

**‘Reading’ and ‘Translating’ Emotions:  
Nationalism in Contemporary Greek Cinema**

by  
**Sophia Sakellis**

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts (Research)  
Department of Modern Greek and Byzantine Studies  
The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
University of Sydney  
October 2016**

## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores emotions related to nationalism, and their manifestations in contemporary Greek cinema. It also investigates the reasons and mechanisms giving rise to nationalism, and how it is perceived, expressed and ‘translated’ into other cultures. A core focus within the nationalist paradigm is the theme of national identity, with social exclusion ideologies such as racism operating in the background. Two contemporary Greek films have been chosen, which deal with themes of identity, nationalism, xenophobia, anger and fear in different contexts.

The study is carried out by drawing on the theories of emotion, language, translation and cinema, to analyse the visual and audio components of the two films and ascertain their translatability to an Australian audience. Both films depict a similar milieu to each other, which is plagued by the lingering nature of all the unresolved political and national issues faced by the Greek nation, in addition to the economic crisis, a severe refugee crisis, and externally imposed policy issues, as well as numerous other social problems stemming from bureaucracy, red tape and widespread state-led corruption, which have resulted in massive rates of unemployment and financial hardship that have befallen a major part of the population.

In spite of their topicality, the themes are universal and prevalent in a number of countries to varying degrees, as cultural borders become increasingly integrated, both socially and economically. It is concluded that nationalism and its underlying emotions are readily translatable between the target cultures of Greece and Australia, as they remain at the core of our political discourse and sociocultural context.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the following people who have generously assisted me in completing this thesis.

First, I am deeply indebted to my supervisor Dr Panayota Nazou for always being there and steering me in the right direction until the very end. Her tireless encouragement, knowledge, experience, work ethic and help have been invaluable and outstanding throughout my candidature.

I want to express my gratitude to Professor Vrasidas Karalis, my auxiliary supervisor, whose knowledge, suggestions and encouragement have been stimulating in the course of this study. His published books and papers have been an invaluable source of research material for this thesis. My special thanks to Dr Anthony Dracopoulos for his general assistance and stimulating discussions.

I wish to thank Dr Petro Alexiou for his valuable suggestions when I was researching suitable films for this thesis, and for generously providing me with his copy of *Red Hulk* when it was not available anywhere else on the Internet or in Australia.

Finally, I also want to thank my family, past and present, for all their steadfast support and encouragement.

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## Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to explore emotions related to nationalism, as portrayed in contemporary Greek cinema. The following discussion aims to define nationalism, the reasons and mechanisms giving rise to it, and how it is perceived, expressed and ‘translated’ into other cultures.

Nationalism is generally considered as an extreme form of patriotism mixed in with a sense of superiority over other nations. Conversely, patriotism is usually considered a virtue to be emulated, especially during a nation’s periods of hardship or war. Both patriotism and nationalism are linked with an individual’s sense of identity and the affinity they feel for their country. An investigation of the nature of patriotism in the academic literature reveals a lack of uniformity in the sentiments that generate it within each individual, and an absence of consensus regarding its definition and origins.

Smith & Smith note a distinction drawn by scholars between patriotism and nationalism, arguing that patriotism pertains to states and their territories, whereas nationalism relates solely to ethnicity and is therefore a “*doctrine about the nation, not the state*”. In practice, however, there is often an overlap between these concepts as “*a free nation often needs a state of its own for protection and the nurture of its culture*”.<sup>1</sup> (Smith and Smith 2009, 61-62)

According to Rothì et al, the two main forms of patriotic beliefs are based either on uncritical conformity or critical loyalty. Patriotism is viewed as a form of intergroup discrimination or as involving perceptions of national superiority and dominance, and differing levels of ethnocentrism. It can be “*moderate and extreme or hostile and*

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<sup>1</sup> From a sociological perspective, the basis of nationalism may either be primordialist, i.e. manifesting itself in a sociobiological and cultural form based on distinct groupings bound together as a result of an affinity of birth, or modernist, i.e. a recent phenomenon founded on the structure of modern society (Smith and Smith 2009, 8,16), or a combination of both, i.e. a modern form of nationalism which has its roots on primordial sentiments. (Smith and Smith 2009, 30) From a psychological perspective, patriotism derives from fundamental introspection and self-exploration and connects the individual to a community based on its ties with the land or a certain locality, state and symbols, even when such a connection is only historical and cultural, rather than physical or geographical. (Smith and Smith 2009, 50)

*peaceful*". It can also be characterised as 'blind' or 'constructive', where 'blind' patriotism manifests itself with an inflexible, unquestioning, uncritical and staunch allegiance and attachment to one's country, whereas 'constructive' patriotism is distinguished by critical and interrogative loyalty "*driven by a desire for positive change*". A combination of both orientations may be evident within the same individual, who may support his or her country even when they are critical of an action it takes. (Rothì, Lyons, and Chrysochoou 2005, 139)

A dynamic complexity to the concept of nationalism is introduced by the different definitions of what constitutes a nation. As we expound in section 1.2.5, in order to create a unified community, a nation consisting of a number of ethnicities needs to establish and adopt a national, cultural, religious and/or diverse identity, decide on its multicultural or monocultural status, and on whether it will try to integrate its ethnic groups or assimilate its minorities. (Motyl 2000, 164)

Antonis Liakos points out that the concept of what does, and what does not, constitute a nation today is not defined by looking to the past, but by looking to the future, and how it is used in building up, or challenging, its governing structure in the establishment of political discourse.<sup>2</sup> (Liakos 2005, 149) Tim Soutphommasane, Australia's Race Discrimination Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission, makes a similar argument when dealing with the subject of patriotism in the Australian context. He views it in the broader context of loyalty as "*a necessary condition for self-improvement*" that binds together, by reciprocity and trust, those societies that flourish, giving their members "*a sense of progress and direction*" which allows them to work collectively towards the common good instead of pursuing their own self-interest. (Soutphommasane 2009, 137)

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<sup>2</sup> According to Liakos, the idea of a nation is used in the construction of political speech and counter-hegemonic discourse on issues of public interest such as social justice, welfare, natural resources and the environment, where the citizens can directly appeal for the protection of a 'national territory', 'national resources', or issues of 'national interest'. In this context, Liakos suggests that nationalism needs to be re-examined and, perhaps, incorporated by progressive forces into their vision for the future, rather than allow the contradiction of its appropriation by those who have historically used it as a propaganda tool in furthering their reactionary cause. (Liakos 2005, 155-156)

Religion can play a major role in a nation's cohesiveness or divisiveness, as it can be a visible factor of difference, occasionally reinforced by the memory of even relatively minor events which have steered communities into a certain thinking of the 'Other'.<sup>3</sup> (Motyl 2000, 154) Geographical location is another factor influencing the prevalent discourse and self-understandings relating to nationalism in each country. Triandafyllidou quotes the example of Britain and Greece, situated at the geographical and/or symbolic periphery of Europe which share an ambivalent attitude towards the European unification vision, each for a different set of reasons. According to Triandafyllidou, these countries differ in the way they define the concept of a 'nation', with Britain emphasising its 'civic' while Greece its 'ethnic' aspect, and that difference is reflected on their respective policies for addressing cultural and religious diversity.<sup>4</sup>

