individual and collective lives" (2000: 143). An empirically testable version of Parekh's conceptualisation might consist in a consideration of culture as the sustenance of understanding and organisation through communication and community.

Seen this way, culture can be usefully be thought of as a narrative, a set of discourses, a way of constructing meanings which influence our actions and even our conception of ourselves. Within the framework of this thesis such an understanding will be brought into dialogue with the more restricted meaning of culture as artistic production and cultural policy. That focus on cultural policy may be justified in two ways. Firstly, cultural policy has received less attention than say immigration, labour or education policy regarding its potential to provide clues to an investigation of national identity in general and Greekness in particular. Secondly, cultural policy is very often seen to carry the potential to changing existing conceptions of national identity. Hall acknowledges this, arguing that representation also functions as reconstitution:

"We have been trying to theorise identity as constituted, not outside but within representation; and hence of cinema, not as a second-order mirror held up to reflect what already exists, but as that form of representation which is able to constitute us as new kind of subjects, and thereby enable us to discover places from which to speak" (1990: 236-237).

Taking into consideration that the case study below will focus on theatre projects, Hall's comment is important as it reveals also the transformative potential of artistic representation, showing it to be more than a mere elitist exercise.

As noted at the outset, the concepts of ‘culture’ and ‘identity’ are most fruitfully examined in the framework of theories of the nation and relevant aspects of liberal theory before these two areas of theorising are brought into dialogue. The first task therefore is to consider nationalism theory.

2. Nationalism and belonging

As noted above, nationalism theory has come to the top of the theoretical agenda relatively recently in comparison with the development of the liberal framework itself. Nonetheless, its current importance is evident and its debates highly relevant to today’s world and particularly to this thesis. Without making reference to those early discourses of blood and biology, culture and identity enter discussions about the nation in various forms – as, for instance, in Anthony Smith’s ethno-symbolic approach. Smith differentiates between ethnies and nations, which he is cautious to identify as only “the pure or ideal types of both these kinds of collective cultural identity”. Thus, an ethnie, the pre-national entity, is defined

“as a named community of shared origin myths, memories and one or more element(s) of common culture, including an association with a specific territory” whilst “a nation as a named community possessing an historic territory, shared myths and memories, a common public culture and common laws and customs” (2002: 14-15).

Smith’s main preoccupation seems to remain the chronology of national development and the evolution of ethnie into nation. However he also talks of cultural identity and community linked by elements of myths, memories and common culture.

Even if Smith has objections to Walker Connor’s position as expressed in his seminal article “Beyond Reason: The Nature of the Ethnonational Bond”, they do tread some common ground as far as their understanding of the nation’s experience is concerned.


Thus Connor, too, differentiates between ethnicity and nation with the latter being the “awareness” of the former (cf. 1993: 388). In Connor, the essence of the nation “is a psychological bond that joins a people and differentiates it, in the subconscious conviction of its members, from all nonmembers in a most vital way” (1993: 379). For him, nationality is an aspect of selfhood and nations aspire to statehood, although allegiance to the state cannot supplant that to the nation. He writes: “The nature and power of those abstract ties that identify the true nation remain almost unmentioned” (1993: 384). Connor then treads in the fields of identity and the subconscious and notes that individuals are inevitably born in some particular national context and may have differing feelings towards that. In the latter respect, even a theorist such as Miller, whose general approach to nationalism is rather more ‘civic’, writes: “The attitudes and beliefs that constitute nationality are very often hidden away in the deeper recesses of the mind, brought to full consciousness only by some dramatic event” (1995: 18).

In the same vein, for Hobsbawm the nation represents a last refuge when everything else is in disorder. Primarily identifying ‘hot’ forms of nationalism, he maintains that xenophobia, separatism or “the rush of fundamentalism”

“all are comprehensible as symptoms of social disorientation, of the fraying, and sometimes the snapping, of the threads of what used to be the network that bound people together in society [...]. For those who can no longer rely on belonging anywhere else, there is at least one other imagined community to which one can belong, which is permanent, indestructible, and whose membership is certain. Once again ‘the nation’, or the ethnic group6, ‘appears as the ultimate guarantee’ when society fails. You do not have to do anything to belong to it. You cannot be thrown out. You are born in it and stay in it” (1996: 264-265).

In Hroch also the group and the comfort it provides, whatever the extent of that, do exist. He writes: “in conditions of acute stress, people characteristically tend to over-value the protective comfort of their own national group” (1993: 15). Again, why the conditions of stress have to be expressed nationalistically remains unclear.

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6 Notice here also the interchangeable use of those terms.
The ‘imagined community’ theoretical framework mentioned by Hobsbawm was originally formulated by Benedict Anderson in his seminal work *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism*. There Anderson discusses the importance for the spread of nationalism of language and print-capitalism as well as of bureaucracy and the rise of different bourgeoisies. He writes:

“My point of departure is that nationality, or, as one might prefer to put it in view of that word’s multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind [...]. The creation of these artefacts towards the end of the eighteenth century was the spontaneous distillation of a complex ‘crossing’ of discrete historical forces; but that, once created, they became ‘modular’, capable of being transplanted, with varying degrees of self-consciousness, to a great variety of social terrains, to merge and be merged with a correspondingly wide variety of political and ideological constellations” (1996: 4).

Ernest Gellner’s theory, on the other hand, from which Anderson wishes to differentiate himself, seems to stem from a reaction, as Anderson well identifies it, to the legendary “Dark Gods” of nationalism (a notion originally formulated by Elie Kedourie). As Gellner puts it in later work: “Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unity should be congruent” (1983: 1). However, although he admits that it is “culture, pigmentation etc” that “provide means of exclusion for the benefit of the privileged, and a means of identification, etc, for the underprivileged” (1964: 168), he nevertheless does not explain why it has to be ‘the nation’ instead of some other pool of information that provides the tools for group differentiation – even if one agrees that it only happens in times of upheaval, modernisation and uneven development. Maybe the answer lies between the lines, as in the following repudiation:

“This [Dark Gods nationalism] picture, which is so widely diffused amongst both the friends and the enemies of nationalism, seems to me utter nonsense (even

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when it occasionally includes some sensible premises – such as the importance of the human need to belong, to identify and hence to exclude)” (Gellner 1964: 149).

Although it is not clear to what degree he accepts the influential role of those premises, Gellner still perceives them as relatively important. In that sense he also echoes Kohn who in 1945 was writing that “nationality is formed by the decision to form a nationality” (1967: 15) but also that “nationalism is a state of mind” (1967: 18) and that “nationalities [...] defy exact definition” (1967: 13).

In order to illuminate why this happens, psychology is brought into the argument by some. Thus Finlayson writes:

“the possibility of subjectivity is dependent on the presence of the collective idealisation while the collectivity is present only because of the subjects produced by identification with it [...]. What we need to do is analyse particular instances of nationalism, particular conjunctures or moments, seeking to establish the connections and inter-relationships of subjectivity and nationhood” (1998: 158).

In fact many agree on this need to study particular instances of nationalism independently of the reasons they put forward or their view of nations and nationalisms. Finlayson is echoed by Nairn when the latter writes about “the psychological structures of both adhesion and dissent, of ‘belonging’ and repudiation or innovation” (1997: 15). The discussion then turns to the nation becoming “a major component of our symbolic environment – so ubiquitous it can become hard to notice” (Finlayson 1998: 157).

The nation’s ubiquity brings a further range of arguments to the fore, namely the nation considered as communication, narrative and production. Here Deutsch’s stress on the importance of channels of communication has been important. That notwithstanding, Deutsch notes that “national consciousness, like all consciousness, can only be consciousness of something which exists” and that “behind the distortions and weird combinations there must be materials on which they could be based, or from which their elements could be derived” (1953: 173). Some forty years later, in Bhabha, the nation is seen to fill the void “left in the uprooting of communities and kin” and to turn “the loss

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8 See also the echo in Connor mentioned earlier.
into the language of metaphor. Metaphor, as the etymology of the word suggests, transfers the meaning of home and belonging, [...] across those distances and cultural differences that span the imagined community of the nation-people” (1990b: 291). This ‘sense of home’ is viewed by Billig as coming into play daily and routinely: “It is a form of reading and writing, of understanding and of taking for granted. It is a form of life in which ‘we’ are constantly invited to relax, at home, within the homeland’s borders” (1995: 127).

Whatever it may take, the nation for those who theorise it is a form of life which must be taken with full seriousness. This should not be interpreted as theories of nationalism taking the object of their investigation for granted: rather they take the experience of it for granted even if the latter may prove quite hard to describe. As Brubaker puts it, “to understand nationalism, we have to understand the practical uses of the category ‘nation’, the ways it can come to structure perception, to inform thought and experience, to organize discourse and political action” (1996:10). Theories of nationalism increasingly move nowadays towards an experiential and/or organisational approach to ‘the nation’. In fact the need to examine the ways nation, nationality, nationness or nationhood is experienced is raised in most quarters with varying degrees and differing emphases. In 1986 Smith writes: “An analysis that is at once sociological and historical may help us to grasp these meanings in their social context and to discover some of the roots of the widespread sense and intensity of national identity” (1986: 6). Ten years later Brubaker comments: “We should not ask “what is a nation” but rather: how is nationhood as a political and cultural form institutionalised within and among states? How does nation work as practical category, as classificatory scheme, as cognitive frame?” (1996: 16).

Whatever their disagreements, nationalism theorists all seem to have something in common. They take ‘the nation’ seriously; they acknowledge both its cultural grounds and its political potential and implications. Furthermore, they have now mostly moved in the direction recommended by Finlayson as follows: “We must examine instances beyond the obvious extreme manifestations of aggressive nationalism [...] recognising the prevalence of national identifications in territorially stable liberal democracies and the
interweaving of notions of national identity with a variety of levels of political discourse” (1998: 160). A further step would consist in paying serious attention to the differentiation of this experience between different actors.

Independently of how nationalism is understood, it is useful to consider how nations may be perceived as special communities and sources of identification; how they may convey a sense of belonging. Hence what remains primarily interesting about the concept of the nation is that the national cultural community is treated as the context in which the individual’s identity is developed. A serious attempt to clarify what nationhood means to those who partake in it – and how that meaning impacts on them – can better contribute to our understanding of identity than can the disregard for ‘the nation’ which tends to occur in much liberal theory.

3. Liberalism, choice and belonging

Liberal theory, since its development during the nineteenth century in Western Europe has continued to inform today’s discussions across the spectrum of political and social theory. That development has traditionally been inhospitable to a notion of the nation as a cultural community or as a given source of identification for individuals. As Fine puts it, nationalism is seen as attracting “us through images of home, hearth, warmth and love, but it displaces emotions which belong to our personal lives onto political life, and thereby robs both of their value” (1999: 154). In fact this fine line between the personal and the political, which sentiments of nationalism are often seen to trespass, has been the object of much liberal theoretical discussion. And it is in such discussions that concern with culture and identity usually arises even when not explicitly. As with nationalism theory, there is no space within the framework of this project to explore in detail all or even most different variations of liberalism. Here rather, the ways in which an acknowledgment of culture and identity seems to have influenced liberal thought will be schematically reviewed.

According to Taylor’s definition, liberalism
"understands human dignity to consist largely in autonomy, that is, in the ability of each person to determine for himself or herself a view of the good life. Dignity is associated less with any particular understanding of the good life [...] than with the power to consider and espouse for oneself some view or other [...]. A liberal society must remain neutral on the good life, and restrict itself to ensuring that however they see things, citizens deal fairly with each other and the state deals equally with all" (1992: 57; emphasis added).

In the same respect, Dworkin stresses the distinction between two kinds of moral commitment, namely "procedural" and "substantive".

"Dworkin claims that a liberal society is one that as a society adopts no particular substantive view about the ends of life. The society is, rather, united around a strong procedural commitment to treat people with equal respect [...] A liberal society must remain neutral on the good life, and restrict itself to ensuring that however they see things, citizens deal fairly with each other and the state deals equally with all" (Taylor 1992: 56-57).

Such a position has been increasingly challenged even within liberal thought.9 When individual autonomy, state neutrality, civic equality and a commitment to proceduralism are taken as the main premises, that gives rise to much debate about liberal theory’s appropriate development and its potential for practical applicability.

A subtler understanding has been prompted by awareness that in increasingly recognised conditions of multiculturalism, civic and political citizenship had failed to grow into a full social citizenship for all. As a response to such failure, minority groups on one hand have raised more vociferous claims about the liberal curtailment of their rights whilst on the other hand xenophobic reactions towards immigrants have multiplied. Delanty suggests that "the new nationalism [against immigrants] can be explained as a response to the failure of civic and political citizenship to grow into a full social citizenship" (1996: 3.3).

9 To some extent it could be also seen as yet another rephrasing of the classic private-public dichotomy which is pervasive of many theoretical stances and not only liberal ones.
In order to locate the source of such problems, some theorist have drawn attention to liberalism’s own cultural foundations, i.e. the connection between the emergence and spread of liberal thought and specific cultural environments. As Taylor put it,

"the claim is that the supposedly neutral set of difference-blind principles of the politics of equal dignity is in fact a reflection of one hegemonic culture [...]. The charge levelled by the most radical forms of the politics of difference is that “blind” liberalisms are themselves the reflection of particular cultures" (1992: 43-44).

He goes on to notice that

“liberalism is not a possible meeting ground for all cultures, but is the political expression of one range of cultures, and quite incompatible with other ranges [...]. Liberalism can’t and shouldn’t claim complete cultural neutrality. Liberalism is also a fighting creed” (1992: 62).

An original ‘taken for granted’ (and predominantly Anglophone) confidence in liberalism’s potential to bridge all differences and diversities, developed in times of faith in both cultural supremacy and its real and symbolic expansion (broadly till the middle of the 20th century), has proven to be too optimistic a claim. Interestingly enough, it has been reasserted with a vengeance in the neo-liberalism of the last twenty-five years (with an associated hegemonic reassertion of the superiority of Western forms of political organisation).

Others have blamed liberalism’s shortcomings under contemporary cultural conditions on a retreat from participatory interpretations of democracy. For instance, Delanty notes that:

“In republican political theory – from classical thought through the Renaissance to the Enlightenment – citizenship has been largely associated with the idea of the participation of the public in the political life of the community. This has given rise to a strong association of citizenship with civil society and in general with a definition of citizenship that stresses ‘virtue’, the active dimension of membership of a political community. In contrast to this in fact quite old tradition, the liberal idea of citizenship is one that emphasises citizenship as a largely legal condition.
In this understanding of citizenship which has its origins in English seventeenth century political theory, citizenship concerns the rights of the citizen in their relation to the state” (2003: 1).

When the parameter of participation is brought back into play, the cultural foundations of citizenship regain salience. Indeed, the fact that a certain liberal conception of citizenship emerged in a certain milieu and at a particular historical moment should serve to dissolve our illusions about ‘the creed’s’ neutrality. The key contemporary question remains that of participation and active integration and thus of whether citizenship can be ‘blind’ or ‘fair’ to culture. Furthermore, even if rights and duties could be rather fairly distributed, citizen participation and fulfilment would not necessarily result. For these aspects of full citizenship are closely tied up with how and how far the varied cultures of all citizens are understood, appreciated and respected.

Within the liberal framework the concern then turns to how to address, for instance, claims raised by minority cultures whilst remaining consistent with liberal theory since, as Parekh puts it, “the apparently fair and even-handed liberal conception sometimes has opposite consequences, and being individual-centred many of our theories of equality come to grief when applied to groups, which call for a very different conception of equality” (1995: 313). One possible answer is given by Tamir through “a distinction between two kinds of liberalism: rights-based and autonomy-based liberalism” (1992: 167). Whereas the second kind is rather restrictive for an acknowledgement of culture, the first kind can be extended to include cultural rights. As Delanty again puts it, “cultural rights are a more recent addition to the rights discourse and are mostly conceived of as group rights for minorities in contrast to the individual focus of the traditional rights” (2003: 3). However, if such cultural rights which translate into measures for minority cultures are collective rights then their compatibility with liberal theories of justice and the importance attributed to individual rights may come into question.

That tension is eloquently addressed by Kymlicka who is prominent among the many who have tried to resolve it. If they have failed, this must be attributed to reasons inherent
in liberalism’s non-negotiable bedrock. Kymlicka addresses the conundrum of incompatibility by suggesting that in fact “both sides of the dilemma concern respect for the individual” (1989: 150) and that thus what we need is “a broader and more adequate liberal theory of the relationship between the individual and the community” (1989: 156-157). Then, of course, Kymlicka needs to demonstrate how these subtle lenses articulate within liberal theory (and can translate into reality) and it is there that his argument’s potential seems limited. The non-liberal group, it transpires, will have to be liberalised:

“Finding a way to liberalize a cultural community without destroying it is a task that liberals face in every country, once we recognize the importance of a secure cultural context of choice [...]. If certain liberties really would undermine the very existence of the community, then we should allow what would otherwise be illiberal measures. But these measures would only be justified as temporary measures, easing the shock which can result from too rapid change in the character of the culture [...], helping the culture to move carefully towards a fully liberal society” (Kymlicka 1989: 170).

Surprisingly for the crucial character of the matter, Kymlicka wonders in a footnote in his influential work Liberalism, Community and Culture why “If French-Canadians were able to liberalize their (distinct) school system in the Quiet Revolution, why not aboriginal Canadians?” (1989: 180). Independently of the direction to which this rhetorical question leads Kymlicka, it seems to reveal an inability to recognise differences between and amongst cultures, a reluctance to take account of the differentiated intensity of identification within different groups and the fact that some groups have closer cultural relations than do others. Kymlicka’s position encourages talk of mere cultural variation and fails to account for conditions where difference is rather more pronounced. Acknowledging the latter would not be a matter of hierarchisation – which is probably what many well-intentioned liberals fear. It would rather be a matter of justice and of overcoming the latent hierarchy revealed by Kymlicka’s oversimplification of the problem. In fact it is often maintained that a transition towards a

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10 To use Habermas again, theirs may be quite distinct ‘lifeworlds’. A/the culture should not be reified but it should not be too minimally approached either. The problem of course lies into balancing those two prerogatives.
more liberal society would be desirable for cultures whose ‘difference’ includes their failure or refusal to subscribe to liberal beliefs. In this respect Raz’s analysis confronts the issue more openly. According to Raz, ‘‘in an autonomy-supporting environment there is no choice but to be autonomous’ and therefore members of such minority cultures must be brought ‘humanely and decently’ to placing value on the condition of autonomy’. A conundrum at the heart of liberalism then, is that a theory with autonomy at its core seems to give no choice to some on key questions of what values are fundamental to their way of life.

As far as the liberal group of the society in question is concerned, Feinberg writes that “liberalism requires neutrality with regard to ideas of the good life, but it does not require ignorance” but he also talks about “the contribution of different cultures to our collective heritage” (1995: 203). Thus, although he acknowledges that different cultures are also to a degree ours and thus an understanding of them should be part of our understanding, he still maintains that liberalism requires us to appraise these cultures as if we could do that in an even-handed way. Although springing from a justified acknowledgment that “the reason certain liberals have difficulty with multiculturalism is that they see people first as individuals and that they believe that peoples, as individuals, then create communities” and that “we are in fact born in social configurations and our choices are reflections of those configurations” (1995: 207), Feinberg goes on to propose introducing children at school, for instance, to as much diversity as possible. In such a suggestion he accords with Kymlicka who maintains that “it is of sovereign importance to this argument that the cultural structure is being recognised as a context of choice” (1989: 166; emphasis added). However, cultural choice is neither easy nor straightforward, especially where the young are concerned.12

12 The question of education in multicultural conditions is a very complex issue which would take us considerably outside the framework of this thesis. I would just like to note that with respect to education, the concept of choice seems to require considering pre-autonomous children as analogous to autonomous adults. Indeed, the parameters of choice even for autonomous adults require further analysis.
In a subtler approach which springs from an understanding that “we define our identity always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the things our significant others want to see in us” (Taylor 1992: 33), Taylor suggests the ideal of a fused horizon of standards and an *a priori* presumption of worth as far as culture is concerned which he explains as follows:

“What the presumption requires of us is not peremptory and inauthentic judgements of equal value, but a willingness to be open to comparative cultural study of the kind that must displace our horizons in the resulting fusions. What it requires above all is an admission that we are very far away from that ultimate horizon from which the relative worth of different cultures might be evident. This would mean breaking with an illusion that still holds many “multiculturalists” – as well as their most bitter opponents – in its grip” (1992: 73).

Whether exposing the cultural foundations of liberal theory itself or attempting to re-incorporate participatory principles, whether focusing on the difficulty in distinguishing between individual rights and groups rights in matters of culture, or whether advocating the necessary liberalisation of some groups (within multicultural societies or elsewhere), the impasse remains. In many of the above approaches, undiversified understandings of culture can be discerned, as can the resurgence of the need to ‘study’ the other (even in Taylor) and a tendency to view cultural heritage as if it could be consigned to history. This is not to say that such mistakes are universal or that liberalism has no resources to take the matter forward. Tamir, for instance, developing Walzer, differentiates between two forms of liberalism:

“Liberalism 1 is committed to individual rights and ‘almost by deduction from this, to a rigorously neutral state’. Liberalism 2, on the other hand, ‘allows for a state to be committed to the survival and flourishing of a particular culture’, as long as the basic rights of citizens are all protected”.

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A more nuanced awareness of both the importance of the past and the cultural embeddedness of politics brings some liberal critics of procedural liberalism back to an acknowledgment of the need to take some aspects of national belonging into account. Hence nationalism theory and liberal theory enter into dialogue. In this dialogue, liberal theorists meet theorists of nationalism as well as social theorists such as Habermas who are difficult to categorise. A thread can be found running through this work which tends to categorise nationalism as either 'civic' or 'ethnic' or some blend of those tendencies. The next section will problematise this tendency.

4. The liberal and the national: in-between and beyond

The problems encountered by liberalism in conditions of multiculturalism as well as the reluctance of the nation and culture to recede from the political scene has led to the proposal of the distinction, taken up by both liberal and nationalism theorists, between civic/liberal and ethnic nationalism, with the former taking different forms.

In Yael Tamir’s Liberal Nationalism, an attempt is made to give due weight to both terms in that pairing. According to Tamir,

“liberal nationalism attempts to capture what is essential to both schools of thought, drawing from liberalism a commitment to personal autonomy and individual rights, and from nationalism an appreciation of the importance of membership in human communities in general, and in national communities in particular” (1993: 35).

14 Discussions on the (in)compatibility of liberalism and multiculturalism, in contrast to theoretical affairs during the twentieth century’s last decade seem nowadays stalled in the best of scenarios whilst in the worse abandoned. Similar is the fate of nationalism discussions on why and how ‘the nation’ is activated, discussions which blossomed during and shortly after the Soviet disintegration and the bloodshed of Yugoslavia. It appears as if theory has either reached an impasse or it has opted out of this which is not considered novel or radical anymore. However, understanding nationality in conditions of democracy should still be a priority by fully attending to the evasiveness of both terms but also to their learning potential. For a large part of this world stability and democracy are only precarious conditions. Assuming them solid and unproblematic not only fails to acknowledge phenomena when ‘cold’, is also seems as a novel disguise of hegemony. In other words, if the issues are abandoned the (theoretical) home is taken again for granted and generalisable.
Starting from a premise that “culture cannot be restricted to the private sphere, and [that] only those living in a society expressive of their own culture could be oblivious to this fact” (1993: 54), Tamir then justifies the right to culture as a (liberal) individual right. Nonetheless, culture and nation are partially presented as objects of choice. “Cultural and national affiliations fall under the same category, of being both chosen and constitutive” (1993: 33). In this way liberal nationalism is seen as celebrating “the particularity of culture together with the universality of human rights, the social and cultural embeddedness of individuals together with their personal autonomy” (1993: 79).

If Tamir’s approach cannot entirely escape the liberal impasse, Miller’s On Nationality is rather more nationally tinted although many of the principles remain the same. Miller echoes the classic distinction between civic and ethnic national identity, even if not in so many words: “The crucial line of division may lie [...] between national identities that emerge through open processes of debate and discussion to which everyone is potentially a contributor [and] identities that are authoritatively imposed by repression and indoctrination” (1995: 39). Though he rejects the ‘radical chooser’ view, since it “makes the task of forming a distinct personal identity an impossibly demanding one”, he asserts that “a more reasonable picture recognizes that we always begin from values that have been inculcated in us by the communities and institutions to which we belong” (1995: 45): hence choice re-enters the conversation. For “common membership in a nation” is valued “where the meaning of membership changes with time. Ideally, the process of change should consist in a collective conversation in which many voices can join” (1995: 127).

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15 Such a task may in fact fall on the very young members of a society: “Children may quite clearly be placed under pressure to conform with their parents’ wishes, but it is of educational value to stress the relation between their choice and their right, teaching them not only to respect their culture but also their own individuality” (1993: 54).

16 Critically, again, in matters of education.

17 However, Miller strongly defies “the comforting thought that one can embrace universalism in ethics while continuing to give priority to one’s compatriots in one’s practical reasoning. The choice, as I see it”, he writes, “is either to adopt a more heroic version of universalism, which attaches no intrinsic significance to national boundaries, or else to embrace ethical particularism and see whether one can defend oneself against the charge that one is succumbing to irrational sentiment in giving weight to national allegiances” (1995: 64-65). The question whether a strong attachment to argumentation is, nonetheless, tantamount to some sort of ethical universalism remains open.
Both Tamir and Miller, as liberals first and foremost, are aware that problems arise when a sense of national belonging and statehood do not geographically coincide. Tamir notes that fewer problems would arise for the application of liberal theory if the political entity were coterminous with the cultural entity; not necessarily through statehood but by at least having power of political decision on cultural matters. In other words, if each cultural group could influence the political context of its cultural life, the members of this group would have a greater sense of inclusion. Alternatively, the institutionalisation of regional \textsuperscript{18} organisations might make the “economic, strategic, and ecological decisions”, whereas “local national communities” would structure cultural policies (Tamir 1993: 151). Miller approaches the same problem less subtly and indeed more prescriptively, claiming that “there are strong ethical reasons for making the bounds of nationality and the bounds of the state coincide” (1995: 73). However, were this applied to the real world, severe problems would arise with adjudicating which community would have the right to its own political institutions and which would not. It is also hard to see how Tamir’s fear of Balkanisation could be avoided. And with Tamir’s solution, one is left with the problem of how responsibilities between the two bodies proposed should be divided. In both of these cases, as in other similar attempts to escape the classic impasse, close scrutiny shows that “liberal nationalism” could only resolve the problems under consideration if parties to the compact could agree that the benchmark for arbitrating hard cases should be taken from the liberal framework.

The search for integration in conditions pulling towards its opposite is also a concern of Habermas. In his “colonisation of the lifeworld” thesis Habermas identifies the increasing proceduralisation of political life. He writes:

“\textquote{I am thinking of the fact that economic imperatives have gradually become independent of all else and that politics has gradually become a matter of administration, processes that undermine the status of citizen and deny the republican meat of such a status […]}. The occurrence of this syndrome, that is, of citizenship reduced to the interests of a client, becomes all the more probable, the more the economy and the state apparatus – which have been institutionalised in

\textsuperscript{18} In Tamir 1993, the term ‘regional’ is used to indicate organisations above state level; see ibid: 151
terms of the same rights – develop a systemic autonomy and push citizens into the periphery of organisational membership” (1994: 30-31).

To counter this syndrome Habermas proposes a political culture which will serve “as the common denominator for a constitutional patriotism which simultaneously sharpens an awareness of the multiplicity and integrity of the different forms of life which coexist in a multicultural society” (1994: 27). However, on closer inspection Habermas’s ideal remains again fundamentally civic: as is the case with liberal nationalism, constitutional patriotism, with its assumption that ‘common denominators’ are available, also appears to rely on the ultimate willingness of all parties involved to resort to liberal principles when hard cases need to be arbitrated. Nonetheless, a nationalism aware and wary of culture is closer to the intuitions of many than one which yet again treats culture as a context of civic choice and conversation – however sophisticated the approach.

Theorists who are particularly sensitive to culture, like Parekh, try to expand Habermas’s notion. Parekh maintains that primary components of national identity are: constitution (“or the constitutive principles of a political community”); imagining (“the way a political community imagines itself”); and identification (since “identity is not a property, something we possess, but a relationship, a form of identification”) (1999: 66-68). The latter is instantiated by symbols which “mobilise political emotions, and give Habermas’s highly cerebral notion of constitutional patriotism emotional and cultural depth” (1999: 69; emphasis added). However, in Parekh too, the ideal of a fully-fledged liberal community seems to outflank national identity whose definition it is stated “should not only include all citizens but also accept them as equally valued and legitimate members of the community” (1999: 71). Parekh is notable in paying attention to the difficulties that arise in practice from this uneasy position. He writes: “Although this is the ideal to aim at, it is not always possible [...] . No society can negate its history and begin with a clean slate” (1999: 72-73). He goes on to note that

19 At some point of his argument Miller declares that “we should be sceptical about ‘constitutional patriotism’” (1995: 163). Maybe Habermas’s position is too dry for Miller, who, in his effort to save all, i.e. both nationalism and the liberal framework often reverts to some obvious idealisations as, for instance, in his description of American identity, described as having “ceased to have any marked ethnic content” (1995: 136). Such claims are made possible through a subtle rhetorical differentiation amongst various
“in the final analysis, the definition of national identity matters because it can delegitimise minorities, damage their material and other interests, and make it difficult for them to identify with the political community. Once these are taken care of, it should not much matter if the definition of national identity retains some bias towards the dominant majority community” (1999: 74).

Whilst one could find little to oppose in the first part of this statement, difficulties remain with the conclusion he draws from it – at least for non-dominant minorities.

The civic-ethnic distinction is not only a preoccupation for theorists with a primary interest in the ability of liberal theory to deal with ‘difference’. In other theoretical work concerned with the historical development of nationalism, the civic-ethnic differentiation is seen as mapping broadly onto the historical development of societies along Western or Eastern lines. According to Kohn’s famous dichotomy,

“nationalism in the West was mainly political – people were defined as ‘citizens’ – while in the East it was cultural – people were the ‘folk’. The Eastern form, […] ‘extolled the primitive and ancient depth and peculiarities of its traditions in contrast to Western nationalism and to universal standards’ (in Hutchinson and Smith, 1994: 164)”.

Or as Kohn said in 1945:

“Where the third estate became powerful in the eighteenth century – as in Great Britain, in France, and in the United States – nationalism found its expression predominantly, but never exclusively, in political and economic changes. Where, on the other hand, the third estate was still weak and only in a budding stage at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as in Germany, Italy, and among the Slavonic people, nationalism found its expression predominantly in the cultural field” (1967: 4).

In his attempt to elucidate the ‘re-emergence’ of nationalism in the 1980s, Hroch also takes up the East-West distinction. He notes that in the West in the majority of cases “the kinds of group-memberships. Thus he claims that “we need first of all to separate the claims of ethnic and other cultural groups in general from the more specific demands made by national minorities” (1995: 146).

late feudal regime was subsequently transformed, by reforms or revolution, into a modern civil society in parallel with the construction of a nation-state as a community of equal citizens” (1993: 5). In the East on the other hand, now as then, “an education in civil society is still largely missing, and linguistic and cultural appeals may once more act as substitutes for articulated political demands” (1993: 16). The maintenance of cultural cohesion, thus, is seen as serving to mitigate demands for political change in the East.\footnote{Similar assumptions are made with respect to Greece. The case of Greece then may offer insight into the breakdown of the (Eastern) former sphere of influence of the Soviet Union.}

Alongside a questionable distinction between East and West which seems to traverse time vertically, the more interesting question of why the East has these characteristics is begged by an answer which focuses instead on the presence or absence of civil society in the development of polities. Hroch, like many nationalism theorists, is keen to demonstrate how his is a focus on the historical and geographical aspects of the distinction in his considerations of civil society. In doing so, although it is far from his intention, Hroch’s analysis has been open to the interpretation that one could justify the distinction in today’s world by reference to the past.

The problems encountered by too rigid a civic-ethnic distinction have led theory to turn now to an acknowledgement of the interplay between civic and ethnic elements as more complex. Hearn writes:

“We are accustomed to thinking of liberalism as, by definition, universalist and a-cultural [...]. Likewise we tend to think of cultures as unique and irreducible to general principles [...]. Liberalism itself arises out of a many stranded culture history from which it cannot be effectively disengaged [...]. To the extent that we understand ‘ethnic’ as meaning ‘cultural’ (as opposed to biological or based on some symbolic extension of kinship) all nationalisms, even the most civic and liberal, are ethnic” (2000a: 11-12).

Or as McCrone puts it,

“In many ways, what we are seeing is the replay of the classical sociological issue, the relationship of structure and action. To translate it in terms of
nationality: is our identity conveyed by the social and political structures which are the frames within which we operate, or do we have greater capacity to choose those frames and move between them [...]. In other words, identities should be seen as a concern with ‘routes’ rather than ‘roots’, as maps for the future rather than trails from the past” (1998: 34).

Billig also maintains that the notion of nationhood constrains multiculturalism which “implicitly inherits a tradition of ‘us’ and ‘them’, the ‘nation’ and ‘foreignness’, not to mention the acceptance of the world of nations in which nationhood is accepted as important and worth defining” (1995: 148). These and related insights also have problems on close scrutiny.

With respect to multiculturalism, a particularly apposite description of the influence of the distinction is given by Brown. Brown first notes that

“civic nationalism is [...] sometimes depicted as ‘forward-looking’ in the sense that the vision is of a community in the process of formation, while cultural nationalism is seen as backward-looking, in that the vision of the community is located in myths of the past. But this should not be interpreted to imply that the former is in some moral sense ‘progressive’ and the latter ‘regressive’, since morality is clearly not dependent on chronology” (1999: 283).

He then goes on to describe the form of the problem in today’s world, namely in conditions of ‘multiculturalism’.

“Does this term [i.e. multiculturalism] refer simply to a civic nationalism whose public civic culture can accommodate the diversity of private ethnic cultures; or to a cultural nationalist challenge to civic nationalism which threatens to divide the state into competing sovereignties? Is it to be applauded for challenging an existing cultural nationalism which favours ethnic majorities, with new formulas which favour hitherto marginalised minorities; or condemned for prioritising ascriptive and illiberal group rights over liberal individual rights?” (1999: 287).

Brown notes that there is usually a conflation of different questions when identifying different nationalisms, questions related both to their nature as well as to their provenance and tries to give a more complex account of how things have happened. Even within this
account, the persisting difficulties reappear when he notes that “both [i.e. civic and ethnic nationalisms]...seek to tie the component individuals into communities of obligation which are depicted as persisting through time, and both have the capacity to prioritise either the collectivity or the individual” (1999: 300). In that way, though, even a complex and sensitive approach such as Brown’s still seems to rely ultimately on the possibility of clearly identifying the effects of distinct kind of nationalisms on the national group or even on the national ‘psyche’ as well as on a somewhat dichotomised view of experience as either individual or collective.

Whilst recent theorising tries to acknowledge and describe a complex interplay of trends and processes, it does not succeed in entirely shaking off the legacy of classic dichotomies between the collectivity or the individual; the civic or the ethnic; citizenship or ethnicity; the public or the private, despite its recognition that this would be desirable. The claim is that liberal thought operates still to a great extent within a framework which does not allow ‘national belonging’ to be taken with full seriousness. By focusing on whether a nation can be ethnic or rather civic, the element of value inhabiting such a distinction is often overlooked, as are its influences on how people think about their nationality and their identity today. This is a problem because national belonging is in fact part of out cognitive framework, structuring the way we think. In fact, even in approaches which address nationalism as a combination of civic and ethnic aspects, it is far from clear that the civic/good – ethnic/bad spell is lifted, if the assumptions of liberal theory are to underpin the polity – acknowledged or not.

As a cognitive framework, more may be learned about ‘the nation’ if that is understood loosely as a discursive framework – as something on which there is a core agreement but whose interpretation may vary substantially. Theories of nationalism avoid the liberal trap of giving this ‘elusive entity’ too solid a substance. As Gellner puts it, nationalism theorists more or less strongly acknowledge the fact that “a man without a nation defies the recognised categories and provokes revulsion [...] . Having a nation is not an inherent attribute of humanity, but it has now come to appear as such” (1983: 6). In nationalism’s
attempts to understand this pervasive category, they often take culture and identity and their interplay more seriously and to a great extent return to Deutsch’s old insight that

“It seems therefore utopian to imagine a blissful state of “cultural autonomy” where “culture” will be carried on detached from real life [...]. Problems... cannot be dealt with completely apart from the problems of culture and nationality on the one hand and of political and economic life on the other” (1953: 106).

This complex interplay between culture and politics will now be taken forward by a consideration of the domain of the public.

5. In ‘the public’ ... sphere, culture, policy

Issues of identity are readily discussed in work that delves predominantly into the realm of pure theory and only contingently into its application. If the latter is brought in, it is usually in the form of example or historical development or, even more frequently, in a combination of those. On the other hand more contextual work usually limits its ambitions. Even if that is understandable since more often than not contextual work is faced with too complicated a field to attempt generalisations, one should not be too cautious. Provided that a context of analysis is meticulously delimited, the input to certain aspects of key theoretical questions may be both contextually subtle and generalisable. Indeed nowadays the necessity of such approaches is more and more urgently recommended, as Brubaker argues: “A theoretically sophisticated eventful perspective on nationness and nationalism is today urgently needed” (1996: 20).

An “eventful perspective” would need to be located in some form of public space or in the hard-to-define zone between the individual and the state, where these interact with or impact on each other. In theorising, that zone has often been referred to as “civil society” or the “public sphere”, the first stressing more its peopled aspect with the second pulling towards a more discursive understanding. In what follows, a critical presentation of those two approaches is offered, followed by an attempt to take better account of both peopled and discursive aspects by locating these in specific contexts.
Bobbio (1989) identifies three main understandings of civil society as a pre-state, an anti-state or a post-state formation and/or situation. In any case as Nairn puts it, "'civil society' has always been aimed at the contrary idea (normally also the contrary fear and hatred) of an over-centralised, interfering, bureaucratically organised and would-be omnipotent state" (1997: 75). In its most influential interpretation, civil society consists of various social institutions, associations and organisations, distinct from family/kinship on the one hand and state on the other, through which various kinds of demands and aspirations are articulated. Furthermore, as noted earlier, the absence of a development of civil society is often blamed for the dominance of the ethnic in nationalisms. It is this latter contention which reveals both civil society's historical contingency and its liberal colours. Nairn's critique is illuminating.

Nairn first asserts that "Marxists were quite right about 'civil society' [...] . The modern and contemporary resurrection of societas civilis, la sociétè civile, is fraudulent in the sense of not denoting what it claims to. More accurately it is a myth" (1997: 74). He then goes on to demonstrate how such a development was constrained by the political conditions of the Scottish Enlightenment:

"Seen in this light, the germ of 'civil society' begins to look much more like an accident: it was associated with the freak development of one national society, in the single generation between Culloden and the drastically new world created by the French Revolution after 1789. Nearly all the diagnoses of civil society's 'rise' or 'emergence' omit that particular history, for the sake of generalisation" (1997: 79).

He does not fail to notice, though, the prescriptive part that the term has subsequently been called upon to play: "Civil society began as one way of contesting and exorcising monarchy, but evolved into an occasional or 'emergency' way of exorcising, or at least trying to moderate, the political effects of non-democratic statehood or nationalism (or both together)" (1997: 83). Furthermore, 'civil society' became a 'cure for all', especially in the 1980s Eastern Europe. In this context, as Nairn again notes,

"The structure of ideas here is that 'formal', state-level, merely political and party democracy provide inadequate defences against 'nationalism', perceived as
inherently ethnic, divisive, inward- and backward-looking, atavistic, aggressive and probably not too good for business either [...]. But there was always ‘civil society’, the reified essence of progress, decency, trust, tolerance and all the other ‘conditions of liberty’” (1997: 84-86).

If the concept of civil society seems to focus more on the peopled aspect of this middle zone, in that of the public sphere on the other hand, the element of rational discourse is brought to the fore as most influentially expressed by Habermas.22 As Featherstone et al report,

“Habermas’s (1989) theory of the public sphere assumes that in eighteenth-century Europe various spaces (e.g., coffee houses, salons, table societies) developed, along with newspapers, journals, periodicals and reviews, which encouraged new forms of reasoned argumentation in public. For Habermas, this dialogical potential of the public sphere becomes eclipsed in the twentieth century with the expansion of the mass media, which he sees as essentially monological and instrumental, a means for the manipulation and closing down of public opinion” (1999: 7).

Or as Eley puts it, Habermas’s

“ideal of the public sphere [...] remains a careful exploration of a particular historical moment, in which certain possibilities for human emancipation were unlocked – possibilities which for Habermas were ordered around the “central idea of communicatively generated rationality”, which then became the leitmotif of his own life’s work” (1994: 298).

However, Habermas’s attempt to hold in the balance history and theory, and description and prescription, is precarious. As Hohendall notes, “Habermas’ model of public sphere has a double function. It provides a paradigm for analysing historical change, while also serving as a normative category for political critique” (1982: 246). Thus, although Habermas does locate his ideal in a particular moment in history, he does not surrender

22 As far as the distinction between ‘civil society’ and ‘public sphere’ is concerned Hearn notes: “There are similarities between the idea of the public sphere and that of civil society, though it is perhaps useful to regard the former as highlighting processes of communication, while civil society usually identifies networks of institutions and patterns of social organisation through which people interact” (2000: 91).
its normative potential either.\footnote{Even if located in historic contingency, as Eley notes, Habermas’s construction is still not entirely unproblematic: “Habermas’s argument idealizes the element of rational discourse in the formation of the public sphere, and neglects the extent to which its institutions were founded on sectionalism, exclusiveness, and repression” (1994: 320). Eley also notices that “the claim to rational discourse, certainly in the social and gendered exclusiveness desired by the late-eighteenth-century bourgeoisie, was simultaneously a claim to power in Foucault’s sense” (1994: 327).} Furthermore, here as with “civic patriotism” Habermas may be rather too optimistic about the capacity of the individual to see beyond his/her interest and into a political community’s common good as well as about the “constitutive role of a participant citizenry, defining public policy and its parameters through reasoned exchange, free of domination” (Eley 1994: 301); a kind of ‘thick’ civic nationalism that implies that the potency of ethnic nationalism is in retreat. Still, in contemporary times, dominant moves towards parochialism or cultural affirmation go against Habermas’ arguably over-rational view of the public and the national. In this respect, both public sphere and civil society can be criticised as historically contingent and liberally tinted, as well as heavily influenced by traditional demarcations between the public and the private domain.

In search of a more contextualised approach, Nairn’s insight is again helpful. He writes:

“Societies are different: without plunging into the metaphysics of identity, I think it can be said that they differ ‘deeply’ in the sense that the politico-cultural questions forced upon both parties and intellectuals remain unavoidably various or ‘peculiar’ […] And one feature of ‘peculiarity’ is a cluster of things we call the national element […] It may not be a matter of fate, blood or divine ordination; but ‘nationality’ has shown itself to be politically unavoidable. As if the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries had not been enough, it reminded us of this all over again after 1989” (1997: 82-83).

In this respect Uzelac proposes that:

“Just as with other social forms, the nation presents a stratified set of relatively enduring relations between and amongst its structure, culture and agency. Hence, the nation as a social form cannot be people-less, since the agency maintains and transforms that social form. Moreover, only through people’s activities does the nation exist, regardless of possible differences in perception of that nation. The
same people are the mediators of all relationships between and among the national structure and culture. However, these ‘people’, the members of the nation, do not act in an empty space” (2002: 49).²⁴

It is in this complex interaction of structure and agency through culture that both the pervasiveness of the national category (as identified by Nairn) and its multiple expressions and dynamics (as hinted at by Uzelac) are deployed. It is there that contextualised answers to the issues of identity can be located. It is there that the perpetuation of underlying assumptions that sustain a society in an apparent cohesiveness are unfolded. Such assumptions form a *public culture*.

The usefulness of ‘public culture’ for the analysis which will follow in this thesis is that this is a contextual concept. It relates both to the discursive domain and the culturally specific. It denotes a domain which is space and time related. It is a concept which allows for both outward looking and inward looking attitudes in particular societies. It draws attention to tensions between both pursuing cohesiveness and maintaining distinctiveness in the same context – often by the same means. It further draws attention to struggles over identity which take place along a continuum from society to polity rather than between society and polity. It focuses on contextual processes, as influenced by policy-implementation, rather than on abstract definitions, abstraction being seen as functioning sometimes as a protective device. Being context specific, ‘public culture’ does not assume that contestation around ‘difference’ must be adjudicated by reference to generalisable civic principles and emphasises that, at least in some contexts, particular understandings of nationhood enter public policy – most unproblematically in policy about culture. The relationship of course is dialectical. Public policy echoes what shared understandings in the public sphere are, what the public culture consists in according to

²⁴ Notice also here Gellner’s echo (contingency of modernity lifted): “In modern societies, culture does not so much underline structure: rather, it replaces it […]. In simpler societies […] no meaning can be attached to membership of the larger group that is not preceded by membership of the sub-group” (1964: 155). Perceptive comments on the political unavoidability of ‘the nation’ as well as its peopled activation come also from work on xenophobia (maybe because there the practical implications of ‘the problem of difference’ are at their most intense). Thus Wimmer writes, “reality effects are not only to be attributed to the discourses of those groups holding power to define official social policies. Instead, the conditions must be analysed under which these discourse spread within a population and are perceived as plausible. The converse is also to be expected – that official views and policies only react to public sentiments and grassroots protest movements” (1997: 26).
state, civil society, and individuals. At the same time it sustains and nourishes that public culture through the very perpetuation of those shared understandings. As Cahn puts it, “if social perception varies, then policy narratives, as well as policy language, must implicitly define the context of social environs” (1998: 455). Public policy is often initiated to bring change. However, the discourses in which this public policy is framed may undermine the change which it seeks to promote.