Greek nationality has been based on genealogical descent aided by the uniquely cohesive power of language and culture, which have survived through the centuries, in spite of ostensibly insurmountable pressures. Due to this 'ethnic' – rather than territorial – nature of the Greek nation, any challenge to the Greekness of the Hellenistic Period or Alexander the Great and the Macedonian Kingdom is deemed an anathema and threat to the continuity of the nation, a point which has been widely exploited by numerous governments, intent on uniting the disaffected populace by focusing on external rivals and foes. (Triandafyllidou, Calloni, and Mikrakis 1997, paragraphs 4.3 & 4.4)

The widely speculated exploitation of such issues by successive governments seems to be supported by the facts. In one of the conversations relayed by Karalis in his 2014 book *Demons of Athens*, an unnamed conservative politician admits with great

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<sup>3</sup> Some major religion-motivated events which have left an indelible mark on local and global communities include Salman Rushdie's 1989 *Satanic Verses* controversy, the 2006 *Mohammed Cartoons Crisis*, and, more recently, the 2015 *Charlie Hebdo* and *Bataclan* massacres in France.

<sup>4</sup> As a postcolonial power, Britain has a strong multicultural citizenship approach that "*incorporates individual and collective diversity into a single political entity and under a common British identity*", notwithstanding any recent criticisms of its particular multicultural model of integration, emanating from public opinion in Britain or in other European states. Greece, faced with a deep financial crisis, is trapped in debilitating national identity issues and, at the same time, feels that it has fallen victim to mistreatment and misunderstandings by the European 'powers that be'. (Triandafyllidou 2009, 38)

cynicism, and scorn for the masses, that his party has been responsible for exacerbating the problem of the scandals and corruption that has afflicted Greece in recent years, but that his government will be able to wash themselves clean by redirecting the attention of the people to matters that always preoccupy them, such as the issues with Turkey, Macedonia, the purported criminality of Albanian immigrants, etc., and that left-wing parties and the media are complicit in these tactics. (Karalis 2014, 171)

Successive governments have continued to conceal the harsh reality of accumulating debt, and shielded their citizens from the truth, affording them, in fact, a considerably distorted feeling of euphoria in staging grand events such as the Athens 2004 Olympics, that further contributed and critically precipitated the impending financial collapse, in the hope of boosting, no doubt, their chances of re-election.

Yet, Greeks have undoubtedly endured attacks on national matters of disputed identity in relation to Cyprus and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), which weigh heavily upon the Greek psyche.<sup>5</sup> The Cyprus issue, which remains unresolved for decades, has added to the contextuality of victimisation, where a foreign power and, indeed, one of a different religious persuasion, is using its clout and strategic position to influence European politics in ways which are not conducive to achieving a long-term peaceful resolution. The FYROM issue is of a different nature, as it relates to symbols, traditions and a glorious past, and serves to broaden the scope of disaffection harboured by many Greeks for their European partners and their silence on

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<sup>5</sup> National identity relies on myths and traditions which help forge a nation, and collective memories associated with national struggles or wars won under adverse conditions, especially those against mighty, powerful and/or unjust enemies. From the time of the Greek Revolution of 1821, the Greek state has endeavoured to reconnect with its ancient past, while keeping up with its ruptured historical trajectory through to modern times.

the historical facts involved.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, it also carries the threat of territorial expansion for the Greeks.<sup>7</sup>

However, the apparent adherence of the Greeks to their national identity dilemma<sup>8</sup> is, in fact, not an isolated issue, but closely related with, and a response to, the re-emergence of peripheral nationalisms and the eclipse of ideological politics following the dismantling of the Soviet Union, which has seen an upsurge in the popularity of traditional values and religion.<sup>9</sup>

In this period of existential crisis for Greece, the Greek press, which reflects and shapes public opinion, is conversely not eager to promote a European transnational discourse or be introspective about Greece's response to external issues forced upon it by the European Powers. Europe is commonly blamed by Greek media of oppressing the Greek citizens with financial burdens which appear alien to them, having never been confronted with the financial realities of their dire situation over several decades.

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<sup>6</sup> Ongoing negotiations have stalled each time, with discussions centring on arguably insulting proposals, such as the *double name formula*, where FYROM would be known by a different name in Greece as opposed to the rest of the world, while it pursues its *Antiquisation* policy of renaming airports and stations after ancient Macedonian historical figures. In effect, Greece has failed to prevent the official use of the name 'Republic of Macedonia', or simply 'Macedonia', and its language as 'Macedonian', adopted by default by the rest of the world over recent decades.

<sup>7</sup> As Mackridge suggests, "*Since the official Greek line is that ancient Macedonia was entirely Greek in language and culture, the words 'Macedonia' and 'Macedonian' can only be used to refer to Greek geography, culture, and history. A large province of northern Greece is called Macedonia. Therefore, according to this line, the use of these words by FYROM and its citizens is tantamount to claiming part of the territory of the Greek state – a part that was fiercely and heroically fought for against rival neighbours in the early twentieth century*". (Mackridge 2010, 333)

<sup>8</sup> Contrary to contemporary times when Greece has been a sovereign nation-state, the Greek nation has existed under different political formations through the ages, from the city-states of antiquity, to a province of the Roman Empire, later the Byzantine Empire and subsequently the Ottoman Empire, under conditions of occupation by a power of different ethnicity and religion.

<sup>9</sup> This has affected the Balkan states more than Eastern Europe, as their liberation from the Ottomans afforded them the illusion of having an ethnically homogeneous society within the borders of their nation-state, where any minorities within could be ignored and excluded by suppression of their rights, or even ethnic cleansing in extreme circumstances. In contrast, the citizens of Western European nation-states have already had administrative, economic and educational structures evolving in parallel with their particular national identity. (Triandafyllidou, Calloni, and Mikrakis 1997, 10)

These conditions do not provide an incentive or inducement to comprehend the ‘Other’, notwithstanding many notable examples of local citizens helping refugees and illegal immigrants on a day-to-day basis. This has also resulted in a significant rise in the appeal of extreme-right groups, especially the Golden Dawn party.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, the utopian desire for ethnic and cultural homogeneity harboured by some can no longer be sustained in the modern era, and this provides a unique opportunity to redefine the concept of a national identity into one which incorporates and recognises diversity, with a functional inclusion, instead of an a-priori rejection, of the ‘Other’, with integration already occurring at a grassroots level, e.g. through mixed marriages, undoubtedly helped along by a substantial portion of the population, namely 15 percent, who are of ‘non-Greek’ origin. (Karalis 2012, 277)

Within this framework, and by investigating the theoretical components of emotion and language, and their relationship to the way they are depicted on the medium of film, this thesis aims to analyse some key elements that constitute, and derive from, a source culture, and explore the way they translate into a target culture through the process of subtitling. In order to be ‘translated’, emotions first need to be ‘read’, hence the quotation marks in the thesis title *‘Reading’ and ‘Translating’ Emotions: Nationalism in Contemporary Greek Cinema*, signifying the aspect of duality in the words ‘reading’ and ‘translating’.

The first chapter outlines theories of emotions, language, translation and cinema, which are relevant to my analysis. The first section presents a broad definition of emotions,

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<sup>10</sup> Golden Dawn (Χρυσή Αυγή) is a far-right political party, founded on 1/1/1985 and registered as a party in 1993, led by Nikolaos Michaloliakos, which has a nationalist, anti-immigration, agenda. It received 5.3% of the vote at the local elections of 7 November 2010 in the Athens municipality, winning a seat at the Council, though in neighbourhoods with a large immigrant population it gained up to 20% of the vote. During the 2012 national elections, they campaigned on an anti-austerity and anti-immigration platform, focusing on unemployment and the economy, and received 7% of the vote, which enabled the party to enter the Parliament with 21 seats which was reduced to 18 following a second election in June 2012. In the aftermath of the murder of anti-fascist hip-hop artist and rapper Pavlos Fyssas, known as Killah P, in September 2013, a number of Golden Dawn members and MPs, including Michaloliakos, were arrested. In the elections of 20 September 2015, Golden Dawn won 7% of the vote, with 18 seats, up 1 seat from the elections of 25 January 2015, when they had won 6.3% of the vote.

their history, classification and types, language, cultural expressions, stereotypes and identity. It then focuses on nationalism and related emotions, such as honour, shame, fear and anger. The next section concentrates on language and translation, presenting a brief theoretical analysis of language and linguistics, cultural linguistics and sociolinguistics, translation theory and practice and cross-cultural communication. The cinema section explores film theory and its relationship to literature, genres, audiovisual translation and subtitles.<sup>11</sup>

The second chapter, *'Reading' Emotions*, attempts a 'reading' of emotions in the 2009 film *Plato's Academy*, a dramatic comedy, or 'dramedy', and the 2013 short-length film *Red Hulk*, both recipients of European and international awards, which explore, in their different ways, the themes of racial discrimination and intolerance, nationalism and xenophobia, as well as their causes and impact on the characters in each film.

The films showcase the depth and scope of emotion for one's own home country and how that relates to the sense of social and individual identity, family and social standing; social integration or alienation; hopelessness, lack of understanding or being understood on an individual or micro-level; and how these may translate to a general macro-dysfunction of a society and a nation, as well as derivative social problems created by disharmony in contemporary urban societies.

In the third chapter, *'Translating' Emotions*, we then examine the visual and linguistic translatability of those emotions by referring to principles outlined in the theory chapter. Referring to the translation of prose, Jorge Luis Borges posits: "*In prose, the colloquial meaning is the most valid, and finding its equivalent tends to be easy*" (Williamson 2013, 43). Finding the most colloquial meaning to translate colloquial language is precisely the task in subtitling.

Although some scenes may invoke 'otherness' in the visuals of both films, such as the intolerance displayed to comical effect for the Intercultural Solidarity Monument in

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<sup>11</sup> The word *subtitles* in this thesis includes *surtitles* and any script which may accompany a film's visuals.

*Plato's Academy*, or with ultra-violence in *Red Hulk*, emotions related to nationalism have much relevance and 'translate' well to an Australian audience. With ultranationalism having reared its head in Australia in recent years, emotions of fear and anger are equally shared between Greeks and Australians, and so are emotions of honour and pride, though the mechanisms giving rise to them may not operate in quite the same way between the two cultures.

Finally, a synthesis is attempted in the *Conclusions*, by reflecting on the two films, their respective 'language' and their different ways of dealing with nationalism, the causes of social dysfunction, how these are addressed, resolved or overcome by individuals or societies, and whether dysfunction is an inherent consequence of the 'human condition' or a result of antisocial attitudes and behaviours which develop and are influenced by external conditions.

# Chapter 1 – Theoretical Framework

## 1.1. Introduction

This is an outline of the theoretical and conceptual framework of the thesis on the three main topics of Emotion, Translation and Cinema. Due to the enormity of these subjects, the following sections are only of an introductory nature, but an effort has been made to include as many of the relevant definitions and concepts as possible for the sake of some completeness.

Section 1.2 attempts a definition of emotion and touches on the history, types and classification of emotions, the cultural expressions and language of emotions, national identity, patriotism, nationalism and related emotions such as honour, shame and fear.

Section 1.3 defines translation and the concepts of formal and dynamic equivalence. We then discuss the theory and practice of translation and localisation, translation as interpretation within the same language and as transference to another language, theory of culture, cross-cultural communication, linguistic relativity, multilingualism and diachronic and synchronic intercultural communication.

Section 1.4 briefly touches on the medium of cinema and film studies, genres and the role of humour, depiction and language of emotions on film, audiovisual translation and subtitling, and contemporary Greek cinema with an emphasis on national identity and nationalism.

## 1.2. Emotions

The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines emotion as “*the affective aspect of consciousness*”, “*a state of feeling*”, or “*a conscious mental reaction (as anger or fear) subjectively experienced as strong feeling usually directed toward a specific object and typically accompanied by physiological and behavioral changes in the body*”. Denton

et al. adopt the shorter Oxford English Dictionary's definition,<sup>12</sup> pointing out that this includes emotion arising from bodily states, and Webster's International Dictionary's etymology,<sup>13</sup> which highlights the links between 'emotion' and the verb 'to move'.<sup>14</sup> (Denton et al. 2009, 501)

The lack of consensus in defining 'emotion', indicated by the commonly assumed interchangeability in the use of the words 'emotion' and 'feeling' and the way it "*differs from other aspects of mind and behavior*", is also noted by LeDoux. (LeDoux 2012, 653) Duncan & Barrett elaborate on the nature of sensory perception, affect, and cognition and their fundamental differences.<sup>15</sup> (Duncan and Barrett 2007, 12)

### 1.2.1. History of Emotions

Even though an accurate definition of emotion has proved challenging and elusive through the ages, the nature of emotions was philosophically explored by the Ancient Greeks and their answer "*is today widely accepted ... that emotions are most typically caused by evaluations ... of events in relation to what is important to us: our goals, our*

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<sup>12</sup> "*A disturbance of the mind, mental sensation or state, or instinctive feeling*"

<sup>13</sup> According to Webster's International Dictionary, 'Emotion' derives from the word *mouvoir*, infinitive of the French verb 'to move', indicating a "*sense of moving out or moving away*" and, therefore, a "*physiological departure from homeostasis which is subjectively experienced in strong feeling [...] and bodily changes preparatory to overt acts which may or may not be performed. The element of intention and movement is incorporated in the word as inherent in its derivation from medieval French*".