6. Conclusion and introduction to Greece

During the theoretical overview undertaken in this chapter, the nation has revealed itself as underpinning a rather emotive understanding of culture and identity, with liberalism on the other hand relying more on a cognitive understanding of such concepts. In passing, other related dichotomies and dilemmas have been highlighted. The claimed distinction between West/civic and East/ethnic has been criticised, whereas approaches which rely on the interpenetration of culture and politics have been endorsed. In the same vein, understandings of the public domain as either civil society or public sphere were commented on, as well as the need to account for the complex dynamics between structure and agency. The latter has led the argument here towards a starting point which makes use of the concept ‘public culture’, as something affected by and affecting policy. If this overview has achieved nothing else, the complexity of issues related to identity construction should be now evident. It is a complexity which under modern conditions, as Jonathan puts it, “is evidenced by conflicts of interest within each person as well as between them as citizens” (1998: 13).

In many of the theories criticised, general principles seem to have been analysed a priori, with examples only brought into the paradigm to illustrate its validity. Examples are taken from past history and are then assumed to illustrate the very different conditions of today. This is particularly damaging in relation to the matters which are at the heart of this thesis, with its concern for understandings of nationhood today and their potential for

future positive development. For as Tamir usefully asserts, “the era of the homogeneous and viable nation-states is over (or rather the era of the illusion that homogeneous and viable nation-states are possible is over, since such states never existed) and the national vision must be redefined” (1993: 3). However, the direction of such redefinition often appears to underplay the legacy of the nation and is reluctant fully to study its impact. If we assume, rather, that the nation is the discursive framework in which both theory and practice unfold, our first task becomes that of understanding nationhood itself, before focusing on its place in established theory. For this purpose it will be more useful to observe the transformations which national discourses undergo, seen through the lens of policy. A deep sense of a chosen environment’s history and current social conditions is a prerequisite to this.

The central chapters of this thesis now turn, therefore, to a specific environment: that of Greece. This environment will be approached in ever more sharply focused lines which will lead from a description of that place’s historical experiences to specific contextualised discourses. The chosen case-study will be discussions of theatre-projects within the institutional framework of the Cultural Olympiad. This strategy has been chosen in order to try and show how Greekness is both conceptualised and manifested, particularly in relation to those issues of ‘difference’ which lie at the heart of the ‘multicultural problem’. Through first acknowledging the past and subsequently lifting the dimension of historic time and studying a specific moment, the challenge consists in acquiring more insight into whether a greater cohesion can be formed from a newly discovered diversity – in the Greek instance and, perhaps by extension, in others.

Greece tends still to be described as fairly ethnically homogeneous, as reluctant to acknowledge the increasing presence of others within, as ethnocentric and xenophobic as well as having a narrow conception of citizenship. It is however currently battling with the inclusion of “the person who comes today and stays tomorrow” (Simmel 1950: 402), the stranger, the other. This makes Greece a particularly interesting place in which to study the politics of difference.
CHAPTER 2: WHY GREECE: Dates and Places? 26

1. Introduction

In 1981 Greece entered the European Economic Community, thus politically and symbolically sealing the country's belonging to the 'Western' world for the present and foreseeable future. However, a political decision could not by itself alter or redress potent developments and perceptions which had been pulling Greece towards a certain Oriental or 'Eastern' understanding. Indeed since 1981, as before, and more poignantly after the dramatic 'Eastern' year, 1989, it has been common practice both at home and abroad to retreat to this Eastern entanglement, often with pride, but mostly as an excuse and/or a blame for present political and even behavioural shortcomings. In fact 1989, a year that saw the beginning of the progressive and painful disjunction of the former Communist Soviet and Balkan bloc, impacted on Greece very powerfully at different levels. That year abruptly stripped Greece of what was considered till then a major political bargaining card in 'the West' - i.e. its privileged positioning within a space in which 'the West' had limited access. That year also put a novel emphasis on political and economic potential for Greece within 'the East'. However, it also confronted Greece with ever increasing numbers of immigrants towards its cities and countryside, altered significantly its population-profile and, thus, marked the beginning of the creation of an unprecedented reality of visible diversity within the country's boundaries. Political and economic implications notwithstanding, world-developments after 1989 reinforced a perception of Greece as a country 'in-between West and East', a perception that has been 'haunting' Greece ever since its first constitution as an independent state. And yet Greece is not unique; it is rather part of a pattern. Hence theory springing from a study of Greece offers potential for generalisation with regard to the interests of this thesis.

In order to demonstrate the validity of such a claim, as well as better to frame the present-day material examined in chapters four to six, historical developments that have

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26 Information for this chapter is mainly drawn by Clogg 1982, Gallant 2001 and Svoronos 1982.
powerfully affected the making of Greece as a country will first be presented. In the next chapter the ways in which such developments may underpin certain kinds of discourses rather than others will be investigated as well as the potential exportability of such an approach. Throughout both chapters subtle, intriguing and challenging work in various areas of Greekness will be used as this author’s interlocutors.

This is not a historicist argument that history somehow happens and impacts on people’s lives in uncontrollable ways. It is a claim, though, that certain places and the ways they are progressively moulded as well as the memory of such processes create a discursive framework of expectations within those places. Taking into consideration the scope and purpose of this thesis, a historical account cannot but be extremely sketchy and even simplistic in part. The narrated events are perceived as being important since they shed light on the historical location of some of Greekness’ main discourses. Throughout the historical account, an attempt is made to alert the reader to such potentially important discourses.

In the next chapter the case of Greece will be used to show that beyond questions about the reality of the geography or the politics of its in-betweeness and also beyond undeniable facts and dates, a network of discourses has been developing. Such discourses retain one foot in facts but have also become somehow independent and may, thus, be put to varied use beyond the historical links that have actually at some point informed and sustained them. Of course, the list of discourses identified is not exhaustive either. Nevertheless, its strength remains the fact that it can always be seen as retaining that one foot in facts or in history. Such discourses will be returned to later, in order to investigate whether their contemporary manifestations support, challenge or even try to dispense with them.
2. The Ottoman legacy and the emergence of the Greek state (1770-1831)

Historians of contemporary Greece agree that a historical overview of Greece, however brief, must start by pointing to some crucial elements of the Ottoman legacy or the “four hundred years’ yoke” as it is often called. The Ottoman rule stretches broadly from May 29 1453 when Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks, to March 25 1821\(^\text{27}\) when the first outbreak of revolt occurred in the Peloponese.

The Ottoman Empire was divided into millets according to religion. Greeks were part of the Millet-i Rum or the ‘Roman millet’. Such a structure obviously accorded increased power to the religious leaders of every millet. However, religion being shared by different ethnic groups, it could not be seen as a mark of ethnicity. In the case of Greeks, language as well as class and occupational status functioned as additional markers of Greek identity. Nevertheless, the church played an important role by keeping the language as well as the traditions of the past alive. Such a role would be over-emphasised at a later stage as well as promoted as one of the most important reasons for considering Christian Orthodoxy to be an integral part of Greek national identity. At all events, as Triandafyllidou & Paraskevopoulou remark, “the millet system contributed to the preservation of the cultural characteristics of the Balkan people” (2002: 90).

The ‘Greek community’ of the Ottoman era was highly stratified as well as dispersed. It included members of the upper clergy and educated Greeks based around the Ecumenical Partriarchate in Constantinople, the “Fanari”, local notables, seafaring islanders, peasant warlords and peasants –the latter being by far the most numerous and the worst off group. Against such a heterogeneous background, the Greek diaspora in Western Europe played a particular role in the 1821 uprising. Being distinctly located within alien cultures, this diaspora experienced an enhanced need for identity definition. What is more, it was exposed to intellectual currents and ideas and had the financial means to give support to

\(^{27}\) Nor surprisingly for the actual and symbolic role of Christian Orthodoxy in the constitution of Greece as an independent state, March 25 is also the date when the Annunciation of Virgin Mary is celebrated. It is one of the two Greek 'national days'.
mainland Greeks, with the formation of schools and other such institutions (cf. Gallant 2001: 7).

As for the reasons for the ‘uprising’, there is no doubt that the Ottoman administration was harsher towards non-Muslims, so that liberation from oppression played an important role. However, different groups of Greeks also had very different reasons for revolting, a point that is often underplayed in popular accounts of the rebellion. Such reasons ranged from sheer survival, as far as the peasants were concerned, to the more romantic reasons of the diaspora aspiring to the rehabilitation of ancient glory. As Veremis remarks, “no doubt the peasant warlords, the local notables and the seafaring islanders who waged the War of Independence against the Ottomans had a far less clear view of their ideal polity than did their intellectual kin of the Greek diaspora” (1989: 135). That being so, later accounts of the Greek uprising rather obscured such diversity of purpose under the veil of common Greek identity. They further provided a vivid picture of the Ottoman enemies’ cruelty which haunted Greek historical memory and even impeded political action till very recently.28

In general, the development of national consciousness in the Balkans, through the influence of the Enlightenment, took greater coherence and developed more rapidly in the latter part of the 18th and first part of the 19th century and especially after the French Revolution of 1789. In this framework, the Greek war was “the first major successful war of independence by a subject population against an imperial power since the American Revolution of 1776. It was the first successful national revolution and it provided a model for later nationalist struggles” (Gallant 2001: 9). The structural conditions were also favourable: the Empire was shaking and the authority of the Sultan was being challenged by members of local governing Muslim elites – a fact which would further impact on the formation of the Greek state. Ottoman administration being characterised by high complexity, it allowed much room for what is often referred to in literature as “capriciousness” or “arbitrariness”29 or what one could more mildly characterise as the

28 To some extent it still does despite recent political developments supporting Greco-Turkish friendship and collaboration.
relative independence of regional authorities. As Clogg remarks, “one form of self-defence again such arbitrariness was to secure the protection of highly placed patrons who could mediate with those in positions of power and privilege” (1992: 3). A historical leap is often performed between such a remark and its extrapolation to the present. Such a leap offers a convenient excuse or accusation (depending on where one stands) for contemporary shortcomings. Such issues will be returned to.

Finally, the influence of the role of “the Great Powers” (a term often used to refer to France, Great Britain and Russia) should not be underestimated. More particularly it refers to the changing attitudes of the British from first condemning the Greek rebellion, which was threatening to destabilise geopolitical order in the area, to then later actively supporting it. Here lie the seeds of a pattern of foreign involvement which would keep recurring. Of course the representatives of “the Great Powers” varied from period to period. However, each future case could be subsumed under the same model based on both the representatives’ foreignness and their timely interference. As far as the Greek War of Independence was concerned, as Gallant remarks, “had the Great Powers not intervened, the rebellion would have been crushed during the summer of 1827” (2001: 24). After the destruction of the Ottoman fleet in Navarino on the 20th of October 1827 by combined French, British and Russian forces, a free Greece was finally established by the spring of 1828 under the presidency of Ioannis Kapodistrias. When he was assassinated in 1831 and after three consecutive agreements (the Treaty of Adrianople in September 1829, the London Convention in May 1832 and the Treaty of Constantinople in July 1832), a tiny polity emerged. Its territory was less than half of what is today known as Greece and its appointed ruler was Otto, son of Ludwig of Bavaria. Thus, foreign dependence came to live within the country.
3. State and nation building: from the ‘Great Idea’ to the Asia Minor Catastrophe (1831-1923)

In order to survive, the Bavarian regency relied on a privileged section of Greek society and on the army. During that period, the political world was broadly composed of the king and his entourage on the one hand and the ‘English’ ‘French’ and ‘Russian’ parties on the other – names mirroring the real loci of political power. Alliances were not stable. They gradually shifted to a pattern which set Otto and the ‘French’ and ‘Russian’ parties in opposition to the ‘British’ party and, by implication to Great Britain (cf. Svoronos 1982: 284-287).

The regency of Otto, although at first greeted favourably by an indigenous population with great expectations, was soon to become the Bavarakratia (the rule of the Bavarians). In fact it tried to apply a foreign model of government without being particularly sensitive to the particularities of the place. Additionally, after a war that had drained the land’s resources in every respect, the regency of Otto was faced with immense problems. The state was surviving on external loans. Also, the scheme put in train for the redistribution of land was far from successful. The only signs of economic recovery were coming from the merchant marine. As Gallant puts it, “the nature of that recovery based on mercantile trade rather than a solid base of production, was to have a lasting impact on the Greek economy” (2001: 37). In fact, as Kokosalakis remarks,

“by 1840 it was obvious that Greece was unlikely to develop along the cultural patterns of modernization prevalent in western Europe. Greek nationalism was evolving along a specific, idiosyncratic pattern. Industrialization was virtually absent and the whole structure of economy was clearly precapitalist” (2002: 8).

In 1843 Otto under the pressure of a coup was forced to concede a constitution. Most importantly, what was referred to as “the national question” started taking ideological shape. It would be articulated most successfully by Ioannis Kolettis who was appointed Prime Minister of Greece in 1844.
He “is best remembered as the man who first gave a coherent focus to the widely held belief amongst Greeks that the Greeks still residing in the Ottoman Empire had to be redeemed; this vision became known as the Megáli Ídea, or Great Idea” (Gallant 2001: 42).

His belief, as he said to the National Assembly in 1844 was that “the struggle did not begin in 1821; it began the day after the fall of Constantinople”. Koletis, thus, initiated an expansionist rhetoric which prevailed in Greece well into the 20th century.

In 1862 king Otto was forced from the throne in an army backed revolt. The ascent in 1863 of Prince Christian William Ferdinund Adolphus George of Holstein-Sonderberg-Glucksbrug, yet another foreign king, who reigned as George I of the Hellenes, marks, according to Svoronos, the beginning of the British hegemony over Greece (cf. Svoronos 1982: 288). In 1864 Greece became a “crowned democracy”. In 1875, in an effort to control royal arbitrariness in the choice of Prime Ministers, the principle of dediloméne was introduced. The King would have in the future to ask the leader of the declared majority of Members of Parliament to form a government. The principle was giving some substance to a democracy that up to then was almost void. This period was marked by the personality and the wave of economic and social reforms introduced by Harilaos Trikoupis. However, foreign debt increased and the economy collapsed in the 1890s.

As already noted, first and foremost the period up to 1923 was marked by the politics of irredentist expansion. Such politics did not only operate on the symbolic level; they were translated into action. In 1881 Thessaly and Arta were annexed. The annexation of Crete and Macedonia took longer, which only fuelled more powerfully beliefs in their inherent Greekness. As Triandafyllidou remarks,

“the contradiction between the compromising attitude and weakness of the independent Greek kingdom and the nationalist fervour inspired by the Macedonian question and the struggle of Cretans for ‘enosis’ led some intellectuals to propose the idea of the ‘stateless nation’ as an alternative to the

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30 Ioannis Kolettis, address to the National Assembly, 1844; cited in Gallant 2001: 54.
nation-state\textsuperscript{31}. They thus emphasised the ethnic and cultural component of the nation and downplayed its territorial unity" (2001: 43).

With respect to Macedonia, as Gallant puts it, “no issue more dominated Balkan foreign relations during the last decades of the nineteenth century than Macedonia” (2001: 63) – a fact which, as we shall see, should not be underestimated in evaluating recent Greek reactions to the emergence on an independent Republic of Macedonia, for instance. Back in the 19th century, the creation of first the Bulgarian Exarchate, i.e. the independent Church of Bulgaria in 1870, and then of a big and independent Bulgarian state spreading across actual Greek Macedonia, following the war between Russia and Turkey (1877-1878), gave substantial support to Greek fears of Pan-Slavism. The situation came to a critical phase with the Macedonian War of 1904-1908.

As for Crete, the first uprising occurred as early as 1866 but was suppressed in 1869. The Cretan ‘redemption’ was linked to the ascendance of Eleftherios Venizelos. In fact, “it was because of the reputation he earned as nationalist leader on Crete that Venizelos was able to enter the stage of Greek politics” (Gallant 2001: 118). He did so by participating in the military coup of Goudi in 1909 which led to the downfall of a government blamed for unsuccessful operations in Crete. Venizelos then formed the Liberal Party and became Prime Minister in 1910. He remains to the present day one of the most popular figures of Modern Greek history – and with good reason. Venizelos’ personality and politics, culminating in his vision of “the Greece of the two continents and the five seas”, contributed to firmly defining Greekness.

Macedonia and Crete were at the heart of the Balkan Wars as well. In 1912 the first Balkan War erupted and presented Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and Montenegro united against the Ottoman Empire. In November of the same year, Macedonian Thessaloniki was captured by the Greeks. In the very same city in March 1913 King George I was assassinated by a madman and was succeeded by his son Constantine I. The second Balkan War, a shorter one (June-July 1913) presented Greece and Serbia united against

\textsuperscript{31} Quoting Veremis 1990: 16.
Bulgaria, repulsing it from Macedonia, which the winners later shared by the Treaty of Bucharest. Balkan alliances continuously proved to be both fragile and volatile as well as in large part dependable upon external interests in the area. Nevertheless, at the end of the wars,

"with the addition of southern Epiros, Macedonia, Crete and some of the Aegean islands, the size of Greece was increased by 90 per cent, including some of the richest agricultural land on the peninsula [...]. There were still over three million unredeemed Greeks in Thrake, Asia Minor, Cyprus, Albania, and Pontos, but nonetheless the gains of the Balkan War had brought the Megali Idea closer to realisation than ever before" (Gallant 2001: 128-129).

Additionally such gains introduced for the first time the challenge of integrating all Greek citizens into some form of common national identity.

The outbreak of the First World War and the division of Europe into competing alliance groups put Greece in a difficult situation and brought the relationship between King Constantine I and Prime Minister Venizelos to a head, with the latter openly supporting Greece’s entry to the war on the side of the Entente. The political crisis was so deep that it became known as the “National Schism” (Ethnekós Dehasmós). It initiated a rhetoric of Division within Greek society which spread in the future along different axes. After numerous resignations from re-appointments to the country’s Premiership, Venizelos was finally able to pursue Greece’s entry to the First World War thanks, yet again, to the timely intervention of Great Britain and France. The latter two blockaded Piraeus, Athens’s port, in December 1916 finally forcing Constantine to leave Greece in June 1917. He did not abdicate though but was succeeded by his second son Alexander. Venizelos was re-instituted as Prime Minister and Greece officially entered the First World War.

The Greeks’ entry into the war was rewarded by ‘allowing them’ to enter Smyrna (Izmir). Furthermore, the Treaty of Sevres with Turkey on August 10 1920 materialised Venizelos’ dream, “the Greece of the two continents and the five seas”. Greece was to acquire eastern and western Thrace, Imvros, Tenedos and the area of Smyrna in Asia
Minor – the latter annexation to be ultimately decided by referendum five years later. The dream, which gave for a moment the impression of Byzantium regained, was short-lived. Following the death of King Alexander (from a monkey bite!) in October, in the November elections anti-Venizelists came to power and in a rigged plebiscite King Constantine I was restored. The developments were multifold.

The ‘liberal’ Venizelists “had wrought a terrible retribution against their political opponents” (Gallant 2001: 138). Back in power, the royalist supporters let loose counter-purges. More people started to find refuge in leftist parties, adding another important cleavage on the general landscape: the growing Left versus Right division. Additionally, the new government adopted a more aggressive and radical line towards Turkey. Most importantly, the restoration of Constantine I to the throne did not meet with the Great Powers’ approval; they proceeded to militarily abandon and financially blockade Greece while the Asia Minor campaign was still unfolding. At the same time in Turkey a new movement of Turk nationalists under Mustafa Kemal Ataturk announced that it would reclaim the lost territories.

In August 1921 the Greek army advanced on Ankara, the Turkish nationalist stronghold. A year later it was driven from Asia Minor and Smyrna was set afire. In November ‘the six’ held responsible for the defeat were executed. The ‘lands of the ancestors’ and some of Hellenism’s most treasured cities were forever territorially lost but would survive in everyday discourse as “the lost homelands”. Furthermore in terms of important relation to others, as Triandafyllidou notes, “the fact that the birth of the modern Turkish nation from the remains of the Ottoman Empire was intertwined with the destruction of the Greek irredentist project confirmed the role of the Turks as the threatening Other par excellence for Greeks. At the same time, the conflict with the Turks contributed to the consolidation of Greek national identity because it strengthened the identification of the nation with the state and enhanced its modern, civic and territorial features” (2001: 46-47).
The Treaty of Lausanne on the 24th of July 1923, finally regulated the territorial relationships between Greece and Turkey and dictated an obligatory exchange of populations between the two countries based on religion. Only the Orthodox and Muslim populations of Constantinople and Western Thrace respectively were to be spared. In comparison with the Treaty of Sevres, Greece was acquiring only Western Thrace and was presented with close to one and a half million displaced persons. As a result the country’s axes of polarisation were compounded. As Gallant puts it,

“...in addition to the political one based on the National Schism, there was now a rupture based on identity – indigenous (dopii) versus foreign/refugee Greeks; related to that was another based on geography – Old Greece (south) versus New Greece (north); and yet one more based on class and wealth distribution. These ruptures, not surprisingly, translated into profound political instability” (2001: 150).

How to bridge the gap between ‘the two fraternal factions’ would be among the priorities of the state during the inter-war period. As Mavrogordatos puts it, it would “take the storm of yet another war and another civil confrontation and the cosmogony of the after war reconstruction to finally overcome the Schism as a crisis of national integration” (1983: 80).32

4. The Inter-war Period, Occupation and Civil War (1923-1949)

The beginning of the inter-war period saw the emergence of new political formations; most importantly, the Demokrateke Ένοση (Democratic Union) of Alexandros Papanastasiou as well as the workers’ movement with the founding of the General Confederation of the Greek Workers and the Socialist Workers’ Movement in 1918. In 1920, the latter was linked to the Communist Internationale and became the Communist Party of Greece (KKE).

32 As late as 1962, Pentzopoulos attributes “the continuance of the distinction” largely to the immigrants themselves and ‘innocently’ claims that “Greece is the West, Anatolia the East” (1962: 201-208).
The first phase of that period was marked by the agricultural reform, the abolition of monarchy and the institution of democracy. However, the democratic experiment was short-lived and regularly interrupted by a series of coups in 1925, 1926, 1933 and 1935. July 1928 saw the beginning of Venizelos’ last administration. He remained in power till 1934 and oversaw a period of relative stability and economic growth during which, though, the chasm between Right and Left increased with the intensification of the prosecution of Communists. In contrast with internal political instability, steps were made towards diminishing external threat. Venizelos successfully pushed the establishment of the Balkan Pact, “a move aimed at lessening its members’ reliance on the Great Powers” (Gallant 2001: 153). He also initiated the rapprochement with Ataturk, which culminated with the Ankara Convention of October 1930. As welcome as it was abroad, the results of the Convention which included final acceptance from both sides of their actual frontiers, proved to be disastrous at home and were further compounded by the financial crises of 1930 and 1931. After yet another coup, in 1935, George II (who had departed Greece on ‘extended leave’ in December 1923) was re-instituted.

In 1936 the era of the Metaxas dictatorship commenced. Contrary to other cases in Europe, Greek fascism was not a mass movement with a coherent ideology. The “Third Hellenic Civilisation” of Metaxas (the first being Ancient Greece and the second the Byzantine Empire), was most importantly marked by the culmination of the tension between Left and Right which translated, again, into the merciless persecution of Communists. At the same time, the Second World War reached Greece with the Italian army invading Greece’s northern frontiers in 1940. The Greek army had some short-lived victories. It even entered Albania and briefly ‘liberated’ some of the ‘lost homelands’ of Northern Epirus, i.e. southern Albania. However, the Germans were soon to invade and occupy Greece from 1940 to 1944. Besides the national humiliation at the loss of Macedonia and Thrace to the Bulgarians, the German occupation was marked by the systematic plundering of the nation’s economic resources, resulting in food shortages, hyperinflation and the growth of black markets (cf. Gallant 2001: 164).
In September 1941 the National Liberation Front (EAM- Ethnikó Apeleftherotekó Mētopo) was formed, at first uniting among its ranks members of varied political conviction. Greek resistance soon had the active support of Great Britain. One of the major successes of their collaboration as well as an event of great symbolism would be the destruction of the Gorgopotamos viaduct in 1942. However, in 1943 mutinies broke out within the resistance. According to Svoronos, such a development must be seen as the result of intense social and political confrontation (1982: 315).33 In October 1944 Greece was liberated and, following the Moscow percentages’ agreement between Churchill and Stalin, was assigned to the British sphere of influence. As Svoronos puts it “the political status quo remains on the surface ‘a crowned parliamentary democracy’; however, in reality, power resided with non-parliamentary forces which constituted a parallel governing scheme, the so-called parakratos (para-state) (1982: 317).

As expected, such a situation was not endured for long. After all, those who had fought to liberate the country from the German occupation were not ready to live as prisoners of their co-nationals. The shooting by the police of demonstrators in Athens in December was the catalyst for the communist insurgency which officially came to a halt with the Varkiza agreement of February 1945. The latter decreed that the left-wing fighters of National Resistance against the Germans were to surrender their arms. Those who refused to comply unconditionally, though, remained in hiding. There followed their intensive persecution, imprisonment and exile in the local version of the eradication of the ‘Bolshevik danger’. In an intensified climate of counter-revolution and terrorism, the Left decided to abstain from the elections of March 1946. A rigged plebiscite in September of the same year voted for the return of King George II to Greece. In October the (communist) Democratic Army of Greece was established and the Civil War erupted. According to Sarafis, “the Greek civil war of 1947-9 was the almost inevitable result of the White Terror which followed the events of December 1944” (1990: 136).

33 A similar situation characterised the exiled Greek government which was stationed in Egypt. In fact in April 1944, the cleansing of the armed forces abroad from every democratic or leftist element was actively undertaken.
What is more, in March 1947 the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine resulted in massive US military and economic assistance to the national government. As Tsoucalas puts it, “the intensification of the Cold War on a universal scale resulted in the rapid evaporation of all liberal scruples in the United States [...] There was now full congruence between the extremist domestic fashion and the dominant foreign influence” (1981: 325). In the same year, the Communist Party of Greece was outlawed and would remain so for twenty-seven years. In April, King Paul succeeded to the throne. Two years later in August, remnants of the Democratic Army were defeated in battles of Grammos and Vitsi and many fled into Albania. In October 1949, the Communist Party of Greece announced ‘temporary cessation’ of hostilities, bringing the civil war to a formal close.

The Civil War reflected to a great extent the tensions and conflicts of the post-war period and the Cold War, dividing Greeks in “ethnikofrones” (‘national-minded’) and “anthellines” (‘anti-Greeks’) – characterisations used by the government of the time to describe themselves and their national political opponents respectively. The division would underlie Greek politics well into the 1970s. The causes and reasons of that war have been the topic of such a vast amount of research and discussion as well as discord and bitterness, that it is extremely difficult to summarise them for this thesis. Around 15,000 people died, 50,000 houses were destroyed, not to mention factories, hospitals, bridges and schools as well as 1,500,000 animals. The war also created a large number of refugees, especially inhabitants of Northern Greece. They were forced to abandon their houses either by necessity – so as not to find themselves amongst fighting groups; or by force – so as to render impossible any provision of ammunition to the Democratic Army. During and after the war more than 57,000 people were obliged to leave the country for political reasons and remained in exile for many years. Many returned to Greece as late as in 1982, when finally National Resistance was officially recognised and National Reconciliation institutionalised. In the general euphoria ‘a detail’ was easily overlooked. The law of 1982 foresaw that a right to return to Greece was given to those of Greek origin, thus leaving out former inhabitants of Macedonia of Slav origin who had fought in this war in the very same Democratic Army. A decree in 1989 entitled each such case to be judged separately. In 1989, a year when the world’s geography was significantly
altered, common Greek origin, which had functioned in previous decades as the uniting bond among different groups of Greeks, could still be employed – partly due to the implications of such geopolitical changes for Greece. Such issues will be returned to shortly.


The year 1950 marked “the ‘false dawn’ of normality” (cf. Sarafis 1990: 140). The Right had won and the United States had assumed the United Kingdom’s position as Greece’s patron. Greece became increasingly linked to the Cold War’s western block both for being in intense need of financial assistance and because of its geographical position. Being the only country with a non-communist regime in the Balkans of the post-war era, Greece’s role would be to contain Communist expansion. In such a political landscape a new constitution was voted in 1952 but the systematic repression of the Left persisted. Cold War polarities linked Greece to ‘the West’ which it has always been striving to be a part of. However, they also further isolated Greece from its immediate geographical neighbours and further intensified its internal political instability.

In 1955, Konstantinos Karamanlis was chosen by the King to form a new government. He remained in power until 1963. His primacy was marked by intense internal and external migration. Under the slogan, “We belong to the West”, Karamanlis systematically pursued Greece’s NATO and EEC membership. Also in 1955, the armed EOKA (National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) struggle for union with Greece began. After years of conflict a settlement was reached in 1959, according to which the island would be independent and ruled by a joint Helleno-Turkish government.

The growth of the economy during that period was paralleled by changes in the social structure. Such changes account for an increasing support of the opposition by ascending working, petit bourgeois and middle classes as well as by the changing voting behaviour
of peasant populations (cf. Svoronos 1982: 318). In fact the opposition started showing the signs of its strength at the 1961 elections in which George Papandreou’s Centre Union Party in association with some smaller parties gathered 34% of the vote. The elections followed widespread allegations of corruption and the same year George Papandreou launched his “unyielding struggle” (‘anéndotos agón’) to overthrow Karamanlis’ government. In 1963 Karamanlis resigned. In the elections that followed, Papandreou secured a narrow victory while in December the constitutional settlement in Cyprus broke down. The Centre Union proceeded to obtain a decisive parliamentary majority in the February 1964 elections. In March of the same year, King Paul died and King Constantine II ascended to the throne.

As Gallant remarks, “the Papandreou government enacted a number of far-reaching social and political reforms, prominent among which was the releasing of most political prisoners” (2001: 196). However, in 1965 a clash over control of the portfolio of defence led to a constitutional clash between King and Prime Minister and resulted in the latter’s resignation. After a short period of an ‘apostate’ Centre Union government, which was formed with the support of conservative National Radical Union, elections scheduled for May were forestalled by the military coup of April, 21 1967. A counter-coup launched by King Constantine in December 1967 was abortive and he was forced to abandon Greece.

The ‘Glorious Revolution’ of the Colonels34 was the beginning of a six-year long period of martial courts, prisons and concentration camps. The fairly sound economy that the colonels inherited explains the continuing economic growth between 1967 and 1972. However their regime was far from popular. Soon, resistance organisations started forming inside Greece and abroad. Prominent among them was PAK (The Panhellenic Liberation Movement) led by Andreas Papandreou, the son of George. The latter’s funeral on November 1st, 1968 became itself a rally of resistance.

The beginning of the end for the junta became apparent in 1973 with the November student occupation of the Athens Polytechnic School, which was violently suppressed by

34 Colonels Giorgos Papadopoulos, Nikolaos Makarezos and Brigadier General Stilianos Patakos.
the army. Further developments in Cyprus brought the collapse of the military regime. In July 1974 Archbishop Makarios, having survived an attempt on his life, was deposed as President of Cyprus in a coup backed by the military junta in Athens. This was followed by the Turkish invasion and occupation of northern Cyprus. Karamanlis was called to Athens from Paris in order to head a civilian government. In the November 1974 elections his party, Nea Demokratéa (New Democracy), secured 220 out of 300 seats in the parliament. A plebiscite in December voted by an overwhelming majority of 70% for the abolition of the monarchy and a new constitution came into being on June 9, 1975. The first post-junta period also saw the trials of those responsible for the dictatorship and the legalisation of the Communist Party. The Orthodox Church was recognised as the established rather than the state church of Greece, “thus allowing for free practice of other religions. [...] By and large, [...] the 1975 Constitution, established the framework of a modern liberal polity” (Gallant 2001: 205). Relations with Turkey remained tense over a number of issues, while the relationship with the United States, being in large part blamed for both the colonels’ junta and the backlash in Cyprus, underwent a major crisis.

In May 1980 Karamanlis was elected President of Democracy. In January 1981 Greece entered the European Community as its tenth member. In October of the same year, Andreas Papandreou’s PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement), which had shown important signs of electoral rise in 1977, became the first explicitly left party to come to government. It would be re-elected in 1985. To Karamanlis’s “We belong to the West”, Papandreou answered with a call for a break with the past and opposed his vision of Greece: “…our opponents pretentiously ask us whether we are with the West or the East, and our reply is: We are for peace and support only Greece’s interests”.35 As Veremis remarks, “the anti-Western undertones of PASOK’s pronouncements, after three decades of almost uninterrupted official loyalty to the US and its European allies, partly reflected the sentiments of those that had been excluded from public life due to their left-wing affiliations” (1995: 109). With the successful ascent to power of a party that branded itself ‘socialist’ for the first time ever in modern Greek history, as Gallant puts it, “the transformation from authoritarian rule to democracy was finally complete” (2001: 209).

35 Speech by Andreas Papandreou on 19 October 1983; cited in Gallant 2001: 211.
Just as Venizelos's Liberal Party had done in the past, PASOK "radically altered the political system, not only in relation to the renewal of the "Established Political Order" but also in relation to the fundamental reconstruction of political structures" (Mouzelis 1986: 149). It also brought into the political arena 'new men', rejuvenating the country's political leadership. On the positive side, PASOK introduced a number of long-awaited and in some sense inevitable reforms with regard to women's rights, universities, the health service etc. As already stated, it also officially institutionalised National Reconciliation, even if in a manner questionable to some (cf. Mouzelis 1986: 158).

However, the state's role, a role that had been increasing in previous decades, continued to grow and the civil sector to expand. Critics of the PASOK administration noted, inter alia, that it bore "more resemblance to populist movements of South America than to socialist and social-democratic parties of Western Europe" (Ibid. 1986: 153). In the international arena, after being brought to the brink of armed conflict with Turkey in 1987, the January 1988 Davos agreement held, nevertheless, the hope of a Greek-Turkish rapprochement. That hope would be short-lived. Papandreou also undertook initiatives for further collaboration between the Balkan states.

However, despite a promising start, the Papandreou era would not end particularly well. In 1988, after a major financial scandal, PASOK lost power. Such a development brought disillusion amongst the party's supporters who had hoped for a really different political style and life. In the elections of June 1989 no party won an overall majority, which led to a temporary conservative/communist coalition. Further inconclusive elections in November led to the formation of an all-party 'ecumenical' government.

In addition to internal political complication

"the fall of Communism made Greece and its post-war brand of nationalism less interesting geopolitically to its European allies. As Adam Nicolson observed:

"Greece, from being one of us since the War, has become one of them (Balkans).

With the collapse of the Soviet Empire in eastern and central Europe, Greece's
usefulness as an eastern bulwark of NATO has disappeared" (Veremis 1995: 99).

At the same time, as Veremis observes, “among the members of the EU the Greeks are fated to assume the lion’s share of the cost incurred by the transition of Balkan states to Democracy” (1995: 111). If nothing else, the late 1980s and early 1990s confronted Greece with an ever-increasing number of immigrants. Greeks demonstrated both institutional and psychological un-readiness for this change which transformed Greece to “a world where language, ethnicity, and territory no longer find a comfortable fit” (Leontis 1997: 224).

Until that time, the main perception had been one of Greece being a sender rather than a receiver of immigrants. In fact, “until 1989 migration from Third World countries towards Greece appeared unproblematic” (Mikrakis & Triandafyllidou 1994: 792). Additionally, the two main non-Greek ethnic groups, namely Gypsies and Thrace Muslims, remained socially and politically invisible due mainly to their constant mobility and their geographical concentration respectively. Other autochthonous groups such as Vlachs, Pomacks and Slavo-Macedonians were never officially recognised as ethnically distinct minorities (whether they were/are or not is still the subject of both academic research and political debate).

The larger group of newcomers arrived from Albania. According to King et al., even by “a conservative estimate of 300,000 [in 1998], this amounts to nearly one-tenth of the Albanian population and to around seven per cent of the labour force in Greece”. As the same authors note, “the scale of these figures makes the emigration from Albania to Greece unique amongst recent migratory movements in Europe” (1998: 161). Those immigrants were in fact Albanian citizens, but a large percentage would identify themselves – and would actually be identified by the Albanian government – as ‘ethnic Greeks’, sharing with their co-ethnics a language and a religion. Before emigrating they would predominantly inhabit the Southern part of Albania or as it is commonly referred

to in Greek reality, ‘Northern Epirus’,\textsuperscript{37} with all the ideological implications of such terminology;\textsuperscript{38} after all, a “virtual state of war”\textsuperscript{39} between the two countries only ended in 1987. In addition to Albanian immigrants, “another category of ‘ethnic Greeks’ emerged in late 1980s as significant: Pontian Greeks from the USSR began to arrive in large numbers in 1989, peaking at 14.000 in 1990-91” (Baldwin-Edwards & Fakiolas 1998: 186). The latter are often referred to as Pontic Repatriates (‘Pôntee Palinostúndes’), implying that Pontic Greeks return to the land where their ancestors lived during some period in the past.\textsuperscript{40}

Most of this immigration has been illegal, at least initially. The overall inability of the Greek state to deal in a consistent and comprehensive way with these migratory waves is notorious and the literature quite extensive. In an article published in 2002 Triandafyllidou and Veikou state that “the continuing lack of a comprehensive policy framework even after 10 years, and the political and public debate on the issue suggest that there is a relationship between this reluctance and the ethnocultural definition of the Greek nationality and citizenship” (2002: 191). In the same article, Triandafyllidou and Veikou set out to demonstrate the redefinition of the boundaries of the ingroup in view of the presence of new ‘others’ within it as well as in view of “present needs and pragmatic considerations” (ibid.: 203). Questions of inexistent change in legal arrangements and numbers notwithstanding, one thing is clear, permanent and unquestionable: after 1989 immigrants residing in Greece have become increasingly numerous and, thus, visible.

\textsuperscript{37} Accordingly those immigrants are called ‘Vorioepirotes’.
\textsuperscript{38} By characterising what is now part of another state as the Northern part of a province which actually exists in the Greek state, its potential as territory of Greece is maintained. Such use emphasises the importance of name-ascription and casts a different light, for instance, on the reluctance of the Greek state to accept a new neighbour under the name of Macedonia.
\textsuperscript{39} See King \textit{et al.} 1998: 161
\textsuperscript{40} Cf. Triandafyllidou & Veikou 2002: 198, 204. Some more explanation: “Pontian Greeks come mainly from the ex-Soviet Republics of Georgia, Armenia and Kazakhstan. They are ethnic Greeks who either emigrated from areas of the Ottoman Empire to the ex-Soviet Union in the beginning of the twentieth century, or who left Greece in the 1930s and the 1940s for political reasons. Pontian Greeks are defined by the Greek state as members of the diaspora community who return to their homeland and are, therefore, given full citizen status and benefits aimed at facilitating their (re)integration into Greek society. Vorioepirotes are Albanian citizens, mainly from southern Albania, of Greek ethnic origin and Christian Orthodox religion […]” (Triandafyllidou 2001: 125).
On the political front, PASOK came back to power in 1994. After Papandreou’s death in 1996, Konstantinos Simitis became the party’s leader and the country’s Prime Minister. Simitis’s PASOK was quite different from that of Papandreou and resembled more a New Labour kind of party which amongst other things tried to pursue the open questions of the name of FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), the status of Cyprus and the relationship with Albania and Turkey within a changed geopolitical order. Simitis’ PASOK was re-elected in 2000 on an agenda of modernisation which would “start with the restructuring of the state bureaucratic organisation. [...] Adaptation [...] according to the major representatives of ‘eksincronesmós’[modernization], can only take place from above rather than from below” (Kokosalakis 2002: 29). However, Simitis’ PASOK was defeated in the March 2004 elections, having been increasingly accused by the victorious New Democracy conservatives as well as a large part of both the press and the Greek public of grossly abusing the mechanisms of the state as well as of corruption and of promoting a distinct elite at the expense of a considerable part of the population. In fact, as Kokosalakis notes,

“with the rise of EU and PASOK’s Schengen agreement, a number of scholars have raised through their studies their concern over the recent development of a new “underclass”. This new “underclass” consists mainly of undocumented immigrants, refugees and a number of inner-city poor” (2002: 33-34).

PASOK’s claimed modernising focus on works of infrastructure and foreign policy has been overshadowed by the actual increase in numbers of people who live below the poverty line as well as the increase in unemployment.

Gallant maintains that “many, but by no means all, of the issues and problems that shaped the nation’s development for the previous 180 years have come to an end of sorts in 1989” (2001: 218). Obviously Greece has now experienced more than thirty years of continuous political and territorial stability. The latest elections were judged by all as the least controversial and as marking at last the end of the era after 1973. However, the resurrection by PASOK during the last 2004 pre-electoral week of a discourse of ‘right
terror' as well as the mere fact that the two protagonists were yet again a Karamanlis and a Papandreou testified that quite a few issues still remain open. If nothing else, the discourses that past developments have introduced into Greek public life often still persist.

In a changing world Greece is again changing without, however, having fully come to terms with developments born in previous eras. In a public discourse more and more infused by a 'politically correct' terminology, some issues still have not come "to an end of sorts". They are still ready to be revived once the opportunity arises. In the next chapter, such issues will be returned to in an effort to distinguish their implications for perceptions of Greekness.

6. Conclusion

As already admitted, in the context of this thesis a historical overview of almost two centuries of Greek history cannot but be extremely sketchy. However, the issue is not to show how Greece is a place of too much or too particular a history. Rather, a historical account is found here for the following reasons. On a first level, this thesis stresses the need to pay attention to the particularities of specific places and to approach such places carefully and with knowledge of what has shaped attitudes and identities in the past. The reader has now been alerted to such particularities in the case of Greece. The discourses that such an environment brings to the fore will be further discussed in the next chapter. Secondly, history can be seen as providing the kind of 'thick description' of the Greek landscape which is necessary if any issues of generalisability of this thesis' findings are to be addressed (the potential for a generalisation of findings will be further examined in chapter three.) Thirdly, the writer is Greek and needs to put her understanding in historical perspective as well; not as an apology for possible shortcomings but in order to be successfully reflective on what constitutes the notion of 'Greekness'. It is against such

understandings that personal identity is formed. It follows that transformations of the context in which conceptualisations of Greek identity have been formed are important on both social and personal levels.

In the next chapter, the focus shifts to disentangling some of the main discourses which map onto specific historical events. It will be argued that such discourses of cultural identity inform both policies about what Greek culture is/should be and also attempts to influence such policies or even to subvert them. Thus, a discursive environment, a 'public culture' is created in which notions of the nation, culture and identity get intertwined. After all, in everyday life what matters most is not the clear demarcation of concepts but rather understanding and communication.
CHAPTER 3: WHY GREECE: A STORY OF IN-BETWEENESS

1. Introduction

The historical itinerary sketched in the previous chapter is often used as supporting material to a series of important public discourses about Greece and its people. Such discourses can be broadly categorised as Western or Eastern depending on the geographical area with which they appear predominantly linked. However, the indispensability of the East for the West and visa-versa will be progressively unveiled. It will become obvious that a clear demarcation is not possible since both sides of the dichotomy are influenced not only by each other but also by an overarching perception of Greece’s ‘in-betweeness’. And yet, even in an ‘in-between’ case, the East and the West still maintain their negative and positive connotations respectively. Implications are manifold. Not only are there no innocent categorisations; what is more, once a place is categorised as x it becomes easier to subsume any new development under x. Furthermore, places themselves often seem to develop in ways that confirm what is believed about them. Such a situation makes overcoming traditional manifestations of such discourses in order to respond to change a daunting task. However, if dispensing with the discourses is difficult, potential for change may be researched within them. Such an attempt is probably more realistic than the prescription of dispensing with what has formed past understanding of the society under consideration. Also, besides being unrealistic, an exercise of ‘dispensing with the past’ may prove to be both a source of anxiety for those under examination and a sign of disrespect on the part of those who are doing the examining. Discursive potential for change will be further investigated in chapters six and seven. For the moment a disentanglement of potent and complex discourses is necessary.

In the first section of this chapter so called ‘Western’ discourses will be examined. In addition to discourses of dependency and deficiency by comparison to the West, the genealogical link to Ancient Greece as well as the perenniality of Greeks as a nation will
be discussed as a major key to the preservation of the relationship of Greece with the West as well as a potent discursive source of national merit. It will be argued that Western civicness in Greece can be seen as somewhat ethnic, linked as it is to the alleged birth of democracy in Ancient Greece.

In the second section ‘Eastern’ discourses will be examined. First, the incorporation of Christian Orthodoxy into a discourse of national continuity (consisting in the triad of Ancient Greece – Byzantium – Modern Greece) will be discussed. Then the implications of continuous border-shifts as well as population movements and homogenisation attempts will be shown to perpetuate discourses of instability. Finally, attitudes towards different groups of ‘others’ will be investigated – as influenced by the predominance of a discourse which describes Greece as a fairly homogeneous country. However, this investigation will also reveal that an ethnic understanding of identity cannot account for all difficulties in dealing with ‘difference’. In fact it will be shown that attitudes towards co-ethnics are often not less problematic than attitudes towards more obvious others. In the case of Greece that may be a function of its disturbed past as well as how it perceives itself as superior inter pares in the area, due to its alleged privileged link to the West. Thus in this case, links to alleged civicness may be functioning rather exclusively. Also, it will be argued that by defining ‘difference’ in ethnic terms, other lines of division (for instance, division linked to internal politics) may be obfuscated, though not necessarily overcome.

Greece, though, is not unique in any exclusive way. Rather, what has been shaping the world in general and the specific Balkan part of it in particular could not but have had its impact on Greece as well. In conclusion, the potential exportability of a theoretical framework originated in Greece will be briefly investigated. Greece may function as a paradigm in certain respects for places with similar development, such as, for instance, the rest of the Balkan countries. Furthermore, Greece may function as a case-study for a series of concerns related to the theoretical issues under consideration. If nothing else, Greece demonstrates that in-betweeness may under certain circumstances become theoretically untenable and practically unbearable. If such is the case, then opposing
poles may be also shown to be flawed. First though, further exploration of the case-study is pertinent.

2. ‘The West’ in Greek public culture

2.1. From foreign rule to the European Union: discourses of dependency

Discourses of dependency refer to the development of the relationship with dominant Western others since the establishment of the first independent Greek state in the early 19th century. As recounted in chapter two, the first ruler of that state was the foreign – Bavarian – King Otto.42 The main Greek parties of the time were named after the foreign power which they saw most appropriate as Greece’s protector. And earlier, as Mouzelis remarks,

“It was only through the intervention of the three great powers (France, England, Russia) that the Greek revolution was rescued from total collapse, and that the monarchical institution was imposed as a means of unifying the country. Of course this type of unity, maintained by pressure from outside, only reflected on the political level the dependency which already characterised Greece on the economic one” (1978: 142-143).

To succeed Otto, the choice of the Glucksburgs was the product of careful calculation. The new King was a Danish prince, on the surface linked to neither France nor Russia or the United Kingdom, but who was, nevertheless, more closely related to the latter. Such externally driven monarchy, never really found a home in Greece. In part, this may be the result of it being literally a foreign body within the Greek state. Furthermore, the monarchy has been linked with some of Greece’s darkest hours: Venizelos’ resignation in 1915 due to conflicting opinions on Greece’s entry to the First World War; or as late as 1965, the unsuccessful efforts of George Papandreou to take control of the very important portfolio of defence from the King and the eventual deterioration of the situation which led to a six-year dictatorship and the invasion of Cyprus.

42 Kapodistrias was only provisionally elected President of the new Hellenic state in 1827 and even he had been earlier Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tsar Alexander I.
In the 20th century “the tradition of Great Powers patronage” (Legg & Roberts 1987: 56), as it is often referred to, was, as already reported, first upheld by Great Britain and later the United States. The political relationship between the latter and Greece has been marked by both sides’ changing interests in the Balkans. The Greek Civil War of 1946-1949, for instance, was tightly related to the Cold War and the need to use Greece as a bulwark against the expansion of Communism. Greece’s ascendance to European Community membership in 1981 was not totally independent of its perception as a Western enclave in the Communist East either. As Clogg remarks, “Greece’s full membership of the European Community […] seemed to set the seal in an unambiguous way on her ‘Europeanness’”. It was further significant “in that she was the first country with a heritage of Orthodox Christianity and Ottoman rule and with a pattern of historical development that marked her out from the existing members to enter the Community” (Clogg 1992: 6).

Once recognised as Western, the terms of conversation could be further negotiated so as to be Western but now ‘on our own terms’. In 1981 this tendency was very astutely captured by Andreas Papandreou both before and after his election. However, despite the fact that he had come to power on an agenda advocating dispensing with membership of the European Community, he soon withdrew from such a position although maintaining a claim to Greece’s ‘European peculiarity’ in discourse. Furthermore, PASOK’s foreign policy could often be seen as continuing a pattern of tense balance between what Legg and Roberts describe as an “assumption that basic problems must be solved by outsiders and that the problems are indeed caused by outsiders as well” and that, at the same time, “the world is in its [Greece’s] debt” (1987: 57). As for the latter construction, it is probably the product of the complex relationship between ‘the West’s’ imagining of Greece as its ancestor on the one hand and Greece’s re-appropriation and use of such a perception on the other. In fact, the situation described by Legg and Roberts cannot be disentangled from a reality of continuous political and financial dependency on ‘others’ nor from their regular interference.
After 1989 the political relationship with the West entered yet another phase. Greece, although striving to maintain a profile of privileged mediator between the EU and the peoples of the former Yugoslavia, nevertheless saw its consideration as a privileged geopolitical partner challenged both by the breakdown of Communism and by an increasing European interest in Turkey. In 2004 further EU enlargement has yet again modified the balance in the area, whilst October 2005 marked the beginning of official talks for Turkey’s full ascendance to the EU.

Of course, interference was not always imposed whereas dependency could be justified by consecutive governments on the premise that Greece is a small country in a very dangerous neighbourhood. It will be shown that the realities of that neighbourhood also create an interesting discursive framework. Financial and political burdens put aside, the conceptual and psychological implications of such perceptions still have to be appreciated. In some form or other the ‘western factor’ has been constantly politically and discursively present – were that only in more recent years in order to claim the final break from past intervention practices. Residues of such discourses may still persist, especially in times of increased globalisation where decision-power seems more and more to evade those at the margins of decision-making centres.

2.2. A Western implant on an Eastern structure: discourses of deficiency

Greece’s institutional deficiency refers to the inability to implement locally successful ‘Western’ institutional patterns. It is often considered as the persisting legacy of the notorious Ottoman era. However, the 19th century developments in Greece were not much different from what was happening in a large part of Western Europe. In fact the Greeks of the early 19th century diaspora, who played an important part in both the cultivation of a distinct Greek national identity and the manifestation of the 1821 rebellion against the Ottoman rule, were nurtured on the ideas of the Enlightenment. Mouzelis notes that

43 It remains, though, questionable whether Greek governments have been able to utilise fully such a potential when it existed.
“the Western-educated intelligentsia and part of the diaspora bourgeoisie not only provided the leadership and material resources of the revolutionary movement, but by disseminating French revolutionary ideas and Western culture generally on the mainland, they were the real catalysts for directing the peasant unrest towards nationalistic-revolutionary goals” (1978: 141);

in Greece as in other Balkan countries. As Kitromilides remarks, “the literature produced in Greek under the impact of the ideas of the Enlightenment introduced for the first time the concepts of distinct ethnic identities in the Balkan society” (1989: 151). An earlier idea of a Balkan federation as propounded by people like Rhigas Velestinlis and as justified again by reference to the French Revolution and Constitution, was soon to be abandoned in favour of more nationalistic dreams.44

What is considered as distinct in the case of the Balkans is that “the new national state adopted western principles of government and administration, at the expense of domestic political idiosyncrasies” (Veremis 1989: 136). The latter can then be blamed for the malfunctioning of the former. Mouzelis writes:

“Greece, whether one likes it or not, belongs historically to a socio-economic and cultural area very different from that of the West. At a time when Western Europe experienced the socio-political transformation which eventually revolutionised the world, Greece was an impoverished province of a declining, quasi-colonial empire. And when Greece cast off the Ottoman yoke, it did not join the West but rather came to share the fate of its Balkan neighbours which were being savagely and consistently exploited by the political, economic and cultural imperialism of Western Europe” (1978: 151-152).

44 López Villalba maintains that Rhigas cherished the enlightened hope that “the moral strength of democratic patriotism – based on the universal principles of the Enlightenment – would reduce religious and national antagonisms, would favour solidarity among the different nationalities and would encourage dedication to the unitary institutions of the new republic” (2003: 146). He further attempted to adapt the French Constitution of 1793 to Balkan standards. As López Villalba remarks, Rhigas’ translation, resulting in the New Political Constitution, being as it is an attempt to draft “a constitution for the peoples of the Balkans – the first constitutional text of South-Eastern Europe”, “proposes answers to questions that the original text did not raise” (Ibid: 144-145). Such are mentions of language or ethnicity. In article 7, for instance, one reads: “The sovereign people consists of all the inhabitants of this Empire, without distinction of religion or speech, Greeks, Bulgarians, Albanians, Wallachians, Armenians, Turks and every other kind of race” (Ibid. 2003: 147-148).
Such explanation does not allow much room for misinterpretation. Greece unavoidably had been placed into the underdeveloped part of the world. What is more, such developmental patterns pertained to the local version of both capitalism and parliamentarism. As the same writer comments,

"[In the West] the development of bourgeois parliamentary institutions went hand in hand with the development of capitalism; [...] Greek parliamentarism, implanted at a time when the capitalist mode of production was peripheral in the social formation, functioned in a very different manner. The nineteenth-century Greek oligarchy used it as a means, not for overthrowing the inherited Ottoman structure, but for safeguarding as many of its features as possible" (Mouzelis 1978: 144).

The still-live implications of such a form of development are considered to be the persistence of face-to-face political legitimation, the economic supremacy of the state, the perseverance of clientelism, thoroughly transformed from personal to party clientelism since 1974, the prevalence of a grey economy etc. (cf. Charalambidis & Demertzis 1993: 228-229). Furthermore, it is believed by theorists and politicians alike that incomplete democratisation will persist into the future as long as it is not attended to in proper (Western?) ways. The Western cultural progress vs. Eastern cultural backwardness view is expanded by others to include all Southeastern Europe and provides an explanation for that area’s distinct development based, as mentioned earlier, on ‘a developmental phase difference’. Besides essentialising places, as once fixed and ever since unchangeable, such arguments seem to study the history of the area not in its own terms but in their own. As if the area is only interesting to the extent that its study can provide further validity not only to patterns of historical explanation but also to the idealisation of a ‘proper’ tradition.

Such arguments further identify an exemplification of a malfunctioning democracy in the absence of civil society. Legg and Roberts, for instance, remark that “precisely at the time when civil society would have been forming [...] the power of social forces in Greece was dissipated on ideas of empire, on the absorption of “Greeks” into the
homeland, and on the creation of a homogeneous national state" (1987: 197) and that
centralisation "was also the result of a process of oligarchic rule and popular exclusion
that was common to the politics of southern Europe and led to fascist dictatorships in the
1930s" (Ibid.: 197). The time-leap notwithstanding, the assertion that civil society would have been forming were it not for other local factors seems to abide by the inevitability of
a certain course of events.45

Finally, the Greek deficiency in successfully separating the private from the public is also
often noted by both foreign and Western-trained academics.

“In Greece [...] there is a utilitarian approach that subjugates the public sphere to
the exigencies of the private. Thus Greek political culture is characterized by a
merging of the public and the private – a privatization of the public and a
publicization of the private” (Charalambidis & Demertzis 1993: 223-224).46

However, it is rather due to the specific developments in the area and their political and
institutional results that such a merging is more visible in the case of Greece. In any case
it is not evident why such premises are essential for the fulfilment of civic and personal
lives. After all, even in societies like Britain where, at least in theory, developments such
a well-functioning civil society and the implementation of impersonal institutions are
acknowledged as having taken place, a large part of the society admittedly feels if not
discriminated against, at least pushed to the borders, silenced, disinterested or
disillusioned.

To avoid misunderstanding it must be noted that it is not the political soundness of such
developmental accounts which is questioned here. There are indeed arguments which can
be plausibly advanced about institutional atrophy and incomplete democratisation. It is
time-leaps which must be seriously challenged as well as a priori considerations of

45 As if things were not complicated enough, the difference of religious tradition can also be brought into
the picture. Leoussi, for instance, writes: “In addition to the patrimonial character of the Byzantine regime,
another factor prevented the formation of a modern understanding of citizenship. This was the conception
of the self held by the Greek Orthodox Church – a conception based mainly on mystical experience” (1993:
222). In an age of rationality the attribute of mysticism cannot be considered a positive characteristic.

46 Elsewhere Karakasidou writes: “The “public” realm was domesticated as the “private” realm became
nationalized. The authority of the state forcefully intervened in the “private” domain of the family, taking
over responsibilities of enculturation that had previously been largely domestic” (1993: 7).
certain parts of the world as good and others as bad, or certain ones as progressive and others as regressive. In such a framework, when value has already been attributed to the kind of development that one has been following, it is also hard to see how to substantiate beliefs such as Mouzelis’: “I believe that the development of Greece is not a question of imitating or catching up with the West; it is a question of transcending the contradictions of both peripheral and metropolitan capitalism by finding and following new developmental strategies” (1978: 153-154). It should also come as no surprise to discover that newly noticed attitudes towards immigrants are marked by such beliefs. In a discussion of recent press-discourse Triandafyllidou notes that: “Even though Greek national identity generally emphasises the difference between spontaneous, Mediterranean Greeks in contrast to the rational western Europeans of the north, Greece suddenly becomes ‘the West’ so that its superiority is accentuated when the outgroup comprises immigrants” (2001: 104). In the development of such discourses understandings are clear: ‘the West’ is a source of positive value and it is the Greeks’ ability to refer to membership in the West that makes them superior to immigrants. In a way then, Greeks are replaying against the immigrants the card often played by ‘Western partners’ against Greeks.

2.3. ‘Demetriades’ skull’ and other stories: discourses of merit?
‘Looking up’ to the West also affected the differentiated value attributed to areas of Greek culture. Discourses of merit refer precisely to perceptions of what is worth keeping and promoting from the Greek cultural past. Of course, as Mouzelis remarks,

“It may be argued that the destruction of the traditional, autochthonous culture under the impact of Western ideas is not a specifically Greek experience. Cultural imperialism goes hand in hand with economic imperialism in all peripheral social formations. But what was specific of Greece was the total lack of awareness or any serious resistance to that ‘cultural imperialism’. On the contrary: the pushing aside of the endogenous culture (songs, dances, poetry, language) was facilitated enormously by the fact that it was seen as the shameful bastardised heritage of four centuries of Ottoman yoke. It was easy, therefore, to attack it and replace it
by another cultural tradition which, although dead, was ‘really Greek’, i.e. nearer the ‘glorious ancient heritage’" (1978: 146-147).

The ‘fetishisation’ of Greekness by the West became the most powerful form of positive self-evaluation in Greece itself.

Furthermore, the transplanting of modern institutions into newborn Greece in the early 19th century could also be considered as actually Greek at heart. Through a complex “positioning of mirrors” (cf. Friedman 1992: 839-840), the Western imagining of Greece as its ancestor and, thus, the ancestor of civicness and progress, has been re-appropriated very successfully by the natives. The new state’s self-understanding was not only imported; it also made perfect sense. “The ancient glorious past was thus incorporated into the modern conception of the nation as its genealogical and cultural cradle” (Triandafyllidou & Paraskevopoulou 2002: 80) but ‘the nation’s’ relationship to it has not been uncomplicated ever since. As Clogg remarks, “The burden of antiquity has been both a boon and a bane” (1992:1). As late as 1980, a year before Greece officially entered the EEC, in a debate in the British parliament a foreign office minister was saying that Greece’s entry would be a “fitting repayment by the Europe of today of the cultural and political debt that we all owe to a Greek heritage almost three thousand years old” (quoted in Clogg 1992: 1-2). The leap between modern and ancient Greece has been both easy and continuous, albeit with various results.

To begin with, the perception of the country’s symbolic past as the alleged cradle of democracy and European civilisation initiated European support for the Greek cause in the early 19th century. Not only that but Hellenism and all things Greek were very pervasive in the 18th and 19th centuries. Hellenism fitted dominant hierarchies of race:

“Human races were permanently unequal both physically, in regard to beauty and strength, and culturally, in relation to their civilizational achievements. In all these hierarchies the Europeans, or white race, were at the top, and within the ‘European’ category, the Greeks occupied the highest rank” (Leoussi 1997: 43).

47 Leoussi goes on to note that “the European desire to be Greek was not new: it went back to the Italian Renaissance and was revived in the eighteenth-century’s neoclassical movement […]. However, at that time, identification with the Greeks had to do with the spirit, not the body, and with imitation rather than
Such claims went even as far as to promote ideas about the north European roots of ancient Greece (cf. Leoussi 2001: 474). As such the Greeks were also Aryans (!). Gobineau, for instance, noted that

"The physical and moral characteristics of the Aryan Hellenes, both men and women, were the same as those of the other Aryan nations. They were white, blond, with a vigorous muscular development, regular features, great physical energy, love of freedom and a desire for continuous conquest" (in Leoussi 2001: 475)

This being so, one may imagine the disappointment of those ‘Greeks in mind and body’ at the sight of the actual state of their contemporary inhabitants of Greece. As Herzfeld puts it,

"the philhellenes [...], western admirers of Classical culture whose political support was essential to the establishment of an independent modern Greek state [...], saw the Greece of their own time, not as an integral part of modern Europe, but as a passive reincarnation of its ancient self, and usually as a not terribly felicitous reincarnation of that" (1987: 54).

‘Holy’ Greece, the place of European ‘aboriginality’, “the idealised spiritual and intellectual ancestor of Europe” (Ibid.: 1), had been ‘polluted’ by 400 years of ‘oriental’ occupation.

However, there has also been an unwillingness to recognize Greeks of their time as more than remnants of their ancient ancestors. Clogg remarks that “it is still, regrettably, a biological inheritance. By the middle of the century, we find a number of anthropological studies advancing the claim that there was a physical similarity and even identity between the English and the Greeks; that the English were Greek” (1997: 55). Leoussi also stresses the impact of Classical Greek statues on the development of such perceptions – for instance, the notorious ‘Elgin Marbles’ (named after their latest owner rather than after their creator): “What is less known is the significance of the Elgin Marbles for the development of a new, physical conception of English national identity construing the modern English as ancient Greeks” (2001: 468).

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48 Gobineau, Joseph Arthur de 1967 [1853-5]: Essai sur l’Inégalité des Races Humaines. Paris: Pierre Belfond; p. 458. However, as Leoussi astutely remarks, “In the twentieth century, Nazi Germany turned the Greek body into an instrument of death. […]. The belief in race, and specifically the race of Greek statues, was to dominate the twentieth century as probably the most destructive myth of that century” (2001: 483).
commonplace to talk of ‘modern Greece’ and of ‘modern Greek’ as though ‘Greece’ and ‘Greek’ must necessarily refer to the ancient world” (1992: 1). In fact they were often seen as belonging just there. In 1836 James Sowles Prichard was using a modern Greek skull (!) to demonstrate arguments about the ancients’ intellect: “The skull from which this engraving was taken was that of a Greek named Constantine Demetriades...50” (in Leoussi 1997: 47). Prichard and Demetriades’ skull notwithstanding, in more recent times similar arguments have been made with regard to both ‘the Greeks’ unmixed character and nature and the preservation of traditions from times old in the traditions of the Greek people (the laós). Such merging has been performed by domestic and foreign observers alike. Karakasidou reports, for instance, that

“Stilpon Kyriakidis, a prominent Greek folklorist [...] in his 1946 thesis, published in English as The Northern Ethnological Boundaries of Hellenism (1955), argues that while people do tend to become mixed under a common oppressor, the “nation” (of the Greeks) continued to exist through the centuries of Turkish rule” (1993: 8).

And Danforth reports on John C. Lawson who in 1963 writes: “But with all this external Christianity they are as pagan and as polytheistic in their hearts as were ever their ancestors” (in Danforth 1984: 60-61).51 In that way the fear of the logical incompatibility between ancient and contemporary traditions is overcome since they can be shown both to be the same. In such scenarios Greeks are just remnants of the Ancient; a mirror in which ‘the West’ can look at itself and rejoice in its progress and a place that will never be able to be anything more admirable than what it has already been.52

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49 Ancient decline of civilisation had also been attributed by some to mixture of races. As Leoussi notes, “Gobineau, like Knox, explained both the rise of Greek civilization in 718 BC and its decline at the close of the Macedonian period, as the result of a mixture of races” (1997: 51).


52 Danforth also comments on research by Richard and Eva Blum: “Difference and change, when acknowledged by the Blums, are dismissed as unimportant [...]. They do not want them to change. They prefer to keep them in the past as a link between the present and classical antiquity” [Blum Richard and Eva 1970: The Dangerous Hour: The Lore of Crisis and Mystery in Rural Greece; New York]. (1984: 63).
However, there can be a further shift of the lens. If the laós, the people, can be shown to preserve what is most important about Greeks, namely their antiquity, then this same laós might not be all that 'easternly' polluted after all. For instance, for the 1930s generation of Greek writers and artists, classical texts can be seen as “signifiers of the laós”. They “no longer represent the distance of historical origins, or revered sources that challenge Neohellenism to prove itself worthy of its name and geographical location; rather, they achieve modern everyday incarnations that promise to reveal more about Hellenism than antiquity could reveal about itself in ancient garb” (Leontis 1991: 202-3).

Such historiographic beliefs were being (and to some extent still are) propagated not only in what we may call popular belief but also by those serving the discipline. As such they gain even more potency and become harder to question. The dangers are obvious. As early as 1923 Amantos was writing: “To the Greeks “the scale of the cultural work of Hellenism in the past places such pressure on the present that it chokes free creativity, and imposes imitation” (in Augustinos 2003: 92). In anthropology’s own darkest hours “the contemporary culture of the people of rural Greece” could then be seen as “an exotic anachronism” (Danforth 1984: 53). It might be that nowadays such statements have actually powerfully been challenged both within and outside Greece. However, such movements do not seem to be accompanied by a parallel challenge to the claim of Greek ancestry. The latter is not in all cases a source of either problematisation or chauvinism. It can just be there. Whether considered as land of ancestry, legacy or incarnation, Greece has been inextricably linked to the Ancients.

The internalisation of the link to antiquity by Greeks themselves becomes manifest when contemporary writers who in every other sense are critical of Greekness and its constitutive elements, use such a link somehow inadvertently. Triandafyllidou et al., for instance, in an article entitled ‘New Greek Nationalism’ write: “Thus, the classic Greek

53 Amantos Konstantinos I. 1923: Οι Βόρειοι Γείτονες της Ελλάδος, 186-7: Athens.
54 Such discourses are also reminiscent of similar approaches to African cultures. Of course, in Greece, as in other cases, locals have also powerfully exploited what is believed about them – especially for tourism. However, the leap between going by the assumption and believing the assumption can be easily performed.
dichotomy between 'us' (Greeks) and 'them' (non-Greeks) is currently used within a new context. *In antiquity it had served to distinguish between the Greek civilization and the 'barbarian' populations (those not enlightened by Greek thought)...* (1998: 8; emphasis added). And Kokosalakis and Psimenos open their report on ‘Modern Greece: A Profile of Identity and Nationalism’ with the words: “The long history of Greece, *from pre-classical antiquity to the present,* ...” (2002: 2; emphasis added). To some extent the link has become ubiquitous. What was believed about oneself has become oneself even if only in passing. Furthermore, the West’s gaze has also powerfully influenced the Eastern connection which will be now explored.

3. ‘The East’ in Greek public culture

3.1. A ‘minor’ complication: Christian Orthodoxy and discourses of continuity

Discourses of *continuity* refer to the presence of the Greek nation through the ages despite obvious upheavals and discontinuities in the history of the area. Such continuous presence manages to incorporate both classical antiquity and Byzantine Orthodox religion. A conceptualisation of the Greeks as ‘Hellenes cum Christians’ is the result of a process which had more or less been completed by the end of the 19th century. The important role of religion in an otherwise secularly oriented state is an interesting instance of the ways in which ethnic and civic elements may be interconnected. In the case of Greece not only has religion been incorporated in the way national identity is perceived, it has also become a component of the nation-state. As Kokosalakis writes,

> “Church and state never separated and the Greek Constitution (article 3) states that the Eastern Orthodox Church is the official religion of the country [...]. A separation between these central institutions of Greek society does not seem likely because the Orthodox religion is a crucial part of Greek ethnic identity” (2002: 16).

Historically, in the Byzantine Empire religion and citizenship were intertwined. Later, the Ottomans, as already mentioned, used religion as the basis of their administrative millet-
In fact, as Kitromilides remarks, the Ottoman Empire’s system helped to "preserve the languages and the medieval imperial memories of Balkan peoples [...] The Church [...] remained a supranational organisation and, by virtue of its doctrinal principles, a non-national one" (1989: 178). Such supra-nationality was challenged by the influence of Enlightenment ideas in the area, followed by the advent of nationalism. As could be expected, "the transition from the ecumenical community of Balkan Orthodoxy and the religiously defined millets to a [...] inchoate, inarticulate and uncertain world of modern linguistic nations" (Kitromilides 1989: 151) was not straightforwardly welcome by the Orthodox higher clergy. Thus, "romantic nationalism in the nineteenth century incorporated the earlier dilemma between Orthodoxy and Enlightenment in a new synthesis – one which hinged on the defeat of both" (Kitromilides 1995: 10). At the end of the process, from completely distrusting the nationalist movement, the Church would become its fervent supporter. Ironically, since in the Ottoman Era "power in the Orthodox Church was wielded by a Greek-speaking hierarchy" (Kitromilides 1989: 178), the Church of Greece was the first to break away from the Greek-controlled Patriarchate of Constantinople. The regional churches of other Balkan states followed. They were "nationalised by becoming components of the nations-states’ modern administrative structure" (Ibid.: 180-181).

Religion has been linked to the nationalist project in yet another way, which relates more to Christian Orthodoxy’s Byzantine past. For some, such as the educated Greeks in Constantinople’s ‘Fanari’, Byzantium provided another source of vision for the ideal polity to emerge after the revolution. The dream of Byzantium would further fuel the irredentist dream and religion would prove a powerful uniting bond amongst a very disparate population. Through religion and language Greek nationalism could incorporate the Greek-speaking Orthodox populations of the Ottoman Empire into its value system. Through the Great Idea, “the original ethnic definitions proposed by the Enlightenment against Orthodoxy and Byzantium [were] transcended to the point at which Orthodoxy

55 Additionally, “where Orthodox communities used to speak Albanian, Vlach or Slavic languages in the Balkans, or Turkish and Armenian in Asia Minor, the extension of the network of Greek elementary and secondary schools led, within one or two generations, to a revival of the Greek language in regions where it had been spoken in the past but displaced in medieval and early modern times” (Kitromilides 1989: 171).
was encompassed within the ethnic definition of Hellenism [...] in order to meet the aspiration of the Greek state” (Kitromilides 1989: 185-186).

The catalyst in the construction of a tripartite historical continuum would be provided by the philologist Jacob Falmerayer. In 1830 he published a study claiming that the Greeks of that day did not have any continuity with their namesakes, the Greeks of antiquity, and that they were, in fact, Slavs. Such a claim disconnected a newly born Modern Greece from both Antiquity and Byzantium. However, like any such entity of that time, Modern Greece needed to prove its roots. The chronological gap would be finally and firmly bridged by Konstantinos Paparigopoulos whose multi-volume history started to appear in the 1850s. Contra Falmerayer, Paparigopoulos “maintained that although the Slavs did, in fact, come down through the Greek peninsula, they were assimilated by the direct descendants of the ancient Greeks through adoption of the Greek language and religion” (Karakasidou 1994: 41). Paparigopoulos, thus, “managed to provide a new conceptualisation of Greek identity, based on a threefold continuum of Greek history which incorporated the heritage of pagan hellenism, the tradition of Orthodox Byzantium and the modern status of Greece as a secular European state”. As Kitromilides puts it, “The effectiveness of this intellectual achievement as a focus of collective self-definition and the profound cultural and psychological needs to which it responded may explain its tenacity and resilience in Greek political thought to this date, more than a century after its original inception”.

He further remarks that “this resilience is all the more impressive in view of the repeated abuses to which this ideological conception has been subjected – by, among others, the dictatorial regimes of 4th August 1936 and 21st April 1967”, but can be explained by “the psychological comfort it offers to the Greek mind by providing an outlet to the dilemma between European civilisation and Orthodoxy” (1995: 11).56

56 However, Kitromilides also remarks that Paparigopoulos began from two historical axioms which “were inherited from the Enlightenment: one postulated modern Greece’s intimate historical, cultural and ethnic affinity with ancient Greek civilisation. The second axiom stipulated its European identity which was based primarily on the classical inheritance that Greece shared with the rest of modern Europe” (1995: 11). The possibility of Western influence as far as this tripartite construction is concerned should not be excluded either. Leoussi informs us, for instance, that “Walter Pater quite explicitly advocated the unification of Christianity with Greek paganism on scientific grounds [Pater, Walter 1886 [1873]: The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry; ed. A. Phillips. Oxford: Oxford University Press]. [...]. For Arnold ‘Hebraism
Furthermore, such a tripartite continuum relegates the period during which the Greeks were under Ottoman rule to a more obscure role and makes it irrelevant to an understanding of Modern Greece. Thus, as Augustinos remarks:

“The modernizing nation continued to be supported in the comfort of past civilisations. One, Christian Orthodoxy, was steeped in the history of the peninsula and linked peoples; the other – classicism – served to distinguish the Greeks in their own eyes and those of the West from the “others” in the Balkans” (2003: 97).

Greek nationalism, with its incorporation of diverse elements, as much answered a definitional need in a world that needed to know where one belonged as well as it provided an unquestionable level of reference during a historical itinerary which saw Greece often menaced from outside as well as from within. Nationalism ‘cemented’ the borders and provided a collective definition which made whatever internal differentiation was left appear ultimately irrelevant. However, nightmares such as consecutive wars, alterations of frontiers and population-movements left marks on Greece which proved hard to extricate.

3.2. From one to many: discourses of instability

Instability is a political condition inextricably linked with Greece’s geographical location. Legg and Roberts remark that, “Depending upon the purpose of the classifier, Greece can be classified as Near or Middle Eastern, Balkan, Mediterranean, or European” (1987: 4). Amongst such categorisations it is Greece’s geographical belonging to the Balkans that linked the country to wider patterns of development in the area. As Tziovas informs us,

“It is now widely accepted that the word “balkan” is of Turkish origin and means a mountain or mountain range, thus confirming, even in lexical terms, that the Balkans are an Ottoman legacy. The name “Balkan” began to be used in the

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and Hellenism’ were ‘the most signal and splendid manifestations of mankind’s ‘forces’[Arnold, Matthew, 1990 [1869], Culture and Anarchy, ed. J. Dover Wilson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press]” (Leoussi 2002: 480). Elsewhere the same writer observes that Southern Europeans were also perceived by some ‘Western’ observers as embodying religion, as being the children of God – ‘vrais enfants de Dieu’ (as in Rochet, André 1978: Louis Rochet, Sculpteur et Sinologue, 1813-1878, Paris: Andre Bonne) (in. Leoussi 1997: 53).
nineteenth century and established itself only around the time of the Balkan wars. According to Maria Todorova, until the congress of Berlin in 1878, the most frequently used designations for the area were “European Turkey”, “Turkey-in-Europe” or similar expressions. Only afterwards did the name become standardized for the region and gradually acquired political connotations” (2003: 1).

Tziovas goes on to remark only what is already too well known: “More than any other geographical appellation the “Balkans” conjure up pejorative connotations in history, international relations and politics, as well as in everyday discourse. The name reflects an essentialist and ossified image of the region” (2003: 1).

The impact of the connotation that ‘the Balkans’ has acquired on the countries themselves should not be underestimated. That impact also pertains to Greece despite its own image of maintaining a precarious balance between the Balkans and the rest of Europe. It is often maintained that developments in the area justify such pejorative connotations. This can only be done, though, by oversimplification as if the world had been discretely separated and some parts of it had not impacted forcefully on others. What then makes this area different is only a function of comparing it to a certain standard, i.e. Western Europe. The standard itself, though, has been more or less actively involved in developments in the Balkans. If nothing else, it was contact with the Enlightened West that triggered nationalist processes in the area.

In fact it is often maintained that the wider region’s common Byzantine and Ottoman past sets it apart from developments during the same period in Western Europe. As Tziovas writes, though, there is also another aspect of such a difference: “Most of the eighteenth century was a period of stability in the Balkans and a time of remarkable freedom of movement which contributed to a trans-Balkan network of commercial activities and fluid linguistic identities” (2003: 4). And as Karakasidou notes,

“Many of these merchants, regardless of their cultural or ethnic identity, lacked a national consciousness of their own […]. Macedonia, and indeed the Balkans in general, has long been not one culture area but a cultures area, inhabited by a
plethora of various ethnic groups tied together in a complex of interaction” (Karakasidou 1997: 219-220).

Furthermore, the whole peninsula seems to follow a similar pattern of national emancipation and rebellion. However, none of these territories was beforehand ‘ethnically’ homogeneous, even though there might have been bigger concentrations of linguistic groups in specific areas. They would become fairly homogeneous (with all the simplification that such a category entails) only after a long history of wars, exchanges of populations and more or less forceful ‘cleansings’ – as they came to be known in latter years. In addition to structural pressures, it was the rapid growth of trade, the influence of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution which would push consecutively Serbs, Greeks, Romanians and Bulgarians to rise by both providing the material means and initiating a rhetoric of ethnic distinctiveness based on language and culture.

Thus, before criticising the homogenising process in the Balkans, one should ask whether any other solution was being offered at the time for emerging states. As Roudometof maintains,

“Actual or potential ethnic conflicts in Southeastern Europe are related to rivalries generated by the region’s reorganization according to the Western European model of the nation-state, and not to a ‘clash of civilizations’. The adoption of the nation-state was a manifestation of the Balkan peoples’ ‘modernity’, not of their ‘backwardness’ [...]. While Southeastern Europe underwent a reorganization according to the nation-state form, this did not include adherence to the standard of citizenship which constitutes the dominant discourse in the Anglo-American world. Hence, this ‘odd’ (to Western eyes) combination of global and local factors has produced an admittedly turbulent ‘route to modernity’” (1999: 242-3).  

During the last two centuries, such a route has been rife with wars. For Greece first there was the 1821 revolution against the Ottomans; the expansion wars well into the 20th century; the Balkan Wars; the Asia Minor debacle; the Second World War and the

57 Sfikas also notes that practically even “the final decisions about the establishment of new states, their borders, their form of government and even the person of the ruler were made by the great powers” (1999: 31).
temporary loss of some northern territories, to name but an important few. The Dodecanese would not be officially recognised as Greek territory earlier than 1947 and Greece and Albania were still in a state of war till 1971. As Augustinos remarks, political and military events "included: frontiers that were the scene of border disputes between states, the movement and resettlement of peoples, and the natural human resistance to breaking up established patterns of residence and forming new national allegiances" (2003: 96).58

In the process of change from the Ottomans' ethnic patchwork to distinct national states, homogenising processes could not have been smooth, although national memory often has not retained them. The chronic precariousness of the frontiers put specific regions and their populations within specific countries under increased stress, further accentuated by the persistence of "unredeemed brethren" in neighbouring countries once the frontiers were settled and war ceased to be an option. The significance of such processes on people's actual lives as well as the ability to recover such significance in times of crisis may be graphically demonstrated by the case of Macedonia. As late as 1991 Greeks would rediscover the potential dangers around this area. As Karakasidou remarks,

"At least three major wars were fought in this part of the Balkans in the decades of the twentieth century before World War II. The Macedonian Struggle, two Balkan Wars, World War I, World War II, and the Greek Civil War brought bloody terror on Slavs, Greeks, and other "Others"" (1997: 223).

Such a prism casts a rather different light on the furore that broke in Greece in 1991 when FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or what is more commonly referred to outside Greece, the Republic of Macedonia) was established adjacent to that part of Greece which is known as Macedonia - a furore mainly linked to the new state's name and flag. Greek fears were often seen abroad as yet another expression of Balkan anachronisms and even dismissed as irrational - but were they? In fact, the case of

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58 Livianios also notes that, "Greek perceptions of who was, or what it meant to be, a "Greek" profoundly influenced their views of the Balkan peoples" (2003: 69). In more specific terms the ways they viewed neighbours and other 'others' was profoundly influenced by "the rediscovery of classical Greece, which now became the "past" of the Greek πάροχος" (Ibid.: 71). And even though "in the interwar period, Greek scholarship on Balkan subjects started to show some signs of scholarly maturity [...] the perceptions that had crystallized in the late nineteenth century remained dominant" (Ibid.: 79).
Macedonia is a prime example of the impact of both the inheritance of Ottoman ethnic mixture and the subsequent wars in order to resolve that.

Under Ottoman rule, Macedonia was composed of three Vilayets: Thessaloniki, Monastir and Uskub (Kossovo). The area’s limits could not be clearly defined by reference to ‘natural borders’ nor was it characterised by a single cultural or ethnic group, resembling more a mosaic of cultures, languages and religions. However, the importance of controlling it was soon perceived by competing nations. Its significance is further manifested by the fact that the struggle over Macedonia and Thrace “between Christian Orthodox nations [eventually] destroyed the ecumenical content of the [Christian Orthodox] ideology and forged new scripts for separate national myths” (Veremis 1989: 132). As Gallant puts it,

“a battle was now under way for the hearts and minds of Macedonian Christians between the [Bulgarian] Exarchate, the [Greek] Patriarchate, and in some areas, the Serbian Orthodox Church. Across the region, people were being forced to choose between one of the rival churches, and it was through making that choice that they began to espouse a specific ethnic identity” (2001: 65).

It would be over Macedonia that the alliance between Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria against the Ottomans would be broken after the first Balkan War, and it would be over Macedonia that the Second Balkan War would occur. And Greek Macedonia would be the prize for the Bulgarians after their alliance with the Germans in the Second World War.

In the early 1990s the break-up of Yugoslavia brought those memories to the surface again, especially since the newly founded Republic chose as its first flag the Star of Vergina, the imperial symbol of Alexander the Great. In 1994 the flag was changed so as to take into consideration Greek sensitivities. Therefore, as Triandafyllidou et al. remark,

“the conflict between Athens and Skopje may not be reduced to a mere problem of ‘names’. The use of the term ‘Macedonia’ involves a set of cultural elements. The use of these elements as distinctive features of the national identity of a new
state does not mean a simple appropriation of the name, but rather an appropriation of the culture and the tradition that this name signifies” (1997: 8).

At least that is how it is taken to be by all parties involved. And then, of course, it is not only a matter of ‘national pride’. As Triandafyllidou remarks elsewhere, “Besides, the Macedonian question coincided with a period of economic and socio-political crisis for Greece. [...] The supposed cultural and territorial threat of FYROM offered an opportunity, perhaps the only one, for the nation to regain its positive self-identity” (1998: 606). Still today, the question of the name is in the hands of the United Nations — the latest development being a proposal for an appellation that would include ‘Macedonia’ preceded by some other kind of qualifying adjective. Such a possibility has not been at all welcomed by the government in Skopje. Recently, the thorn of FYROM’s appellation has resurfaced in view of the neighbouring country’s possible adhesion to the EU.

The situation with Turkey provides another interesting case. From a historical point of view, the Turks are not the Ottomans. However, that conceptual leap is easily performed by the parties concerned and by ‘outsiders’. Since the Ottomans, the ways the two countries have been related have very often been disturbed. Venizelos’s rapprochement with Ataturk in 1930 was short-lived as was “the 1988 spirit of Davos”. The Aegean continental shelf as well as the air control of Northern Aegean, respective minorities and most importantly Cyprus, are always potential inflammatory factors. In an era where “on the whole, power relations in the eastern Mediterranean favour Turkey, given her population, military force, and importance to the international community” (Legg and Roberts 1987: 66), clearly Greece can no longer pursue the aggressive and populist approach to foreign policy of the 1980s Papandreou administration. In fact the latest decade has been marked by an increasing sense of rapprochement. However, Clogg captures quite accurately and concisely the complexities of the relationship with Turkey when he writes:

“Those who argue that the facts of geography condemn the two countries, which in the 1970s and the 1980s more than once came to the brink of war, to friendship, fail to take account of the historical roots of present-day antagonisms and of the
extreme sensitivity to perceived threats to national sovereignty that can arise in countries whose frontiers have only relatively recently been established" (1992: 5-6).

Memories of such threats have resurfaced in 2005, with the inauguration of annexation talks between the EU and Turkey, which have not coincided with an official recognition of Cyprus from the Turkish side.

Following the restoration of democracy in 1974 and the beginning of the détente in East-West relations, Greek governments experimented more or less successfully with different concepts of bilateralism or multilateralism which nevertheless have only been successful in matters of 'low politics'. After the collapse of communism and the formal end of the Cold War both Greece and its neighbours perhaps felt freer to re-examine what united them rather than what set them apart, whereas newer lines of division seemed to place them as a whole in a distinct group. Tziovas remarks that "the rich cultural interaction which occurred in the area during the pre-nationalist era [...] is showing signs of revival today" (2003: 2). If such is the case it could be perhaps attributed to the capacity for both sympathy with and inherited comprehension of the changing fortunes of the neighbours as well as to the intensification of political, commercial and personal rapprochements both outside and within the country's borders. Nonetheless, Greece could be set apart by the fact that it had escaped destructive developments in the area partly because of its continuous western political and ideological affinities. It would thus become an irresistible magnet for immigrants from the neighbouring countries, a development which found Greeks unprepared both institutionally and conceptually.

59 In March 1988 a Conference of Balkan Foreign Ministers was taking place in Belgrade. As Veremis observes, it "could not have occurred in a more opportune moment for a multilateral breakthrough". The Reagan-Gorbatsev agreement on nuclear arms limitation had just been signed and Greek-Turkish relations were relatively improved after Davos. "The year 1988 would have become a watershed in Balkan multilateralism if the protagonists of the Belgrade meeting could have foreseen the cataclysmic developments in Eastern Europe that were only a year away" (1995: 40).

60 Tziovas also writes: "This social mobility might reopen old channels of cultural communication as more and more people from the Balkans learn Greek as a form of cultural and social investment, leading to a situation reminiscent of the eighteenth century" (2003: 6). And elsewhere: "Indeed, this process of cultural rapprochement among Balkan peoples could be assisted by studying cultural and historical otherness as it has been constructed and presented in literary texts, school textbooks or in other official publications during the age of suspicion" (2003: 1).
3.3. Refugees, minorities, immigrants: (muted) discourses of otherness – ‘oi xénoi’

Discourses of otherness are characterised by different phases which run in parallel with phases in the development of perceptions of Greek identity. For instance, in times of expansion and homogenisation, Greekness used to be an open and flexible category, one which would allow Albanians, Vlachs, Slavs and Latins to preserve their ethnic features as long as they were acculturated into its linguistic tradition (cf. Veremis 1995: 104). In a parallel process the state was extending itself to encompass the nation and the nation to match the boundaries of the state. The implications were multifold. On a first level, scholars note that “Greece emerged as one of the most ethnically homogeneous states in Europe” (Kitromilides 1989: 176). Secondly, when the possibility of expanding the state was no longer available, a problem rose with regard to new arrivals and their integration into Greek society. National definitions having become more or less ‘sealed’, the option of expanding a conceptualisation of the nation so it can cover newcomers may have become unavailable. And then such incapability may be attributed to the alleged ‘ethnicseness’ of Greek identity. Thus Triandafyllidou writes: “National identity in Greece is predominantly ‘ethnic’, based on the belief in a common genealogical descent” (2001: 40).

Furthermore, the ‘civic’ element never really merged with its ‘ethnic’ predecessor since it could be attributed to the continuity between classical and modern Greece. Such lack of merging is often seen as being carried into the present and is blamed for various contemporary malfunctions. Proponents of such views could be considered justified when from the late 1980s onwards Greece became a host country for the first time in its history.

61 Vidali suggests that it might be possible “to interpret the ambivalence of the Greek world ξένος (xénos), meaning both friendly and unfriendly, both alien, outsider and guest or visitor, both at home and not at home, in the sense of Freud’s notion of the uncanny (heimlich-unheimlich)” (1996: 39). The ambiguity of the term is most appropriate for this analysis.

62 Karakasidou informs us that, “At the turn of the century the geographer Wilkinson (1951: 80) listed a total of 22 different “Greek-speaking groups”, including: Members of the Rum millet; Greek speakers; Hellenes; Pelasgo-Greeks; Muslim Greeks (or Greek Pomaks); Soulotes; Greek Orthodox Albanians; Albanians under Greek influence; Albanian-speaking Greeks; Tosks; Graeco-Albanians; “Hellenized Vlachs”; Greek Orthodox Vlachs; Gracco-Vlachs; Bulgarian Patriarchists; Graeco-Bulgarians; Bulgarophone/Slavophones’ Bulgarian-speaking Greeks; Graeco-Macedonians; Macedonian Slavs under Greek influence; Turks of Greek Orthodox faith; and Greek Jews. To speak of a homogeneous Greek-speaking population in Macedonia is not only inadequate but wrong” [Wilkinson, Hemy Robert 1951: 88]
Both the Greek state and the ‘Greek people’ have appeared highly unsuccessful in their dealings with an increasing number of immigrants. On one level this inability could be seen as the straightforwardly xenophobic reaction of an ethnically rooted identity to ‘others’ disrupting its homogeneity; a reaction whose results were multiplied by a perception of citizenship based on ethnicity and compounded by a malfunctioning democracy. However, things might be somewhat more complicated as is seen from different challenges to homogeneity during Greece’s historical itinerary. A brief examination of reactions to different groups and otherness as documented and studied by work in the field reveals a history of diversity which is too easily obfuscated.