<sup>14</sup> The element of movement is also evident in one of the Greek words for 'emotion', i.e. 'συγκίνηση', the other word being 'συναίσθημα' which also translates into English as 'feeling'. As indicated by leading researchers in the field, emotion is hard to define, even in scientific terms, and had been neglected by neuroscience and cognitive science until recently, having proved too elusive, subjective and vague a concept. (Damasio 2000, 12)

<sup>15</sup> "*Although feelings seem different than thoughts ... affect is a form of cognition. The circuitry that instantiates a core affective state is widely distributed throughout the brain, and includes so-called "cognitive" areas. This circuitry projects to and modulates sensory processing. Via this modulation, affect is an intrinsic part of sensory experience, not a separate cognitive function that is later performed on sensations. As a result, affect is an intrinsic property in all psychological phenomena that result from so-called "cognitive" processes (such as consciousness, language, and memory). Affect and cognition, then, are not ontologically separate, but they are, perhaps, phenomenologically distinct. This is distinction in experience, however, rather than a distinction that exists in the structure of the brain or the psychological processes that produce that experience*".

*concerns, our aspirations*". (Oatley 2004, 3) In his book *Aristotle, Emotions, and Education*, Kristjánsson discusses the Aristotelian conception of the nature of emotions and deliberates on the individuation of emotions and how integral they are to being human, concluding that "*there are no expendable emotions*". (Kristjánsson 2007, 49-50)

In the nineteenth century, Charles Darwin explored the genesis of emotions and recognised their innate nature and adaptive value in increasing people's chances of survival, and the role of facial expressions in communicating with others. In his 1872 book, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, he investigates genetically determined aspects of behaviour and the causes and functions of reflex actions, and traces the animal origins of human responses.<sup>16</sup> (Darwin 1872, 42)

In his 1884 book entitled *What is an Emotion*, the 'father' of American psychology, William James, influenced by the ideas of Heraclitus and Darwin, argues that emotions may include bodily changes, and that an emotion is in fact the perception of any such bodily change.<sup>17</sup> (James 1884, 13)

Current evolutionary theories of emotion suggest that there are a number of primary emotions shared among all human cultures and that all other, non-primary, emotions result from different combinations and intensities of those primary ones. Several theories of emotion have been proposed, some lying at opposite ends of the scale with

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<sup>16</sup> "... in the case of Man [there are] several instances of movements associated with various states of the mind or body, which are now purposeless, but which were originally of use, and are still of use under certain circumstances. ...a considerable number of analogous facts, with reference to animals ... show that certain movements were originally performed for a definite end, and that, under nearly the same circumstances, they are still pertinaciously performed through habit when not of the least use. That the tendency in most of the following cases is inherited, we may infer from such actions being performed in the same manner by all the individuals, young and old, of the same species. We shall also see that they are excited by the most diversified, often circuitous, and sometimes mistaken associations". (Darwin 1872, 42)

<sup>17</sup> "Our natural way of thinking about these standard emotions is that the mental perception of some fact excites the mental affection called the emotion, and that this latter state of mind gives rise to the bodily expression. My thesis on the contrary is that the bodily changes follow directly the PERCEPTION of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur IS the emotion". (James 1884, 13)

one another, but there is general agreement that people experience emotions differently even when these emotions produce a similar pattern of physiological arousal. Neurophysiology studies have found that the experience of emotion occurs simultaneously with physiological arousal and not sequentially of each other.

In his ground-breaking book, *The Emotional Brain* (Le Doux 1996), Joseph LeDoux describes the organisation of the brain and the implications for understanding emotions, and in his later book, *Synaptic Self*, he details the role played by various parts of the brain in responding to external stimuli, and the biological mechanisms and processes involved.<sup>18</sup> Multidisciplinary approaches in modelling the brain, based on research in neurobiology, anatomy, psychology and cognitive science, have also enabled researchers to look into the ‘physics of the mind’ by using mathematical tools such as Modelling Field Theory. (Perlovsky 2006, 24)

### **1.2.2. Types and Classification of Emotions**

There are two different theoretical frameworks by which emotions may be classified, namely, the Discrete and the Dimensional Model of Affect. According to the Discrete Model,<sup>19</sup> which is most relevant for the purposes of this thesis, emotions fit into distinct categories, manifesting in all humans and some animals. The Dimensional Model

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<sup>18</sup> “*The basic wiring plan ... involves the synaptic delivery of information about the outside world to the amygdala, and the control of responses that act back on the world by synaptic outputs of the amygdala. If the amygdala detects something dangerous via its inputs, then its outputs are engaged. The result is freezing, changes in blood pressure and heart rate, release of hormones, and lots of other responses that either are preprogrammed ways of dealing with danger or are aspects of body physiology that support defensive behaviors*”. (LeDoux 2002, 7)

<sup>19</sup> The Discrete Model provides the most accessible viewpoint and posits that, at their most fundamental level, emotions are classified as Basic or Primary and Higher-Order or Social. The primary emotions are fear, anger, happiness, sadness, disgust and surprise, and are considered biologically determined, innate, universal, and characterised by similar facial expressions which, nevertheless, may vary between cultures or within the same culture over time, with even the words describing them varying in meaning over time. (Reevy, Ozer, and Ito 2010, 174) These shared emotions are psychological universals that constitute some basic, evolved functions and may be recognised across cultures from vocal signals inferred from facial expressions, such as laughter, or postural expressions, such as pride. There are, however, a number of positive emotions which are recognised within cultural groups but not across cultures, such as sighs signalling relief, which can be interpreted by different cultures as signalling a range of other states. (Sauter et al. 2010, 2409)

regards emotions as a combination of broad dimensions of affect based on a number of characteristics and patterns. (Barrett 1998, 580)

Social emotions include guilt, shame, envy, pride, admiration, compassion and indignation, characteristic of the communal experience of living, and are based on the *insula* which forms part of the cerebral cortex, the brain's thin outer layer of neural tissue, responsible for many higher-order functions such as information processing and language. (Reevy, Ozer, and Ito 2010, 325)

Like other cognitive states, emotions derive from rational thought and action, and can be deemed warranted or unwarranted according to the circumstances which generate them. Fear, for example, would be deemed warranted if the object causing it poses a threat, or unwarranted if it does not, and anger would be a justified response to an insult, or unjustified if it was based on a misunderstanding of intent. (Deigh 2008, 12)

Emotions are expressed in a variety of ways, including facial and bodily movements and gestures, noises and language. In fact, if 'the face is the mirror of the soul', facial expressions are a result of human emotions.<sup>20</sup> Emotions can be regarded as mental states or as mental processes. As states, they interact with other mental states and cause certain behaviours.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Aristotle's writings on physiognomy have recorded his contemporaries' ideas in relation to facial expressions accompanying certain emotions. Although recent studies in psychology have thoroughly revised older notions on the cause and effect of facial responses, the concept of universality of emotions across cultures remains largely undisputed. "*Happiness, surprise, fear, anger, contempt, disgust, and sadness—these seven emotions, plus or minus two, are recognized from facial expressions by all human beings, regardless of their cultural background*". (Russell 1994, 102)