One such obvious group were the “Ottoman Greeks” who were forced to move to the mainland after the Asia Minor debacle in the 1920s. Giannuli reports that, “The majority of Ottoman Greeks who arrived in Greece experienced hardship, discrimination, and cultural alienation” (1995: 272). In fact despite their alleged common Greekness, “the long-forged cultural divergence between Ottoman Greeks and metropolitan Greeks became far more conspicuous after the exodus and deepened the mutual suspicion between these two groups [...] [The Ottoman Greeks’] exposure to a complex ethnic and religious society prompted a cosmopolitan view of the world while their adherence to the Orthodox Patriarchate reinforced their ecumenical perception of the greater Christian community to which they belonged [...]. In pursuit of Western ways of modernization, mainland Greeks neglected their more recent Byzantine heritage and sought to restore the secular ideas of the distant pre-Christian classical past [...]. Such key dissimilarities in the collective profile of each group were further reinforced by the newcomers’ more visible characteristics” (Giannuli 1995: 277).

This situation was further aggravated by the fact that the majority of those peoples were forced to leave their homes with almost nothing as well as the immense demographic challenge they constituted. As Renée Hirshon remarks, Ottoman Greeks “although they felt very assertive about the superiority of their culture, they were nevertheless compelled
to accept their new status as “superior subordinates”\(^{63}\) (in Giannuli 1995: 278). The sources of the time are unambiguous. The refugees were often exploited and were definitely discriminated against. However, nowadays the “uprooting”, as it is commonly referred to, is commemorated every year, as is the wealth of the cultural contribution that the refugees brought with them; a wealth now often considered as an indispensable part of the backbone of Greek identity.

The case of the Ottoman Greeks at least demonstrates that the self-perception of Greece’s homogeneity often serves to mask what made ‘us’ different in times past. Facts obviously challenge such self-portrayal, which is further challenged by the presence of minorities. In fact this story is linked to the previous one because the only groups of people who were not asked to move during the “uprooting” were Muslims living in Western Thrace and Greek Orthodox living in Instanbul. According to Triandafyllidou and Mikrakis this group and the nomadic communities of Gypsies are the two main minorities in Greece. They go on to note that

“the ethnic composition of the Greek population as a whole has been stable since the 1920s […]. There are other ethnic groups, such as Pomachs who are Muslims and Vlachs or Slavo-Macedonians who share the Christian Orthodox tradition […]. They are not ‘visible’ […]. Greece has traditionally been a country of emigration” (1995: 164-165).

Bypassing for now the question of visibility, it is important to say that the presence of such groups can of course still be explained by the drawing and re-drawing of boundaries. What is, though, specific to the Balkan case is that most minority groups in these countries can be seen as having a ‘national centre’ somewhere else within the Balkan area. Roudometof explains:

“The dynamics of the ‘national question’ in the former Yugoslavia are similar to those of the less publicized cases of Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania (or the more well-known case of Cyprus). […] Due to the historical factors […] reorganization led to the elevation of nationhood into the foundational principle in regional nation-formation. Consequently, discrimination against minorities has

been legitimized via reference to cultural difference: Muslim Pomaks, Bosnian Muslims, Macedonian Slavs and a host of others were, and are still, not viewed as ‘genuine’ members of the Bulgarian, Serb or Greek nations” (1999: 241-242).

Past enmity as well as the potential for linking internal with external others often exacerbate the minorities’ plight. As Trinadafyllidou notes,

“In reality, internal and external significant others may be connected. Thus, for Greeks, the Turkish minority living in the region of Thrace is sometimes perceived as an internal significant other not only by itself but also, and perhaps most importantly, to the extent that it is related to an external significant other, namely Turkey. Similarly, the re-emergence of a Slavic-speaking population in the Greek region of Macedonia during the past few years and its assertion of minority rights is inextricably linked to the diplomatic relations between Greece and FYROM” (1998: 609).

In the case of Slavo-Macedonians, the issue is complicated by the fact that not all recognise the existence of such a group. Without attempting to go into the truth or falsity of claims in both sides of the argument, something beyond this author’s expertise, it is clear that the northern border is perceived even nowadays as a sensitive political and conceptual frontier. Hence it is not obvious how the Greek state will be drawn to recognise such a minority, especially in times where the northern neighbours are far from stable. Legal arrangements notwithstanding, this group will thus remain invisible. Due to their small number and geographical concentration as well as the fact that, as Karakasidou informs us, “the bulk of the population of Greek Macedonia today is nothing less than Greek in national consciousness and political loyalty” (1993: 22) – were it only because of successful national homogenisation –, in all probability, invisibility will remain the prevailing condition.

It has not been so for the new immigrants who crossed the frontier after 1989. They now account for almost one tenth of the Greek population, coming predominantly from Albania. Reactions to the arrivals have been changing. At first, Greek society was slightly flattered to be seen as a capitalist paradise. Also by reference to Greek identity the necessity for decent treatment of the immigrants could be partly justified through
reference to the Greek tradition of hospitality and democratic values. Reporting on research on the press from the early 1990s, Mikrakis and Triandafyllidou write:

“Our cultural heritage and, in particular, the custom of hospitality, as one of the strongest elements of Greek tradition, do not allow for a dozed attitude towards immigrants. Furthermore, it is our national duty to welcome foreign workers. […] Among the traits of Greek national identity there is that of a political duty to defend democratic values” (1994: 800).

However, as they also further note, memories of xenophobic reactions towards Greeks abroad do not contribute to welcoming the newcomers since

“first, a significant percentage of the younger population cannot relate to this experience any more […]. Second, and this applies to the older population, there is no evidence that people process their experience in such ways that they do not inflict on others what they suffered in the past. We could possibly argue the opposite” (1994: 803).

Amongst new arrivals many had the credentials of co-ethnics. That fact did not, however, make their inclusion an easier undertaking. There may indeed be political reasons for that, including the Greek government’s effort to discourage such migratory movement from Albania on the grounds that the minority there is in “Greece’s interest”. Or that, despite the fact that

“according to the Greek constitution, people from the Greek diaspora are entitled to a favourable legal status in Greece […] law does not provide a conceptual definition of who qualifies as a co-ethnic. According to the decision of the State Council65 (no. 2756/1983), the legitimate criterion for one to be characterised as a co-ethnic is ‘to belong to the Greek Ethnos’. That is, ‘to have Greek national consciousness’, which is ‘deduced from characteristics of personality which refer

64 Ironically, in 2001 Triandafyllidou reports again from the press that “… in the case of Greece […] emphasis is placed on the civic culture of immigrants; it is portrayed as being so different from that of Greece that it supposedly prevents immigrants from adapting to their new environment. Civic traditions in fact play a marginal role in the conception of the Greek nation and their importance is therefore overemphasised in the press discourse on immigration” (2001: 117). The ‘lesson’ of the value of civiennes has all too well been learned.

65 State Council is the Supreme Administrative Court of Justice in Greece.
to common descent, language, religion, national traditions and extensive knowledge of the historical events of the nation” (Triandafyllidou & Veikou 2002: 198).

The permeability of such criteria is evident. For instance, “language could not be a valid criterion because some of them [the new arrivals] spoke very poor Greek while others have learnt fluent Greek during their undocumented stay in the country” (Ibid.: 199).

This author believes that the perception of Greek national homogeneity has become a fact of life. What is more, one of the main problems that a perception of successful homogeneity has bequeathed to Greeks is the loss of perspective which comes from the challenge to identity perception that only the acknowledgement of otherness within the territorial boundaries of the majority group (‘the other inside’) can provide. Then again such stress on a homogeneous Greek identity helps today to overcome those political cleavages that have plagued the country since its birth. The infamous “Dihasmos” is another serious rupture in Greek self-perception – albeit not in ethnic terms. There are at least two prominent instances of the phenomenon. The first is the 1915 National Schism between Venizelists and royalists over Greece’s entry to the First World War and its expansion. The second one is the 1945-1949 Civil War between Communists and the State. The interplay of this story with the story of homogeneity should not be underestimated.

On one level over-stressing bipolarisation along political lines may conceal diversity in other respects whether these be ethnic, religious, cultural etc. In parallel, focusing on such a bipolarisation may render subtler sources of common identification incapable of playing a decisive role in creating bonds of commonality. Then, it could also be that ‘the nation’ alone is a source of identity powerful enough to allow transcendence of habitual political divisions. Thus, in some sense both sides of the division are linked much more tightly than what is usually perceived by either of them. There must be something to
share, if refusing to share is to be a possibility. In fact in the past one could often observe that political ruptures predominantly occurred whenever the country found itself in a period of relative external stability and even after considerable victories of some sort. It is as if ‘aggressive nationalism’ worked as a shield against the ‘curse of division’ and that once removed, the nation fell under the sway of its passions again. The question of whether ‘the nation’ has successfully dealt with the memories of violence that such ruptures have brought, despite today’s political rhetoric remains open. After all, it was only very recently that the Civil War was a taboo-subject.

Vidali maintains that, “Violent events disturb the continuity in time of collective memory, affecting participation and communication within the community in such a way that intimacy gives way to secrecy and the confusion of identities” (1996-97: 33). She goes on to note that,

“Desirable here is neither a complete forgetting which conserves the event’s singularity but denies its public character, nor a complete remembering which reduces it to a generality and deprives it of any affectionate dimension. [...] Only the thought of a future as radically different can make memory again possible – but this means exposing oneself to pain [...] It is only through acknowledging separation and difference that an encounter with the past, the dead other, can take place” (Ibid.: 42).

The extent to which such processes have taken place within Greek society is doubtful. Monuments of reconciliation may have been erected and commemorations may still be held. However, the possibility of being different and still Greek has not been explored as if we should not be different anymore once we have become Greek. Then, the inability to deal positively with ‘difference’ and otherness in general may be further aggravated – as if ‘difference’ can be only a source of discomfort, pain or even trauma.

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66 The official exclusion of those of non-Greek origin from National Reconciliation in 1982 further sustains this hypothesis. It would seem that the two parties could be ‘reconciled’ because of being Greek in the first place.
4. A story unique or ‘exportable’?

Developments similar to those in Greece can be observed in other places on two levels: (a) the general assumption of in-betweeness and (b) the different discourses discussed here. Such similarities make research findings taken from Greece exportable. The list of discourses as a whole is not probably amenable to generalisation. Instead different parts of the argument are valid for those other cases which share some of the same characteristics. Such an approach is more sensitive than a ‘one size fits all’ formula to the particularities of different cases. The temptation for greater abstraction is of course strong for most in this line of work. However, if there are any general lessons to be learned, they rather concern the ways we approach certain places and the possible impact of preconceived schemata of understanding on our ability to acknowledge both differentiation and change. Such issues will be returned to more closely in chapter seven. However some preliminary comments may also be made here.

In what follows, thoughts about exportability are divided into three parts. First, the implications of the similarity between Greece’s history and the rest of the Balkans is discussed. That similarity underlies the development of discourses of in-betweeness in the wider area. Secondly, the exportability of what we can learn from specific discourses is examined. Finally, the potential exportability of an analysis based in Greece with respect to broader theoretical issues is investigated.

4.1. The Balkans: similar lives in-between

The parallel itineraries between Greece and the wider Balkan area must now be clearly apparent. In fact it is common practice to make comparisons between the different countries with respect, for instance, to their national emancipation and the formation of their perception of national identity. Furthermore, both Greece and the rest of the Balkans share the general perception of in-betweeness. It has not always been so. Scopetea informs us that,

"As late as the beginning of the eighteenth century, the prevailing view in the area, or at least among its more articulate inhabitants, was that of a self-contained world, which resented the existence of other worlds around it. This world did imagine an “East” and a “West”, but mainly as the aggressive realms of the Antichrist and his obedient organs, Mohammed and the Papacy" (2003: 171).

By contrast in the West, “In the beginning the Balkans were considered as little more than an integral part of the East: the East, of course, of that West’s imagination” (Ibid.: 172). However, “although the Balkans were initially assigned [...] to the “East”, they ended up as something between East and West, and were faced with the prospect of either staying there or being recognized as “western”, by acquiring the appropriate credentials” (Ibid. 175).

In fact, as Scopetea suggests, this perception of in-betweeness or incomplete ‘westernness’ could at different times be re-imported into the area and could impact forcefully on local self-perception. Thus, although “it is not guaranteed that what looks like Western identity viewed from the Balkans can pass as Western in the West itself”, Scopetea notes that still “the Balkan peoples look upon one another through Western eyes” (2003: 174). The picture is often far from flattering. Often, stereotypical images include a consideration of “the inhabitants of the Balkans as “crossbreeds”, [...] racially and culturally inferior, not only to western Europeans but also to the oriental other” (Todorova 1994: 476). As early as 1927, the Swede Marcus Ehrenpreis was writing: “In a spiritual sense these creatures are homeless; they are no longer Orientals not yet Europeans. They have not freed themselves from the vices of the East nor acquired any of the virtues of the West” (in Todorova 1994: 476).

68 However, Scopetea notes that also “it is not coincidence that there is a certain fondness among the Balkan peoples for their stereotypical images, at least where they do not touch upon ominous aspects of the Balkan “psyche”’’ (2003: 174).

69 Marcus Ehrenpreis, 1928: The Soul of the East: Experience and Reflections, trans. Alfhild Huebsch; New York: Viking Press. The original was published in Stockholm: Hugo Gebers Förlag, 1927; 12-13. However, as Scopetea notes, “By adopting any stereotype one tends to be oblivious of the fact that one is part of that stereotype” (2003: 174).
One may hear here echoes of analyses of orientalism. What sets the Balkans apart from other parts of ‘the Orient’ is their geographical location within Europe. Todorova remarks that “‘Balkanism’ is not merely a sub-species of orientalism [...]. Geographically inextricable from Europe, yet culturally constructed as ‘the other’, the Balkans became, in time, the object of a number of externalized political, ideological and cultural frustrations and have served as a repository of negative characteristics against which a positive and self-congratulatory image of the ‘European’ and ‘the west’ has been constructed” (1994: 454-5).

In her excellent investigation, Todorova observes the gradual cumulative attribution of negative characteristics to the Balkans as well as the reductionism and stereotyping of the area in the ‘western’ imagination as “an invented image of the region as Europe’s ‘other’” (cf. Tzios 2003: 2). Such representations are somewhat frozen, thus, freezing in time the peoples upon which they are fixed. The fact that such constructions concretely affect people’s lives is revealed by the following:


Within such a general framework of approach to the Balkans, two main developments have set Greece apart from the rest of the peninsula. One is reference to its classical

70 In fact as Todorova suggests, “Less attention [...] has been paid to the essentialization (or, rather, self-essentialization) of the ‘west’, as the hegemonic pair in the dichotomy” (1994: 454).

71 The Other Balkan Wars: A 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospect with a New Introduction and Reflections on the Present Conflict by George F. Kennan (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1993). Todorova interestingly observes that “Roland Barthes remarked that collective representations and mentalities can be frozen, kept stagnant by power, the press and reigning values [Roland Barthes, “Bichon chez les nègres”, Mythologies (Paris: Edition du Seuil, 1967). 72-73]. [...]. There is a continual oscillation between both worlds that produces a two-fold doubling – one affecting the recipient, the other the world of the text itself [Wolfgang Iser, Prospecting: From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 240-241]. [...]. Indeed, “the challenge of orientalism is precisely the challenge of a discursive formation that has complicated extratextual and nondiscursive implications and consequences” [Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van den
heritage which was "eventually reclaimed by the West as its rightful heritage, thereby acquiring special status within the Balkan Context" (Scopetea 2003: 172). Secondly, Greece was spared the institutionalisation of a communist regime despite the fact that echoes of the Cold War did indeed reach the country quite loudly. In times when the rest of the peninsula is experimenting with different versions of democratisation and development as well as attempting entry into the European Union, empirical and theoretical work based on Greece can be used to highlight both potential and problems related to the specificities of developments in the area. Greece has pre-empted, to some degree, a path that the rest of the Balkans could take if and when incorporated into the EU. Furthermore, Greece also exemplifies the persisting impact on present day perceptions as well as policies of discourses originating in different times for different purposes. These discourses are sometimes recapitulated in order to account for contemporary developments. Many of these discourses are shared between Greece and the rest of the peninsula. If nothing else, the whole area shares contentions of in-betweeness. Thus, research into Greece could point to possible ways into both more constructive and more compassionate approaches towards the Balkans; especially so if research can show that Greece has enough potential to alter its own self-perception.

4.2. Potential resonance of specific discourses

Similarities between Greece and other places may be also observed with respect to specific discourses. Such similarities allow optimism as far as the exportability of findings from Greece is concerned. Some examples are:

Dependency

Dependency on the West at different levels is commonly admitted regarding the Balkans. Dependency has been financial, for instance. Mouzelis writes: "From the moment of their emergence as independent national entities, the Balkan States had all to depend on foreign loans for the development of their armies, the maintenance of their overinflated state bureaucracies, and the running of their economies" (1978: 40). Then again some

forms of material *dependency* were translated in differing perceptions of the relationship with the West according to specific circumstances. In Greece, for instance, a rising claim to self-sufficiency is still unavoidably curtailed by the reality of power and resource distribution.

More importantly intellectual *dependency* may also be detected in the ways Balkan nationalisms moulded their aspirations. Scopetea remarks that, “There are as many versions of the relationship [to the West] as there are Balkan nationalisms” (2003: 174). However, in terms of 19th century emancipation of the Balkan countries, Roudometof notes:

> “These international currents did not escape the attention of the newly formed Balkan states, whose intelligentsia was eager to show its modernity by adapting itself to the intellectual currents of the time. Between 1830 and 1880 a romantic nationalist intelligentsia shaped the Greek, Serb and Bulgarian version of the ‘nation’ [...]. The Serbs wished for the reconstitution of Tsar Dusan’s medieval empire, the Bulgarians for the reconstruction of the medieval Bulgarian empire and the Greeks for the resurrection of the Byzantine empire. In line with European romanticism, these empires were conceived of as national states and not as imperial non-national formations” (1999: 239-240).

Nor should parallels with development in other post-imperial emerging states be missed. McCrone, for instance, draws our attention to the restricted choice that such newly born states may have: “While it is important not to conflate the very different historical experiences of many post-colonial cases, there is an argument that they had little option but to adopt the forms of state framed by the logic of the world system” (1998: 114). Nowadays, the interplay of material and intellectual dependencies on ‘the West’ often militates in favour of importing both theories and policies to areas such as the Balkans which then often combine with local factors to produce unanticipated results.
Deficiency

Deficiency in the implementation of Western institutions in the Balkans is commonly acknowledged. What is also interesting are the unpredictable uses ‘western’ theories and policies may be subjected to in different environments. For instance, with respect to the breakdown of Yugoslavia, Bakić-Hayden and Hayden inform us that,

“The initial step was to reject the concept of “unity” as itself an undesirable limitation of the self-determination of each Yugoslav nation. To [...] quote [Slovenian writer] Kermauner: “In place of the central structural pair of tribal society, brotherhood-terror, which is the reality of the slogan brotherhood-unity, I propose the pair from civil society: communal living-freedom’” (Bakić-Hayden, M. & Hayden R. M., 1992: 7).

However, instead of initiating democracy, in this case ideals of civil society led some to war.

Other patterns of institutional deficiency have been observed by researchers in different areas. For instance, the infamous impingement of the private on the public: “The MENA [Middle East and North Africa] region had long been seen as characterized by “private politics” rather than public participation and there is little acknowledgement or understanding of historical or cultural ways and means of achieving public consensus” (Seteney & Fawwaz 2002). Or the possibility of local institutional adaptation without total change; Petras, for instance, comments: “In the area of the Mediterranean, we see that there exists a kind of organic conservatism which means that those countries can on the one hand adapt to new situations with bigger flexibility whilst on the other reacting to total changes” (1986: 406) [...] . Such parallels in development may suggest parallels in discourses also and here again the investigation of the case of Greece may prove exportable.

Merit

The link to classical antiquity is considered as setting Greece apart from the rest of the peninsula about which discourses of Balkan primitivism developed; as if the peoples of the area were a living instance of times that ‘the West’ had left behind. In fact such
perceptions have also influenced Greek perceptions of their neighbours. Even nowadays Tziovas notes that “the renewed interest in the Balkans and its culture among Greeks seems to arise out of a sense of superiority and not solidarity” (2003: 8).

However, reference to an ancient past is a situation that for decades has plagued other places such as Italy. In this and possibly other cases, essentialising discourses may cling to mainstream developments and predominant perceptions and be perpetuated. Tzanelli, for instance, notes that, “The fascination with these two [Greek and Italian] ‘ancient civilizations’ is not new, although its ‘history’ is replete with breaks and discontinuities” (2003: 237). The discourse of ‘ancient merit’ persists even if linked in different cases to different justifications. Thus we may have progressively passed from the philhellenes’ interest in things ancient to the tourist industry’s exploitation of all things ancient.

**Continuity**

Discourses of cultural *continuity* may have survived in the rest of the peninsula. Despite the long Communist hiatus they persisted below the surface and led later to the kinds of claims that have been voiced in the Balkans since 1989.

The role of Orthodox Christianity should not be underestimated either. Bakić-Hayden and Hayden note that both the doctrine and the impact of Orthodox Christianity have not been fully appreciated by commentators. They write: “What is self-evident is a chronic lack of knowledge about the Orthodox Churches and the differences in their historical development […]. Partial knowledge creates simplistic representations, which are then used as “arguments” and “explanations”” (1992: 11). In fact the role that religion in general played in the area, both uniting and differentiating various groups, should be more fully acknowledged (from the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century to that of the Communist Block in the 20th).

**Instability**

Greek *instability* is in large part linked to that of the wider area, starting with their common Ottoman past. Further complication beset the rest of the peninsula with the

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advent of Communism which “exempted two of the most important representatives of the Balkan Kulturraum, Greece and Turkey” (Todorova 1994: 478). However, Greece also was not totally spared the Cold War’s consequences – quite the reverse. Again, the perennial potential of instability and the ways it may impinge on present-day perceptions and developments is yet to be fully appreciated not only for Greece but perhaps more critically with respect to the ever re-igniting wars in the former Yugoslavia.

Otherness

Here again, the resemblances between all the Balkan countries are obvious. They concern not only specific groups of others but also the ways different groups have imagined each other. Millas writes, for instance, that,

“There are still striking resemblances in the ways each nation has handled the image of its neighbour and presents the mutual relationship […] [Certain] understandings are accepted respectively in Greece and Turkey as the ‘official view of history’, and can be found in many history books. Supervision of the writing of history is a major preoccupation for politicians in the Balkans” (1991: 24-25).

The complication of otherness as observed in the case of Greece and as rooted in past historical developments concerns the rest of the Balkan area equally if not more so.

In parallel in recent times, Greece may be also compared to Italy and Spain due to each of them having become the countries in Europe which have most recently experienced immigration rather than emigration. Triandafyllidou informs us that xenophobic and even racist attitudes as well as violent incidents against immigrants have been observed not only with respect to Albanians in Greece but also towards “extracomunitari’ in Italy and Moroccans in Spain” (2001: 90). We could speculate that discourses similar to those deployed in the Greek case may also be used in places like Italy and Spain in order to justify such reactions.
On the whole, specific similarities in historical development allow for optimism about the possibility of generalising discourses which occur in the context of Greece. Of course, the account above is very selective and mainly concentrates on the Balkans. Nonetheless, this account gives an initial impression of the potential of the case. After all, as Gellner has observed,

"The existence of explanatory schemata which apply to some human societies only, if such schemata exist at all, need not be attributed to the non-universality of some human element, but only to the specificity of some forms of social organisation, which however remain open to all human populations in similar circumstances" (1982: 199).

Thus, the present exploration and analysis may become exportable if other places can be shown to undergo similar kinds of development to those briefly demonstrated above. Finally, the potential of research based on Greece to function as a theoretical paradigm will be now explored.

4.3. Greece as a theoretical ‘topos’

It is recognised that in the relevant literature there has often been talk of Greek and Balkan exceptionalism. As Gallant puts it, part of “the argument is that the Greek case is so different that any attempt to be more comparative risks forcing Greece into a Procrustean bed of models developed elsewhere” (1997: 213-4). Nevertheless, if Greece is exceptional in any respect that is so with respect to the combination of different factors we find there. Still, in that sense any place is exceptional, though not all so obviously. Thus, specific parts of the argument put forward here may be valid for different places, mitigating ideas of Greek exceptionalism. Beliefs in Greek exceptionalism are in fact the product of a double process.

To begin with, the claim to Greek exceptionalism is linked to some of the dark pages in Greek intellectual life. Hence Karakasidou writes: “In Greece, the borders between scholarly and ordinary knowledge are blurred or even nonexistent when it comes to issues of national concern” (1994: 51-52). In fact, however, these kinds of processes are not particularly or solely Greek. Most importantly, “exceptionalism” is also a reflection
of outsiders’ perceptions of the area, then appropriated as dominant theoretical views by native intellectuals. Lambropoulos, for instance, writes: “We know that certain regions have appealed to the imagination of the world and assumed figurative power”. The Mediterranean, for instance, has been the subject of “the kind of general reflection that elevates a particular place to a topos, a space broadly available for shared rumination and deliberation”. By contrast, “the idea of the Balkans is coterminous with that of their locus no matter how that may be defined” (2003: 266-7). He goes on to conclude that, “The Balkans constitute a place, not a project” and that, “The only thing we can do with the Balkans is dismantle them” (Ibid.: 269-270). However, if the Balkans have not yet become ‘a project’, i.e. a theoretical topos with potential exportability, that may not be because of their idiosyncratic existence but rather because they have not been given the chance. Both the historical account above and the exploration of discourses it supports provide justification for such a claim. After all, even with respect to ‘discourses of merit’ we have seen how the linkage of Modern Greece to antiquity has often functioned as a double-edged sword with respect to appraising the country’s present. Instead, positively dismantling and ‘exporting’ the Balkans could rather be achieved by studying them from within whilst in parallel liberating ourselves from readings of either negative or positive specificity. The fact that local intellectuals have not been able to disengage their region from this line of argument, as Lambropoulos suggests elsewhere (cf. 2003: 266-7), may be for some an entrapment on their part in a game of self-justification. Nevertheless ‘Balkan research’ should now turn without guilt to addressing mainstream topics. What is more, those who have been accused of a ‘sinful past’ may be better placed to expose the self-laudatory undertone of those who urge other places to forget their past as well as the impossibility and insensitivity of such exhortations. As Bakić-Hayden and Hayden suggest, “Those who are within Europe, yet repeatedly told that they are not really “European”, may be better placed to evaluate the meaning of the (north and west) European construction of itself” (1992: 13) – both in practice and theory one might add. Within that process, pleas of Greek exceptionalism should be resisted, seductive as they may be.
As far as theoretical extrapolation is concerned then, there is no reason why an approach sensitive to discourses shown to be linked to specific historical developments could not be exportable. With respect to the theoretical debates examined in chapter one, if ‘the nation’ can be shown to play an important part in the development of discourses of identity, then attempting to dispense with it as a source of ‘ethnic’ trouble will not take us much further. Then again if ‘Greek civicness’ can be shown to depend on the Greek ‘ethnic’ legacy of an ancient past, the inclusive potential of such civicness may be curtailed. Such arguments will be taken further in a later stage of this thesis.

Furthermore, Greek in-betweeness also offers insight into accepted theoretical dichotomies. Besides demonstrating the precariousness of dichotomous approaches – as well as the fact that both parts of the divide depend on each other for definition – there are implications for the ways such an ‘in-between’ place perceives how it should develop today. It is often theoretically and politically prescribed for instance, that Eastern/Balkan ‘ethnicness’ or primitivism should be resented and overcome whereas the Western benefits of civil society should be achieved by those who have not done so. In fact often theory keeps on ascribing value to specific types of development – and that even when complex positions are advanced. And when attempts to ‘go further or beyond’ are supported, the pervasiveness of such evaluative positions remains unchecked. In other words, if the results of previous ways of describing and understanding are still potent in certain cases, it is to such ways that we must return if only to fully realise the impact of previous times on present ones – both in theory and in practice.

In that respect, there is one more lesson to be learned from the case of Greece: the impact of unresolved pain and guilt. In fact, as already discussed, the psychological and conceptual implications of the Greek Civil War were largely un-dealt with. This has led to difficulty in dealing positively with ‘difference’ and otherness. Whilst this inference may sound extravagant, such developments may also haunt those making theory. We must deal with the remnants of past ways of theorising, including past ways of perceiving ‘difference’, if we are to advance theory independently of whether these may now have become unfashionable or taboo. That is so because such perceptions were often
implicated in how specific places have developed and how they have learned to think about themselves.

However, it should also be noted that the discourses explored remain open to differentiated use and even manipulation. This optimism is supported by an understanding of the plasticity of 'national history'. Thus, we may discover differences between dominant national history/historiography and how people use it – both locating themselves within it and differentiating themselves from it at the same time. We may also discover that it is not only ‘xenoi’/‘foreigners’ who are not able to participate in cultural understanding and re-definition but maybe even ‘Greeks’ themselves. The latter’s potential may, for instance, be curtailed by their socialisation into isolationist and ultimately phobic notions of nationhood as well as a situation where the state dominates public expressions of identity.

Nonetheless, even if one cannot get rid of a stereotypical understanding of oneself, one may be able to read such an understanding differently and it is within such readings that dominant discourses of national and cultural identity may shift. The observation of such slight movements of lenses is more promising than admitting that history was ‘gotten wrong’. Inter alia, the latter is insensitive to how people for better or worse have been educated into (and possibly believed) their nationhood. Rather we should grasp some privileged loci of differentiation (where they exist) and expand upon them. A public culture will not change either from one moment to the next or by force. Rather there is a need to be willing to capture the slightest changes in understanding and give them space in a place where such space is not historically appropriated or even claimed by citizens be it only because of fear of the state or of fear of loosing the state. If such fears spring from events in a people’s national history, they are much harder to discard. That is why attempts to open up any historical discourse are worth exploring.

The next three chapters of the thesis contain the progressively more detailed presentation first of the fieldwork location (the Cultural Olympiad), then of the field of theatre and
finally the data analysis from the CO theatre projects. In the context of this thesis, cultural identity is perceived as setting the background against which personal identity is formed. Any transformations then of the context in which conceptualisations of one’s culture are sustained are important. Greekness is not an empty framework imposed on its constituents. Neither is it the accumulation of different components. It is an active background of discourses which comes to life in interaction with experience in different areas of life. It is only if it is understood in this way that its potential for redefinition can be uncovered or unlocked.
CHAPTER 4: MAKING CULTURE IN PUBLIC: ASPIRATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS OF AN AMBITIOUS INSTITUTION

1. Introduction to the field site and fieldwork methodology

Culture is not easily reducible to some set of practices or some group of cultural products. Loci of analysis in which such a culture's characteristics can be discerned, though, may be identified. The hypothesis is that discourses of cultural identity have permeated and continue to be used in public policy, mainly in policy about culture, and that the close analysis of discourses in this area will be most revealing as to the development of cultural identity construction and deeper cultural patterns permeating a place's 'public culture'. As already defined, the concept of 'public culture' refers to the discursive space of interaction between the state and 'the public' where a certain consensus about a society's culture unfolds. It is the space where both the possible pervasiveness of the national category and its diversified use and expression by different agents is deployed. It is the space occupied by cultural identity assumptions which then influence the development of public policy by the state. As already noted this is a dialectical relationship.

A first attempt to approach such contextual processes was taken through an examination of the discourses related to cultural identity that the historical itinerary of Greece reveals. The next part of this thesis turns to a particular institutional environment and specific conversations about cultural policy within this environment in order to investigate the contemporary relevance of discourses previously identified.

The institution chosen to test the hypothesis developed in this thesis was the Cultural Olympiad, which was a 'spin off' from Greece's successful bid to hold the 2004 Olympic Games and spanned the four years leading up to the Games (2001-2004). Fieldwork was conducted at the 'Company' responsible for the implementation of the Cultural Olympiad (CO). Due to the relationship of the CO with the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, their
importance will be briefly recalled. The story began in 1989 when Athens lost the 1996 Olympic Games to Atlanta. As those games marked the centenary of the modern revival of the Olympics in Athens in 1896, the sense of Greek failure was great. According to many critics at that time, Athens lost its bid because it based it on tradition and 'rights of property' rather than on a solid portfolio. If such was the case, then in 1997 Athens must have ‘learned its lesson’, as in the final voting on the 5th of September of that year Athens beat Rome, its remaining competitor in the fifth round, by 66 votes to 41. However, quality of application notwithstanding, the symbolism of an undertaking marked by a perception of the Games coming home at last, and the responsibility and expectations implied, were not lost on different parties. On the 6th of September, one day after the voting, the headlines of the leading newspaper Eleftherotepía read: "TRIUMPH!: We overtook Rome against all expectations. THE CHALLENGE: To restore the Games’ sense of honour. OUR DUTY: United to be proven ‘better than most’."  

The Bidding Committee’s President – who also became President of “Athens 2004”, the Greek Olympic Games Organising Committee – also most eloquently captured such significance:

“Ours is a country in a corner of the world which is rife with problems. This is precisely why we must be pioneers of the messages of peace, friendship and cooperation amongst peoples [...]. When the Prime Minister asked us to ensure the Games for Greece, we thought that we had to show everywhere that we should not be ashamed of our country. And we did show that Greece is a beautiful place where all Greeks may be united [sic]. We promise that we’ll make the most beautiful Games of the third millennium; they shall be without precedent and impossible to match".  

References to important discourses are obvious: the need to overcome perceptions of dependency, deficiency and instability; the belief in our merit based on our sense of continuity; the absence of any mention of otherness. In such a framework the Cultural Olympiad could be seen as catering precisely to the accepted wisdom that Greece must

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73 The text in “ appears in ancient Greek in the original. From the website: http://archive.enet.gr/1997/09/06/on-line.
do something exceptionally cultural due to its 'genetic' link to the Games as well as to the perceived importance of culture for Greece both at home and abroad. Furthermore, the relationship between the Athens 2004 Olympic Games and the birth of the CO as an institution endowed the latter with the responsibility of exemplifying both internationality and Greekness. Through its attempts to meet this challenge, the CO offered insight into discourses of Greek identity and the ways in which these discourses respond to diversity. It may be argued that the combination of nationality and internationality is a challenge faced by all countries hosting the Olympic Games – especially manifested in the ways different countries employ to portray themselves for the eyes of world audiences in the opening ceremonies of different Olympic Games. Obviously though, in the case of Greece, further complication arises from the Games' Ancient Greek origin. To put it simply, if Olympic internationality is ultimately subsumed into discourses of Greek identity, the potential for portraying 'difference' may be curtailed. If true, that would be important for the present investigation of Greekness as an exemplification of a cultural identity which puts only certain discourses on offer and thus gives different interlocutors specific tools both to talk about and to understand who they are. And it is through an understanding of national selfhood that 'difference' can also be approached.

In practical terms, as described in section 2.1 below, the relationship between the CO and the 2004 Olympic Games was translated in restrictions imposed upon the names and sponsors of events hosted by the Cultural Olympiad. These restrictions are related to IOC (International Olympic Committee) copyrights and bind any entity wishing to use the words "Olympic" or "Olympiad" in its appellation. In terms of budget, the CO proved capable of making ends meet through a more or less subtle juggling of a variety of sources – from the Ministry of Culture itself and from private donors and funds. (Accusations of squandering and unnecessary extravagance were sometimes made of both the CO and "Athens 2004". However, more often than not they died away in the midst of more pressing social issues).

Despite these formal ties, the actual cultural contributions of "Athens 2004" and the CO were intended to be quite distinct. They thus developed their programs mostly
independently of each other – not only in content but also in time. The CO was to function as both Greece and the world’s cultural preparation for the Greek Olympic Games. Its role officially ended the day that the Games began and from then onwards “Athens 2004” assumed the cultural part, consisting mainly in catering for the production of the opening and closing ceremonies of the Olympic Games. In other words, there remained a lot of room for manoeuvre for the CO to set up a program meeting its own administration’s ambitions rather than those of “Athens 2004”.

However, it transpired that, despite being two distinct organisations, “Athens 2004” and the CO remained united in their mutual perception of a quintessentially Greek cultural mission. And whilst the CO will be further investigated in later sections of this chapter, it should be noted at the outset that the opening ceremony of the Athens Olympic Games on August 13th 2004 was itself laden with the same strong sense of a historical heritage, echoing the discourses identified in chapter three. The words of the ceremony’s artistic director Dimitris Papaioannou just hours before the ceremony itself stressed that point:

“The Opening Ceremony is a unique opportunity for modern Greece to share its joy in, and pride of the centuries of its history; a history that gave birth to ideas, values and principles, which enlighten us all today. Democracy, philosophy, theatre, sport itself, the Olympic Games – all were born in Greece”.75

The leading newspaper Kathimerini read the following day:

“Athens welcomed the Olympics back to the city in which they were revived in 1896 last night with an opening ceremony that combined homage to the Greeks and their long march through the millennia with an enthusiastic welcome to the athletes of all the world’s nations competing in these Games. The ceremony combined state of the art technology with simple and strong images from myth, history and civilisation, ranging from stylised depictions of Bronze Age Cretans leaping over a bull to a pantomime of the Olympic revival in 1896. The show [...] tied together a rich past with a modern sensibility, touching repeatedly on Greek history without resorting to cliche”.76

75 Reported in the website mediainfo2004.gr
76 From the archives of the website www.ekathimerini.com.
And the message was not lost on foreign correspondents. “Athens is the flame which lit up the world”, said John Mehaffey, Reuter’s chief editor of the sports department in London. “I feel privileged to be experiencing and attending the Athens Olympic Games today”.77 Or as Andrew Welsh, the show’s Australian executive producer said, “It wasn’t gee-whizzery for its own sake. It was gee-whizzery hidden away, being used solely to tell a tale”. “It actually showcased more than three millennia of Greek history and mythology” explained the reporter of Australian newspaper The Age under a main title reading “No Greek tragedy, just sheer triumph” and he went on to note that

“If the Sydney show four years ago had foreigners turning to their Australian neighbours to explain local pop culture, the Athens opener would have had them desperately recalling their old history classes, as they tried to identify the colourful figures in the living friezes – the lustful satyrs, the ecstatic maenads, the warriors, the athletes of ancient Olympia”.78

To the writer of this thesis, the opening ceremony of the Athens Olympic Games, coming as it did towards the conclusion of this project, suggested that the chosen path had been vindicated. That was a ceremony laden with some of the very same discourses that had been identified both in the country’s historiography and in the study of CO documentation. It thus lent support to the typicality of the field site and the viability of the main premises upon which research had been based: not only does a sense of historical heritage remain irreplaceable in Greece today; it also delimits the boundaries of understanding Greekness and ‘difference’ by overstressing certain discourses at the possible expense of others.

Fieldwork was conducted during eight months, from February to September 2002. During that period, the researcher was asked to come to the organisation on a regular basis, approximating the times of other employees and to offer her services (mostly secretarial) whenever asked. That appointment did not involve substantial decision-making or handling of sensitive data. It required some specialised training as well as trust

77 Reported in the website mediainfo2004.gr
78 From the archives of the website //theage.com.au/olympics/articles/2004/08/14
that information would be used for academic purposes only. That trust had already been secured thanks to prior professional involvement with some of the personnel in the administration, since the researcher was (and still is) a permanent employee of the Ministry of Culture - which partly financed the undertaking of this PhD and allowed four years sabbatical leave. As detailed in section 2.1 below, the Ministry of Culture was also the authority to which the Company responsible for the organisation of the CO was directly accountable. However, even though the Cultural Olympiad was supervised and closely monitored by the Ministry, in structure it remained an independent institution which employed people under a different set of regulations than those governing employment by the Ministry of Culture. No contract was set up for the researcher within that framework. Employment agreements there remained verbal, which would not surprise anyone familiar with Greek institutional reality. Of course, the researcher’s prior (and only temporarily suspended) professional engagement with the Ministry facilitated the access agreement through ongoing relationships with key people in the cultural sector of Greece.

Thus the author was already considered an insider and that was a major advantage. However, it was not professional and personal intimacy only that facilitated the researcher’s task, which was assisted on the other hand by the convoluted bureaucracy governing the Greek public sector. For in Greece, as perhaps wherever there are highly hierarchical administrational networks, a researcher may actually be given more freedom of movement than she would were the system less complex. The fact that practically none of those working at the lower and middle levels of public administration can assume responsibility or take initiatives without the substantial involvement of those at the higher levels of hierarchy gives to paperwork a life of its own, a life growing openly in a series of different offices. The multiplication of the same document, which must be kept in the archives of every office ‘it’ visits before a final decision is made, obviously increases the chances of tracking it down. Hence institutional complexity and bureaucratic hierarchy combine to increase the researcher’s access to information.
It should be noted that the Ministry of Culture placed no constraints on the research topic, field-site or time-span, either before or during the research. No questions were asked, provided the required report was submitted at the end of each academic year, as is standard practice under ministerial employment regulations for research leave. A final advantage was distance from the sector of culture in Greece during post-graduate studies (an MSc in Nationalism Studies) pursued in Edinburgh immediately prior to the fieldwork. Not only did that MSc enrich the researcher’s knowledge of various facets of nationalism and political theory, sharpening a critical approach to institutions: moreover an insider had briefly become an outsider and could return to the Greek cultural environment with a fresh eye, exemplifying *in vivo* the permeability of such insider-outsider boundaries. Further exploration of such boundaries is therefore not judged necessary here. Suffice it to say that the researcher’s temporary absence from the field sharpened the ability to recognise behaviours. At the same time, keeping a diary and log and being in regular communication with supervisors kept at bay re-absorption by the vagaries and routines of work, assisted a critical eye and disciplined previous and new assumptions.

Thus in return for administrative work provided on a regular basis under the supervision of the Cultural Olympiad’s Managing Director, the researcher was given access to most documents produced at all levels of the CO. She was also allowed to conduct interviews with leading CO officials, where necessary, as well as attend meetings and discussions about the development of different projects. The Managing Director and the staff of the Cultural Olympiad were well aware that the researcher was gathering data and, in fact, facilitated the process by pointing to the different sources that had documents that might be of interest. Written authorisation signed by the Managing Director to conduct research within the CO was also secured. At an early stage, it was suggested to the researcher by one supervisor that interviews might be worth considering. However, the nature of the information extracted during pilot interviews suggested this would not be a fruitful path, as the primary research interest was the justification provided either by those proposing or those intercepting different projects, and this kind of justification was generally provided in written form. In conversation, whether casual or formal, people at all levels
of the organisation were mainly interested in the practical aspects of a project’s realisation. The same applied to the executive meetings that the researcher had the opportunity to attend. However, in the correspondence exchanged between those proposing and those receiving and judging different projects, especially at early stages and before practicalities came into the picture, perceptions of Greek identity unfolded. It is on these written exchanges, i.e. the correspondence between potential participants and the CO as well as relevant consultations, that the research focused, with theatre being the chosen cultural domain within the field. As shown in detail in chapters five and six, the general directions taken by the entirety of the program of the CO came most prominently to the fore in the domain of theatre.

The cultural domains developed within the framework of the CO were (in random order) theatre, the visual arts, dance, cinema, archaeological exhibitions, digital culture, literature, music, great projects, prizes, conferences and architecture. Not surprisingly, the number of proposals reaching the CO was extensive. Usually a project would either be proposed to the institution by Greek or foreign organisations and/or individuals or it would be initiated by one of the CO’s senior employees. Projects could be either new or already performed but in need of financial assistance for reproduction. Submissions would then be made to the relevant consultant who might ask for additional information before making a recommendation to the managing director. The latter would then submit that to the board of directors for rejection or provisional approval. Ultimate realisation would of course also depend on the satisfactory development of the practical aspects of the project (participants, locations, budget, etc.). The research coding system follows the fate of projects from their provenance through the evaluation process.79 Additionally, the terms ‘sender-proposer’ and ‘receiver’ refer to those submitting and receiving proposals whereas the terms ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ indicate geographical location in relation to Greece.

79 See Appendix 2.
In the domain of theatre, according to some draft statistical research\textsuperscript{80} conducted by one consultant during the summer of 2002,\textsuperscript{81} by that time 697 proposals had reached the CO of which 16\% were related to theatre. At the time of that evaluation out of a total of 116 theatre proposals, 18 would be realised, 34 had been rejected, 38 remained to be considered by the Board of Directors, 17 had been advised to resubmit for reconsideration and 9 were already classified. Even though the program was more or less finalised by the end of 2002, those numbers remain only indicative due to the fluid character of even a ‘finalised’ program and the intervention of factors external to the process of decision-making. Nonetheless, the figures give a good impression of the part that theatre played within the CO, being a major slice of a proposals pie-chart which included eleven other domains. On the empirical level, despite the basic structure and the continuous administrative transformations of the CO, persistence as well as the establishment of good relationships made it possible to keeping track of most, if not all, theatre projects.

In examining projects, the researcher’s aim was to collect a body of discursive manifestations with a broad set of limits in mind. To this effect also, extracts, sometimes extensive, are included to back up the analysis, although little detail is disclosed about those involved in the process beyond that of the provenance and progress of proposals. Although written permission to use and analyse all material from the CO was secured, it was possible to conduct this research and to have access to confidential information due to \textit{bona fide} conditions and the development of trust between researcher and institution. Disclosure of names would be not only improper but redundant to this work. The methodology of the approach adopted for the discursive analysis of material from the domain of theatre will be further detailed in the introduction to chapter six. For the moment, suffice to say that the handling of qualitative and textual data is based on a combination of prior knowledge of the environment under consideration, coding of written material and the use of particular conceptual tools, such as metaphors, as guiding principles.