<sup>21</sup> In his book *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*, Antonio Damasio, faced with what he calls 'the obstacle of self' which manifests itself by "*three distinct although closely related phenomena: an emotion, the feeling of that emotion, and knowing that we have a feeling of that emotion*", concludes that "*consciousness and emotion are not separable*" and that "*consciousness can be separated into simple and complex kinds*". The simplest kind, which he calls Core Consciousness, provides a person with a sense of self about the scope of core consciousness, which is the 'here and now'. "*Core consciousness does not illuminate the future, and the only past it vaguely lets us glimpse is that which occurred in the instant just before*". The complex kind of consciousness, which he calls Extended Consciousness, provides a person with an identity placing it at a point in history, "*aware of the lived past and of the anticipated future*", within its environment. Thus, core consciousness is a simple biological phenomenon not exclusive to humans, whereas extended consciousness "*is a complex biological phenomenon; it has several levels of organization; and it evolves across the lifetime of the organism.*"

### 1.2.3. Emotions and Culture

‘Culture’ is defined in a variety of ways across disciplines. It is often used interchangeably with ‘civilisation’ to distinguish between people of different ethnic backgrounds, modes of behaviour and lifestyles. It may imply ‘high culture’ when encompassing the great ideas represented in the classic works of philosophy, literature and the arts of an age or a nation, or, in a more modern setting, ‘popular culture’ or ‘mass culture’ when referring to forms of entertainment, music, art, design or literature of everyday people.

People belonging to the same culture are, on the whole, influenced by collective factors such as shared history, migration, standard of living, geographical location or climate, and would be expected to have a similar interpretation of the world and express their feelings and thoughts in such ways that they would understand one another. (Hall 1997, 2).

Similarities within cultures also bring into focus the differences between them. As an example, people around the Mediterranean tend to exhibit different overall modes of behaviour and reactions compared with those in the Anglo-Saxon milieu, largely due to their different historical and climatic experiences, with these differences further exemplified the narrower the scope of the geographical area becomes, to individual countries, cities or even suburbs. On an individual level, unresolved identity issues, bottled-up emotions, anger, shame, honour or class status, all impact on the collective psyche which, in turn, shapes each distinct culture.

Conversely, culture moulds the ways in which emotions are expressed, especially social emotions which correlate more with culture than those of a primary nature. The field of cross-cultural studies examines the similarities and differences in the expressions of

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*Although ... extended consciousness is also present in some nonhumans, at simple levels, it only attains its highest reaches in humans. It depends on conventional memory and working memory. When it attains its human peak, it is also enhanced by language”. (Damásio 1999, 14)*

individual emotions across cultures, focusing on the different reactions that the same stimuli may produce in people of the same culture, compared with those of different cultures.<sup>22</sup>

Emotions are often juxtaposed to logic, and blamed, across cultures, for irrational decision-making, tainted logic and impulsive behaviour. Emotionality is generally attributed to females more than males and is used as a disparaging remark against anyone who is considered uncivilised or uncultivated when deemed to be acting emotionally. Some cultures are also considered more emotional than others, with Southern Europeans, for example, being regarded more expressive (εκδηλωτικοί) in their behaviour, language, body language, gestures, etc., than others.

#### **1.2.4. Language of Emotions**

Language is used to express thoughts as well as feelings. The affective state of a language user (emotions, moods, preferences) interacts with their language processing, and this interaction between language and emotion can be examined from a number of perspectives, including the ability to convey rational thoughts.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *“Culture is a realm of shared meanings; it is only through certain artifice and convention that different people with different experiences are able to overcome private differences and share in the same world. It is only through certain artifice that we come to inhabit the same social space. If authenticity, understood as spontaneous manifestation of emotions, and hence as lack of artifice, is to become the standard by which to measure all dimensions of human life, then the modern distinction between the private and the public realm is no longer clear”.* (González 2012, 6)

<sup>23</sup> Natural languages (languages that have developed naturally and are not artificially constructed by humans, e.g. computer language, Esperanto, etc.) communicate logical arguments but tend to be imprecise, as words often have multiple meanings and thus the sentences they form may be misinterpreted. Any system of rigorous analysis, therefore, requires a clear system of logic, and Classical Logic, based on Aristotle’s Syllogistic Logic, has been used to construct logical arguments for over two millennia. Modern Logic has been developing since the seventeenth century, and saw its first comprehensive formulation in Gottlob Frege’s nineteenth century formal logic. Frege was the first logician to employ quantification, and establish Quantifier Logic, and Sentential Logic, its subset, was developed specifically for expressing logical arguments with clarity and precision by philosophers and mathematicians who defined it as a symbolic language which enables analysis using rules and formulas. (Zegarelli 2010, 18 & 52)

From a communication perspective, the interaction between language and emotion is explored at the level of discourse comprehension and conversation analysis.<sup>24</sup> As nonverbal elements bear semantic content that is significant in communicating meaning, so are language elements, such as paragraph structure, punctuation, etc., in conveying semantic content in spoken or written language. Therefore, semantics is closely linked to linguistic reference fields such as grammar,<sup>25</sup> syntax, etymology, lexicology, philology and pragmatics<sup>26</sup> in aiding communication.

Through an analysis of the signals used to express emotion, and the social, cultural and political functions of emotional language by different cultures, it can be demonstrated that *“speaking, feeling, reflecting, and identifying are interrelated processes and ... emotions such as happiness, sadness, anger and love are attached to language”*. (Agus 2013, 204) Ethnographic case studies from anthropology and linguistics<sup>27</sup> demonstrate the *“cultural diversity, historical emergence, and political significance of emotional language”* from a range of cultural concepts, genres and social functions of emotional expression. (Wilce 2009, i)

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<sup>24</sup> Discourse comprehension examines the role of affect in the relevant mental and neural processes. Conversation analysis examines the involvement of emotions in human interactions and the degree of meaningfulness in people’s emotive exchanges, and how they comprehend texts and deal with the affective stance of the speaker as implied by his or her choice of words, phrases, intonation, etc. Communication is achieved by both verbal and nonverbal means. Verbally, meaning is conveyed through language (linguistics) and non-verbally through proxemics (by the use of space and territory, or by being close or distant), haptics (touch), kinesics (body movement, gestures, postures, eye contact/behaviour denoting liking / honesty, etc., facial expression), vocalics (paralanguage e.g. pitch, volume, intonation, prosody, etc.), chronemics (structure of time, e.g. hesitancy in speech, being punctual or ‘fashionably late’) (Duck 2007, 13), artefacts (physical appearance, clothing, jewellery, bags, briefcases), etc. (Guerrero and Floyd 2006, 8)

<sup>25</sup> Grammar indicates how much affective information, such as intensity of expression, is linguistically encoded at the level of word, phrasal and sound structure, where word structure constitutes the affective morphology of language, phrasal structure incorporates its building blocks, e.g. interjections, exclamations or idiomatic expressions (Edwards and Dewaele 2007, 228), and the sound structure refers to prosodic patterns related to affect. (Baker 2010, 50)

<sup>26</sup> Transmission of meaning depending on context

<sup>27</sup> Linguistics is the scientific study of human language, and Semantics or Semasiology is the study of meaning, based on the relation between ‘signifiers’, that is, words, phrases, symbols, etc., and their meaning or ‘denotation’.