\textsuperscript{80} Confidential.
\textsuperscript{81} By that time the largest number of proposals had reached the CO. Very shortly after the CO stopped receiving proposals and in February 2003 it announced its final program for 2003-2004.
In this chapter, through a discussion of the CO on different levels, both the suitability of the fieldwork location for an investigation of Greekness and the discourses of Greek identity evident in that environment are examined. One of the underlying threads of the argument will be that the environment under consideration progressively revealed itself as being a typical Greek cultural institution with atypical characteristics in terms of initial aspirations and pragmatic potential. Quite extensive quoting will be necessary to elucidate claims made for each level of analysis.

First, the CO’s institutional dependencies, testifying to its ‘atypical typicality’ are examined. These involved both international and national partners with varying powers of decision as well as their own aspirations about what the CO was to be. Decisions regarding the ultimate result lay with two of those dependencies: (a) the CO’s direct placement under a specific organisation entrusted with the promotion of the Greek cultural heritage and (b) the Ministry of Culture as overall controlling body. Those two dependencies being primarily Greek, they limited the CO’s multicultural and international ambition.

Then the examination turns to (a) the CO’s general imperatives, (b) the assumptions on which they seemed to depend and (c) their gradual transformation, through three successive brochures which contained programmatic and ‘vision’ announcements. During and after this fieldwork, imperatives were being gradually and more or less obviously transformed from ‘more international’ to ‘more Greece-focused’ events. That development has conceptual, discursive and practical bases.

The aim of the present examination is to give an account of the process of decision-making as well as of the complexity of the task of painting a different picture of Greekness. It also aims to document the basic parameters of the environment under study. It shows that material and institutional processes are both partly a product of cultural discourses and partly the channels through which claims to definitional power over
culture unfold. It also illustrates how culture (i.e. public culture) matters and can often be a battlefield for diverse interests and aspirations. These, however, take place within a certain understanding of culture, even if only in order to contest it.

2. Cultural Olympiad: institutional dependencies

2.1. The ‘network’ of dependencies

The complex institutional network in which the CO unfolded is illustrated below (DIAGRAM 1).

DIAGRAM 1: The CO’s institutional dependencies
The green ‘route’ shows dependencies linked to the CO’s final financial and naming approval. The CO could use, besides the Ministry, only certain other sources for financing and was subjected to restrictions in naming its events. As already mentioned in the introduction above, that series of institutions had final program approval but was relatively unconcerned with the artistic product itself, provided the above two conditions were met.

The orange ‘route’ reflects the CO’s claim to internationality. Mainly through entering into a partnership with UNESCO and through creating the International Foundation for the CO (‘IFCO’), its Greek initiators wanted to create an international institution whose functions would be taken up by other countries after Greece. Additionally, through such connections they also aspired to Greece maintaining an important role in the future of the CO as an institution. However, this route had no substantial influence on the program of the CO due to reasons that will be elaborated shortly.

The blue ‘route’, whilst the shortest, identifies the two institutions that designed and implemented the CO: ‘the Company’ and the Ministry. Their importance and their role were crucial and they will be discussed separately in section 2.2.

However, independently of the role they played in the decision-making process, institutions besides the Company and the Ministry also offered definitions of the CO which converged or diverged to differing degree. These were often thrown up quite inadvertently within the text of the various agreements signed between the CO and other partners.

In the agreement\(^\text{82}\) entered into by the Ministry (as representative of the Hellenic Republic) with UNESCO, for instance, an agreement of which the creation of the ‘IFCO’

was part, the focus was on abstract ‘internationality’ and ‘multiculturalism’. The CO was defined as “an instrument of knowledge and mutual understanding among the peoples of the whole world in their creative diversity”. UNESCO considered that the project came “in the front rank of activities concerning the culture of peace and dialogue between cultures” and that the CO “should emerge from a series of initiatives undertaken at the instigation of civil society and reflecting local or regional concerns; that it should open up the additional channels for dialogue between differing cultures and provide opportunities for interaction between them”. Further on, one could read:

"in accordance with the priorities of cultural development fixed in recent years by UNESCO and the imperatives of rapid socio-economic and technological change, the CO shall endeavour to develop its activities so as to underscore the priorities of: a culture of peace [...], a culture of social cohesion [...], a culture for the information society [...], culture as a meeting place for tradition and modernity, with a view to meeting all the cultural challenges facing the global community under conditions of mutual respect and solidarity”.

What is starkly absent from this agreement is any mention of the role of Greece in such international aspirations. The goals of the CO are set in very general and rather abstract terms.

With the same agreement and in order to assist the CO in fulfilling this remit, the International Foundation (‘IFCO’) was constituted “to help in organisational matters and also in consultations and discussions with a view to ensuring that the CO is open and responsive to global cultural trends”. However, as is obvious both from the generality of the document and from the absence of any substantial commitment to actively pursue the issues set out in it, this agreement and the Foundation that originated from it never really took an active part in the decision making process. Regardless of whether the goals set were realistic or had any chance of being translated into actual programs, the fact that institutionally the CO had international partners did not increase the internationality of its eventual program since the relationship with these partners was not further cultivated.
The CO was also linked to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) through the Organising Committee for the Olympic Games “Athens 2004”. Through that affiliation, Greekness came more dynamically to the fore. First and foremost it should be noted that part of the success of the Athenian bid to organise the 2004 Olympic Games was from the very beginning its commitment to organise the CO. Thus, the way “Athens 2004” originally defined the CO, as well as the terms of its agreement with the Ministry, are important.

In a “Memorandum of Common Conception and co-operation between the Ministry of Culture and the ‘Athens 2004’ for the CO”\(^8^3\) whose object was “the alignment of the basic principles of the CO and its program with the obligations” stemming from the successful bid, six out of eight of the aims of the CO were specified as follows:

- “Promoting both ancient and contemporary Greek culture and establishing institutions which will remain active even after the Olympic Games of 2004.
- Highlighting the Principles of Greek Thought and Philosophy which characterise the itinerary of the Greek nation, by paying special tribute to their function and value in contemporary times.
- Assigning the Greek contemporary creation and the universality of its messages and values a fundamental position in the program, in order to portray contemporary Greeks as citizens of the international society in the new era.
- Believing that success consists in the participation of all the regions of the country and Greek creators everywhere as well as in the support of living cultural forces.
- Strengthening the links between Greeks abroad and their birthplace and disseminating the image, the goals and the achievements of the modern Greek state amongst second and third generation Greeks abroad
- Functioning as a catalyst in collaborations between Greek cultural institutions and relevant important institutions abroad”.

\(^8^3\) Signed in 2000.
Hence Greek identity came back into play in an agreement between the Ministry and the institution which ratified the CO’s final program and approved its financing. Some recurring themes such as the need to portray Greece as both ancient and contemporary and as both local and universal as well as the allegedly uninterrupted itinerary of the Greek nation through time and space were highlighted.

The link between the CO and discourses of Greekness was finally sealed, though, through its bond to the Company and the Ministry of Culture.

2.2. Program design and implementation

2.2.1. The Company

The Cultural Olympiad came under the jurisdiction of a Limited Company (Société Anonyme) for the promotion of the Greek Cultural Heritage. That organisation was once referred to by one of its senior employees, as “the sole organisation responsible for the administration and promotion of the cultural heritage and resources of Greece”. In the same document some of the organisation’s main areas of activity were identified as follows:

- “The management of the Hellenic State’s rights over the country’s Cultural Heritage […]
- The commercial use, production and distribution of aspects of Cultural Heritage […]
- The promotion of all cultural activities relevant to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture”.

In the founding legislation passed in 2000 the Company’s mission was further elaborated: “The Company’s mission is: to highlight and promote the cultural heritage

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84 Its appellation and constitution have changed subsequently but these changes did not affect its function.
85 Confidential.
and potential of the country as well as to organise and promote the CO in the framework of relevant policies determined by the Ministry of Culture”.

Even organisationally, the CO was placed under the direct control of an institution mainly responsible for promoting the cultural heritage of Greece and hence became tightly linked to that purpose. Such positioning provides further clues as to the difficulty which would arise in achieving both a portrayal of modern Greekness and a form of internationality. It also explains the preponderance of Greece and Greekness in the eventual program of the CO. The contradiction did not pass unnoticed by some of the CO’s designers and implementers. In his initial commentary one consultant remarked:

“The fact that the CO is ultimately controlled by the Company provides clues to understanding the CO’s contradictory definitional framework. Despite the CO having a primarily international character […] its implementation at the higher level by an entirely Greek committee constitutes the most important reason why the institution is inconsistent in its approach. The picture painted gives the impression that the whole organisation aims to the promotion of Greek culture. The results are:

(a) The international aspect of the institution is not ensured.
(b) Proposals submitted remain Greek at heart
(c) The necessary connection between the CO and international organisations or collaborators is not active.
(d) The organisational infrastructure for realising projects is insufficient and weak”. 87

These were in fact obstacles to realising the CO’s international aspirations. However, for a portrayal of discourses of Greekness they could not be more apposite. The CO was in fact tightly linked to such a portrayal. Additionally, due to a certain international ambition, it also thought to offer new definitions of what it might mean to be Greek – definitions suited to a contemporary international cultural arena. Some final clues as to

87 Confidential.
the difficulties of such a goal can be offered by its submission under the Ministry’s control.

2.2.2. The Ministry

In an attempt at a more comprehensive institutional framework, in 1997 the Ministry of Culture passed a law under the title “Institutions, measures and actions of cultural development”. It is an exemplification of the state’s involvement in the cultural life of Greece as well as an attempt to support Greek creation in various ways, i.e. through prizes, subsides, etc. It is not a novel development in Greek public policy; rather, this law constitutes one of the most recent codifications of long standing practice observed also before and after its publication.

The document was divided into sections according to different domains of culture. Thus, under “National policy for the book”, one reads: “The Ministry of Culture is taking care of the promotion and diffusion of Greek literature and supports Greek intellectual creators”. In the policies designed for the support of theatre a special “entrustment for writing contemporary Greek plays” was foreseen. And in cinema policy, special tax incentives were given to premises which would show “films with final scripts in Greek, allowing though, for part of the dialogue to be in a different language where it is necessary for the scenario”. Finally, it was stated that

“the Minister of Culture can give awards to people of the arts with significant contribution in literature, the plastic arts and in all fields of cultural creation, in Greece and abroad; especially so, when they have contributed through their work to highlighting and promoting the cultural heritage and Modern Greek culture”.

In the same legislation we find the first concise mention of the Company whose goal would be “to promote and publicise the cultural heritage and potential of the country within the framework of relevant policy designed by the Ministry of Culture”.

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The legislation also foresaw a series of actions such as the founding of Museums which would exhibit the work of both Greek and foreign artists. But, the need to protect and reinforce Greek cultural production underpinned the general directives given to national initiatives by the Ministry. It is in this framework of support and protection that one can see the foundation of the Company.

During the same year of 1997, the Ministry also published a small booklet entitled “Areas of Foreign Cultural Policy”. It consisted mostly of texts by the Minister himself on the cultural role of Greece within larger groups of countries. The discourses on which these draw are perceptions pervasive in Greek public culture. The designated country-areas themselves are revealing; they are the Balkans, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, and the EU. In the booklet’s introduction one reads: “Culture is the fundamental element of our national identity, our comparative advantage and a privileged area of international cooperation”.

The special link of Greece with culture is highlighted several times in the publication. For example, in the framework of the Mediterranean, the Minister claims:

“I am sure that you will acknowledge the right of every Greek Minister of Culture to have a particular historical interest, a particular historical claim for justification of the protection of cultural heritage [...]. Greek philology, the Greek drama and many other examples I could give you, may allow us some small historical priority, mainly with reference to the period of classical antiquity”.

The past is thus used to claim some kind of pre-eminence. In parallel, fears are expressed about the country’s geographical and linguistic marginality.

When addressing Greece’s Balkan neighbours, the author feels he does not need to be explicit about such concerns since “the common historical and cultural past of the Balkan

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89 References from: Ministry of Culture 1997: Areas of foreign cultural policy, Athens.
countries is well-known and self-evident. There is a similarity of temperament, there is a similarity of problems”. In this framework, a relative weakness is turned to potential strength:

“Certainly we do have an advantage. All our languages are, more or less, of equal importance. Here in the Balkans, we do not have a language that outweighs the others, in the way that the English language predominates on the global or European level […]. The Balkans and the Balkan culture have always laboured under a burden, the burden of a so-called inferior aspect of European culture”.

However, “the Balkan cultures are not an aggregate of second-rate aspects of European culture”. On such premises, the document bases an appeal for more integrated action in the region.

In the framework of the EU, though, that marginality is not considered an advantage. There it is claimed that “the principle of respect for variety and diversity of European regional and national cultures does not rule out existing inequalities – I would say it guarantees the opposite, and it allows these inequalities to increase and be repeated”.

Finally, state-intervention is deemed justified to safeguard cultural liberalism: “The market very often suffocates and overwhelms cultural diversity, cultural tolerance, what we could call cultural liberalism, which is a different side of liberalism, different from political liberalism but very close to it, and different from economic liberalism”.

In the concluding “Ten Points for a Foreign Cultural Policy” the main goals are set. They are self-explanatory:

1) “In Greece, culture is not merely an element of national identity and individuality – as is the case in every country – but possibly the most important international comparative advantage [for Greece]. The Greek participation in the European cultural edifice and the international cultural process is far wider than is justified by the size of the population, the financial power of Greece and the current
expansion of the Greek language. However, the presence of Greek culture is not confined to the contribution of ancient Greek culture to the international heritage, nor to the contemporary influence of classical studies. Greek culture appears at European and international level in its current form and indicates the great significance of its diachronic continuity – without the exception of any period. […] Besides, in culture the status of universality is attained by what is original from a national point of view, i.e. what is rooted in experience and history, thus, having there a source of inspiration. […]

2) National identity, diachronic continuity, the conscience of universality, the special contribution to the European cultural reserves, the dynamism of modern Greek culture are the elements on which Greek cultural foreign policy should be founded and which it should combine and promote. […]

3) […] The cultural presence of Greeks abroad and Cypriot Greeks, the survival of Hellenism in many parts of the world, constitute the additional aspects of our cultural identity. The promotion of Greek culture and its diachronic continuity are, moreover, an element of self-knowledge as well as national and social self-confidence of the Greeks, wherever they may be. […]

4) Within this framework, Greek foreign cultural policy cannot – and should not – be founded either on a version of Greek culture based solely on folklore or in the risky promotion of Greek classicism only. It can – and it should – be based on the diachronic continuity of Greek culture, on the respect and the promotion of cultural heritage, as well as on the natural implantation of memory [physeké ensomátose tes mnémēse] in modern creators' inspiration”.

In a sense, the path toward the CO’s essential Greekness is here sealed. This comes not only from neglect of its genuinely international connection. It stems most of all from the two organisations with direct responsibility for implementing the program: a Company constituted to promote Greek Cultural Heritage and a Ministry which defines internationality in very Greek terms. This is not surprising. After all, in both documents quoted, it is national policy that is being described. However, it is the national policy of a country that finds itself in a rather peculiar position: under the ‘boon and bane’ of a
classical past; in a relatively advantaged position in the Balkan neighbourhood; on the actual periphery of the EU but at its symbolic core. Because of those elements the CO reveals itself as a promising fieldwork-location not only for an inquiry into Greece and Greekness, but also into several other geographical and symbolic areas. Finally, the CO instantiates the complexity of an environment such as Greece and hence its theoretical potential.

3. Self-definition: the CO according to the CO

3.1. The initial manifesto

The CO’s relevant inability to escape from Greekness can be seen in its ambivalent and changing declarations. One of its first manifestos was published in January 2001. Though developed and altered in subsequent phases, this set the parameters of the conversation that would take place between project officials and potential participants. In this manifesto, the CO aspired to be not “just another festival... nor a series of national activities for or about Greece”. It would not be “restricted exclusively to Athens”, but it would cover “the whole country”. Furthermore, it would also “seek to make its presence felt across all continents and in as many countries as possible”. Thus, “it would not pivot on the quantity and frequency of cultural events but on their symbolic value and communication range”. Its message would be “a message of peace and social cohesion; a message that links tradition to modernism and modernism to postmodernism [...] The fundamental idea [...] is the universality of civilisation”. The CO considered “all civilisations across the world as great, with the firm belief that they revolve around Time, Place and Word” [Chronos, Topos, Logos].

More insight into discourses of Greek identity was given by reference to important characteristics of the image of Greece envisioned by CO officials. They also painted universality in very Greek colours. Greece was defined as

“the place where History finds its voice – a voice that also belongs to a modern, dynamic European country that is an active and competitive player in the international arena, whilst at the same time remains the guardian of a civilisation of exceptional historical importance in the world’s pool of cultural wealth. Greece is synonymous with Culture and History; every single landscape in this country, its people and their daily lives reverberate with the echo of history and culture, and yet it is a country that keeps abreast of our digital times”.

In just a few lines, dominant images of Greece, both at home and abroad (Greece as ‘a land of history’), are highlighted while also claiming an active presence in much more modern terms.

On the local, Greek level, “the topography” of the CO, it was claimed, would “reflect the authentic topography of the land of Greece as a universal point of reference”. On the international level, the organisers wished to see great events “impregnated with a universal worldview and not [...] Greek- or West-centred”. They would have liked them “to show respect for all nations and all cultures, whilst highlighting both the diachrony and the modern features of Greece as a land of culture and one of the central points of reference in terms of the global cultural heritage”. “In other words”, this document stated, “it is our wish that these events underline not only the universality of Greek Culture but also emphasise that this universality of Greek Culture is one of its fundamental and permanent characteristics”.

The stage could not be more revealingly set. In its effort to transcend Greek frontiers, the CO turned to Greece and dominant discourses of what it means to be Greek. Strangely enough, being Greek is described as being somehow universal. Thus a specific facet of an ‘ethnically’ defined identity is reversed and used to claim greater inclusive potential for the CO itself, and also for Greekness. Whether this claim can be sustained remains to be investigated. In the meantime some other pervasive discourses can be briefly identified.
For example, to illustrate the parameter of *Time*, it is stated that

“Greek culture spans across millennia, and its enduring qualities are but one example out of many around the world. Yet, they serve as a characteristic example of the relationship that exists between humans and their history that is our relationship to the past and the future”.

Thus the importance ascribed to history and the past was highlighted. As far as *Place* is concerned, culture was described “as a constant meeting point, as continuous transition and transcendence of boundaries. *Place* (Topos) is a universal and yet local phenomenon, since nothing can be truly global if it is not genuinely local”. The importance of salvaging ‘the local’ was thus underlined and the political correctness of aspiring to ‘the universal’ was moderated by the wish not to lose local particularity. Again, in defining *Word* more than writing was propounded; it is to encompass “reason [...] narrative [...] inspiration [...] dialogue [...] information”, thus avoiding domination by specific languages, since all cultures whether “dominant” or not, will have a contribution to make.

Finally, two more targets were set. The first concerned the need to involve Greeks abroad in the activities of the CO. It was stated that “Greek emigrants play a key role in the overall design of the system” and that the CO “will involve all Greeks around the globe, meeting their need for a universal approach to culture”. Also, “primarily targeted” were young people on this planet”, since the CO wanted them “to become conscious of the message of peace, reconciliation, creativity and fair competition”.

To sum up: the CO set out to achieve ‘genuine’ multicultural and inclusive tasks such as regional and national decentralisation, peace, social cohesion and “the universality of civilisation”, while at the same time sustaining perceptions of Greece which included: special links to culture and history, its position as a universal point of reference through the universality of its culture but also its claim to an important position in today’s world. The latter became obscured by perceptions of the importance of salvaging the past, the importance ascribed to location and locality as well as to a broader perception of language. Finally, whilst target-groups such as ‘the Greeks abroad’ seemed to pull the
whole endeavour towards the contingencies of the location in which it unfolded, target-
groups such as ‘the young’ linked its discourses with wider, global concerns.

3.2. Development and transformation of CO prerogatives

Two subsequent publications will be now considered. The first consists of an
announcement of 100 characteristic events during the four years and was published
towards the end of 2001. The second was published after the completion of the first two
years, i.e. mid-way, and focuses on reviewing that period.

In the 100 events brochure, there are again from the very beginning references to the
cultural dimension as being in Greece “part of the fabric of its own identity” as well as
references to the “worldwide significance of Greek civilisation”. In parallel “the need for
respect for cultural diversity and equality as a basic condition for peace and social
cohesion around the globe” are also highlighted as well as the three parameters of Place,
Word and Time. The brochure reads: “We wish to focus on the universality of Greek
civilisation and at the same time welcome other cultures and civilisations to a great
celebration of creativity, inspiration, memory, quality and peace”. These words were
underwritten by the Minister of Culture himself.

The aspiration to internationality was further sustained by drawing particular attention to
the institutional infrastructure which had been put in place to achieve it, i.e. by dedicating
space to describing the International Foundation for the CO. At the same time the wish to
include all of Greece in a redefinition of the image of Greece at home and abroad was
also promoted by specifically naming all those from whom the CO expected proposals
for participation:

“all services and bodies of the Ministry of Culture, all organisations supervised,
subsidised or contractually connected to the Ministry of Culture, local
government bodies, together with their cultural services, Greek artists, private

91 References from: Ministry of Culture – Hellenic Cultural Heritage S.A. 2001: Cultural Olympiad 2001-
cultural bodies, cultural foundations, and volunteer cultural organisations involved in amateur art and folk culture”.

However, the tension arising from seeking to be both international and national becomes apparent in this document. There are references to “antiquity” “as a feeling for place and time” which is further perceived as offering answers to “the question of whether a “culture of civilisations”93 and the values this implies do really have a future”. The tension is further substantiated by reference to the institutional framework in which the CO unfolded which aimed “to promote the cultural heritage and resources of Greece and to organise and promote the CO”. The document also notes that “the Company places an emphasis on two key areas of activity: (a) the organisation of cultural events and programmes [and] (b) the promotion of the Greek Heritage and the cultural potential of the country”. The question of whether both internationality and nationality could be served under the aegis of such an organisation remained open.

In the same 100 events brochure, the specific programs which were to unfold under the CO were further detailed bringing other features of Greekness to the fore. Greece’s Balkan dimension was noted, with Greece described as “the privileged location in this [i.e., the Balkan] dialogue, as a country with cultural, social and economic stability”, able to contribute “in this way to the development of a lasting peace”. Yet another program was mentioned which would aim “at emphasising the diachronic nature of Mediterranean cultural contacts and the arrangement of a communication network among cities that share the same sea, and therefore, all of its benefits and problems”. Through such descriptions, the importance of the host country’s geographical position also became apparent. It is clear that through geography, Greece is linked to and shares a specific set of issues and problems with its direct neighbours – something that is not the case, at least not so starkly, in relation to those with whom it shares symbolic bonds defined by the alleged “universality” of Greek culture. Thus, in that publication the CO’s mission was expanded both by spelling out more clearly the institutional framework in which it would

93 This main original slogan of the CO was later transformed to ‘A Celebration of Civilisations/Cultures [the word Poletesmós in Greek accounts for both thus making it difficult to distinguish to which one it actually refers].
unfold and by specific mention of programs which alluded to the geographical and symbolic position of Greece in the world.

In the subsequent review brochure some of these ambitious aspirations remained still in place but reality had somehow muted them. Additionally, reportage of some of the international and the local events that had in fact taken place during the first two years is revealing.

This later publication was characterised by ambiguity and generality, which was due in part to the involvement of people with very differing ideas about what the CO was. These people also had conflicting interests and job-descriptions which then affected both the power-dynamics of the organisation and the CO program itself. The pragmatic parameters involved in decision-making will be examined in the next chapter but it is important to keep in mind for the moment this ‘human factor’. A certain unsurprising incongruence in the latter was further aggravated by the fact that the balance between internationality and nationality as expressed in earlier publications left considerable space for interpretation by the different parties involved.

The first section of that review publication was again written by the Minister who in this case was more cautious. His short contribution concluded by stating: “The CO was born in Greece. But it belongs to the entire world. We would very much like to see the initiatives undertaken by Greece develop [...]”. After this opening, those involved in running the CO contributed short texts. One of its senior officials stated that the CO was “expressly designed to highlight the value of mutual understanding between the different cultures of our world: what was theory is now reality”. He went on to note that “creating an institution that aspires to permanence and international status and getting it up and running is no easy matter... We are doing the best we can, and hope that that will prove enough”. However, another of the CO’s senior officials and one who, as fieldwork showed, was much more involved in the everyday work remarked:

“Our fundamental goal has remained unchanged: to take the Greek cultural principles at the heart of our world’s cultural and intellectual life and to develop
them to locations/symbols that transcend all national boundaries and effectively promote modern artistic creativity around the globe. Of course, the entire country also has its role to play, and we have done everything we can to encourage the decentralisation of cultural activities in Greece. It has not been easy”.

Maybe for the first time here both the definitional paradox and the magnitude of the task at the heart of the CO were actually described. They amounted to recommending the resurgence of ‘our world’s’ underlying Greekness in a contemporary manner by playing the strongest cards of Greek culture in the present. In the next paragraph the actual result of such an endeavour was presented: “All the dozens of performances and programmes that have already come and gone serve to highlight our message: culture expressed in as many ways as possible by as many people as possible from as many places as possible”. The question remains open of whether a redefinition of Greekness has been achieved through such multiplicity. After all, this could be seen as a characterisation of any international festival around the globe. Moreover, if such variety was combined with an attempt to rehabilitate Greece’s symbolic and actual position in the world, it could be that cultural multiplicity has remained only superficial whereas the core of the events stayed ultimately Greek.

4. Conclusion

In a critique of the CO’s original announcements, one consultant remarked: “The character of the CO as defined by its initial announcements is subject to many contradictory interpretations. This fact results in the exact aim of its events and their exact character not being fully clear”94. This chapter has sought to convey both this apparent confusion and inconsistency and also to restate what remained as the one persisting guiding principle, i.e. a principle of Greekness even when internationality was attempted. As the implementation of the Cultural Olympiad developed, this principle did

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94 Confidential.
not merely survive; it seemed to acquire increasing potency and was permeated on different levels by different discourses of Greekness.

Greekness was very evident in the institutional relations amongst which the CO unfolded. Even the CO’s international connection in practice described the project in very Greek terms. Moreover, the two institutions responsible for its final program design and implementation, the Company and the Ministry, are both necessarily and inextricably linked to aims with Greece at their heart. Those organisations’ self-definitions and mission-statements stress the promotion of Greek culture and the re-evaluation of its place in world culture through retaining what are key perceptions of Greece. They also focus on enhancing Greece’s role within the areas where it belong symbolically and geographically, through maintaining links both with Greeks abroad and with the young everywhere.

Greekness was also present in the CO’s own attempts to define its mission. In congruence with the Ministry, internationality was sought through an understanding of Greece as a place of Culture and History with a special place at the beginning of Western, if not world, civilisation. At the same time, a contemporary role was claimed for Greece – one which would inspire both Greeks abroad and the young and spread through Greece’s geographical and symbolic area of influence. However, if being Greek means being in part the bearer of universal values then it becomes a greater challenge to host a program which transcends the essence of Greekness.

In fact, the fieldwork location showed how the Greek case studied is both typical and aypical at the same time. It also revealed itself as an excellent exemplification of an active debate about the nature of culture. That debate was not confined to the formalities of organising cultural events; it also involved discussions about the essence of what events should be put on and why.
Chapter 5: Studying Theatre

1. Introduction

The gradual transformation of CO priorities from more ‘international’ to more ‘Greece-focused’ prerogatives can be starkly observed in the domain of theatre. This chapter will show the paradigmatic character of the domain of theatre in a study of Greekness drawing on material from the CO. It also provides a more focused background to the data-examination which will follow.

Section two concentrates on the gradual formation of the theatre program. As far as characteristic topics were concerned most of those proposing or receiving projects, independently of status or provenance, remained unanimous: despite various declarations or because of the latter’s vagueness, the Cultural Olympiad was mainly perceived as being about Greece and Greekness, only superficially touching on international and/or multicultural aspects. After all, were it not true that if one spoke of ‘the Greeks’ one also spoke of the others? The complications stemming from such perceptions are further discussed in chapter six.

Within the domain of theatre, the selection of projects for closer study was based on their significance with respect to discourses of Greekness and not on their success. Hence, the material presented in chapter six draws on both successful and unsuccessful applications. This is because, besides criteria of Greekness, actual implementation took into consideration practical parameters such as ‘quality’, trustworthiness, exportability and fit with the program and its aims. Amongst these parameters prestige, recognisability and know-how of different proposers remained dominant. These practical aspects which were crucial when decisions about a project’s realisation had to be made are investigated in section three below. This section then focuses on the practical contingencies that mostly dictated whether a project would be realised or not. The Company (the parent organisation of the CO) was set up in order to avoid institutional, bureaucratic and other
clashes. Nevertheless, close as it was to the Greek establishment, it could not avoid the usual features of many Greek public institutions. Here too, the CO’s original wish to break new ground can be seen as a reversion to type. In this section some material from the detailed study of the domain of theatre (chapter six) is used to back up claims about the pervasiveness of practical contingencies. As in the detailed study of the manifestations of discourses in chapter six, the study centres here on what was said both by those proposing projects and those considering them. In so doing it reveals a shared understanding in communication.

Theatre is only one of the artistic domains which was developed within the framework of the Cultural Olympiad. However, theatre was considered an optimal choice to address the concerns of this thesis for a series of reasons. On a practical level, theatre is text and is hence easier for a researcher with a linguist’s training such as the one undertaking this thesis to approach it. Furthermore, theatre’s presence all through the CO was both consistent and well documented due also to Greece’s claim to be the birthplace of drama and, hence, theatre as we now understand it. It is of course true that because of the close association between theatre and Greek antiquity, the former is more obviously linked to discourses of merit. Nevertheless, it will be shown that, within the CO, this domain was also permeated by other important discourses of Greekness. Thus theatre exemplified both intensely and clearly how Greek identity was understood and approached within the framework of the CO – itself a reflection of developments in the cultural sector of Greece at large. In just a few words, whereas projects centred around a ‘Greek’ theme were both better conceived and more elaborately developed, attempts to host genuinely international/multicultural events were rather random and unsystematic. And it is actually through understandings of Greekness that internationality and ‘difference’ were also, if at all, more fruitfully explored. This kind of development did not characterise the domain of theatre only but the CO in general (as already discussed in the previous chapter).

95 Both organisational and thematic ‘Greek’ typicality do not exclude, though, the case’s potential for producing theory which is exportable.
A focus on ‘Greekness’ was characteristic of both successful and unsuccessful proposals, whereas, as already stated above, practical rather than thematic parameters actually determined a proposal’s approval and subsequent realisation. Whereas access to all proposals, whether successful or not, was possible during fieldwork, limitations of time dictated a specific focus on one domain – the domain of theatre. Hence, whereas as far as theatre was concerned both successful and unsuccessful proposals were studied, when it came to other domains the researcher had to confine herself to the lists of approved projects. However, a short comparative review of the most characteristic amongst approved projects in the domain of theatre and in other domains will demonstrate theatre’s typicality for a study of ‘Greekness’ drawing on material from the CO.

Successful theatrical proposals characteristically included:
In 2001-2002, in either the Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus or the Athenian Theatre of Herodes Atticus there were performances of, for instance,
- Aeschylus’ Oresteia by the Greek National Theatre
- Euripides’ Bacchae by both the Dutch Zuidelijk Toneel Hollandia and the Royal National Theatre of Great Britain
- Euripides’ Electra by the Greek Theatre Anoixis
- Euripides’ Medea by the Spanish Rosas de Otono
- Euripides’ Theban Cycle by the German Dusseldorfer Schauspielhaus

During the same period, contemporary creation was represented by productions of
- A Comedy, the most recent work by Iakovos Kambanellis, “the most important Greek playwright of the post-war generation”.96 The play is “an effort to use ancient myths to approach Greece’s cultural heritage from a new, modern angle”.97

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96 From the website: http://www.cultural-olympiad.gr.
97 Ibid.
• 12 Theatrical Monologues – The Actor and His Voice, where “a selection of major stars of the stage performed monologues from both Greek and foreign repertoires”. 98

Such performances often either followed or marked the start of the respective productions’ Greek and/or European tours.

There were also relevant exhibitions, summer schools and conferences such as:
• The XIth International Conference of Ancient Greek Drama at Delphi and
• “From the Epic to Ancient Drama” in Nafplio

In 2003, the Greek Theatrical Monologues were renewed. The same year was marked by the original production of Euripides’ Trojan Women and Hecuba in Rome directed by the international Greek film star Irene Papas.

Finally, 2004 saw productions of Sophocles’ Oedipus Rex by the Japanese director Ninagawa as well as “a panoramic production in which selected scenes from the work of Aristophanes” 99 were presented from the Greek Art Theatre – Karolos Koun.

Events similar to the ones dominating the domain of theatre may be found within most of the other cultural domains developed within the framework of the CO.

The domain of music, for instance, which was second in importance and number of productions, was marked by Prometheus, the event that inaugurated the program of the Cultural Olympiad. As the press release characteristically indicated,

“The vast creative potential for contemporary expression offered by this most ancient of myths is yet again exemplified by this synthesis of various Greek texts and Iannis Xenakis’s music under the creative direction of Bob Wilson. Inspired by Hesiod and borrowing excerpts from Aeschylus, Aristophanes’ Birds and Konstantinos Cavafis’s poems, this world premier at the Athens Concert Hall shows us how Greek culture

98 Ibid.
99 Ibid.
has the ability to supersede the boundaries of its birthplace through its use of a timeless musical accompaniment tied to its on-stage action".  

Another important music project came under the title of Mythodea, Vangelis Pathanasiou’s choral symphony, “a fusion of the words myth and ode”. “The presentation itself was remarkably impressive with a large orchestra, choir, famous soloists and the composer on synthesisers. Lighting emphasized the temple's columns while images of ancient Greece, the universe and the planets were projected onto huge canvases that cut the area off visually from the outside”.

Yet another commission was inspired by the island of Delos, its “natural and historical environment, thus presenting for the first time the archaeological site as a host site for the modern music expression”. The Island of Light by Italian composer Nicola Piovani was a work based on the myth of Apollo.

More ambitious projects as well as more multicultural in content such as the Opera of the Earth, an undertaking stemming from the international competition Dimitris Mitropoulos and uniting, were it to be realised, artists from a wide range of countries proved more difficult to produce or even remained only in paper. And even in this partly completed production Balkan and Greek connections and references abounded. Hence the composer, Vasil Tole, was Albanian, the score was based on Aeschylus’ Eumenides, and the conductor, Alpaslan Erungealp was Turkish. In 2003 there was also Sacred Music, “a tour of music and dance performances focusing on ritual and religion”.

In the CO website one reads: “The groups tours all of Greece highlighting the value of sacred Greek sites (ancient, Byzantine and modern) as universal symbols of cultural unity and dialogue. The tour has a symbolic close with a series of events at the ancient stadium of Olympia”.

\[100\text{ Ibid.}\]
\[101\text{ Ibid.}\]
\[103\text{ From the website: http://www.cultural-olympiad.gr.}\]
\[104\text{ Ibid.}\]
The domain of dance and more precisely CO’s international presence through dance was overshadowed by the production of Mikis Theodorakis’ Zorba the Greek by the Greek National Opera which was performed in Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney in 2002. Another commission to the American Ballet Theatre in 2003 resulted in the production of a ballet characteristically entitled Artemis, itself included in an evening “brimming over with Greek music, word and image, from mythology, the classical age and the country’s modern culture” at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York.

The domain of cinema was marked by a Panorama of European Cinema dedicated to sport and the Olympic Games as well as by CINE-mythology embracing films that “drew their subject matter from the mythology of Ancient Greece”. After all, as the CO website explains, “Since antiquity, Greek mythology has always been a source of inspiration and a point of reference for all the arts”.

Conferences included a conference inspired by the “International Year of Socrates” (in Delphi and Athens) and the International Conference of the Delphic Society. Even a symposium under the promising title “Rethinking Culture” characteristically took place in Ancient Olympia and a Declaration was signed along the same vague lines of CO prerogatives as further explored in the rest of this chapter. The odd exception here came in the form of a conference about Bioethics, which was nevertheless also held in Delphi in 2003.

Exhibitions, presented either home or abroad, included the self-explanatory “Hours of Byzantium”, “Minoan and Mycenaean Flavours”, “The Costumes of the Greek National Theatre”, “The Taurus in the Mediterranean Myths and Cults”, “Sea Routes; From Sidon to Huelva”, “Alexander the Great”, “The Light of Apollo”. “Periplus: 12 Magnum Photographers in Contemporary Greece”, “Hola Grecia!” etc. Here again, exhibitions of a more international content such as “Outlook” which was designed to bring together

105 Ibid.
106 Ibid.
107 Ibid.
works of art by more than a hundred international artists, remained incoherent in conception and hence not distinct from similar exhibitions commonly staged during various festivals around the world. In other cases, the (Ancient) Greek link had also to be made clear, were it only in the title (cf. "Ptychosis: From Ancient Greek Dress to 21st Century Fashion" where “ptychosis” means “pleats”).

Internationality and pluralism were more prominently catered by a series of events entitled “Nea Balkania” (New Balkans) held in the sensitive areas of Macedonia and Thrace in 2001 and 2002 and centred around cultural creativity in the Balkan neighbourhood. In the CO website one reads: “The Balkan region has a long and politically explosive past, and embraces a rich tapestry of cultures. The Cultural Olympiad has embraced this area via a series of major events of international importance in an attempt to bridge the gap that lies between a past of entrapment and conflict, and a future of European co-existence and independent self-determination”.

In order to investigate the development of the program of theatrical events, this chapter uses general CO guidelines together with a discussion of critique and recommendations made in key consultations within the CO on this domain. Throughout the development of the program of the CO, a series of influential theatre specific guidelines were written and much of the program was supposed to be modelled according to them (This material is confidential and will be quoted here without any further mention of specific sources). Besides general CO sources, another document will also be used, this time from the public domain, because of its unusually open presentation of relevant issues. Entitled National Policy for the Theatre, this was issued by the Directorate of Fine Arts of the Ministry of Culture in 1999 and consists in a series of observations and recommendations – more the former than the latter – which set the stage for the domain of theatre in Greece most revealingly. If read in parallel, all these documents contribute to a better understanding of the development of the CO program in this domain.

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109 From the website: http://www.cultural-olympiad.gr.
understanding on the one hand of the existing ‘national’ background for any work in this field and on the other of the (frustrated?) theatrical ambitions of the CO organisers.

2. Limitations of a vision: Greek theatre-legacy and theatre-program formulation

As already stated, the CO’s original manifesto, published in January 2001,\(^{110}\) set the institution a series of tasks. These included a perception of Greece as a ‘land of history’ with a strong sense of locality and history but with an active role to play in the present through the “universality of Greek culture”. Hence the CO would be an institution with international and multicultural aspirations which would seek to involve “all nations and all cultures” while emphasising the importance of including Greeks abroad and the young. Further elaboration or alteration of these aims in subsequent brochures revealed a growing tension between international and national foci. These, together with disputes between decision makers, led ultimately to an admission that accomplishing so great a task might be fraught with difficulty. Indeed, that difficulty was rooted in the institutional framework as well as in the contradictory remit to transcend national definitions whilst rehabilitating the Greek core of many “cultural principles at the heart of our world’s cultural and intellectual life”.\(^{111}\)

That said, the program of theatre events within such a framework developed accordingly, with further evident restrictions imposed by the notorious special relation between Greece and drama as its birthplace. Thus, in the first program brochure it was proposed that submissions should pivot on “archetypal myths in ancient tragedies and the way they are perceived by 21\(^{st}\) century theatrical and dance art” on the one hand, and “common characteristics of great theatrical traditions in the East and the West” on the other. In this first CO publication, the latter task was not elaborated further. Its approach, then, was problematic from the start. The former task in contrast, was informed by the wish to use

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“the ancient theatres in Epidaurus, Delphi, Ancient Olympia, Dion, Maroneia, Philippi, Thassos, Dodoni, Odeion of Herodes Atticus, the modern Thessaloniki's Damari Theatre, and all the other symbolic and appropriate sites and venues", as places where “directors and troupes from various schools and traditions will present their own version of the great anxieties of humankind centring on the core myth of Oedipus as an organiser of culture”. This task was also supported by the rhetorical question: “Did Oedipus belong to the West or to the world of humans?”

A desire was thus expressed for an enterprise which would advance thinking and performance in relation to a self evident aspect of the history of theatre: the perception of Greece as its birthplace through the general ‘genetic’ link to Ancient Greece and by the utilisation of the visual evidence of such a past across the country. If accomplished, the CO’s endeavour would achieve a decentralisation both of theatrical activity beyond Athens and of theatrical thought beyond Greece. The magnitude of such a task, though, should not be underestimated. After all, the conventions of theatrical performance and of textual understanding could prove hard to manipulate and even more so to subvert. Nevertheless, the wish to open up a theatrical domain hitherto more closely linked to ‘the West’ was definitely a good start.

The publication which followed, announcing 100 characteristic events for the four year period, came out towards the end of 2001 after a serious organisational re-structuring which was not though followed by similar far-reaching changes in understanding of the Cultural Olympiad’s mission. “The aim of the Cultural Olympiad vis-a-vis the theatre” was reiterated as “twofold: to present contemporary interpretations of ancient drama in the place where it was born and to promote [...] modern theatrical expression”. In essence, it remained quite similar to the original publication but the ‘Greek duty’ towards theatre was further accentuated since it was considered natural for the CO as a Greek institution to actively support theatrical expression. It reads: “Naturally, the theatre in its

various forms has a key place in the artistic missions and the cultural itineraries of the Olympiad” (emphasis added). It is interesting that, despite serious changes of key-players in the administration of the CO as well as its institutional format towards the end of 2001 and again 2002, the perception of its mission remained constant (although becoming more sophisticated in its expression). Hence, considerations of internationality and transcendence remained vague and rather laden with anxiety as to their implementation whereas the focus on novel and innovative productions of ancient drama was upheld by both those approving and those submitting theatrical projects, thus also maintaining the special perception of Greece as the birthplace of theatre.

In fact the Greek relation to theatre as an artistic domain beyond performances of ancient drama has always been particular. Thus in National Policy for the Theatre one reads that “Greece is connected to the birth of European theatre. However, it may be argued that the relationship between the Greeks and theatre is consummated by reference to the ancients” (43). Some historical explanation of the persistence of antiquity in theatre is given in the introduction to this publication:

“During the Byzantine period theatre is officially ‘asleep’, but it continues its route unnoticed and leaves its imprint on the Christian Orthodox service [...]. The Turkish occupation puts a gravestone [sic] on theatre. However, during the Venetian occupation, Crete and the Ionian islands set the foundations of contemporary Greek theatre with plays such as “Erophile” by Chortatzis and “Vassilikos” by Matessis” (15).

As far as play-writing today is concerned, the policy writers maintain that “without any doubt, modern Greek theatre has not found a particularly fertile ground either in state-run or in independent theatres; probably even not in Greek society at large”. Such a development is attributed to the “absence of substantial support to modern Greek playwriting (by all sides)”, combined with tendencies of widespread “xenomania” (36).

That situation is partly explained by theatre researcher Constantinidis as the persisting influence of “the academic project of the Greek Enlightenment” (2001: 17). He notes that at that time a “thread of temporal continuity was spun out that stretched as far back in
time as the day Thespis won the prize at the first drama contest in Athens in 534 B.C.”. This thread “was spun out by Greek theatre historians as late as the 1980s” (Ibid.: 21-22).

In a familiar tone, Constantinidis remarks that “metaphor turned classical Greek drama into the perennial nourishing root of the European dramatic tradition. Although flattering, the alleged nourishment was not factual because modern Greek dramatists withered under the shadow of the theatres that hosted the subsidised productions of their resuscitated classical Greek competitors” (Ibid.: 25).114

In fact CO consultations had a similar point to make. In an early stage a consultant remarked that “a tribute to the most ancient texts of western tradition seems self-evident”. However, he added that the challenge for the CO would consist in approaching “the texts of ancient Greek dramatic poetry through the use of techniques of different acting traditions”.115 Elsewhere it was noted that “throughout the development of the theatre program, a certain one-sidedness may be observed with the totality of Greek proposals orbiting around the performance of ancient Greek drama”. In fact, the obsession with ancient drama did not only concern the CO officials but also those proposing different projects to the CO. Hence in the consultations there was talk of the need to “set [theatre] free from the sterile and perilous worship of the ancient [archeolatrēa]”, “to present unknown theatrical periods” and “to paint a different picture of the continuity of Greek culture”.116

Personal observation by the researcher as well as the final theatre program of

114 Constantinidis also interestingly notes that the project of the Greek Enlightenment contributed in obliterating many different voices of the time from Greek literary histories for decades. Interestingly, he claims that “a portion of modern Greek drama may have been left out of literary histories because, as a multicultural, multilingual, and (to a lesser extent) multiethnic phenomenon, it did not fit the academic project of the Greek Enlightenment” (2001: 17). Thus, literary historians “constructed the study of the Greek theatrical past under a unifying perspective – even though the Greeks were socially, linguistically, culturally, politically, and even geographically divided before and after their fragile nation-state was established” (Ibid.: 21). In fact, “Greek men and women dramatists of the modern period voiced the fears, anxieties, and pressures of deculturation which were experienced not only by Greeks but also by other “marginal” ethnic communities and nations living along the cultural fault line that stretches from the Aegean Sea to the Baltic Sea between Europe and Asia” (Ibid.: 12-13). However even as late as 1972, as for example in Myron Matlaw’s Modern World Drama: An Encyclopaedia where he claims that “Greek drama in modern times hardly reflects the glories of its golden age” (318), as Constantinidis observes, “Modern Greek drama was regarded as a third-rate cultural product that was given third place next to classical Greek drama and modern European drama” (Ibid.: 11)

115 Confidential.

116 Confidential.
the CO revealed that, despite some isolated actions, it proved hard to implement a more comprehensive policy framework in that respect. As already noted, that difficulty should not be attributed only to decisions regarding the priorities of the CO but also to general conditions that have operated in Greek theatre in particular and the Greek cultural sector in general. It may also be attributed to a possible consolidation of what is worth promoting and what is not in the domain of culture in general. As a consultant remarked in a review produced midway through the deployment of the program (i.e. during the summer of 2002),

"With the actions approved to date undoubtedly the majority of [theatrical] events are covered by performances of ancient Greek drama. This fact is linked on the one hand with the great interest expressed by both Greek and foreign groups and on the other hand with the fact that there are already [established] venues for such performances (Epidaurus and Athens Festivals). It is not out of place to stress that there is also significant experience in the use of ancient amphitheatres while from all interested institutions the intention for their utilisation has been repeatedly expressed".

Experience, expertise and expectation combine to frustrate disengagement from past practices.

The same review – the last extensive synthesis of facts and aspirations urged that a "multisided approach to the issues stemming from the ancient Greek intellectual and monumental heritage" should be promoted. It should though be based on the admission that

"the promotion of the influence of ancient Greek intellect on western civilisation and its impact in contemporary times is one of the main thematic axes of the CO – maybe even the most basic in the domain of theatre, since it allows promotion of both Greek thought and Greek landscape".117

The pull of 'the ancient', although criticised, remained strong. The task was difficult indeed, as can be seen from the stark shift from the CO’s earlier aspirations. Possibly in an attempt to rationalise and avoid external criticism, it was noted after the event that

117 Confidential.
"The basic criteria for the formation of those [theatre] actions were given by centring on two basic axes:
1. The promotion of Greek speech (where speech is understood as both textual ('tragic') and representational speech in its diachrony, with Greek language and Greek thought at its natural epicentre)
2. The promotion of the Greek landscape (with a basic criterion being the attempt to use historical places: archaeological, Byzantine, meta-Byzantine and contemporary)".118

However, taking into consideration the special position of ancient drama within the development of theatre in Greece on the one hand and a certain inflexibility in the institutional and organisational framework on the other, it is not hard to understand why other attempts were often frustrated. These concerned

"actions which [would] cover the entire history of Greek theatre from antiquity to contemporary times, from ancient Greek drama to late Cretan Renaissance and modern Greece; [they would also consist in] an investigation of both the Greek dramatic texts and the development of Greek stage practice".119

It is interesting that even these mostly 'frustrated' attempts to go beyond antiquity still centred on very Greek discourses. It should also be noted that they tended to coincide with the theatre consultant's (himself a theatre specialist and a university professor) respected but rather grand ambitions rather than being formulated within specific proposals.

Finally, there were also (admittedly rare) ventures to express both Greekness and internationality – and to redefine the former in the light of the latter. On one level that was undertaken in straightforward ways related to the development of theatre practices. For instance, there were proposals for performances which included a mixture of languages, actors, theatrical traditions, directors and spaces. Alternative theatrical forms were also introduced as possible "points of contact between cultures". Additionally, the
conventions of ancient drama were sometimes used to showcase contemporary Greek work. Nevertheless, despite the international character of productions or an intention to extended interpretation of texts, the task of transcending long standing conceptions of Greekness remained elusive. The magnitude of the task was further aggravated by contingencies of a bureaucratic and institutional order. These are again not specific to Greece but were tinted in the case studied in very local colours.

3. Practical contingencies

The practical contingencies concerned criteria used to evaluate project proposals. They arose from expectations and balances both within the organisation in its institutional network and between the organisation and different agents seeking involvement. For receivers and senders alike, CO criteria included both explicit parameters of choice and implicit parameters related to other intervening factors and not intrinsically related to the artistic product. Some of those parameters further frame Greekness in terms related to Greek actuality. They shed a different light on issues of mission and its interpretation. What is more, such features are not only characteristic of theatre in Greece or of the CO; they seem to permeate contemporary Greek cultural life. The categories of contingencies below are indicative only and a certain overlapping is inevitable.

3.1. Appeals to CO compatibility

Although appeals were made to CO compatibility what this consisted in remained debatable to the end of the program development. Frequently a proposal was supported in terms of whether or not it was “in tune with the deep humanistic messages and the spirit of the CO” (emphasis added). Furthermore, an appeal to compatibility or incompatibility with the thematic cycles of the CO could be made by the receiver in order to promote or reject a proposal respectively. S/he could claim that some projects met “the

120 Also noted in National Policy for the Theatre.
121 UP-PC-gr/R
objectives of the CO". Clearly then, a broad thematic framework served as a mechanism for evaluating proposals without offending their initiators. However, what the CO actually promoted was amenable to diverse interpretations. In general terms it should "promote the universality [ecumenical character] of Greek Culture and also host all civilisations in one big celebration of creativity, of inspiration and quality, of Peace". As detailed above it remained quite unclear how this dual remit was to be achieved. On a more practical level, there was an attempt to enable the CO to reach a wider public by "producing great communicational events", by offering "some special prices" and by reaching a younger audience through striking some "balance between old and young actors, with more emphasis put on actors who are popular amongst young people".

The broadness of proposal criteria was also reflected in proposals. As one submission stated: "We believe that this performance will be a significant artistic event and that it will represent our country abroad conveying deservedly [appropriately] the messages of the CO" (emphasis added). The justification of proposals could be either 'universal' or 'country-specific' or both. In one instance a project "is characterised by a universal [ecumenical] consideration of different matters; it will respect different people and their cultures and it will highlight the contemporary image of Greece as a cultural locus". To meet the premium of universality, some proposed alternative kinds of theatre, such as puppet-theatre because it uses "the language of the image, of the symbol, of the archetype". Other forms perceived as meeting a prerequisite of 'universality' were collaborations; thus a proposer claimed that her project fostered "artistic collaboration both in Europe and regionally, a fact that [...] matches exactly the spirit of the CO" (emphasis added). The attempt to do something 'bigger', though, was further frustrated not only by definitional confusion, but also through organisational difficulties.

3.2. Appeals to quality

Criteria of quality varied considerably and were used in a discretionary way according to circumstance. They were also sometimes mutually incompatible.

Established reputation, expertise and authority were often appealed to in order to back up a submission to the CO (by both proposers and receivers). Quality could be demonstrated in a variety of ways. For example, the CO could maintain that it supported a project because “the level of the artistic product of this [particular] group is of a high standard”. Again, recognition abroad was also offered as proof of quality, a proposer mentioning, for example, “the establishment and recognition of our theatre in Germany through the stable quality of the performances we stage, as well as the tight bonds we have forged with the German audience”. Another submission offers ‘touring’ and a presence on the London theatrical scene as indicators of quality. The question of originality was often appealed to both positively (“it constitutes an ‘avant-garde’ company with major successes in European theatrical life”) and negatively (“it does not constitute an original contribution to the program of the CO”).

State subsidy was another criterion of established success, often offered as proof of consistency: “the company is one of the most consistent in meeting its obligations according to the subsidising committee”. This criterion was also appealed to by

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130 UP-PC-gr/Int-S
131 UP-PC-gr/R
132 UP-SE-gr/S
133 UP-SE-en/S
134 SP-R-gr/R
135 UP-SE-en/R
136 With respect to money-allocation within the domain of theatre in Greece, National Policy for the Theatre gives some interesting information: “Whereas in the rest of Europe – or, at least, in the big and rich European countries [sic] – a tendency of retrenchment is dominant for subsidies offered to artistic creation, on the contrary in Greece such subsidies follow a rising tendency” (98). “The numbers show clearly that a significant part of the subsidised companies survive solely thanks to the contribution of the State, since their financial standing is from insecure to non-existent” (99). It is further proposed for “State subsidising to be maintained and increased”. Not in an unqualified manner, though, which could “lead to dangerous complacency” (64). As far as regional theatres are concerned, municipalities should have an increased financing role to play as well. In general some criteria should be implemented which would include “the emphasis on the promotion and showcasing of contemporary Greek theatrical play from both accomplished and young Greek theatre-writers” (103). The implementation of such criteria, though, has not proven to be an easy task.
137 UP-PC-gr/R

151
proposers: “The Ministry of Culture of Athens has subsidised us for the first play ‘[…]’ with 15,000 euros”. The leap from established subsidy to seeking CO funding for productions already prepared or even already realised was easily made. In this way, the CO was often perceived as what it claimed not to be, i.e. as yet another festival. As one consultant remarked midway through the implementation of the program, a significant number of proposals concerned

“ordinary activity by Greek groups. The latter without taking into consideration the special parameters of [the CO], they regarded [it] as an additional mechanism, parallel to that employed by the subsidisation committee of the ‘free [independent] theatre’ of the Ministry of Culture”.

Indeed, even the Ministry of Culture used the CO for events that could not be budgeted by itself.

3.3. Appeals to ‘fairness’ and ‘transparency’
The CO had to demonstrate that fair criteria were in place so as not to appear narrow-minded or exercising censorship. In one case one reads: “This decision by the Minister does not in any way coincide with the impediment of artistic creation”. However, the CO could also be quite partisan about whom it responded to and how. There were cases that were simply ‘hard to ignore’.

Hence if a CO official approved a submission, s/he could find links with the CO’s conveniently broad thematic framework. If some people were thought to be too famous, important criteria such as, for instance, an ‘original production’, could be overlooked and a play supported despite the fact that “the premiere of Euripides’ tragedy was given last summer ...”. Claims to (often overstated) ‘exceptional quality’ could then back up such ‘inconsistency’, as here: “The tickets for two performances were sold out very early. Director and lead were ‘deified’ by the audience, while the critics greeted “Medea” as

138 UP-NC-gr/S.
139 Confidential. Such a relationship additionally puts the state in a position of subsidiser of independent creation.
140 AB-gr/M
“the best of the 20th century and the beginning millennium”’. In such cases the CO made the submission fit the criteria by dubbing a future production, for instance, as “the natural continuation” of one that had already happened.

There was also a need to appease important others so as to achieve a smooth realisation. Within this framework a special “committee of prestige” was set up in order to deal with a particularly important event. One reads: “Its [the committee’s] character is advisory, but its presence adds prestige to the events of the CO”. In this and other cases the crucial need to be both transparent and immediately responsive to proposers’ demands for explanation was also expressed.

3.4. Reaching Greece: Appeals to decentralisation:

In the National Policy document amongst the main problems besetting theatre in Greece are the poor dissemination and the low quality of theatre in the regions. It is remarked that “the absence of a basic contact between the audience of the periphery and good theatre [as well as] opportunistic [for financial gain] touring groups and the advent of television have had a negative impact on the formation of higher aesthetic criteria” (62).

The CO aimed to remedy this situation. As one reads in one of the theatre consultations, “amongst the proposals by Greek institutions that are being submitted to the CO a significant number comes from Municipal and Regional Theatres which are superintended and financed by the Ministry of Culture”. In order to give new impetus to such organisations and help them overcome regional difficulties, it is suggested that “it would also be useful to encourage them to develop collaborations with other similar theatrical groups abroad or to participate in international organisations”. However, transcendence of past practices was often sacrificed on the altar of popular inclusion and appeal. In fact, the CO needed to respond to increasing demands to accessibility and participation voiced respectively by Greek society in general and Greece ‘beyond

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141 SP-R-gr/R
142 UP-PC-gr/R
143 SP-R-gr/R
144 Confidential.
Athens' in particular. Various means of popularising theatre were employed. Famous actors were used; a "younger generation" of "acclaimed actors" was hoped to "induce for sure the interest of larger layers of the public"; and free performances and awards were also proposed. Attempts to engage many audiences from theatre-lovers to 'connoisseur-spectators' to theatrical professionals were also made. Above all, a need was expressed for both the Ministry and the CO to be attuned to specific Greek regions' sensitivities. Particular places asked for special treatment through, say, their tangible links with the Greek past and past regional concerns sometimes prompted coordinated action in defence of sensitive issues. Often the 'other Greece' reacted to an Athenian lack of sensitivity in the guise of open-mindedness. In such a context, the Ministry and the CO had repeatedly to rise to the occasion by stating explicitly their alliance to regional demands:

"The Minister of Culture Mr... at the meeting he had with X ... [...] brought to his attention the fact that in the development of the multi-show project must be included, in a way of his own inspiration, Ikaria and Crete, a view with which the artist agreed" (emphasis added). Whether the organisation was really able fully to acknowledge and cater for specific demands right across Greece, remains debatable.

3.5. Reaching the world: Appeals to multiculturalism, internationality and exportability

Besides the need for regional consolidation, a certain international isolation is also drawn attention to in the National Policy document. This is attributed "in part to the absence of either representation in or direct contact with relevant decision-making centres. It is also due to the hesitance of Greek creators to contact colleagues in other countries, in combination with the difficulties that may be attributed to the limited geographical scope of Greek language and the inability to communicate effectively in the main European languages" (171).
Early on one of the CO theatre consultants advised the creation of "an international programming committee for the theatre events".\textsuperscript{149} It was also recommended "to create a network with big organisations of production of shows abroad (e.g. Avignon Festival, Edinburgh etc.) so as to establish direct communication for the development of contacts and less dependence on cultural management offices".\textsuperscript{150} In practice, the anxiety regarding internationality was often conflated with the need of multiculturalism. Hence, this was mostly a formal multiculturalism which could operate while substance remained untouched. That 'multiculturalism' was expressed through multi-national casts/teams of collaborators and multi-national media. The same measures were also hoped to attract audiences abroad to Greek productions.

In the name of greater internationality submissions reflected such priority with the importance of having well-known personalities often mentioned: "The CO [has also been] undertaking a series of contacts with famous artists, in the framework of its effort to create big artistic events of international communicative reach, aiming at the promotion of our country internationally".\textsuperscript{151} The CO, thus, tried to use famous artists to promote Greece and achieve internationality by professional inducement such as performance in an ancient amphitheatre. The premium on providing 'big names', "old and famous" international acting personalities, was also taken up by proposers, though often with no substantial provision of proof, it being very difficult to book important foreign participants far enough in advance. Problems arose from a sense of contemporary cultural isolation as well as from the vagaries of the organisation. Discussions were most often successfully concluded when they relied on connections built between individual groups from Greece and other countries. What facilitated this was precisely their independence from Greek and other states bureaucracies. For instance, interesting connections have been created historically with countries like Germany, through the establishment of substantial Greek communities abroad.\textsuperscript{152} Greeks abroad can function as

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\item \textsuperscript{149} Confidential.
\item \textsuperscript{150} Confidential.
\item \textsuperscript{151} AB-gr/R
\item \textsuperscript{152} UP-NC-gr/S
\end{enumerate}
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intermediaries in successful collaborations with foreign organisations and can create loci of Greek culture, sometimes even assisting the Greek cultural presence abroad. In sum immigrant groups can function as the country’s ‘cultural ambassadors’.

In general, though, Greece was often perceived as being in contemporary artistic isolation, with the language the major barrier. As one submission remarked: “The isolation of Greek theatre because of the language is a fact”. On the contrary Greeks were described as being informed “continuously about the themes as well as the dramatic forms of new plays staged abroad” as well as “performing all foreign plays, classical or contemporary and avant-garde”. Attempts to transcend the barrier of language were made through working in a variety of languages so that the performance could “be understood by a linguistically broader audience”.

Finally, there is also a practical dimension to a foreign cultural policy with limited reach. Relationships with other countries are political realities. Discursively they create a set of concentric circles where, with Greece at the centre, other states are perceived as more or less ‘close’ in terms both of their geographical location and the country’s political involvement with them. The places furthest away from Greece are either considered under totalising stereotypes or they are ignored. On the contrary, the Balkans and Central Europe as well as the Mediterranean, for instance, are traditionally easier to establish cultural relations with. Mediterranean countries were considered as being, for instance, “Bulgaria, ... Georgia, France, Italy, Turkey and Macedonia”. Another project’s participants included: “Sofia... Athens... Plovdiv... Tbilisi... Spain... Turkey... Parma/Italy... Vienna...Ohrid [FYROM]... Avignon...”.

\[153\] UP-SE-en/S. However, as R implies in this occasion, maybe not prestigious enough.

\[154\] UP-PC3-gr/S

\[155\] UP-AB-gr/S.

\[156\] UP-YP-gr/S

\[157\] As already noted such closeness between Greece and the rest of the Balkans allow optimism with respect to theoretical exportability.

\[158\] UP-PC-gr/S

\[159\] UP-PC-gr/S
need to bridge them were also intervening factors in defining the CO’s potential abroad. One Greek Embassy’s intervention is characteristic:

“I would ask for the Greek parties [services] involved to consider the realisation of the above proposal very favourably and to assist the effort that this Embassy is making for the rapprochement and the development of relations of beneficial collaboration between Greece and [country name] in the field of arts – and beyond”.

Thus, culture becomes a political tool.

Practical contingencies briefly discussed here stem largely from the absence of any well-planned general theatre policy. As the National Policy document admits: “most [past cultural] initiatives were inspirations or thoughts of specific persons or circumstantial choices” (13). The absence of coordinated and systematic cultural policy as well as the inflexibility in the organisation of events were also often criticised in relation to theatre within the CO, an institution paradoxically set up in order to avoid such rigidity. At an early stage, a consultant remarked:

“A basic problem for the development of the theatre programs consists in the fact that a consistent mechanism to examine the issues of organising events has not been set up. The design of general frameworks and the choice of specific events are not followed through by a mechanism for their realisation”.

The fact that theatre within the CO did not manage to transcend given practical limitations demonstrates once again the typicality of the domain of theatre and of the CO.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter the domain of theatre has been investigated as a key example of the work of the CO in order to throw light on discourses of Greek identity. If in general the CO

\[160\] UP-PC-gr/Int-S

\[161\] Confidential.
found difficulty in extricating itself from discourses of Greekness, then in the domain of theatre in particular this was exacerbated by an insistence on linking theatre in Greece to ancient drama. Most interestingly, in the case of the CO this was happening despite an environment set up to promote internationality, diversity, transcendence and redefinition. These aspirations were frustrated by institutional inflexibility and a somewhat fruitless attempt to please as many as possible, for the CO was also an arena for political action. After presenting and elaborating this dilemma for the CO in general and the domain of theatre in particular, the next chapter will explore the degree to which the data shows attempts to re-qualify existing discourses of Greekness. It will also ask how effective that is within the historical, institutional and discursive framework under examination. An analytical approach to understanding the discourses of Greekness in play will then be suggested, based on an eclectic use of relevant theory and a consideration of the discourses in question as metaphors. Metaphorical treatment allows flexibility of usage and potential for change. It is suggested that such an investigation can shed new light on both the impact of specific discourses of cultural identity on identity-construction and self-perception and also on the ways such discourses influence decision-making and change. It is hoped that this may offer novel ways of understanding and experiencing Greekness both by Greeks themselves and by its researchers. In this way, tools may be provided both for understanding areas which may share some of Greece’s characteristics and for general theorising about the issues under consideration.
Chapter 6: The Theatre-Projects: Discourses of Greekness in Practice

1. Introduction: Understanding and Analysing Discourses

During the development of projects for the theatre in the CO, dominant discourses of Greekness were expressed within that institutional milieu and with the additional restrictions imposed by theatrical practice in Greece. Such discourses were manifested in various ways independently of their original referents. In this chapter the persistence of those discourses and, most importantly, their diverse manifestations will be investigated. In examining these manifestations, possible space for discursive and conceptual modification in changing conditions may be identified, with consequences for varied readings of the past and for modified perceptions of self and other related to that past.

In the analysis here, discourses are understood in broad agreement with Triandafyllidou when she writes: “In this study, discourse analysis is seen as ‘a general analytic approach whose precise implementation depends upon the particular theoretical issues at hand’ (Reicher and Hopkins 1996: 359), rather than as a set of rules for processing data. The analysis undertaken thus concentrates on the specific issues of concern in the study” (2001: 123). In other words, talk of discourses does not concentrate on the linguistic and textual details of vocabulary and syntax; it rather approaches discourse as a framework of understanding whose intricacies and potential may be revealed by a closer look at their various manifestations. The term ‘manifestation’ refers here to the specific manipulation of discourses within – mainly written – exchanges between different agents during the development of theatre projects. With the starting point being discourses of Greekness, an attempt was made to identify both their anticipated and unanticipated manifestations. The process was: (a) analytical, consisting of a breaking-down of discourses and their manifestations and an attempt to subsume them under general categories and (b) synthetic, insofar as it ultimately aimed to explore the interconnections of discourses, their mutual compatibility or otherwise, and their differing potential for producing an overall narrative about Greekness. Both analysis and synthesis will be presented in this
chapter. Although such an approach is unavoidably interpretative, dealing with meaning situated in text, the reader should already have enough information against which to judge the inferences drawn.

Following Bourdieu, it is maintained here that discourse about a field depends on the (at least symbolic) existence of the field, which it in turn perpetuates. In “Political Representation” Bourdieu remarks that “moving from the implicit to the explicit, from one’s subjective impression to discourse or public act, constitutes in itself an act of institution and thereby represents a form of officialisation and legitimation” (1991: 173). As he notes elsewhere though, “words alone cannot create this belief [...] What creates the power of words and slogans, a power capable of maintaining and subverting the social order, is the belief in the legitimacy of the words and of those who utter them” (Ibid.: 170). In the material studied, such words and slogans came from a large number of agents with differentiated position and status. They nonetheless seemed to converge around the general terms of the conversation within particular discourses whilst varying in the details – or, in other words, in the ‘manifestations’ of those ‘discourses’. Thus they could be seen as re-creating or perpetuating a certain symbolic field, consisting in the internalised picture of the national group.

Such an approach also resonates with work by Lakoff and Johnson which extrapolates from the use of metaphors in language to a theory of the metaphorical structuring of conception (1980). Those theorists, starting from linguistics, never really disengage themselves from that field and offer a system which is too language and speech related to be used in the kind of analysis undertaken here. Moreover, some of their conclusions such as support for an “experientialist account of understanding” remain theoretically debatable. Their emphasis on the important pervasiveness of metaphor, though, is useful. They maintain that “metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action” (1980: 3), whereas central to their argument is the claim they make that “in allowing us to focus on one aspect of a concept (e.g. the battling aspects of arguing), a metaphorical concept can keep us from focusing on other aspects of the concept that are inconsistent with that metaphor” (1980: 10). In this thesis the
pervasiveness and selectivity of metaphor will be further explored through the analysis of discourse.

First, metaphor will be disengaged from linguistic bonds by focusing on how metaphors/discourses pervade thought and action. The analysis in this chapter locates discourses of Greekness in the CO theatre material. Characteristic discursive manifestations are identified from the data in order to tease out how conventional or unanticipated they are. The examination also considers the power of certain manifestations to re-qualify dominant discourses and hence contribute to a redefinition of Greekness in changing conditions. That potential is examined further in chapter seven. An attempt is also made to explore how different manifestations of discourse may interconnect, converging or diverging. Differentiation across manifestations of a given discourse reveals that discourses are “symbolic structures” though despite their symbolic status, they prompt and influence action, structuring reality and being structured by it.

Secondly, it will be shown that metaphors/discourses shed light on certain parts of an argument and obscure others. It will be maintained, however, that inconsistency is not necessarily the only reason why different versions/manifestations of specific discourses are obfuscated and others preferred. It will also be noted that different versions/manifestations may coexist in parallel, though the predominance of some rather than others may be a matter of established value or, more simply, a matter of habit. For example, part of the material studied seems to fall under the discourse of *merit* which links modern Greece to Ancient Greece. At first sight such a discourse seems rather ‘exclusive’ being related as it is to the past, to roots and ancestors. However, its manifestations can vary extensively and this may come precisely from its being a metaphor. Indeed some manifestations of that discourse seem to offer differentiated understandings of Greekness.

Thus the discourses discussed here represent a discursive simplification of a more complex reality. That is not to suggest that the more complex version is not understood - only that it is glossed over. How reality is glossed remains important since by repetition a
narrative is constructed which may relegate the unspoken to oblivion. What is more, even when the unspoken is spoken, different discourses do not lose their structuring power nor are they always subverted. Struggles over legitimacy may reproduce legitimacy. As Bourdieu points out, to run the race is to maintain “the disparity which underlies the race” (1991: 64). In fact, it is maintained in this thesis that the discourses studied represent an important code of communication which then defines the boundaries of the group’s reality. To quote Bourdieu again: “The categories according to which a group envisages itself and according to which it represents itself and its specific reality, contribute to the reality of the group” (1991: 133). In short, playing with the rules of the cultural game in unexpected ways may not imply transcending them. Such ‘rules’, providing as they do a common point of reference and even comfort, as well as making reference to specific historical developments, become interlinked with personal life and personal history. But there still remain reasons for optimism. One arises from expanding the relationship between the national and the personal. The symbolic field of nationality, in this case of Greekness, may interact with a personal necessity to cater for other important aspects of identity and the possible dominance of other identity-factors over national belonging should not be discounted. What is more, in attempts to transcend national belonging in fulfilling personal life, the field of national identity may also be re-qualified despite the strength of relevant discourses.

If nothing else, the exposure of mechanisms through which any narrative, national or other, persists is important, since change can only occur through meticulous study of the status quo. As Bourdieu remarks:

“[The science of the social mechanisms [...] could] arm itself with the knowledge of these mechanisms in order to try and neutralise them; [such science] would find, in the knowledge of the probable, not an incitement to fatalistic resignation or irresponsible utopianism, but the foundation for a rejection of the probable based on the scientific mastery of the laws of production governing the eventuality rejected” (1991: 136).
It is argued here that discourses are conceptual bridges which vary considerably in material, length and location. But their function remains constant: to represent reality in both a less complicated and a more familiar way. If nothing else, this unobtrusive process should be unmasked and subjected to critique.

In chapter three, discourses of Greekness were presented along two main axes justified by the country's historical itinerary and the dominant perception of Greek national in-betweeness: (a) discourses linked to 'the West' and (b) discourses linked to 'the East'. That distinction was made for analytical purposes only, as an (often too readily endorsed) claim of Greek 'in-betweeness' defies rigid categorisation. Discourses of Greekness may be briefly reviewed as follows:

Three kinds of discourses were identified as Western: discourses of dependency, of deficiency and of merit:

- The *discourse of dependency* refers to the perpetual presence of the “western factor” in the Greek political and discursive landscape. It ranges in use from a tradition that linked the “Great Powers” to patronage and intervention, to more recent claims to liberation from such past practices.

- The *discourse of deficiency* is linked to the implications of the importation of western institutions into a distinctive local landscape as well as to the malformations or malfunctions often stemming from that. This discourse is further considered as ascribing specific value to specific types of development and perpetuating a narrative of Western cultural progress versus Eastern cultural backwardness.

- The *discourse of merit* refers to the genealogical link between ancient and modern Greece. On the one hand, the conflation of two eras distant in time elevates Greece's
contribution to Western civilisation whilst on the other imposing upon today’s Greeks and their achievements a model impossible to match.

Three kinds of discourses were identified as Eastern: discourses of continuity, of instability and of otherness:

- The discourse of continuity is rooted in the attempt to incorporate both Byzantium and Antiquity (Orthodox Christianity and Classicism) within the Greek nation’s narrative. Despite its historically problematic status this discourse has become an integral part of the Greek discursive environment and a main source of ‘identity comfort’.

- The discourse of instability is linked to the perpetual redrawing of boundaries in the Balkans, dating from the Ottoman past to as late as the 1970s. The last part of the 20th century as well as the first years of the 21st are characterised by increasing attempts at Balkan rapprochement – the idea of further enlargement having become both unattainable and unfashionable. Nevertheless such a discourse persists.

- Finally, the discourse of otherness is related to discourses of instability and population movements. Asia Minor Greeks, minorities and, more recently, immigrants have presented the narrative of Greek homogeneity with successive challenges. Clear-cut group definitions being sometimes difficult if not impossible, memories of violence as well as traumatic experiences linked to other sources of internal division impose further difficulties on successfully dealing with otherness.

Different discourses have relevance at particular moments within the environment studied in this thesis. However, precisely because of this, their possible manifestations show a spectrum of selectivity and varying stress. That spectrum reveals both conventional ways of understanding Greek identity and unanticipated ones linked to new national, transnational, personal and conceptual developments and understandings. Discourses linked to history are amongst the hardest to challenge, though, and are often practically
supported by linguistic and landscape referents. When some are trying to carve space out of the ‘given’ for new definitions to emerge, then that seems a process worth describing. The emergence of new understandings of identity become possible when differing versions of the environment are entertained by even a few, as claims about ‘what is’ actively affect what occurs (though to what extent and in what ways remains open). Hence the analysis that follows in this chapter resists the idea of a static perpetuation of dominant discourses across generations and challenges alleged Eastern or Western references. It therefore implies a distancing from conventional understandings of those paired terms and sheds another light on the implications of such categorisations for individual lives and theoretical developments alike. Though the material here studied reveals that 'the East' or 'the West' often remain relevant to how people conceptualise their reality, an investigation of differing manifestations of discourse also allows 'the East' or 'the West' to be re-qualified.

In sum, this chapter investigates how people use what they know as ‘Greek’ by inheritance or tradition, what they were told is ‘Greek’ or what is popularly believed as being ‘Greek’. It challenges a perception which has hermetically categorised that inheritance as ethnic, closed, exclusive, introverted etc. It demonstrates how different discursive manifestations may pull dominant discourses towards unanticipated directions. It attempts to show that small movements of questionable effectiveness should not be underestimated or disregarded as they may constitute first steps towards change. That investigation may assist a better understanding of the Greek case and also indicate the potential for specific ‘difficult’ places to respond to new developments without having to discard the historical understanding of their identity.
2. Discursive manifestations

Discourses here explored are manifested in both conventional and unanticipated ways in the material under consideration. Table 1 gives a first impression of such discursive manifestations.

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<tr>
<th>Discourses</th>
<th>Conventional Manifestations</th>
<th>Unanticipated Manifestations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'The West'</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dependency</td>
<td>Insecurity</td>
<td>Rehabilitation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deficiency</td>
<td>Distrust</td>
<td>Exceptionality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merit</td>
<td>Antiquity(1)</td>
<td>Regionality(1)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ancestry(2)</td>
<td>Allegory (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>'The East'</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity</td>
<td>Linearity(1)</td>
<td>Integrity(2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instability</td>
<td>Threat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Otherness</td>
<td>Betrayal (1)</td>
<td>Incomprehension(2)</td>
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</tbody>
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**TABLE 1: Discursive Manifestations**

Manifestations are labelled for reasons of convenience only since, of course, their complexity is much greater than a single word can express. It should also be noted at the outset that different discourses unavoidably converse with each other and any kind of subsuming x manifestation under x discourse (as of x discourse under x Eastern or Western provenance) is largely for analytical purposes. This dialogue between discourses and their manifestations further influences the potential for discursive modification and is brought to the reader’s attention in the analysis that follows. Some terminology should also be recalled: ‘Sender/proposer’ and ‘receiver’ refer to those proposing and those receiving different projects within the CO respectively. The terms ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ refer to geographical location inside or outside Greece respectively.
At first glance discourses offering some potential for a different reading are those linked
to the West (dependency, deficiency, merit). However, that first impression may be
misleading. The fact that Eastern discourses (continuity, instability, otherness) do not
obviously present any unanticipated manifestation should not be considered as a
deficiency of those discourses per se. In fact, discourses originally identified as Western
forcefully impact on the potential for modification of those identified as Eastern. On the
other hand it will be shown shortly that some Western unanticipated manifestations of the
discourses of dependency and deficiency, for instance, can only exist because of the
burden of having been judged ‘Eastern’, i.e. because of discourses of instability or
otherness. Knowledge of the latter allows expression of the former. Such interactions
amongst discourses and their manifestations evidence an understanding that does not
rigidly categorise certain discourses as Eastern or Western as well as problematises the
connotations of relative value that geographical position has acquired in both history and
theory.

2.1. Discourse of Dependency
The discourse of dependency purveys views about the ‘objective value’ of both Greece
and the wider Balkan area. It consists in both voicing an appeal to the West, for objective
evaluation of one’s contribution (conventional manifestation) and in an attempt to react to
the need for such evaluation (unanticipated manifestation). These manifestations are
labelled Insecurity and Rehabilitation respectively.

2.1.1. Conventional Manifestation (Insecurity)
This manifestation has both symbolic and practical implications. The former consists in
being dependent on outsiders for the ascription of cultural and sometimes personal value,
while the latter talks of Greece and/or the Balkans as dependent on the political ambitions
of outsiders. Whilst a certain ironic treatment somehow exorcises the effects of these
manifestations, it clearly does not eradicate their psychological and practical
implications.
The regular repetition of a foreign perception of both the country and the area as 'bad', different or, simply, too far away from the rest of the world explicitly demonstrates how important and pervasive the views of dominant foreigners may be for locals. There is talk about "the usual folklore of the tourist poster" and the need to change such perceptions "through a worth-while cultural activity". In another submission to the CO we read: "foreigners totally ignore us, knowing only the ancient tragic and comic poets, the Acropolis, our islands, souvlaki, tzatziki, “Never on Sunday" and “Zorba the Greek". Such characterisations are often used in order to stress foreign insistence on rather 'static' images of Greece and its people — that image being an amalgam of a glorious past, a tourist-destination present and a perpetual Balkan entanglement, followed by the negative connotations that these characterisations have accumulated through the years.

Relative country and area isolation is judged responsible for the relative solidification of foreign perceptions of Greece. Contemporary Greek cultural production is perceived as isolated but also unworthy, accentuating freezing both in time and place as well as supporting confinement amongst 'one's own', as the only place where one can be understood. In one instance, self-deprecation comes into play as follows. The proposer maintains that 'we' are in need of "an objective evaluation of our plays from people with different theatrical history and reality" in order to see "whether there are WORTHY Greek theatre plays which have the merits to be included in the international repertoire". The need for "objective evaluation" does not refer to the country's well accepted and well documented ancient cultural production but rather to its more obscure location in the present. Hence the influence of outsiders' perceptions on how insiders perceive their own identity and the possibility of them acting in tune with foreign expectations should not be overruled.

In fact, the stereotypes used by outsiders for Greece and the Balkans as well as local self-stereotypes are often incorporated in various submissions even in only with irony,
cynicism and affection for the troubled area which is ‘home’. Thus a past of dependency is both acknowledged and possibly challenged by demonstrating how outsiders, being ultimately more concerned with their own political goals, actually fail to perceive the variety within Greece and the Balkans. Thus an all too familiar pattern of patronage is perpetuated. One Balkan writer maintains:

“How do we appear to those who are far from us? [...] They mix the war in Bosnia with Kossovo, the stories about Dracula, the Turks, the Vikings, Vienna opera, CNN and DNA”. In the same project the bombing of the Balkans is described as a celebration of the last Millennium. And on a bomb dropped one reads: “I LOVE YOU!” (“Greetings from USA!”).167 The sense of fatalistic surrender to such foreign approaches to the area cannot be missed. Ironic as it is, the statement clearly acknowledges the local importance of the ‘foreign factor’. Ultimately decision power is seen as evading the locals.

2.1.2. Unanticipated Manifestation (Rehabilitation)

Knowledge of the effects of chronic dependency is also appealed to constructively, in an attempt to break free from past practices and rehabilitate local value per se. Value insecurity is dispelled by affirming a creative presence in the present. It is maintained that the specific area may prove an enriching experience, despite dominant understandings of foreign dependency.

In a Ministerial memo one reads: “this is not a matter of history, but rather of the respected traditions of people both alive and creative: the Greeks”.168 ‘The Greeks’ are described as a people asserting its presence in contemporary times as well as re-evaluating their relationship with outsiders. In a confidential Ministerial document the danger of being accused of ‘graikylismos’ – a behaviour which implicitly denigrates Greek identity – is raised,169 stressing rather the need to be part of the ‘global community’ but on terms specific to the country’s actual location. Additionally, an

166 I LOVE YOU: in English in the original.
167 UP-PC-gr/S
168 AB-gr/M
attempt is discerned to rise above expectations, becoming intellectually and culturally un-colonised – not always with fair chances of reciprocation though.

In a further exploration of local value, the Balkans become an allegory of life itself ("life, love and death") because of their geographical and historical experience. Thus the Balkans become an enriching experience and a source of knowledge; they are seen as providing interesting conceptual tools in explorations of difference and complication. Elsewhere, the area’s troubled fate is reworked through a fairy-tale – a vocabulary which makes it accessible to a wider range of "both indigenous and foreign" audiences. Every aspect of the fairy-tale becomes a symbol in order to talk about a traumatic experience and, possibly, overcome it. For instance, ‘the forest’: “This forest is not only a representation of the Balkans but of the whole of Europe and even more than that [...]. The forest: is it dangerous or is it our common good?”

It remains unclear, though, whether knowledge of those damaging side-effects that dependencies and hierarchies promote can be further translated into an increased open-mindedness on such issues. A certain ‘Greek’ feeling of superiority, for instance, because of the country’s ancient past (discourses of merit) may curtail this potential if it exists. Visual relics in the wider area as well as the use of past ‘Greek names’ for places which have now acquired different ones may either be used as illustration of a common past and a common fate in this area or, conversely, may ‘hellenise’ the places to which they refer. One finds references to the “Ancient Theatre of Philippopoli (Bulgaria)” – instead of Plovdiv; the “Ancient Greek Theatre of Ephesus (Turkey)”, the “Ancient Greek Theatre Kourion (Cyprus)”, the “Ancient Greek Theatre of Syracuse (Sicily)”. Ancient Greek as they may be, those theatres are presently located in countries outside Greece. In a similar vein past and present names may be used in parallel. A place may be “Urfă” but it

169 AB-gr/M. ‘Graikylismos’ is a historical term (deriving from the Latin Graeculi) referring to somebody who becomes culturally and ‘spiritually’ enslaved of her own will.
170 UP-NC-gr/S
171 UP-PC-gr/S
172 UP-PC-gr/S
173 UP-PC-gr/S
may also be “Syrian Edessa” (Urfa’s Ancient Greek appellation). Maintaining the balance between pride in Greece’s past and an acknowledgement of the value of the wider area as a whole often constitutes a subtle undertaking.

2.2. Discourse of Deficiency
Closely related to discourses of dependency are discourses of deficiency, i.e. of being distinctive through being deficient in Western eyes. This development is confirmed by both Greek and Balkan actors. It is then highlighted as either a negative experience (conventional manifestation – Distrust) or as a rather enriching one (unanticipated manifestation – Exceptionality).

2.2.1. Conventional Manifestation (Distrust)
As mentioned before, Balkan belonging is remarkably stereotyped by its own constituent members despite the fondness with which certain characteristics are described. In one project for the theatre submitted by a Balkan participant the idea of distrust among different people in the Balkans is dominant. One of the play’s characters remarks: “We also maintain contact with the Greek and Turkish armies – so that they don’t do anything behind our back. We maintain contact with the Mafia of Albania and Montenegro, so that they don’t take advantage of the opportunity – they also have wives and children after all”. ‘We’ are also described as “content in our confusion and home proud”. As for ‘the others’, ‘they’ are the “men of the new order” or, like “the Japanese”, ‘they’ are too distant to understand our situation; or, like “the Americans”, ‘they’ are proving that they care by bombing ‘us’. The connection with discourses of dependency is obvious when the intentions of outsiders are considered questionable. However, even within the same geopolitical area no real option of empathy exists. Being distinctive through deficiency is considered unavoidable without though always buying into the idea of the alleged superiority of outsiders.

174 SP-gr/R-S
175 UP-PC-gr/S
In another submission, the Balkans are described as “a blot on the map of the European Union”. They are the crossroads of very different peoples. A series of stereotypes is used again: “an area where cold Northern Europeans with a contemporary lifestyle and religious fanatics, Islamic Fundamentalists, Euro-fans and divas” meet. Elsewhere the image of the motorway linking Greece to Northern Europe through the Balkans is used. It is as a meeting point for people of different origin; “from Western and Eastern Germany, strayed Greeks, Gods, Heroes and gastarbeiter”. The reality of the motorway illustrates more than physical distance between the North and the South of Europe. It also highlights how the place where North and South meet is distinctively ‘messy’ and ‘jammed’ with memories of a troubled past and confrontation. These difficulties reinforce tendencies of confinement amongst one’s own. However, home is not always judged as unavoidably inferior. Often the discourse of deficiency is challenged from within by claiming exceptional distinctiveness.

2.2.2. Unanticipated Manifestation (Exceptionality)

A positive approach to the area allows the discovery and the rehabilitation of artistic affinities within the Balkans or within a much wider Eastern area. For instance, as a commentator remarks on the use of Syrian music in a performance of ancient tragedy: “Here the Syrian composer X was chosen, based on the rationale that the music of the orthodox church of Syria is close to that of classical Greece”.

A significant number of submissions for the theatre consider Greece as part of the Mediterranean countries in which the Balkans are sometimes included. The area may be further blurred under the term ‘Southeastern’. A Balkan proposer describes it as characterised by a common past which is exemplified by the survival of past relics. These are mainly ancient (amphi)theatres still in operation across different countries. Interestingly, in the description of the area by another Balkan proposer, echoes of themes familiar to Greek identity may be discerned. It reads: “The culture of the Mediterranean

176 UP-NC-gr/S
177 UP-NC-gr/S
178 UP-NC-gr/S; in German in the original.
179 SP-gr/R-S
basin has its origins in Orpheus and exists for more than 20 centuries". Within a familiar rhetoric of distrust and stereotyping, confrontation is later described as ‘natural’, “deeply rooted” and the possibility of war never forsaken. However, the appeal to a distant era characterised by commonality of space is interesting. To begin with, any negative emotional charge is absent. The penetration of the discourse of merit is also evident. An appeal is made for theatre to function as a source of rehabilitation as well as demonstrating the exceptional value of the East in general and the Greek cultural contribution (“the most ancient texts of the western tradition”) in particular. One consultant remarks: “the most ancient [theatres] have been operating in the West since the end of the 19th century in the West and much earlier in the East” (emphasis added). Thus, by appealing to past practise, not only does the East rediscover internal commonalities, it also claims relative primacy over the West.

Finally, the experience of the burden of being considered ‘deficient’ is sometimes translated as an appeal to avoid hierarchisation and to be more sensitive to ‘difference’: “In order to avoid a perception of traditions being hierarchically linked as well as to highlight the importance of a different approach to the traditions of different civilisations/cultures, the final event should not be competitive”. Statements such as the above demonstrate that those previously judged deficient may be in a better position to understand and empathise with the impact of cultural hierarchisations. They may also be able to expose the self-laudatory undertone of those making such judgements. Whether this insight can be further translated to successful action remains questionable.

2.3. Discourse of Merit
The discourse of merit often appears as the importance of resuscitating the universality of ‘authentic’ Greek symbols and values. Four main manifestations of the discourse are observed. Two are conventional, characterised by a merging of ancient and modern times (Antiquity) and a consideration of Greece as Europe’s ancestor (Ancestry).
Unanticipated manifestations of this discourse include its use for regional rather than national purposes (**Regionality**) as well as its broader allegoric potential (**Allegory**).

### 2.3.1. Conventional Manifestation 1 (Antiquity)

Ancient and modern Greece are quite inadvertently merged in many discussions within the development of projects for the theatre as if the time leap is not perceived by various contributors (outsiders and insiders alike). Often a project is described as Greek enough in the present just by having references to antiquity or mythology. Such are projects about *Icarus, the Trojans, Orpheus or the Argonauts*, for instance. The accomplishments and creations of the ancients, such as the Persian wars or Aeschylus’ homonymous tragedy, are considered as Greek also in the present.184

Greek antiquity's genealogical link to modern Greece is also supported by subsuming mythology under history. In fact, myths recounted by ancient Greek writers are taken literally by some as if they were describing actual events. In one submission it is maintained, for instance, that "the footprints of the giant Hercules"185 can be seen at some location. This kind of statements reinforces the tendency to consider mythology as part of the historic past of the Greeks.

Greek culture’s alleged **antiquity** and its self-evident relevance for modern Greece is dominantly recognised by outsiders as well. "A theme derived from the mythological universe of ancient Greek drama"186 becomes the unquestionable core of an international event suitable to the CO, an institution developing in modern Greece. In the same spirit, another project under the general title “the Greeks” refers exclusively to plots and heroes of ancient tragedy.187

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184 Thus, a sender can claim that “the vision of the great tragic [writer] in his immortal play *The Persians*”, was for the triumph of Greece against barbarism to stay unabated through the centuries” (referring to the famous tragedy by Aeschylus) (UP-No-gr/S).
185 AB-gr/P
186 UP-PC-gr/S
187 SP-IP-en/S
Besides supporting exclusivity of ownership, focusing on Greek antiquity may imply that Greek culture is merely ancient, thus rendering later phases of Greek history strangely culture-less. In fact, attempts to highlight the cultural contribution of other historic periods, such as the promotion of a cycle of Renaissance plays and related activities, are mostly frustrated. In discussion it is noted that Greek plays from that period “reveal a connecting link with both the past of Greek theatre and theatrical tradition in the West”; they demonstrate “the relationship between Greek and European culture and [will reveal] the influences of the latter on the formation of the image of Greek culture”.\textsuperscript{188} Insistence on the need to highlight links to the West also demonstrates how important acknowledgement by the West is (cf. discourse of dependency). However, submissions portraying non-ancient Greek culture remained scarce, thus reinforcing temporal ‘freezing’.