Different groupings of people use different codes and language to express emotions, such as the use of slang by certain substrata of society or the underworld. Even where the emotions are largely the same, the language used to express them affects, and is affected by, the way they are felt. *“Culture is shaped by language, and language influences thoughts, behaviors, and feelings. Emotion words do not always correspond from one language to another”*. (Reevy, Ozer, and Ito 2010, 174)

The lack of correspondence of emotion words from one language to the other indicates that emotions themselves may not exactly correspond between cultures, which could potentially contradict the universality thesis. It is expected, however, that basic emotions such as anger and fear would be shared among individuals, though this is arguably only an implicit assumption. The study of how different cultures conceptualise their emotions, and the facial behaviours those emotions produce, provides a link to their belief systems. (Russell 1994, 137) The evaluative component of emotions is largely culturally determined, and there exist culturally untranslatable emotion concepts, as experiences and their expressions are unique to each culture and period.<sup>28</sup> (Sauter et al. 2010, 195)

Another perspective on the interaction between language and emotion relates to multilinguals, for whom each language has different associations with different aspects of life.<sup>29</sup> Panayiotou focuses on Greek-English bilinguals as, by crossing physical, linguistic and cultural boundaries, they *“subjectively experience two languages and two cultures”*, and offer an optimal cross-cultural comparison of emotion terms.<sup>30</sup> She

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<sup>28</sup> As Hilda Doolittle noted when referring to her own and others’ respective translations in her *Notes on Euripides*, *“There is no adequate translation for the Greeks and there never will be”*.

<sup>29</sup> Multilinguals may prefer one language for formal communication and another for expressing feelings. This functional distinction between languages is usually due to the fact that languages are assigned different values by multilinguals, depending on factors such as the relative prestige of a language in specific occasions or times, its status e.g. as a lingua franca, its utilisability in particular situations, etc. Symmetrical multilingualism, where languages are assigned the same value, is highly exceptional.

<sup>30</sup> Panayiotou has found that some emotions are specific to certain languages and cultures and are rendered untranslatable into others, and that an accessible method of researching these emotions is at a verbal level, as language is the means by which they can be expressed by the subjects who feel them.

examines a few key words, among them the complex word ‘frustration’ which can be translated as ‘στεναχώρια’ into Greek, and which, in turn, is normally back-translated into English as ‘sadness’, ‘discomfort’ or ‘suffocation’. (Panayiotou 2007, 10)

Although there is no exact linguistic translation for such words or terms, Panayiotou suggests that they are ‘cultural’ translations of each other as they have been used by bilinguals for their descriptions in various cultural contexts. (Panayiotou 2007, 1) Panayiotou has also studied concepts of guilt and shame in people of English and Greek linguistic and cultural backgrounds.<sup>31</sup>

As outlined above, the untranslatability of some emotion terms serves to highlight issues of identity and diversity, and the characteristics and increasing importance of cross-cultural communication.

### **1.2.5. National Identity and Culture**

In their interpersonal interactions, people create and/or employ cultural templates or stereotypes<sup>32</sup> which help them organise their social experiences and provide motives for explaining group differences. (Schneider 2005, 23)

According to identification theory,<sup>33</sup> at a psychological level, a secure sense of identity is a prerequisite for wellbeing and individuals have an innate need to strengthen and

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<sup>31</sup> “As social and moral concepts they are inevitably influenced and (re)formed by cultural effects, connected to interactions between individuals. Her results showed that bilinguals have two emotional ‘universes’ ... two different, but connected systems that can affect each other. This can be explained by the bilingual individuals’ capability to sense subtle language variations and similarities, thanks to more profound experiences with cultural differences than monolinguals”. (Grabovac 2013, 425)

<sup>32</sup> These stereotypes are generally based on social stimuli, social values, principles and interpretations, people’s mentality, outlook, idiosyncrasy, personality and psychology, and form the foundation for the concept of their collective identity. Instead of being static, this identity may exhibit synchronic fluidity or diachronic persistence.

<sup>33</sup> Identification Theory posits that a “threat ... to ideology or culture is a threat to identity... [and] an enhancement of ideology or culture enhances identity. Thus a change of historical circumstances ... will threaten the individual’s sense of identity by removing and altering the external social coordinates by which the individual recognises her/his own identity continuity. This diffusion of identity, or identity

defend their identity.<sup>34</sup> Individuals have the drive to protect and bolster their sense of identity, and this drive may be as aggressive as basic instincts such as hunger and, when their identity is threatened, they try to bolster their old identification or seek to form a new one. The mechanism is unconscious and the identification drive is ongoing “*unless the individual’s social environment has been stable since infancy*”. (Bloom 1993, 40)

The creation of a national identity is dependent upon several factors, including cultural and linguistic homogeneity, usually galvanised by conflicts with common enemies, establishment and acceptance of citizenship rights and responsibilities, and national education and media systems. The state normally introduces national symbols and rituals, such as a national anthem and flag, aimed at consolidating national identity and imparting a sense of belonging and emotional attachment to the nation. (Guibernau 2014, 36)

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*crisis, will trigger anxiety and the crisis will be countered by a dynamic adaptive reaction in which either (a) the already held identity (ideology or culture) is protected, or (b) a new synthesis of identifications is made appropriate to the situation and its constraints. Equally, individuals seek to enhance their sense of identity and the psychological sense of security and well-being that comes with it. To counter anxiety, to maintain security and to enhance the sense of well-being that is concomitant with reinforced identity - all of which are unconscious motivations - the adult identification mechanism, like that of the infant, is dynamic and not simply a passive adaptation dictated by the environment.”* (Bloom 1993, 39)

<sup>34</sup> From their infancy, as they gradually move from their family into the broader society, individuals must synthesise a satisfactory identity out of their ‘historical’, or already formed, identifications and a ‘general mode of behaviour or culture’, termed ‘ideology’. By that psychological definition of ‘ideology’, there is a close relationship between identity, ideology and culture, where a threat or enhancement on ideology or culture can, respectively, threaten or enhance identity. (Bloom 1993, 37-39) As the one-to-one identifications become more generalised, they acquire a social dimension, and a change of circumstances which threatens a generalised identification also threatens the identity of each individual in a group. The individual’s motivation will then be to either protect their historical identification or “*resynthesise a new and secure identity*”. This can occur in isolation for each individual, or be shared by those members of the group that have the same identification, who may synthesise together a new identification, or enhance their old one. “*The degree to which the group will respond as a whole will depend upon certain historical and existential bonds within the group: geographical propinquity, length of time passed together, class, ethnicity, religion, ritual and the degree to which that particular identification is crucial to the general identity. The form that the group reaction to a shared identity threat takes will be determined by a configuration of shared perceptions and commonly accepted communications about the nature of the crisis. Both the perceptions and the communications are, of course, vulnerable to manipulation - particularly so since individuals, and individuals as a group with a shared identification, may seek together to enhance their sense of identity.*” (Bloom 1993, 40)

The triptych of Ancient Greece, Byzantium and Modern Greece, and the notion of a smooth succession between them, have created the foundation for the formation of the Modern Greek identity. This identity, most heavily linked with its ancient past, was introduced into the teaching of history in the Greek school curriculum after the Greek Revolution of 1821, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>35</sup> (Zervas 2012, 4)

This tripartite identity, composed of diverse and largely incompatible elements such as the rational thought of the ancient philosophers with the dogma of a Christian theocracy, has galvanised, but also confused and factionalised multiple generations of Greeks. The overall effect has ultimately led to a complete dysfunction within the political system, ineffective governance, mishandling of social issues, distrust towards the authorities and the institutions, widespread corruption and clientelism.