2.3.2. Conventional Manifestation 2 (Ancestry)

Greece may be considered as Europe’s ancestor in two ways characterised by different emphasis. These are: (a) Ancient Greece is first Greek and then belongs to the West or (b) Ancient Greece is the root and thus belongs to the West. In the first case ancestry means reclaiming priority in ownership of the past whilst in the second case it means that the past has been either surrendered by Greece or usurped by outsiders. The whole endeavour constitutes a subtle balancing game of definitional control.

In the first case (a) ultimate control remains in Greek hands. Hence, the Ministry of Culture supports actions by which “the Greek myths, which influenced global civilisation, return to the places of their original inspiration”.\textsuperscript{189} Even if “universal”, the myths’ essential Greekness (as proven by the linguistic and visual relics of a mythical past) should then not be negated. This understanding of ancestry combines universality with Greek identity in a way that takes advantage of outsiders’ perceptions of Greekness but also retains Greek ownership.

\textsuperscript{188} SP-IP-gr/S
\textsuperscript{189} AB-gr/R
At lower levels of political sophistication this subtle interplay may become difficult (case b) and recognition of ownership of the past may matter increasingly. This is poignantly highlighted in a letter of protest against the ‘subversive use’ of an ancient myth by a foreign director. We read:

"The myth is Greek, its leading characters are Greek, it takes place in the area of Greece. Thus, it should not be allowed for its international and humanistic aspects to take over its Greekness, insulting age-old myths – even more so when such projects are financed with money from the Greek public sector".  

Unconventional interpretations which do not centre on the Greekness of myths are described elsewhere as a "rape of sanctities". Thus, a perception of the Greek past as universally compatible sits uneasily with a perception of this past as intrinsically Greek. The belief in the genealogical link between ancient and modern Greece is thus reinforced.

The modern Greek hereditary right to ancient Greek dramaturgy is further substantiated linguistically by Greek contributors to the discussion through the casual use of vocabulary commonly used in ancient drama – independently of whether the project itself is ancient drama or not. Such is the case with the adjective ‘dionysian’, for instance: "That’s the performance’s goal: Euphoria! Dionysian celebration! Dionysus is present in this play; our wish is for the performance to be full of his presence also". In another submission we meet expressions such as: "A 'choral' for the 21st century [...]" or "the cantors’ parts". These expressions are used in an un-qualified manner, based on the assumption of both their recognisability and their rightful ownership; they can be both easily made and easily understood.

**2.3.3. Unanticipated Manifestation 1 (Regionality)**

This manifestation builds on the basic *discourse of merit* as influenced by specific regional demands. Besides demonstrating the penetration of that discourse from national to local consciousness, it also shows that this discourse has potential for differentiated

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190 AB-gr/P  
191 AB-gr/P  
192 The translation does not purvey the antiquity of the vocabulary in Greek, but in the original it does (SP-gr/R-S).
treatment. Through the manifestation of regionality, national internal variation is deployed along regional axes. It thus testifies to a somewhat stable internal political situation which allows the appearance of other lines of division.

Appellations and names play a central part in the perpetuation of regional rights of property over a ‘slice of antiquity’. Hence specific regions are making claims based on “the traditional relationship between mythical heroes and the specific regions”. In one case the myth of Ikarus is appropriated by the island of Ikaria (which owes its name to the myth) and, through Ikaria, by the group of the islands of the Dodecanese (to which Ikaria belongs) as well as Crete (where one part of the myth supposedly unfolds). In a similar move of regional appropriation, Salamis – a little islet off Athens – advances its right to host ancient tragedy events, since it is there that Aeschylus’ Persians unfold as well as being the birthplace of the other famous tragedian, Euripides. Also, contemporary Thebes becomes “the city where dramaturgy was born and flourished, the city that was the inspiration of tragic poets who wrote Antigone, Oedipus, Bakhai”. Names further provide foreign recognition of places and regional applicants to the CO can maintain that “because of […] their ancient History, [they are] known by the entire humanity”.

Regional appropriation is also supported by the contemporary construction of reminders. Even the Government itself engages in similar activities in its effort to support an idea of ‘eternal Greece’ as well as to placate different regions. Such a reminder is, for instance, “the shrine of Ikarus”. We read: “Last year, following a decision by the Minister Mr. X …, the Ministry of Transport and Communications disposed of the amount of 100 million drachmas for the construction of the SHRINE of IKARUS close to the sea area where Ikarus fell”.

193 UP-PC-gr/S
194 AB-gr/R
195 The project related to Ikaria and Ikarus provides a few of the examples offered throughout the chapter because of its extensive discussion in both the CO and the Greek press.
196 UP-No-gr/S
197 UP-NC-gr/S
198 UP-NC-gr/S
199 AB-gr/P
The myths are also kept alive through the institutionalisation of symbolic events. Ikaria is considered the birthplace of flying (!), for instance, which gives it the right to become the centre of Aerathletic events. Being able to reach audiences beyond Greece, similar kinds of events often function as regional marketing cards. In one instance we read: “This event was broadcast all over the world and for yet another time Greek Mythology was heard to the ends of Earth”. Although an exaggeration, the statement reveals that, even today, a mythological past can function as a passport to international recognition – for both the specific region and Greece as a whole. Then again, in cases of protest against unconventional use of myths, regional protesters can claim that they protest both in the name of Greece and in the name of their region. They can claim that a proposed submission “will not only distort provocatively the historical and cultural continuity of the Aegean. [...] It will exclude unallowably the national area of both the Aegean and Greece from a cultural activity of international reach”.

2.3.4. Unanticipated Manifestation 2 (Allegory)

Another manifestation of the discourse of merit consists in its function as a shifting prism through which a variety of issues may be approached. The discourse can be related to the biography of a specific person, to regional, area, country or world-wide concerns etc. Such allegoric manifestation is not specific to recent times. Rather the issues and situations it is activated for are of more or less contemporary concern. Furthermore, those using allegory are also often less faithful to different conventions in a play’s performance. Some examples: In one instance the initiator of a project (and an outsider) aims at revealing the parallels between “the ambitions of classical mythological characters and those of contemporary people202 as well as “creating ‘tableaux’ portraying the seven sicknesses of mankind (narcissism, depression, schizophrenia, desire to stay young, self-hatred, desire to fly, desire to be loved)”.203 Similar, ‘universal’ issues are also tackled through the myth of Oedipus, for instance. In one submission we read:

200 AB-gr/P
201 AB-gr/P
202 AB-gr/R
203 AB-gr/S
"Through the myth, Oedipus the human being is revealed as the incarnation of the universal [ecumenical] man, since he brings with him all past, present and future; his message reverberates with questions that still remain open underpinning contemporary Western thought ... [It is about the] kinds of frontiers [that] must be overcome within the human and amongst humans and in what ways ... The performance aims to expose the difficult itinerary of the modern man towards common understanding".204

The myths have, thus, the potential of blending different times. As one proposer remarks "The time is now and not now, but of ancient realms, which cannot be forgotten and which still inspire and haunt the day-to-day reality of the characters".205

The possibility of "contemporary universal references" also allows the use of myths as tools for different cultures to be brought closer without losing the appropriate "respect for Greek culture".206 Worldwide recognition as well as mythological references incorporating other regions, in combination with conveniently distant temporal development, may also be used in order to approach ‘difficult’ geographical zones. Both insiders and outsiders seem to capture such potential. For a Balkan outsider, for instance, returning to a common ancient past through the myth of the Argonauts is a way of assisting the area to cope with imperatives today:

"The argonautic expedition constitutes a fact of global [ecumenical] significance which transcends the limits of Hellenocentrism... [It is about] the ancient cultures of the countries through which the Argonauts passed. ... [It constitutes] a way of salvaging the cultural identity of every nation".207

Finally, the mythical past can also be read as personal past and identity exploration. The initiator of one submission based on the Odyssey, for instance, believes that his project
"weaves the stories of [his] own Greek parents and their migration from Greece to Australia through the classic Greek text, Homer’s Odyssey".  

In terms of theatrical conventions today, ancient drama is used as well-known material for an otherwise innovative approach to theatre in many performances characterised by allegoric treatment. Ancient drama provides a familiar core which allows a reworking of other aspects of a performance. Ancient myth (Medea, for instance) may function as ‘raw material’ for diverse “transformations and reproductions”. It can “be put in the epicentre of a new discussion aiming to the theatre’s renewal”, a usage characterised, as one proposal remarks, by “an attitude of un-discipline and insubordination”. Or it may be fragmented and mixed with different texts. Most importantly, by providing a famous context, performances of ancient drama can showcase Greece’s contemporary culture. This ambassadorial potential is not lost on a proposer, for instance, who remarks that a certain project will familiarise “the international public with [...] the diachrony of the Greek cultural heritage through our country’s contemporary artistic creation”. At the receiving end a consultant comments favourably on a submission because it “offers a unique possibility for the promotion of contemporary Greek dramatic production”.

2.4. Discourse of Continuity

This discourse is predominantly manifested in two conventional ways. The first overlooks discontinuities and traces a rather smooth historical narrative (Linearity). The second one treats Greek culture as an indivisible whole (Integrity).

2.4.1. Conventional Manifestation 1 (Linearity)

Historical linearity is rarely, if at all, questioned. This manifestation of the discourse of continuity actually de-emphasises past upheaval. Through it, upheaval is incorporated in a larger national narrative, as a phase of a sequential process and not as a traumatic break.
to it. It is not actuality anymore, thus giving the illusion of a homogeneous and smooth national existence through time.

The emphasis on a specific period may shift or a project may even attempt to go “beyond antiquity”, avoiding “the usual picture of the continuity of Greek culture [...]”, usually characterised by an obstinate, conventional and, in any case, specialised emphasis on ancient Greek culture”.\textsuperscript{214} The linearity itself, though, is not questioned. Depending on the task at hand, different phases of the historical continuum are either highlighted or obscured. In one instance we read:

“From ancient times we pass quickly to Roman times; the era of the Turks; then the emergence of the Modern Greek state; the two world wars (mentioning also the national schism and Asia Minor catastrophe); then liberation; the civil war; the colonels’ dictatorship; the era of Karamanlis; and finally the period from 1974 to date”.\textsuperscript{215}

In another instance, geographical space is divided into four historical phases: “archaeological, Byzantine, post-Byzantine and contemporary”.\textsuperscript{216} Renaming the Ottoman era “post-Byzantine” bypasses the need to mention an undeniable Ottoman period in Greek history whilst incorporating it in the dominant three-phase narrative (Ancient Greece – Byzantium – Modern Greece). Elsewhere, language is perceived as a further proof of historical linearity. The linguistic validity of such claims notwithstanding, Ionic language is seen as having become Pontic dialect. The latter is then the link between ancient and modern Greece, and thus exemplifies “the richness, continuity and span of our language”.\textsuperscript{217} A linear approach to Greekness is also supported by a series of expressions such as “the diachronic values of Greek culture”\textsuperscript{218} or “the catholicity and universality of [...] Greek Culture”\textsuperscript{219} by a variety of different companies.

\textsuperscript{214} SP-IP-gr/S-R
\textsuperscript{215} UP-NC-gr/S
\textsuperscript{216} SP-gr/S-R
\textsuperscript{217} UP-SE-gr/Int-S
\textsuperscript{218} UP-YP-gr/S
\textsuperscript{219} UP-YP-gr/S
In performance, the collapse of time may be achieved by different means. Visual exemplifications of linearity consist, for instance, in the distinctive use of costumes as is the case in a performance of Medea: “The chorus is dressed with very Greek [sic], traditional, post-Byzantine costumes... and resembles a chorus of black-dressed Caryatids”. Such a merging is perceived as entirely legitimate; it is “a sample of an honest effort to offer a performance exactly as its own creator would have wanted it”.

Finally, the existence of visual relics from different periods, such as “the ancient space of Epidaurus” and their use in the present as well as their attraction to local and foreign creators also contribute in glossing over time-discrepancies. As well as being symbolic, those places are legally regulated, protected and preserved by the Greek state. Legal rights of property often also have ‘time-collapsing’ effects. The obligation of literal protection actually backs up a right of symbolic protection. Protesters against one project can thus claim that they are “resisting the efforts of depreciation and distortion of the historical continuity of our tradition”.

2.4.2. Conventional Manifestation 2 (Integrity)

Possible inner contradictions of Greek culture are obscured through submission to the general concept of the Greek Cosmos (‘Ellenesmós’ – Hellenism). The term ‘Ellenesmós’ (Hellenism) has wider encompassing potential than saying ‘the Greek nation’. It refers to both the physical presence of Greeks elsewhere and to commonality of history and conception.

In fact, Greek immigrant communities create loci of Greek culture in different places as well as openings for a Greek cultural presence abroad. As mentioned earlier, they often function as the country’s cultural ambassadors, as intermediaries for achieving successful collaborations with foreign organisations; such as, for instance, “a co-

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220 SP-gr/Int-S
221 UP-SE-gr/Int-S
222 AB-gr/R
223 See, for instance, in a UP-PC-en/S where a foreign proposer notes: “I think that if this piece were seen in Epidaurus it would undoubtedly be a world event”.
224 AB-gr/P
production with the Ministry of Culture of Rhineland-Westphalia and the Municipality of Cologne”. Symbolically, immigrant communities are also reminders of the essential integrity of Greek culture in both diachrony and synchrony, despite physical distance. In the same spirit, a project initiated within the institution of the CO is promoted because “with this action will be attempted the rehabilitation of the continuity and the unity of contemporary Greek culture”. The conventional manifestation of integrity implies then the rather open possibility of incorporating sameness along given lines based on commonality of ‘national roots’. Difference, though, still remains unaccounted for.

2.5. Discourse of Instability
As in the past, today also, tensions in the area and the need to bridge them remain a source of consternation. The stress, however, is on rapprochement rather than conflict. In one instance we read, for instance, that an outsider’s submission would “give a major boost to the development of cultural relations between our two countries”. As a result, the discourse of instability, which draws on the rhetoric of past upheaval, is manifested predominantly on a symbolic level, concentrating on the threat of de-culturation.

2.5.1. Conventional Manifestation (Threat)
A domestic familiarity with conflict or struggle discourse is mostly used to refer to the danger of symbolic domination. ‘Conflict’ is present mostly through vocabulary in quotes such as: “We call in militant readiness all Greeks and philhellenes”. And elsewhere: “It joins in the righteous fight [systratevetai] for the defence of our national and cultural heritage”. “It proclaims to every direction, that it will resist the realisation of X’s... proposals”. And again, in a different document: “It calls in militant readiness all

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225 UP-AB
226 UP-SE-gr/Int-R
227 SP-IP-gr/S-R
228 SP-gr/R
229 Interesting contemporary use of a term which has acquired specific connotations in the times of the ‘Greek rebellion’ against the Ottoman Empire (AB-gr/P).
230 AB-gr/P. The word in Greek has military connotations. In fact the whole phrase has a military tone.
231 AB-gr/P
Greeks and philhellenes” etc. (emphases added). Repetition in proposals of various provenance illustrates the internalisation of the rhetoric of conflict.

The manifestation of threat exemplifies a fear of being overwhelmed by new developments, of even being de-hellenised. The danger of national acculturation often stems from surrendering the proper version of history and culture – “a totally a-historical choice and a dangerous oversight – both culturally and nationally”. In another letter of protest one reads: “We shall see many who will attempt to distort History and Mythology; they are supposedly proponents of open ideas; of progress”. Thus, a narrative of a nation in danger nowadays underpins the idea of national identity being increasingly threatened by emerging ideological frameworks of political correctness. It is in this framework that a protesting group claims that it “considers that this position is serving anti-Hellenic interests and constitutes unallowable compliance and inadmissible sacrifice to the altar of globalisation”.

The rhetoric of threat can still resonate especially with the Greek periphery, i.e. places excluded by developments in the political mainstream – both geographical and social. In yet another letter of protest we read: “Whatever possible benefits from these events will constitute great loss to the vital interests of both our island and the other frontier [akritika] islands of the Aegean, which have to face a multitude of developmental and socio-economic problems”. A threat of being left out is thus justified not only regionally but even nationally. What is more, the connotations of “akritika” should not be lost. These are places which are both marginal and guardians of the nation’s integrity. And it is the latter which makes them all the more important and able to use the rhetoric of threat more effectively, playing the card of the area’s historic vulnerability. Only now the threat is not as much geographical as it is cultural.

232 AB-gr/P
233 AB-gr/P
234 AB-gr/P
235 AB-gr/P
2.6. Discourse of Otherness

Manifestations of this discourse either purvey a sense of internal cultural betrayal (predominantly on the symbolic level) or address the issue of increasing differentiation amongst the country’s population. They are here labelled Betrayal and Incomprehension respectively.

2.6.1. Conventional Manifestation 1 (Betrayal)

A rhetoric of internal betrayal is used today to express definitional hubris or inappropriate surrender to foreign understanding of the Greek nation’s history and culture – as, for instance, in the following statement:

“Mr X, [...] in the presence of the Minister of Culture [...], rejecting without any reservation “our national demand” for the return of the Parthenon marbles to Greece [...] told us, in a few words, that the sculptures the Parthenon should stay in Great Britain so that he and the rest of the British people can visit them.”

Besides conveying a sense of being nationally wronged, there is also a sense of being betrayed by a Minister who tolerates such positions and is merely defensive towards the obvious abuse of important features of Greek national identity. Demonstrating tolerance is judged unacceptable in statements such as “with the blessings of the legitimate Greek government!” (emphasis added), which recall memories of earlier internal betrayal – of times where Greece was ruled by illegitimate governments. Similar are the effects of phrases such as “Ikarus in exile” – the title of another protest letter. The painful connotations of exile for Greeks convey more eloquently the danger in surrendering ownership of a national understanding of history (including mythology, as already discussed). A rhetoric referring to past complexity due to internal political differentiation has strong symbolic force. To confront such dangers, it is maintained that collective memory must be fortified. Thus in a ministerial statement one reads: “The CO’s design and implementation aims to unite all Greeks” – as if ‘the Greeks’ need always be
reminded what binds them together. Another project stresses the importance of “seeking the reinforcement of our cultural and historic memory”.\textsuperscript{241}

Clearly, the elision of the discourse of otherness from the actual to the symbolic does not obviously allow the opening up of discursive spaces for new understandings to be expressed. Appealing as it does to collective understanding and the repudiation of differing versions, it essentialises Greekness as one true version of identity which one accepts, hence partaking of Greekness, or does not.

2.6.2. Conventional Manifestation 2 (Incomprehension)

Explicit attempts to address the reality of increasing population differentiation are scarce. In a draft press-release on yet another performance of ancient tragedy, the separate existence of immigrants in contemporary Greece is straightforwardly accepted: “They [the play’s chorus] are the economic immigrants of your neighbourhood, fellow-citizens”, the writer claims. “It’s a pity that they won’t see how ancient their problem is”.\textsuperscript{242}

Reluctance to address the issue of internal diversity may be partly understood within a framework in which a rhetoric of internal and external upheaval still persists. Inter-Greek division having been overcome through reference to all belonging to the same geographical and conceptual space, it may be hard to allow the newcomers some space for expression – or even visibility. Furthermore, newcomers re-introduce a pragmatic dimension to threat – coming as they do predominantly from neighbouring countries with which relationships in the past have been anything but benign. In fact the issue of immigrants often draws its vocabulary from both the discourse of symbolic otherness (betrayal) and the discourse of instability (threat).\textsuperscript{243}

The influence of the discourse of dependency should not be underestimated either. For instance, one project specifically aims to tackle the issue of “the homeless, the ‘foreigner in foreign land’, the wanderer, the fugitive”. As the initiator of the project notes, through

\textsuperscript{241} SP-gr/S-R
\textsuperscript{242} SP-gr/R
\textsuperscript{243} By vocabulary should be understood both linguistic choices and their symbolic charge.
A hybrid performance based on ancient text; this venture constitutes an approach of an issue which concerns and preoccupies the international community and at the same time demands a different approach from today’s globalisation society. Although initiated by a Greek proposer, this project does not locate the issue of immigrants within Greece specifically. Instead it tackles it in global, West-dependent terms. In a similar vein, another attempt to address the issue of “the Foreigner, the Immigrant, the Other” is proposed through an investigation of his/her presence in European dramaturgy, in which Greece finds a place through Euripides with other potential contributors being Shakespeare, Brecht, Cortez, Heiner Muller (the list is indicative). The intention of the company is

“to reveal and promote: the hidden dynamics when the other, the foreigner intrude into the system of a civilisation – in this case, the European civilisation; his [the other’s] great and significant contribution in the formation of the cultural profile of Europe; and [finally] the wealth deriving from friction, confrontation and absorption [for] human thought”. A certain essentialisation of the concept of ‘otherness’ is not avoided specifically because of its examination across a vast array of times, places and authors of “the theatrical landscape of Europe”. What is more, as a result of his encounter with the other, the European is described as being intruded upon whilst the other is described as being absorbed, with the end result being the enrichment of European cultural thought. These streams of thought are neither original nor specific to Greece. They can be understood within a framework which is predominantly influenced by attitudes towards immigrants in dominant/Western societies. It is ‘the Western host’ approach – i.e. a perspective that considers Greece as part of the West and seeks to emulate patterns that have been promoted there before – and must be, therefore, correct.

A second type of approach reveals a consideration of the immigrant ‘as oneself’. In one project the following concepts are presented as being intertwined: “Greek – foreigner

244 Notice also the use of ancient drama in order to tackle a sensitive issue.
245 UP-PC-gr/S
246 UP-YP-gr/S
247 UP-YP-gr/S
Interestingly enough in the same project immigrants are described as “looking for a new homeland in Greece” and that despite the fact of many Greeks’ actual migrant knowledge of the difficulty in substituting one homeland for another. The realities of the lives of Greeks abroad are characterised by their having led, at least initially, a separate existence – as probably all immigrants do. However, such memories do not deeply influence an understanding of immigrants within Greece. It is as if the condition of the immigrant is incorporated into Greekness and cannot belong to anybody else.

However, Greek immigrants abroad may also be considered as ‘foreigners’. In practical terms, the cultural activities of Greek immigrant communities are often refused support by the Ministry of Culture. They are instead relegated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Directorate of Hellenes Abroad. Paradoxically, through officially recognising the Greekness of Greeks abroad, yet relegating their affairs to specialised departments, the state essentialises their group as something static rather than dynamic; and even as something foreign rather than Greek. It is suggested here that this separation of funding duties may have conceptual implications. Finally, Greek immigrants are also expected to overcome past degradation and become part of the new image of Greece through, for instance, “a Greek theatre which is contemporary, experimental, innovative [and] open to new influences; [a theatre which is not] a theatre for minorities and closed immigrant-groups”. It is, in fact, this new image of Greece that does not find easy fit with notions of ‘needy immigrants’ – either others or one’s own.

3. Synthesis and Conclusion

There are two kinds of conclusions to be drawn from the above analysis. The first set recaptures the implications of this study for the development of dominant discourses and
the ways such development may influence perceptions of Greekness and otherness. The second set revisits a binary consideration of geographical provenance (‘the West’ – ‘the East’) and the value that such division has acquired in both the popular and the theoretical imagination. These concluding remarks relate to the above analysis – further inferences for the development of theory in relevant fields will be drawn in chapter seven.

3.1. Observations on the modification of dominant discourses

The manifestations of discourses presented above clearly imply the perpetuation and/or modification of dominant discourses in today’s changing times. Developments in the understanding of dominant discourses are influenced by attitudes towards a more or less distant past and refer to definitions of both Greekness and otherness. They may be summarised as follows:253

(i) The development of the perception of Greekness is at least threefold:

(a) The fact that often both Greece and the surrounding area have to take refuge in the very distant past in order to claim some value in the present shows the impact and pervasiveness of Western perceptions locally. Manifestations that stress local value in contemporary terms are more difficult to maintain. The attempt permeates much of the material but is rife with tension. In the case of Greece such tension – if taken to its extreme – concerns the inability to attribute any value to the contemporary presence of Greek culture. It also refers to rights of ownership and to the possibility of losing control over who owns Greece’s “glorious ancient past”. It thus contributes in the creation of a spatial and temporal ‘freezing’ effect in considerations of Greece.

(b) Self-stereotyping is often present and consists in the importation of dominant outsiders’ perceptions as, for instance, in folklore or ‘Balkan’ depictions of Greekness. It does not, however, render its users oblivious to the fact that it is just a static

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252 UP-SE-gr/R
253 Such considerations become even more important if one keeps in mind the provenance of the material under study; i.e. a mostly well educated part of the population involved in cultural policy.
understanding that may impede actual and symbolic change. In fact, knowledge of the impact of stereotyping may be a first step towards a more comprehensive approach to both Greekness and otherness. Of course were it to take over, other understandings would have to be mitigated as well.

(c) A smoothening of historical disjunctures is revealed with Greekness being identified in features such as commonality of history and language. Linearity is further supported by the physical and legal appropriation of the past – in the form of monuments and names, for instance. Thus, a rather closed understanding of Greekness is perpetuated. In parallel, Greeks abroad are often viewed as an exemplification of the actual existence of the Greek Cosmos (Hellenism). However they may also constitute an uncomfortable reminder of internal differentiation and past inability to unite Greeks both politically and geographically.

(ii) Perceptions of otherness are of course interpenetrated by perceptions of Greekness. Developments in perceptions of otherness may be summarised as follows:

(a) The emergence of regional concerns coincides with a rather smooth internal political differentiation. It further demonstrates the penetration of national discourses on the regional level and hence remains linked to a restricted national understanding. In this respect, allegoric manifestations are promising. While not being threatening to the Greek ownership of the past, allegoric manifestations still allow the incorporation of other issues, peoples and areas. The extent and relevance of such considerations for the wider audience is debatable. Still, these intentions may be a good first step towards diversified understanding, even if only by revealing that important changes in the societal landscape do not pass unnoticed by some.

(b) The permeation of an understanding which emphasises the need to keep the Greeks united despite the absence of any actual internal or external danger has negative implications for a reconsideration of otherness. In this respect the ‘Western host’ approach as well the ‘immigrant as oneself’ approach have been identified. The former
follows a standard Western understanding of how to treat immigrants fairly. The latter, instead of activating sympathy, makes of immigrant status a Greek 'quality' but still one with which Greeks are now not entirely comfortable. The stress put on Greek immigrants to excel and, thus, to retain a tenuous balance between maintaining Greekness and being accepted by the host society, does not translate accordingly for immigrants in Greece, who some would rather prefer to remain invisible. Re-qualification of otherness refers predominantly to external others as long as they stay where they are or to regional others who are still co-nationals.

(c) The symbolic impact of past upheaval is characterised by a refusal to deal with a traumatic past, subsuming it instead into rituals of commemoration. However, the material studied reveals a domestic familiarity with conflict and struggle rhetoric which is now used to account for the danger of being culturally dominated. This development can both facilitate and impede a reconsideration of otherness. Thus, the knowledge of cultural danger may activate sympathy for those in similar situations. However, the possibility of justifying historically the rhetoric of cultural danger may also create tensions in dealing with otherness – especially when coming from countries with which Greece has been in conflict in the past.

3.2. Observations on binary geographical considerations
In the material studied, the persistence of the East-West divide in people’s imagination and understanding is obvious. However, it is often combined with an attempt to re-qualify the value that this binarism has acquired in popular and theoretical imagination. For instance, a dominant historical and theoretical narrative talks about the Balkans as a stagnant and static location. Actually, though, when insiders reflect they consider their place as anything but static, discovering sources of change and merit both in the location’s past and its present. Then again, when location is observed by outsiders the rather frozen image is sustained. The influence of perceptions originating outside Greece and/or the Balkans is big, being linked to ideas of progress and proper development. If that is the case, though, the potential of the specific location to go beyond conventional
manifestations of dominant discourses is not an entirely local issue as well as revealing much about the handling of those issues in other areas.

In fact, Western discourses strongly impact upon those originally identified as Eastern and vice versa. For instance, it is probably because of knowledge of the implications of instability that unanticipated manifestations of the discourse of dependency take place – i.e. efforts to re-appraise the Balkan area as a whole. Instability also enables allegoric manifestations of the discourse of merit to be summoned, with their potential to smooth over past differences across the Balkans through reference to a common mythological past. Conventional manifestations of the discourse of otherness are not solely due to the Eastern location either. The penetration of 'the West' is obvious, with locals expressing 'Western' attitudes towards immigration. Even the symbolic manifestation of the discourse of instability (the fear of surrendering the proper version of the past through which Greece is valued abroad) is strongly influenced by Western discourses of dependency and merit.

The conversation between different areas as well as the permeation of important discursive manifestations on different geographical levels may take the form of a set of concentric circles (DIAGRAM 2). What is more, in view of the similarities observed amongst Balkan countries, it could be stipulated that were we to study a different Balkan country, we could possibly place it in the outer circle of the diagram (where Greece now is) in many respects.

Every wider level encompasses those within it, although manifestations contained in each level are rather more relevant to the specific level. Moreover, every wider level is also influenced by the ones it contains.
DIAGRAM 2: Geographical reach of different manifestations

The outer, 'Greece' level includes discursive manifestations with a reach limited to Greece. Conventional manifestations of the discourses of merit and continuity set Greece apart from the rest of the Balkans both within the country itself and as far as outsiders are concerned (although not so clearly as far as other Balkan participants are concerned). In the same vein, the regional manifestation of the discourse of merit is also an 'internal affair'.
In the middle level are included manifestations which concern approaches to Balkan others and/or with a Balkan appeal. They reveal a frozen image of the area on the one hand and a localised, more optimistic view on the other. Eastern understandings of Balkan otherness appear more promising when left alone to reconfigure their relationships in the area. Hence unanticipated manifestations of the discourses of dependency and deficiency develop. That level is telling with respect the geographical exportability of the case of Greece.

The core level contains manifestations that, if developed, would allow either negation of the presence of ‘others’ and, thus, further closure of cultural identity or on the other hand a possible modification of understanding. What is more, such manifestations, like the allegoric manifestation of the discourse of merit, are shared both within and beyond the Balkans. This level shows that despite dominant understandings of Western openness vs. Eastern closure, closure is by no means confined to the East. The latter’s understanding does not develop in a vacuum but rather in discussion with relevant understandings in its alleged opposite, the West. If such is the case, ‘the West’ itself has equal potential to be manifested either openly or otherwise.

Thus, Diagram 2 reveals graphically the pervasiveness of claims made throughout this thesis about: the mutual influences between different geographical areas; the impact of Western patterns on the development of discourses internally (i.e. within Greece and the Balkans); the potential of the case of Greece to reveal pervasive assumptions which also obtain in a series of other places; and the possibility of change being dependent on both local discursive modification and discursive space offered by outsiders’ considerations. Thus, culminates the process of closely investigating a specific empirical context in which dominant discourses of Greekness are manifested. That process may now assist us in re-examining different important aspects of identity construction and development. These are: the role of perceptions of the nation and national history; the local/‘national’ potential for inherent change; and the occasionally misleading role of binary theses in understanding identity. In this process of re-examination, theories discussed in the first chapter will be revisited in the light of what has been learned from the empirical study.
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUDING CONSIDERATIONS OF CULTURE AND IDENTITY: LIBERALISM
AND THE NATION REVISITED

1. Introduction

At a time when theoretical approaches to ‘identity’ such as those examined in chapter one are often drowned out by postmodern claims about the essentialism or the bogusness of concepts such as ‘identity’ or ‘the nation’, to focus on the role of the nation in identity construction may seem unfashionable, as noted at the start of this thesis. It may furthermore seem rather ambitious not only to revisit ‘the nation’ in order to throw light on the construction of identity, but on the basis of that project to try even to inform some of the paradoxes in liberal theory which arise from its attempts to reconcile ‘difference’ with its basic tenets. This thesis, nonetheless, attempts a re-appraisal of national and liberal discussions of identity in the light of the empirical findings above. A ‘hard case’ was chosen in order to take both directions of the enquiry forward (It was also intended that such a case should illuminate the problems faced on the ground in ‘hard case’ contexts). It is a basic motivation for this thesis that in theory as in practice, ‘hard cases’, which are particularly apt to contribute to our understanding of these matters, have not been given enough attention.

As far as practice is concerned, chapter one recommended seeking assistance with understanding the development of identities in specific environments and also the complex interplay between analysis and practice in identity construction, not in the realm of definitional abstraction but rather in the tangible domain of the public. The suggested approach should focus on experience and evolve in case-sensitive terms. The ‘hard case’ chosen was that of Greece and the particular focus chosen was public culture: a field which would combine both peopled and discursive aspects of society – a space where structure and agency meet and where cultural communication takes place within specific discursive boundaries. Public culture was approached through public (cultural) policy and through case-study. That case-study revealed how dominant discourses in their varying
manifestations permeate public culture and, in doing so, also reconstruct it. In sum, a hard empirical case, that of Greece, was deconstructed and the pieces of the puzzle reassembled differently. Some of the paradoxes and dilemmas exposed in chapter one may now also be taken forward, perhaps, if a similar procedure is followed. That would allow the insights of the concrete to influence abstract analysis more profoundly.

In view of this author’s overarching concern with identity as an everyday task rather than as simply a theoretical topic of interest, the controversies discussed in chapter one were chosen for their importance to real life problems. Those theoretical controversies will now be revisited. First, relevant aspects of theories focusing on the nation will be recalled. Their contribution may now be re-evaluated in the light of the organisational and experiential approach to the nation which the case-study appears to validate. Secondly, certain liberal conceptions of identity construction will be reconsidered and possibly refined. It is standardly claimed that, despite the problems which arise in practice, liberalism is still a society’s best option in conditions of increasingly evident multiculturalism. For those problems to be mitigated however, the liberal compact would need to be more sensitive to the particularities of specific polities. A prime area for reconsideration becomes the vexed question of whether, where group allegiances and values differ between groups which are required to co-exist, neutral ‘choice’ between allegiances and values is possible. To address this requires that we take into substantial consideration the sensitivities around ‘cultural belonging’ within different groups – particularly sensitivities about ‘national belonging’.

Finally, the argument will revisit those binary theses of ethnicness or civiennes in nationalism which ascribe value to specific polities on the basis of what aspects of life their citizens draw on in the construction of identity. For the central section of this thesis suggests that, in matters of identity, openness to change or otherwise should not be considered as inherent in either Westerness or Easternness, in civiennes or ethnicness; rather, the impact of locally dominant discourses should be brought to bear on those traditional distinctions. Attention to how dominant discourses adapt to novel developments reveals some of the ways in which individuals respond to or cope with
change. This would challenge the tendency for static and stereotypical perceptions of particular places to persist.

2. Stories of the nation: The nation as history and discursive framework

In the first chapter, credit was paid to theories of nationalism for their focus on concepts such as ‘community’, ‘culture’ and ‘belonging’ to varying degrees. Any over-rigid classification of theories of nations or nationalism was resisted, as was any tendency to overstress terminological clarification of ‘the nation’ and its many derivatives. A welcome inference drawn from the overview was that reference to the nation as a factor which is important for understanding identity, as well as reluctance to give a precise substance to one so “elusive” is evident in approaches as diverse as the ethno-symbolism of Smith (2002), the psychological focus of Walker Connor (1978), the civic nationalism addressed by Miller (1995) and the “imagined communities” of Benedict Anderson (1996). Even Gellner, the modernist, also assumes some kind of pre-existing cultural form which provides identification to a group (1964). That identification is explained by some with recourse to psychology (cf. Finlayson 1998 or Nairn 1997), whilst others concentrate on the nation as communication, narrative and discursive production (from Deutsch 1953, to Bhabha 1990b, to Billig 1995).

If the nation, to those who theorise it, remains a form of life that should be taken into serious consideration and whose impact on actual societies must be investigated (despite those associations with guilt and grief that nationalism as a political reality has acquired through time), it will be seen that those investigations could usefully be more contextually nuanced. In theoretical attempts to reconsider the nation as a dominant factor for identity construction and development, the nation may properly be considered an “elusive” category but given its significance for both individual and political development and growth, that elusiveness merits close attention. Many theorists of nationalism are now, in fact, increasingly shifting the focus towards the study of national environments as experienced by different actors in specific situations. Hence, in those
theories of nationalism which seem most persuasive to this writer, the nation is pre-
eminently understood as a pool of information and influences with varying
manifestations and effects.254 However, even in those treatments, the range and diversity
of impact which a sense of the nation may have on its members will be shown below to
be insufficiently encompassing.

Throughout this thesis too, an important key principle has been to engage with the ways
that the nation as a dominant cultural and discursive factor permeates everyday lives –
among them, ways that are not accounted for by examining a nation’s birth and evolution.
Thus, the theoretical preoccupation with “how is a/the nation” or, even more importantly,
“why is the nation” (instead of “when is a/the nation”)255 has remained central to this
thesis. It has been suggested that as well as avoiding de-emphasising the nation in
theoretical treatments of identity development and construction, and of taking seriously
what a nation means to its constituent members, understanding of that meaning can be
informed by studying the evolution of dominant discourses.

To consider the analysis of dominant discourses in this thesis as delineating a field
consisting in an internalised ‘portrait’ of the national group accords with Bourdieu’s
theory on how important fields (whether actual or symbolic) are constituted and
perpetuated.256 The persistence and perpetuation of that portrait is revealed by the
multiplicity of different social agents who deploy certain dominant discourses. That is not
to imply that discourses persist unchanged through time. Like symbols, dominant
discourses are open to interpretation and varied use which can be more or less close to
their original historic points of reference. Hence the national portrait is not frozen but
rather is amenable to transformation without losing its key constituents. Or as Parekh puts
it in a different context: “Images are not only self-projections, but also tools of self-
creation” (1999: 67). In other words, the national portrait does not simply project
understandings inherited from one generation to the next; it also provides the tools to
create novel understandings in response to present conditions.

254 Cf. Uzelac 2002
One of these tools can helpfully be understood with recourse to metaphor, in the sense in which this is explicated in chapter five of this thesis (and elaborated elsewhere by Lakoff and Johnson) – metaphor as pervasive in our everyday life, allowing us to focus on certain aspects of meaning rather than others. Metaphors, like discourses studied in this thesis, exemplify both pervasiveness and selectivity. Hence to draw on that notion of metaphor reminds us that an analysis of dominant discourses and their varied manifestations (themselves metaphorical) should never seek to be too neat or too exhaustive. This applies particularly to the different manifestations of underlying dominant discourses, since these create short-cuts in meaning between historical referents and the challenges of contemporary developments. This was illustrated through the analysis of the cultural material of the case-study. In addition, recourse to the concept of metaphor allows a more sensitive approach to the renewal of national and cultural understanding – a renewal that does not recommend a deliberate distancing from an influential past but rather the possibility of going forward while still treasuring this past. By refusing to categorise rigidly the ways certain places have developed, this approach allows specific cases space to breathe in which to explore their potential to respond to changing times.

It is therefore intended that conclusions drawn from the case-study in this thesis should enrich the ways in which a/the nation and its potential for redefinition in changing times are theoretically approached. A theoretical understanding of the nation may be seen as ripe for expansion in two directions: First, the role of national history/historiography in identity construction and development should be reconsidered. Secondly, better account could be taken of the nation’s peopled aspects, if approached through an interpretation of discursive frameworks (and particularly the evolution of their varied manifestations) as metaphors.

In this way: the analysis presented in this thesis is claimed to provide support for a reconsideration of the impact of national history in matters of identity. For example,

257 Cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1980.
places like Greece cannot and do not overcome a history of intense internal and external instability by consciously deciding that instability does not apply to their current condition and is thus a matter of the past. It has been shown through the study of discourse above that quite the opposite may happen. Appeals to the public for reconciliation of past divisions (by erecting monuments or initiating commemorative events), may actually perpetuate memories of conflict instead of distancing them. They may also simply obscure the traumatic reality of that past so that it re-emerges with force in times of crisis\textsuperscript{258} as, for instance, when there is a need to make sense of contemporary ‘others’ – coming now mainly, in the ‘hard case’ considered, from Albania. In that particular case, memories of actual conflict make it very difficult to acknowledge and to positively reconsider ‘the other’. Then again, in the cultural rather than the social sphere, the impact of the past is seen in the fear of being culturally rather than geopolitically dominated. And memories of internal betrayal are seen to resurface when some are accused of unconditionally surrendering important cultural definitions and assets to dominant others (see chapter six).

It is hoped that the empirical work undertaken for this thesis lends support to the claim made in chapter one that the impact of history and historic memory on contemporary developments must be taken seriously in any consideration of possible changes in the future constitution of identity. That taking seriously can usefully build on two famous theses in nationalism studies: Benedict Anderson’s “imagined communities” and Eric Hobsbawm’s “invention of tradition/s”. Those theories seem particularly pertinent because of their links to history and its manipulation. They are also significant for their powerful impact on the development of theories of the nation in general – and that despite the fact they make constant references to specific times and places. Hobsbawm’s work exposes the institutionalisation of practices related to national history by the state or dominant elites. Anderson, on the other hand, frequently stresses that he is not actually alluding to fabrication but rather to ‘imagining’ and ‘creation’ (cf. Anderson 1996: 6). In other words, an “imagined community” is one that exists if there are people who believe that they are its members.

\textsuperscript{258} Cf. also Vidali 1996-97.
Whilst the core of Hobsbawm and Anderson's type of argument is maintained in analyses which address contemporary situations in a de-contextualised manner, unfortunately, the specificity shown in their work is often neglected. And even in Hobsbawm and Anderson, despite their intentions, terms such as 'imagining', 'creation' or 'invention' do not convey the subtle power of historic experience in constituting the bonds upon which national commonality is often built. This thesis suggests that if a tradition is perpetuated, that is because it can be referenced with relative precision in the history of the group. But it further suggests that the retention of common historic memories has much greater potential for diverse and often surprising impacts on groups' self-understandings than either of those theorists tends to acknowledge. This is because such historic memories are neither static nor unamenable to recasting. Historic memory is in fact capable not only of haunting population groups adversely, but also of providing positive resources to them when novel developments and changed circumstances require response. (It remains of course true that the converse may happen).

The need to reappraise the impact of history (through discourses rooted in it) on the conditions of the present is pertinent also to the connection between history, memory and rational choice which is often under-explored in debates about nationhood. When Appiah (in his critique of arguments like those of Anderson and Hobsbawm) observes that "History may have made us what we are, but the choice of a slice of the past in a period before your birth as your own history is always exactly that: a choice. The phrase the "invention of tradition" is a pleonasm" (1992: 32), his critique starts from the right point, but it can be taken further. The scope for conscious choice is itself open to investigation (especially as historical referents recede and their commemoration and narration becomes increasingly standardised), as the persistence through time of dominant discourses, notwithstanding their diverse manifestations, has shown. Through study of these latter, it is seen that history, as it is experienced, recounted and internalised, is not a question of choices made but rather of unconscious as well as conscious processes, since historic memory is activated by both contextual pressures and personal aspirations. Clearly, context is a richer field of study than is frequently allowed.
The claim here therefore is that a nation’s peopled aspect is better accounted for through an analysis that focuses on dominant discourses and their manifestations. Particularly, if such analysis takes place within an environment which proclaims its openness to new understandings of identity (such as the Cultural Olympiad), it provides clues as to how ‘a nation’ responds to challenges presented to its self-definition by today’s conditions of multiculturalism. And yet, even if an allegedly ‘open’ environment should encourage the expression of a variety of points of view, the case-study showed that it may be very difficult for unconventional manifestations of dominant national discourses to be expressed.

If those discourses bring coherence to otherwise diverse historic material, manifestations of discourse make the crossing between past and present, and personal and collective understanding, less complicated. Of course in doing so, they may either hide from view the diversity over which they arch through a (false?) sense of homogeneity or they may rather give the tools for differing views to be incorporated within the ‘safety’ of the national narrative. Nevertheless, it is within the not unlimited space offered by differentiated manifestations of dominant discourses that change in dominant understandings of identity may be located.

Two contrasting examples from the case-study illustrate how this may happen: In the case of the discourse of continuity, both diachronic linearity, as supported by linguistic and visual instances in the present, and synchronic integrity, as exemplified by commonality of culture amongst Greeks in different places, perpetuate a conventional understanding of the discourse in question. In this case national understanding is not enriched in the light of contemporary influences. However, the situation is rather different with respect to the discourse of merit whose regional and allegoric manifestations uncover that dominant discourse’s potential to diversify – either on a regional level or on levels (such as personal, geographical or ‘universal’) better served by recourse to allegory.
In the case of allegoric manifestations, a possible passage from a conventional discursive understanding to a modification or unanticipated manifestation of understanding was often attempted by recourse to Ancient Greek mythological material. This use of ancient myths did not consider them solely as occurrences of the unreal or the false but rather as materials which can be used to understand and deal with reality.\(^\text{259}\) (The choice of ancient myths in the case studied also depended on their potential to resonate with current concerns).\(^\text{260}\) The potential of ancient drama to incorporate current concerns is also acknowledged by Hall when she writes: “Every era finds in the study of the ancient world a context in which to express its own preoccupations” (1989: ix). Consider, for instance, what was said in a submission about the myth of Oedipus:

“Through the myth, Oedipus the human being is revealed as the incarnation of the universal [ecumenical] man, since he brings with him all past, present and future; his message reverberates with still open questions underpinning contemporary Western thought ... [It is about the] kinds of frontiers [that] must be overcome within the human and amongst humans and in what ways ... The performance aims in revealing contemporary man’s difficult itinerary towards common understanding”\(^\text{261}\)

In the case studied then, ancient myths often functioned as the link between the conventional understanding and an unanticipated understanding of dominant discourses. The process could be described as circular: conventional understanding (the widely acknowledged genetic link between Ancient and modern Greece in this case) prompted

\(^{259}\) In other words, this is not Lévi-Strauss’s understanding, as insightfully presented by Overing when she writes that “The implication of Lévi-Strauss’s statements about the nature of reality is that it is singular: there is only one reality, and it is science alone that can unfold it. Because the world as presented through the mythic cycles is fantastic by the canons of that reality, indigenous peoples in their mythology have got it wrong” (1997: 12). In fact, the dramatisation of myths in ways which commented upon their own and their contemporaries’ preoccupations was amongst the main objectives of ancient dramatists themselves. In Inventing the barbarian: Greek self-definition through tragedy, Edith Hall demonstrates, for instance, how the tragedians’ preoccupation with the ‘barbarians’ affected their own interpretation of myth. She notes that “Drama is a source for the Greeks’ conceptualization of the non-Greeks world” and that “The earliest extant formulations of the theory of Hellenic superiority are in tragedy” (1989: x). Or, as Constantinidis puts is, “Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, and Menander, too, had dramatized local concerns in a city-state well before the West European cultures developed sufficiently to assert, for their own purposes, how relevant the Greeks were to ‘European’ civilization and progress” (2001: 25).

\(^{260}\) As Schöpflin puts it, “For a myth to be effective in organizing and mobilizing opinion, it must, however, resonate [...] It seems that there are clear and unavoidable limits to invention and imagination and these are set by resonance” (1997: 25-6).

\(^{261}\) UP-NC-grt/S.
the use of ancient myths: these, in inspection, revealed unanticipated understandings. As these latter gain strength they affect or even eclipse conventional understanding, opening the way for further development which, in the most optimistic of scenarios, might plausibly be a more subtle differentiation of the ways in which dominant national discourses are understood and perpetuated.

Although of possibly limited scope, this kind of analysis is claimed to be more sensitive to the case under consideration and might be extended elsewhere if the findings from this thesis are judged to be exportable. In other words, were this kind of analysis to be more widely relevant for other cases a two-step approach could be opted for:
(a) An investigation of the development of dominant discourses in a national narrative of self-understanding in order to unveil any possible differentiated manifestation of those discourses and
(b) The identification of an appropriate middle field, of this facilitating material between conventional and unanticipated understanding – in the Greek case, ‘myths’.

In other contexts, that facilitating material may be found in other ‘national’ stories – the stories different peoples tell themselves about their past. (Lest too much be claimed for this work, it is acknowledged that the reach and potential of this ‘sequence of steps’ may be restricted both by the size of the social group implicated in their production, but also by the fact that this process does not unfold in isolation from other kinds of social and conceptual processes).262

To summarise: focusing on the ways historical narratives are (consciously and unconsciously) manipulated and on the processes which yield discursive alteration of dominant national understanding has possibly more to offer to an understanding of identity development and construction as influenced by nationhood, than does theorising concentrating on evolution and geography of the study of ‘the nation’ or even on such a study’s mere justification. Thus, it is proposed here that an examination of a national narrative by the procedures described and followed in this work brings us closer to

262 As already discussed, universality, for instance, can be considered ultimately Greek, through the double equation which, on the one hand, sees Ancient Greece as ‘belonging to the world’ whilst considering modern Greece as the direct heir of Ancient Greece, on the other.
answering questions such as “why and how a/the nation is”, questions that lie at the heart of many debates on nationhood and nationalism.

3. Culture, identity and the liberal framework

In its exploration of theoretical attempts to address the issues of culture and identity in today’s conditions of ‘globalisation’ and increasingly acknowledged multiculturalism, chapter one turned to debates on the possibility of accommodating ‘difference’ within both a liberal theory and a liberal polity. It was suggested that the liberal framework may be usefully revisited not only because of its increasing interest in culture and identity but also because of its pronounced respect for the individual and his/her rights to determine his/her interests – the individual for whom culture and identity may be amongst these. Within the liberal framework the premium placed upon individuality is rather understood as respect for the rational autonomy of the individual. Hence those cultural affiliations through which individuals are considered as members of cultures first and only secondarily as rational agents are not easily incorporated within a liberal framework without the latter running into tension with its basic principles. In other words, within liberal theory the value of rational autonomy and the need to maintain neutrality towards differing ‘ways of life’ trumps others possibilities of social and political co-existence.

The problem, though, is that the ascription of greater importance to culture rather than to rational autonomy does not have only theoretical implications; it is often evidenced in contestation and conflict between and within (multicultural) polities. In these cases, the liberal premises of negotiation and reasoned compromise (i.e. the basic qualifications of a premise of ‘rational autonomy’ which could be operational in real life situations) do not deliver the balance between ways of life which they are supposed to support. And the concern of this author is that cultural issues do not remain in the sphere of abstract theory but are painfully experienced as unsettled and unsettling not only between liberal and ‘illiberal’ polities but also within actual liberal polities as well as within individuals themselves. Or, as Jonathan sensitively puts it, under modern conditions the complexity
“is evidenced by conflicts of interest within each person as well as between them as citizens” (1998: 13). As set out in chapter one, these intractable difficulties in practice give birth to critical scrutiny of the relationship between the liberal framework and culture as well as to attempts adequately to modify this framework in order better to account for social and political claims made in the name of culture and ‘difference’.

Beyond acknowledging the cultural contingencies of the development of liberal theory itself and its possible recent political retreat from a participatory sense of citizenship towards greater proceduralism, when it comes to ‘difference’ the important charge against liberalism remains the implications for culture and identity of the premium on rational autonomy. Briefly, a premium placed upon rational autonomy translates into a premium placed upon rational choice. However, by the same token no choice is given to some on key questions of what values are fundamental to their way of life if such values (e.g. where individual choice of a way of life is far from a priority) do not accord with liberal ones. Even if the liberal polity should not dictate or even seek to influence how individuals lead their private lives, as long as their public lives are regulated by law (though that last proviso is not unproblematic either), to put it simply, a premium placed on choice actually dictates that choice for individuals between ways of life is the recommended way of leading one’s life. Hence this brings prescription in by the back door and, to its critics, liberalism is revealed as far from neutral. That claim is often backed by pointing out the historical and cultural contingencies of the development of liberal theory itself. As Taylor puts it, “Liberalism can’t and shouldn’t claim complete cultural neutrality. Liberalism is also a fighting creed” (1992: 62). Within liberalism then, the focus turns to addressing such charges, though in ways that seem mostly to yield further problems.

Focusing on the intractability of the problem, the first response can be briefly reviewed, since it does not further the exploration of impasses met either by the liberal theoretical requirement of neutrality or the predicament of living with ‘difference’ in practice. Writers such as Dworkin maintain, either explicitly or implicitly, that liberalism being the least-worst solution both in theory and in practice, non-liberal groups and values would
(with time, education or mere co-existence with liberal groups) or should (more prescriptively) be brought to liberalisation and to accepting the preponderance of the rights of the individual. As Raz observes, this type of argument rests on acknowledging that “in an autonomy-supporting environment there is no choice but to be autonomous’ and therefore members of such minority cultures must be brought ‘humanely and decently’ to placing value on the condition of autonomy”.263

The second type of approach often sets out to avoid prescription and re-focuses on state neutrality and individual choice instead. The conditions that this approach attempts to address are often those of multicultural nation-states and, more precisely, the difficult task of educating the young within such states. Writers such as Feinberg (1995) who focuses on the necessity to fight ignorance whilst acknowledging the contribution that other cultures make to a common cultural heritage, Taylor with his suggestion for “a fused horizon of standards and an a priori presumption of worth as far as culture is concerned” (1992: 33) or Tamir (1992) and her distinction between rights-based and autonomy-based liberalism, advocate the even-handed presentation of different values and traditions whilst ensuring that the individual remains free to choose between them. Difficulties are clearly again related to the possibility of ‘choice’ for the individual between these values and traditions – an option only available if rational autonomy is still considered as an overriding value of the polities in question. In other words, the alternatives explored by this second group of theorists are still available only within a liberal framework, rather than between such a framework and other competing ones. The result then may be that, as confessed by Kymlicka (1989) for instance, even this more sensitive kind of approach results in the need to seek to liberalise different views (even by the temporary introduction of illiberal measures).

The paradox of the necessity to prescribe autonomy when autonomy should consist in the absence of prescription remains. Not surprisingly, the investigation conducted within the framework of this thesis has not resolved that paradox. Instead, and precisely because of the practical importance of relevant theory, this thesis suggested abandoning efforts to

resolve paradoxes and focusing instead on the crucial issues which those paradoxes fail to address. For beyond conundra, it may be that it is our understanding of ‘difference’ itself which should be re-qualified – a necessity in today’s world for reasons that ironically lie at the heart of liberal theory. These are indeed reasons related to taking into adequate account and giving adequate respect within the liberal polity to values, allegiances and practices, either cultural or other, because of them being considered important by different individuals for their self-development and their life’s fulfilment. In fact culture may be experienced as such an integral component of individuality that the possibility of addressing it as an object of choice may not even present itself to some individuals. To avoid misinterpretation, it should be added that admitting a difficulty in considering culture to be an object of rational choice does not necessarily imply claims about the relative importance of culture for differing individuals. It is only to assert that, for better or worse, culture is undoubtedly a part of the context of choice, with that part varying from minor to overwhelming. Whereas in stable liberal democracies, cultural affirmation may be relatively unproblematic for the majority group, for both minority groups within such polities as well as contested and even threatened cultural groups around the world today, the experience of culture may have much deeper consequences and implications – both practical and psychological. Hence for a richer understanding of ‘difference’, we would need first to take into adequate consideration the different forms and the varied degrees of intensity of ‘difference’. Secondly, we should return to the concept of rational choice and attempt to refine our understanding of how allegiances are modified through time and circumstance. For they are exposed to both conscious and unconscious manipulation and can undergo change within a tradition which still remains live and important. In other words, ‘choice’ remains central to the issues investigated, though not in the ways suggested by liberal scenarios briefly revisited above.

To begin with, three ‘ideal types’ of ‘difference’ at the heart of problematic relationships between and within polities today may be discerned. If examples are offered to illustrate these types, we can see that the extent of cultural difference or closeness is not necessarily accompanied by the presence or absence of conflict or contestation.
At the ostensibly highest level of cultural ‘incompatibility’ the differences between longstanding religious traditions may be met. Most notably on this level, we encounter the historical and contemporary tensions between the ‘Western’, historically Christian world and the ‘Eastern’ world of Islam. It is sometimes suggested today that because of fundamental differences of doctrine and value, the ways of life recommended by those two groups may be ultimately irreconcilable and, thus, the possibility of peaceful coexistence between those groups should be forsaken – as instantiated, it is claimed, by dramatic developments such as terrorist attacks in the name of Islam against ‘Western’ countries. However, there is enough historic and contemporary evidence that points to the opposite direction. The Ottoman Empire, an ethnic and religious patchwork par excellence, is a prime example not only of the possibility of co-existence between different religious groups but also of its endurance through large periods of time. Furthermore, despite dominant national narratives, and whilst it is true that the empire was divided in millets based on religion, the fortunate plight of better-off elites within ethnic groups throughout the empire (as also suggested in chapter three) is today commonly acknowledged in relevant literature. In fact, in the Ottoman Empire it was not ethnicity or religion that constituted the basic characteristics of ‘difference’. It was only when internal developments (the deterioration of the fortunes of those elites) and external conditions (the weathering away of the empire’s frontiers after consecutive wars) combined that ethnicity (or rather language) and religion provided the necessary means of identification for quite disparate groups and their claims to national independence to be expressed. As for today’s conditions, one need only point to the active and enduring presence of Muslim individuals and groups within liberal societies. However, both in the past and now, what often reinforces the importance of religion for different groups is not religion itself but other factors such as the range of social possibilities available to different groups or the problematic political and social condition of certain groups (not necessarily delimited by reference to religion and culture) both within and between specific societies and countries. In these cases, religion often backs up reactions ignited by the inequality of power-relations and ensuing social and political frustration.
On a second level of incompatibility, the literature frequently discusses groups such as the Amish, who live by non-negotiable values, claimed to be derived from a common historical, cultural and religious root with the community against which they experience ‘difference’ (in this case Christianity).264 Already at this level, although ‘difference’ is less ostensibly pronounced than in the first instance – if ‘difference’ is taken to be linked to the values chosen by different groups –, complication arises mostly in the translation of those values to actual ways of life and their accommodation becomes very problematic. For instance, the problems encountered by the Amish insistence to terminate formal schooling after the 8th grade had to be confronted legally in the United States with the 1972 ruling by the US Supreme Court,265 recognising the right of the Amish to limit the education of their children. In this case resolution was made possible through rational and legal argumentation (despite the potential clash between this ruling and the liberal theoretical need to create optimal conditions for (young) individuals to be able to choose between different values and ways of life or, simply, the liberal political obligation to provide adequate education to children). However, this ruling also reveals that, despite the underlying commonality of values with the rest of the community, the problems deriving from different practices are not easily overcome and the possibility of separate existence endures.

The third level of ‘incompatible difference’ is sectarian difference within the same religion, where both groups are deeply wedded to the tradition of this religion though diverge in its interpretation. Examples include the Shia and Sunni split within the world of Islam266 and between Catholicism and Protestantism, most frequently discussed today within the framework of Northern Ireland. In these cases, differences in values and ways of life resulting from differing doctrinal interpretation are not as deep as in the case of the

264 Another historic case in point is that of the Christian Orthodox nomadic group of the Sarakatsani in Greece who, however, are now considered to have been ‘successfully’ incorporated through processes of homogenisation recounted previously in this thesis.
265 Wisconsin vs. Yolder.
266 According to Hussein Abdulwaheed Amin, Editor of IslamForToday.com: "Iran is overwhelmingly Shia. Shias also form a majority of the population in Yemen and Azerbaijan and 40 to 50% of the population of Iraq. There are also sizeable Shia communities in Bahrain, the east coast of Saudi Arabia and in the Lebanon. The well known guerrilla organization Hizbollah, which forced the Israelis out of southern Lebanon in 2000, is Shia. Worldwide, Shias constitute ten to fifteen percent of the overall Muslim population".
Amish briefly considered above. At this level, it becomes even less clear why ‘difference’ should remain intractable over the years, since the commonality of values and practices of the groups in question appears to be greater than their divergence – (to the extent that one could possibly talk about sub-groups of the same main group). Nevertheless, the deadliness of their confrontation remains. On a first level, the historic provenance of those splits may be put to blame. The division between Shia and Sunni, for instance, dates back to the death of the Prophet Muhammad, and the question of who was to take over the leadership of the Muslim nation. The trouble in Northern Ireland is often traced back to the 17th century and the ‘plantation of Ulster’. On a second level, though, it transpires that it is the translation of the historical roots of confrontation into political and social reality, and the use of doctrinal differences as a marker to distinguish and discriminate between sections of the community which is at the bases of the perpetuation of conflict between ‘brethren in faith’. As a matter of fact, were religion to be solely responsible, it is not clear why the doctrinal differences between Orthodox Christianity and Catholicism, for instance, are not equally translated in actual upheaval. Beyond sectarian differences, this level clearly reveals again the decisive role played by power relations and their translation in inequality of treatment and the curtailment of personal options.

Today, due to a history of immigration and the contemporary conditions of globalisation, all three ‘ideal types’ can be found either separately or together in different political and social situations where they are also influenced, of course, by local factors. Most prominent amongst exacerbating factors and most common in today’s globalised world is the experience of ‘difference’ resulting from the meeting between majority nations in long-standing liberal democracies and more or less recent arrivals from more traditional societies. Clearly, and despite popular rhetoric, in these cases the blame cannot be put on the local translation of the three ‘ideal types’ reviewed above or, in other words, on incompatible values and ways of life only – if at all. It is proposed that the investigation conducted in this thesis allows recasting our understanding of the exacerbating conditions of migration. It is also suggested that if the intractability of ‘difference’ in these cases is
shown to depend on more than incommensurability of values and ways of life, new light may also be shed on the three ‘ideal types’ previously discussed.

For example, in the case of Greece, clearly, none of the ‘ideal types’ offered above pertains as such. Greece is rather a country having to face increasing immigration (although not necessarily in exactly the same way as other (Western) cases). Albanians (who constitute the majority of immigrants coming to Greece) do not experience ‘difference’ as a result of their attempts to declare, defend and disseminate their religious or doctrinal allegiances (despite being predominantly Muslim), they do not appear to have non-negotiable values nor do they wish to develop highly separate ways of living. Actually, more often than not, immigrants from Albania, as most immigrants worldwide, not only come to Greece to improve their conditions in life but also wish to be accepted (legally and otherwise) by the Greek society. What is more, their contribution in the development of Greek economy is increasingly being recognised both in relevant theoretical literature and in media reports. Nevertheless, social discomfort persists and, were we only to attribute it to the reception country’s ethnocentrism and ensuing xenophobia, we would be misled. The history of war between the two countries can only be partly responsible, since were we to attribute the roots of contestation only to the history of war, Germany or Italy would need to emerge as prime candidates for Greek national distrust (whereas even the relationship with Turkey has recently been the object of positive revaluation). As explored previously in this thesis, the reasons underlying Greek reactions to increasing Eastern immigration are rather more complicated. Immigrants to Greece, beyond flattering its European host ego, awaken memories of weakness, of fear, of being culturally dominated, of being incapable of defining the development of one’s own life. ‘Albanians’ are now where ‘Greeks’ think that they used to be and wish never to return politically, socially and even personally. The historic conflicts between the two countries only provide the necessary material for justifying the reactions of the host-nation to the arrival of immigrants. Reactions themselves, though, should be understood within a framework of national insecurities or, in other words, of national power deficit and its translation into personal insecurities and possible complexes of inferiority. (In the case studied, for instance, vulnerability often referred to
frontiers of Greekness instead of real boundaries, and to the need to resist the danger of de-hellenisation). Thus, attitudes towards ‘difference’ are not predominantly informed by rational consideration. They are rather the product of an unconscious mixture between rationality and the feelings evoked by the characteristics of contemporary cases. What is more, historical distance, instead of healing, often exacerbates the psychological implications of past grievances to the extent that one could talk about group trauma.

It is suggested here that this thesis has illustrated the fact that, in cases of less intractable ‘difference’ or in ‘less obviously incompatible’ scenarios, problems persist because of the (emotive) connotations of ‘difference’. In other words, it is not historical or doctrinal differences themselves that perpetuate cleavages; it is rather the feelings implicated in the perpetuation of the narratives around such cleavages that seem responsible. Factual disputes having receded from view, they have not though disappeared from memory and can, thus, function in two ways: either being resuscitated in order to account for the possible re-emergence of danger in the present or just providing the rhetoric, the vocabulary through which to account for different, modern kinds of danger. It is suggested here that a deeper understanding of such ‘less complicated cases’ may also advance our comprehension of apparently greater cleavages. For at the level of ostensibly greater ‘difference’ as where ‘difference’ is apparently less deeply rooted, it is not – or not only – the actual historic and doctrinal differences that perpetuate conflict – however incompatible such differences may be. We could speculate that when a Palestinian suicide-bomber enters a bus in Jerusalem, religion is not his/her primary concern, but rather resentment and grief at the perpetuation of unfair treatment and the implications of such treatment on the actual lives of his/her family and friends and, by extension, on the lives of the Palestinian people. Once again the emotive reverberations of unequal power-relations are evident.

To return to liberal theory, the question of rational choice between differing traditions or ways of life, when presented in this light, has a rather different aspect. For liberal choice based in rational autonomy may be applicable to rational matters, but the matters sketched above are not purely rational. They also concern emotions and feelings, such as
anger, resentment and fear, which accompany a history of unequal power relations. If such is the case, then presenting the public with an array of cultural options from which to choose undisturbed by the emotive baggage that choices have for both individuals and groups is clearly not an applicable solution. The analysis in this thesis has indicated that the possibility of social and political change is limited by the development of dominant discourses, themselves further constricted by specific historic references. It has been shown that, whether such references are ‘accurately’ remembered or not, whether they are part of history or rather historiography is irrelevant to the present discussion. What matters is their ability to be nourished by history as well as to awaken particular types of emotions. That in turn allows them to persist even when references are lost in the mists of time. However, it has also been suggested in this thesis that the knowledge of the implications of uneven power-relations and of being driven to choices one does not want to make, may constitute the basis for both negative and positive developments in a group’s self-understanding. In this case then, change may be shown to inhere in the tradition in question rather than being only the possible result of contact between specific differing traditions. Then again, when contact occurs, its manipulation may be the object of highly diversified approaches as well. It is here that ‘choice’ re-enters the conversation, although in a different way than the one considered by liberal attempts examined above.

In fact the case studied has revealed that the historicity of discourses does not always have malign effects, as was shown, for instance, with manifestations of the discourses of dependency and deficiency. Historically, the discourse of dependency is linked to the persisting involvement of the ‘Western factor’ in the development of the Greek state ever since the early 19th century. In the material studied this discourse was predominantly manifested symbolically. One manifestation referred to dependency on the West for objective evaluation of local cultural contribution. However, more interestingly, an attempt was also made to go against such tendencies and rehabilitate local cultural value. Although mitigated by other factors, historic knowledge of the impact of dependencies and hierarchies led some to attempts to modify that legacy. Here then, a discourse with
strong historical references was used subversively in order to recast the relationship between Greeks and their neighbours.

The development of the discourse of deficiency also brought to light challenges to dominant perceptions. It should be recalled that this discourse refers historically to a local institutional incapacity for proper implementation of successful Western patterns and is often justified by reference to uncritical importation of Western institutions as well as the hostility of the Greek (and the Balkan) environment. In the material studied, whilst belief in some inherent deficiency was largely perpetuated by both Greek and Balkan participants, light was also shed on distinctive yet valuable parts of the past which had been hitherto obscured in standard accounts. Thus, Balkan belonging and commonality of past experience were not seen pejoratively only but also rather favourably through appeals to eras distant enough in time and through focusing on the possible damage inflicted by an ascription of deficiency based on geographical position and past upheaval only. Hence these manifestations demonstrated a tendency to positively include within the same narrative all Balkan neighbours. They showed that history and tradition do not always inhibit the potential of cultures to diversify internally independently of the degree of liberalisation of political institutions.

To summarise: the case of Greece challenges the assumption that the implications of the experience of ‘difference’ in liberal polities can be both fully understood and mitigated through resorting predominantly to rational negotiation, reasoned compromise and informed choice. In this context, it has been argued that rationality often assumes secondary place when historic differences are being recalled. It is rather the emotive baggage that such differences evoke that is responsible for the ways in which past historical complication still informs present developments. However, the influence of the past may be also subject to diversified manipulation. In relation to this point it was proposed that, depending on the needs to be addressed, past pain may actually be reworked in a positive direction. It is within this second possibility that ‘choice’ may also be incorporated although not usually consciously and, in any case, not understood as a choice between ‘our’ tradition and somebody else’s tradition but rather as a choice
amongst possibilities offered within a particular tradition. This mitigated understanding of ‘choice’ within cultural limits contributes to a more nuanced understanding of culture and identity. It does not of course resolve the paradox (the limitations of which have been problematised by many within the liberal framework) consisting in considering rational autonomy as the optimal arbitrator between different values and ways of life when they coexist and/or compete (especially so when such values and ways of life do not prioritise individual choice). It does deepen, though, our understanding of ‘difference’ and our appreciation of the complexity of factors involved in responses to ‘difference’ in specific environments.

4. The ‘civic’ and the ‘ethnic’: Binary distinctions revisited

As noted in the previous section, conditions of immigration, globalisation and, thus, increasing multiculturalism within the boundaries of the same polity exacerbate the challenges which the experience of ‘difference’ presents liberal democracies today. At the end of the 20th century, the realisation that political citizenship had failed to be translated into fully inclusive and participatory citizenship for all in stable liberal democracies, together with the re-emergence of aggressive nationalism in polities emerging from the break-down of the former sphere of influence of the Soviet Union (both developments being unsurprising to most), prompted attempts to accommodate conceptions of nationalism within a theoretical and political framework of liberal civic principles. As discussed in chapter one, this reconsideration of ‘the nation’ took broadly the form of positing a common civic culture as a binding force amongst different groups within a specific society and led to theories of civic/liberal nationalism. The differences which may be allegedly observed between specific civic and ethnic nationalisms – where ‘ethnic’ involves “beliefs in biological and cultural essentialisms” with ‘civic’ involving “commitments to ideas of citizenship and the rule of law” (Hearn 2000a: 7) – have been furthermore often attributed – most notably in theories of nationalism – to differences in the historical development between the broad geographical and political areas of ‘the East’ and ‘the West’.
In the light of the case-study for this thesis, both the practical applicability of theories of liberal/civic nationalism and the usually unintended implications of drawing an imaginary line between the development of ‘the East’ and that of ‘the West’ may be briefly reconsidered. Through a brief discussion of the conception of civic nationalism, more insight is added to the fact that the experience of ‘difference’ is tightly linked to the reality of belonging to a nation (a reality which is admittedly acknowledged and experienced with varied degrees of intensity by different individuals). Furthermore, through a more nuanced appreciation of the uses and effects of the broad division between East and West (unintended by their initiators in theory), the complexities of the experience of ‘difference’ are further illuminated, as is the need to shift theoretical focus to the emotive and practical reverberations of this experience for groups and individuals – reverberations stemming again from a history of an uneven distribution of power and the persistence of discourses supporting that inequality even when the actual political or economic gap between different groups within and between societies diminishes.

Beyond their differences of focus and other divergences of view between them, writers such as Yael Tamir in *Liberal Nationalism* (1993) or David Miller in *On Nationality* (1995), Habermas and his theory of “constitutional patriotism” (1994) and even Bhikhu Parekh, whose sensitivity to culture and national identity is more pronounced, approach culture in ways echoing an understanding of culture based on avoiding prescription whilst focusing on state neutrality and individual choice. What distinguishes these theoretical attempts from those proposed by Feinberg (1995) or Taylor (1992), for instance, is the additional effort to incorporate the connecting force that national belonging often appears to hold for individuals in real-life situations – as acknowledged and even entrenched by theories of nationalism. As suggested in chapter one, a civic/liberal understanding of ‘the nation’ stems from the acknowledgement that a sense of belonging to a particular nation is more than a formal distinguishing mark and that, if defined and delineated appropriately, nationhood may have inclusive potential for a

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267 As it transpires from the observation that “the definition of national identity matters because it can de-legitimitise minorities, damage their material and other interests, and make it difficult for them to identify with the political community” (1999: 74).
(multicultural) society. Nevertheless, even such a nuanced approach still founders upon the same irresolvable obstacles met by attempts to accommodate within a liberal framework differing values and ways of life, both liberal and non-liberal, since it is impossible for this accommodation to be equally satisfactory to all.

The problem can be most readily observed in attempts to demonstrate how theories of civic/liberal nationalism may be translated into practice. In doing so, Miller, for instance, suggests that "there are strong ethical reasons for making the bounds of nationality and the bounds of the state coincide" (1995: 73). In view of the fact that such an (ideal and hardly ethically unproblematic) possibility does not exist in today's world, however, at least not without escalating confrontation, Tamir, for instance, proposes that in cases where the political entity cannot be coterminous with the cultural entity, it may be necessary to establish regional organisations for the "economic, strategic, and ecological decisions" in parallel with "local national communities" who would be responsible for cultural policies (1993: 151). However, as already noted in chapter one, in practice, the separation of duties between the two sets of bodies may give birth to further complication. For further arbitration would be needed in order to define what qualifies as 'cultural' and what does not. Furthermore, were we to confine culture to cultural policy only, this would amount to a very restricted understanding of culture. As already suggested, culture should rather be considered as a context of influential narratives within the boundaries of which choices may be performed. And even if cultural policy could be adequately developed, it is hard to see how fulfilment stemming from the experience of one's culture (and hence one's 'difference') would necessarily follow.

However sophisticated and subtle the attempts to provide a shared legal framework, a civic/liberal nationalism does not constitute a form of reconciliation of the values held and the ways of life chosen by differing groups within actual multicultural societies; it is a more or less fortunate compromise which is again only available within a liberal framework rather than reconciling such a framework with other competing ones which may rely upon different sets of values (possibly incompatible with a prioritising of the values of rational autonomy and informed choice). As already observed before, in a
multicultural world this situation is beyond resolution and it is hard to see how a practical translation of civic nationalism can avoid being limited to mere legal application of equal political rights (the necessity of the latter being of course undisputed). However, observations made throughout the case-study for this thesis, may illuminate some further aspects of the distinction itself between civic and ethnic nationalisms.

It was noted in chapter one that analyses focusing on the interplay of civic and ethnic elements in real-life situations (cf. Brown 1999, Hearn 2000a, McCrone 1998) attempt to address those characterisations in more nuanced ways. Hearn starts from the right point when he says that “to the extent that we understand ‘ethnic’ as meaning ‘cultural’ (as opposed to biological or based on some symbolic extension of kinship) all nationalisms, even the most civic and liberal, are ethnic” (2000a: 11-12); but his observation can be taken further. The impossibility of a clear demarcation between civic and ethnic characteristics needs still to be the object of a deeper appreciation. First, the interplay can be such that the distinction no longer holds in practice in real-life situations. Then secondly and most importantly, when such characterisations are made they commonly have evaluative connotations: broadly, approving in the case of civic and pejorative in the case of ethnic. However, as the case-study for this thesis has suggested, positive advancement in national self-understanding may take place through the reworking of ostensibly ‘ethnic’ characteristics. And conversely, the potential for social integration that the application of civic principles admittedly holds is often limited by the specific references of ‘civicness’ in some environments. An example from the case studied will clarify this point.

In view of the findings presented in this thesis, not only is the extent to which ethnicness and civicness can be clearly demarcated from one another questionable but further complication arises from the specific translation and justification of the civic aspects of nationality in specific contexts. Beyond the possible coexistence of ethnic and civic/liberal principles, the case of Greece exemplifies the possibility of making claims which link the necessity or the implementation of civic political principles and institutions to specific references in an environment’s ‘ethnic’ narrative. A pertinent
example is provided in this case by the conventional perpetuation of the discourse of merit. This discourse facilitates the creation of direct, hereditary links between Ancient and modern Greece, establishing Greece as Europe’s intellectual ancestor. In this way the values and ideals allegedly expressed by Greek antiquity and which allegedly underpin the development of civilisation in the West can be re-appropriated by Modern Greece, as legitimate heir to Greek antiquity. The concepts of democracy or citizenship, for instance, can be considered as intrinsically Greek and the link to Ancient Greece may be seen as endowing the Greeks with the necessary ‘expertise’, and thus in no need of instruction in an understanding of those principles. Thus, the case of Greece illustrates only too obviously the fact that ‘civicsness’ may find unexpected ‘ethnic’ references in some milieus. In fact claims to an environment’s ‘inherent civicsness’ (and other ‘liberal qualities’) may be found in a variety of cases. Olga Augustinos, for instance, makes a similar observation based on the work of the Albanian writer Ismael Kadare. She writes: “Kadare’s work is a hybrid genre of parable and roman à these in which the author aims to define his country’s exclusive identity. Part of the Balkans through its myths and legends, it belonged to a more august antiquity, even more ancient than the Greeks since they borrowed the names of their gods from the Illyrian language [...]. Albania can still revivify these European links if only it can revive Arberia in its memory” (2003: 167).

Were such developments to be attributed to the ethnic credentials of specific forms of nationalism, we would be misled since similar observations also pertain to the development and application of civic principles in ostensibly different cases. It is here that, besides the unpredictable translation of civic principles in some environments, as in the cases of Greece and Albania above, the connections between the development of civic principles and specific environments, widely acknowledged today, regain importance – most notably the connection between the emergence and spread of liberal thought and the age of the Enlightenment (or even for some writers, the connection between the Scottish Enlightenment and the idea of ‘civil society’). As often admitted today, not only is the project of the Enlightenment tightly linked to the specific societies in which this project unfolded; what is more, it also unavoidably incorporated the rejection of other possibilities. In other words, its potential for social inclusion and integration had
necessarily to be defined by excluding other options. As Billig et al. observe: “Whole groups of people could be dismissed because their traditions were steeped in irrationality, as opposed to ‘our’ modern Enlightenment. In this way, the Enlightenment declared its own conditions of life free from prejudice, whilst condemning those of others [...] Outbursts were not a betrayal of rationalism, but a product of it [...] Sympathy might be shown to the victims of hatred, but one must pity their irrational backwardness and be aware of the dangers of such primitive unenlightenment” (1988: 122). Although admittedly hardly surprising to most students of political, social and conceptual evolution, today the reality of these developments needs to be brought to bear more specifically on the consideration of different contexts, since it adds subtle historical weight to the fact that there are no unproblematically generalisable solutions. That is why this thesis supports an approach in which specific cases themselves become the object of more sensitive examination. Once again, change may inhere within a tradition whereas positing a choice between civic and ethnic alternatives often overlooks that point. If our interest lies with a better appreciation of nationhood and the sense of belonging and connectivity which it offers to people, this interest may be better served not by a distinction between ‘civic’ and ‘ethnic’ characteristics/nationalisms but rather by shifting the focus of the inquiry onto the development of national narratives as integrated wholes which have inherent potential for adaptation and response to novel developments and imperatives.

In parallel with the implication that ‘civic is good and inclusive’ and ‘ethnic is bad and exclusive’, the distinction between East as ethnic and West as civic only exacerbates the problems discussed above – a development mostly unintended by those who use it in theories of nationalism. As discussed in chapter one, that distinction is appealed to by Kohn (1967) in order to justify the diversified expression of nationalisms across the world in the late 18\textsuperscript{th} and early 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries and further applied to the resuscitation of Eastern nationalism in the 1980s by Hroch (1993). It was noted there that even though both those theorists clarify the fact that they only refer to specific historical periods, in

\footnote{Billig et al. go on to note that the desire to be different becomes then a threat in the “unprejudiced’s world” since (paradoxically?) the alleged “unprejudiced” cannot accept those who claim some kind of difference to them (cf. Billig et al. 1988).}
The implied distinction has often been taken as resting on the crude assumption that, depending on geographical location, things tend to develop in an ethnic and exclusive direction in the East and a civic and inclusive direction in the West. Thus, instead of being applied only descriptively, it has been used prescriptively in a variety of distinct contemporary situations in order to ascribe intrinsic value and to suppose that in certain environments specific conditions will persist and be perpetuated. There is a further danger at the heart of this political rhetoric if it persists over extensive periods of time: this danger consists in the creation of an unproblematised or even frozen framework of reference for both theory and practice. Today, for instance, under the weight of pressing social and political problems, the historical specificity attributed to this distinction by specific theorists is often overlooked — mostly in practice but also sometimes in theory, though often with qualification. However, any perpetuation of such a West-East rhetoric can be seen to reflect the pervasiveness of uneven power-relations between different parts of the world and of the impact of these power-relations and ensuing attitudes on the understanding and the experience of ‘difference’. In fact, the case-study for this thesis illustrates the powerful links between a reality of political lack of power and feelings of insecurity and threat when ‘difference’ needs to be accounted for. In this framework, the ‘West-East’ oversimplified distinction adds apparent credibility to claims surrounding the intrinsic value and the developmental potential of certain areas.

In Greece, for instance, the overarching social perception of national in-betweeness is justified in rhetoric by the fact that Greece cannot be easily geographically pinned down within either the West or the East. Most importantly, the importance ascribed to ‘the Western paradigm’ in this environment may be observed on different levels. On the more obvious level of modern political institutions and practices, the transplantation of Western examples has often been and continues to be prescribed by some for Greece ever since its constitution as an independent state. It has equally often been far from successful, thus testifying against the uncritical importation of civic political principles and institutions into specific societies where they may founder upon indigenous institutional contingencies. On the level of national self-understanding, even though the
Greek case demonstrates that assumptions based predominantly on geography and evolution about a specific environment’s potential for adaptation and development may be misleading in important ways, it also shows that the pervasiveness of these assumptions has been hard to shake off. In the case studied, for instance, in order for Balkan participants to substantiate Balkan exceptionality, making references to eras positively considered by the West, usually the ancient times, has often been considered necessary. As suggested in chapter six, the observed Greek inability to deal positively with the reality of immigrants is also partly an example of seeking to emulate ‘the West’. Local attitudes to immigrants are partly influenced by the attitudes of dominant others in places where internal otherness stemming from the encounter of long-standing nation-states with immigrants from more or less traditional societies has been an issue of political and theoretical problematisation for longer. (If such is the case, then local attitudes to foreigners are also telling about the unsuccessful handling of similar issues in ‘Western’ countries). Once more then the uneven power-relations between different groups influence both the development of national self-understanding and the possibility of change within specific environments.

However, here again a political history of power-relations was shown to have differentiated impact on the ways understandings of identity and ‘difference’ develop today. It is not only that people often develop their political and social preferences through resistance to external paradigms, especially when historic memory gives them reason not to trust foreign influence and interference, as in the case of Greece. It is the ways in which this knowledge of political powerlessness is reworked that further opens up or restricts the spaces offered to the revaluation and redefinition of national and personal identities. The understanding and use of stereotypes about the Balkans is a pertinent example. Stereotypical understanding appears to persist and permeate self-understanding despite theoretical awareness of its dangers. However, as noted in chapter six, the perpetuation of these stereotypes may have varying effects. On a first level, the political interests and goals of those doing the stereotyping are identified by local (Greek and Balkan) participants. In this framework, as participants also observe, not only are stereotypes by definition based on undiversified descriptions of a rich and varied area.
Most importantly, their uncritical perpetuation often makes them politically useful for justifying intervention in this area. On a second level, stereotyping is projected back to the people about whom it is conjured thus rendering their positive self-evaluation an even more demanding exercise. However, knowledge of the social and personal impact of stereotyping also prompts novel positive perceptions of Balkan selfhood and the discovery of a common potential for positive change and development in the Balkans.

In summary: The redirection of the lens proposed in this thesis offers some insight regarding possible ways of accommodating different values, life-choices and self and other perceptions without having to resort to the characterisation of different aspects of a society's national self-understanding as either 'civic' or alternatively 'ethnic'. For the potential application of theories of 'civic nationalism', whilst promising within the boundaries of the liberal framework, does not serve to reconcile this framework with other competing ones which may be based upon different sets of values or may prioritise differently within similar sets of values. Rather than attempting to decipher whether a nationalism is civic or ethnic, the requirement for better integration in contemporary liberal polities may rather be served in many cases by a revalidation of 'the nation', if the latter is understood as a dominant discursive framework and if focus shifts precisely on the processes that may yield discursive alteration of dominant national understanding (as examined and analysed in section two). Finally, the case of Greece being hard to firmly locate within either the category of the East or that of the West, in both theory and in practice, and the impact of this observation on national self-understanding testify to the ease with which (stereotypical) perceptions linked to political hierarchies amongst different parts of the world may be perpetuated through time even when the untenable foundations of such hierarchisation have been today exposed. Hence the case studied offers support to the claim that the uneven distribution of power and the assumptions it gives birth to traverses time not only horizontally but also vertically. The potential for the mitigation of similar developments exists; in theory through a more nuanced approach to the experience of 'difference' and in practice through organised and concentrated political and social initiatives.
5. Conclusion

The reconfiguration of political relationships between and within ‘East’ and ‘West’ at the turn of the 21st century has often given rise to political and social claims made in the name of unrecognised, underrepresented or misrepresented identities and cultures. The insistence and often the cruelty through which different groups have been reaffirming their presence has demanded attention both in practice and in theory. In both spheres, though, attention has usually turned to the need better to accommodate ‘difference’ within existing frameworks. This thesis suggests that it may be useful also to focus on seeking to deepen our understanding of ‘difference’ itself and exploring the ways in which ‘difference’ becomes influential within a complex network of historic, political, social and personal relations.

In this thesis, this recommended turn has been addressed through an exploration of specific discourses of Greekness and the ways in which Greekness may become the object of redefinition through the development of these discourses. The case of Greece has been shown to exemplify a difficult interplay between past and present complexities. After a history of conflict and upheaval, hard circumstances today include a strained geopolitical and economic position and a relatively recent population reconfiguration, with a majority of immigrants coming from neighbouring countries with an ambiguous relationship to Greece. It has been shown that within such a conjunction some are trying to respond to those challenges in positive ways, which allows optimism about future developments not only in Greece but also in the Balkans, an area with which Greece has been shown to share more than a common past and which has been the object of more malediction than hope.

However, if the potential for positive response to changing conditions has been shown to inhere in specific environments, the limitations of the specific case-study were also repeatedly stressed. Attempts to requalify dominant understandings of the nation were sporadic and unorganised rather than systematic and institutionally coordinated. And it is
there that the necessity for political action becomes crucial. Of course it is also action not easily decided and undertaken since it may imply political prices that those responsible for policy are not willing to pay. However, in view of overwhelming changes witnessed in the constitution of societies across the world today, concerted and focused political initiatives are of imperative importance. In view of the ways in which the world is developing today, we can claim with relative security that the challenges that ‘difference’ presents us with will not disappear. Not only that but, as suggested before, these challenges may further become implicated in narratives quite different from their original references – increasingly so as those references recede into the past. If, today, the rhetoric of ‘difference’ has been shown to persist and nourish reactions to a varied array of issues, attempts to reconsider dominant national understandings should not only be politically welcomed; they should be supported and encouraged.

Tracing the links from the observation of dominant national discourses to the possibility of modifying them allows a reconsideration both of the role of ‘the nation’ in the process of identity construction and of the development of perceptions of ‘difference’ in specific environments. In this thesis, it has been suggested that through this approach theoretical frameworks in which culture and identity are investigated may be also enriched on two levels. First, the concept of ‘the nation’ may be revalidated through its appreciation as a discursive framework which delimits but does not necessarily confine the development of self and other understandings within specific environments. Consequently, change may inhere within a specific case independently of its alleged ‘ethnic’ or ‘civic’ characteristics. Secondly, the interplay between the experience of ‘difference’ and the pervasiveness of uneven power-relations, as reflected in a judgmental distinction between East and West, should be fully appreciated. Then the intractability of problems that the liberal paradox of rational choice meets with in matters of culture may be illuminated by an inquiry into the reverberations of ‘difference’ and the associated potential for choices within specific traditions.

A better understanding of ‘difference’ further involves its appreciation as an intrinsic property of an identity rather than as a problem of identity. Efforts to accommodate
‘difference’ often miss the point that ‘difference’ is something from within ourselves rather than opposed to us. In this thesis, it has not been minorities or paradigmatic others that have been investigated. It has rather been a (liberal) majority group that was the object of scrutiny. And yet, it is this very same group which has to face problems of cultural affirmation due to its ambiguous position within a complex hierarchy of power. Not surprisingly, it is often feelings of relative inferiority and insecurity that persist and deeply influence both negative and positive reconsiderations of the group’s self-definition.

Whereas Greece may be considered a ‘hard case’, nevertheless, in today’s conditions of globalisation, it is not that much harder than many others. Complication in specific environments does not only pertain to the specificities of socio-political configurations. The creation of increasingly interdependent political and social networks further exacerbates the legacy of past hegemonies which remains deep and pervasive in the ways different peoples and places understand themselves and are understood by others. This thesis has highlighted the importance of redirecting the inquiry of culture and identity to the complexity of our own groups’ self-definition. Moreover it has focused on the possibility of surprising developments in the understanding and experience of national identity in ostensibly ‘different’ and ‘difficult’ environments. However subtle, these changes in understanding should be acknowledged. For they nuance the ways in which culture, identity and ‘difference’ are approached in theory and may yield social and political change in practice.
APPENDIX 1: REFERENCES IN CHAPTERS 4 AND 5

Brochures, Ministerial publications etc.


Ministry of Culture 1997: Areas of foreign cultural policy, Athens.


Agreements


Laws


When used in the text these references are usually not accompanied by page references due to their special status.
APPENDIX 2: CASE-STUDY CODING SYSTEM

UP: Unsuccessful Proposal
SP: Successful Proposal
PC: Positive Consultation
NC: Negative Consultation
No: No Consultation
YP: ‘Yes, provided that...’; positive consultation if specific criteria are met
SE: ‘Somebody else’s job...’; positive consultation but not suitable for the institution
AB: Aborted project
IP: In process of realisation
R: Already realised
/R: Receiver’s End
/S: Sender’s End
/P: Protest
/M: Ministerial Document
/Int-S: Intermediary for Sender
gr-en: Language markers; Greek – English


CONNOR, W., 1978. “A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group is a …”. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 1*(4), pp. 377-400.


GOUREVITCH, P., 1999. *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families: stories from Rwanda*. London: Picador.


KASIGANO, 1, Council of Higher Education, South Africa, pp. 35-86.