There is, also, tension between the mutually opposed semiotic systems of introspective self-knowledge or self-recognition and extroverted self-presentation, which is a pervasive feature of Greek national and regional social discourse. (Herzfeld 1988, 208) Greeks living in the micro-society of a post WWII village have often been depicted as exhibiting repetitive behaviours of exaggerated, uncontrolled emotions with high drama and hyperbolae when mourning, i.e. dirge (μοιρολόι), or celebrating (γλέντι).<sup>36</sup> By

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<sup>35</sup> In his book, *The Making of a Modern Greek Identity: Education, Nationalism, and the Teaching of a Greek National Past*, Theodore G. Zervas contends that following the establishment of the Greek national school system in 1834 “a Modern Greek identity was shaped mainly through the Greek school and the crafting of a Greek national history—both of which intended to link the Modern Greek individual to the culture and history of Ancient Greece” by governments in order to forge a national identity based in history, with the following goals: “First, it would unite a Greek public around a common identity based on a shared historical and cultural space. Second, it would legitimize the existence of the state of Greece, and third it would advance Greek territorial claims in the Balkans. Using Paparrigopoulos’s historical template of one continuous Greek history from past to present, the Greek state set forth to unite its citizenry around a common historical experience.” (Zervas 2012, 243-4)

<sup>36</sup> Extroverted self-presentation can also be influenced by introspection and internalisation of stereotypes propagated by outsiders who have abrogated to themselves the authority to formulate them, as exemplified, for example, in the film *Zorba the Greek* and its role in promoting, but also misconstruing, the notion of a quintessential Greek man, or woman, and its repercussions on Greek self-narratives and discourse. Notions of exaggeration, extrovertedness, escapism, fatalism and stubborn repetitiveness observed in everyday activities, as well as externally perpetrated, reinforce the behaviour and self-fulfilling nature of such stereotypes. Zorba’s extroverted nature as manifested in his dramatic expressions, language, gestures and exaggeration are suggestive of a ‘true and authentic’ depiction of Greekness, a convincing, yet baseless, stereotype made more ironic by the non-Greek ethnicity of the actor who plays the main protagonist.

contrast, Anglo-Saxons are considered reserved, detached, objective with controlled emotions; similar analogies can be drawn in terms of their public vs private life.

The stereotype of fatalism, dominant in criticisms by foreigners, is most contested and disputed by Greeks, as it is an evident oversimplification of the concept of ‘ευθυνοφοβία’, or ‘fear of responsibility’, which many Greeks blame their political culture for, in acknowledging their dysfunctional social and political system. (Herzfeld 1989, 34)

Herzfeld introduced the term ‘disemia’ (δισημία)<sup>37</sup> to describe the tension between “*extroverted collective self-presentation and introspective collective self-knowledge*”. Disemia extends to aspects of Greek culture, such as architecture or politics,<sup>38</sup> and is better known in its linguistic form as ‘diglossia’, which signifies the contrast between ‘καθαρεύουσα’ or ‘pure neo-Classical language’ and ‘δημοτική’ or ‘demotic’, the current spoken ‘language of the people’. (Herzfeld 1988, 278) Disemic tension occurs not only at the national, but also at the regional level.<sup>39</sup>

An interesting study of a number of people from different nationalities, including Greeks, has shed light on the interdependency of the concepts of ‘emotion regulation’ and ‘uncertainty avoidance’.<sup>40</sup> Uncertainty Avoidance (UA) is defined as the degree to

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<sup>37</sup> Disemia is “*the existence, in a wide range of cultural modes of expression, of a contrast between a formal code designed for external consumption and a relatively informal code that expresses, through both form and content, the unexpurgated [uncensored] stereotype that Greeks hold of themselves*”.

<sup>38</sup> In architecture, disemia can extend to neo-Classical stereotypes, where façades may hide unpretentious interiors. In politics it manifests itself within a Western image of Greece, favoured by the political Right, that aligns it with Western European political influence and control.

<sup>39</sup> Disemic tension occurs especially in islands, as opposed to the mainland, where there are distinct claims of pre-Classical history, such as Crete with their Minoan civilisation, while they retain modern Greek traits, such as ‘πονηριά’ or ‘cunning’, developed during Turkish occupation of the island aimed to defy and counteract the terms of the overbearing Ottoman rule over Crete. (Herzfeld 1988, 208)

<sup>40</sup> A large systematic cross-cultural study led by Hofstede et al. over a number of years to examine intra- and inter-cultural adjustment in the workplace, conducted with International Business Machines (IBM) employees. Based on a country level factor analysis Hofstede identified four dimensions of “*cultural variability: Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism, and Masculinity*”. Of these, Uncertainty Avoidance is probably linked to emotion regulation (ER).

which people feel threatened by unknown or ambiguous situations, and have developed beliefs, institutions, or rituals to avoid them.<sup>41</sup> “*In Hofstede’s study, the three countries highest on UA were Greece, Portugal, and Guatemala; the three lowest were Denmark, Hong Kong, and Sweden*”. (Matsumoto, Leroux, and Yoo 2005, 26)

Analogous is the case of a local population experiencing an onslaught of illegal immigration which impacts its livelihood, lifestyle and safety. Even though the nature of the conflict places those groups at odds with one another, it also highlights a common dimension, namely that both groups’ motivation is, indeed, survival. The importance of addressing this issue, in fairness to both sides, is that a lack thereof can lead either to dispossession and violence against immigrants, or to a type of localism that can generate ethnic prejudice or racism, which further isolates the local population and may cause forms of intolerance that result in exclusion and victimisation of the ‘Other’.

### **1.2.6. Nationalism and Related Emotions**

Nationalism<sup>42</sup> may be considered as a collective sentiment, which binds people who identify with, and share between them, a sense of historical commonality and political solidarity, which coheres them to a territory or a nation, and demarcates who belongs within its cultural borders and who does not. (Marx 2003, 6)

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<sup>41</sup> In this sense, cultures high on UA are most likely characterized by low levels of emotion regulation, while cultures low on UA have high levels. Individuals high on ER would tend to feel less threatened by unknown or ambiguous situations, and would be able to deal with such situations more constructively than those with low ER.

<sup>42</sup> Nationalism is a non-primary, social emotion which is arguably founded on fear. Fear is a primary emotion, induced by a threat which causes an effect in brain and organ function, followed by a behavioural reaction, such as a ‘fight or flight’ or a ‘paralysis’ response. Fear may be experienced as a reaction to a threat in the present, or to an anticipated situation which threatens one’s life or family, status or security. Fear has been preserved throughout evolution as it aids survival, and is modulated by learning and cognition, and deemed rational or irrational.

Honour (τιμή or φιλότιμο<sup>43</sup> in Greek) and shame (ντροπή<sup>44</sup>) are social emotions, both affecting an individual's self-evaluation and social standing, or even that of a nation. Individuals or corporations need to uphold and abide by moral codes imposed by their society and, when they fail, they are shamed for breaching that code.<sup>45</sup> In his book *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, Charles Darwin had extensively described the signs of shame (or shyness / modesty) as consisting of blushing, downcast eyes, lowering of the head, slack posture, etc., in human populations worldwide. (Darwin 1872, 309-346)

Patriotism, which is linked to honour, is defined as devotion or cultural attachment to one's own country or homeland. Nationalism is a related construct, but involves a national identity and a political ideology or belief in one's nation. Nationalism is a challenging concept to define, with a long history of interpretations, varying according to each particular model's time period and milieu.

Marking a dramatic change in the way nationalism has traditionally been regarded as a source of the kind of hatred that can lead to war, in his book *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, first published in 1983, Benedict Anderson views nationalism as a source of love and selflessness towards one's

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<sup>43</sup> Untranslatable noun, meaning different things according to context; 'doing the right thing', 'doing the honourable thing', 'doing the ethical thing', etc. are common interpretations.

<sup>44</sup> The word 'shame' derives from the Old English sc(e)amu, meaning *to be ashamed*, which many scholars attribute to the pre-Germanic \*skem-, variant of \*kem- to cover, 'covering oneself' being the natural expression of shame. (Oxford English Dictionary) In a slightly different vein but with the same end effect of avoiding eye contact, the derivation of the Greek word (ε)ντροπή and verb εντρέπομαι, which appears in Sophocles' Oedipus at Colonus, means 'to turn back' or 'turn the other way' so as to hide one's face or avoid having others seeing it. (Babiniotis 2009, 937)

<sup>45</sup> Honour is a positive emotion, associated with the concepts of fame and reputation, respect, nobility of rank or birth, and, in terms of sexuality, with chastity, fidelity, virginity, etc. Shame, the opposite of honour, is a painful and negative emotion that results from a perceived breach of an honour code. A sense of shame, however, indicating an awareness of shame, may result from any situation of embarrassment, humiliation, disgrace or presumed inadequacy.

homeland.<sup>46</sup> (Anderson 2006, 145) He further recognises nobility in sacrificing one's life for their country.<sup>47</sup> (Anderson 2006, 148)

Similarly, for Liakos, nationalism is based on a sense of common destiny and language. Racism is based on the concept of a community held together by blood ties and the fear of impurity. Racism divides whereas Nationalism unites. Racism stems from the official nationalism of the dominant dynastic and aristocratic elite and is different from the secular nationalism that stems from a sense of belonging. (Liakos 2005, 86-87)

The ramifications of nationalism stem from the differing definitions of what constitutes a nation and the different strands of nationalism it generates, some of which expound ethnic or cultural intolerance. Symbols of national identity such as flags and national anthems are generally considered very important for the national community, and occasionally become the objects of choice for displays of disrespect or demolition by opposing parties, such as flag burning during demonstrations.<sup>48</sup>

Notwithstanding the difficulties encountered in measuring collective sentiment due to its links with its ideological conceptualisation, the affective conceptualisation of nationalism is helpful in explaining the willingness of people to sacrifice their own life for their nation, regardless of their respective class or status. (vom Hau 2008, 6)

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<sup>46</sup> "...nations inspire love", writes Anderson, disagreeing with those who placed the nation in the heart of fascism or racism.

<sup>47</sup> "Dying for one's country, which usually one does not choose, assumes a moral grandeur which dying for the Labor Party, the American Medical Association, or perhaps even Amnesty International cannot rival, for these are all bodies that one can join or leave easily. Dying for the revolution also draws its grandeur from the degree to which it is felt to be something fundamentally pure".

<sup>48</sup> Empirical techniques used to study nationalism have employed different methodologies in order to address a perceived shortcoming in the theoretical approaches. Social research on nationalism has also been hampered by disagreements with respect to the approach to be followed in conceptualising nationalism. Hau proposes three major conceptualisations of nationalism: as a set of political behaviours, as a collective sentiment, and as a form of ideology or discourse. (vom Hau 2008, 2)

## 1.3. Translation

In its most general sense, translation is a conversion or transference of something from one form or medium into another. In a stricter sense, it is the process of rendering the meaning of a word or phrase from one language into another. Translation is often used interchangeably with the term ‘language localisation’ which refers to a process of adapting a translation to a particular language variant and culture.

Translation and language are implicitly linked, and any theory of translation has its foundation on concepts relating to the philosophy and theory of language, linguistics, sociolinguistics, cultural linguistics and ethnolinguistics. Human language is a (spoken or written) method of communication which involves the combination of words and/or symbols in a structured way governed by rules. It also denotes a system of communication used by people in a particular country or community.

A brief summary of the basic concepts and history of linguistics is intended to elucidate language principles of form and content that are relevant to translation.

### 1.3.1. Philosophy and Theories of Language

Philosophy of Language is the study of the nature of meaning, language use and cognition, and relationship of language to reality. Aristotle starts his *Metaphysics* with the observation “*All ‘men’<sup>49</sup> by nature are actuated with the desire of knowledge*” (MacMahon 1857, 1), a reference most specifically intended to apply to the scientific method, which is based on observation and experimentation.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Or, more precisely, ‘humans’, as it appears in the Greek original “*Πάντες ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγονται φύσει*”.

<sup>50</sup> In communicating science, many language-related processes are involved, for example, words are used to explain phenomena observed through the senses and to make statements about the nature of things. A similar discourse may be applied equally well to art and poetry. Language is the most fundamental tool in the process of communication and can be used to convey truth, or even to deceive. (McKeon 1947, 30, 31)

The notion of scientific linguistics lies in its perceived similitude with formal logic. This, however, is paradoxically an unsubstantiated assumption, as the body of perception of human speech provides a phenomenology which lies beyond the limits of scientific hypothesis and experimental verification, and presents the fundamental logical dilemma of using language in order to study language at the root of epistemology. (Steiner 1998, 115) Modern Philosophy of Language has its roots in the analytical tradition of the late nineteenth century German and Austrian philosophers and the advances made in logic and research into the structure of the brain.<sup>51</sup>

Aiming his ontological ideas away from the sciences, Heidegger describes Language as the ‘house of Being’, or ‘Being-in-the-world’, where men dwell, and whose guardians are poets and thinkers. (Heidegger 1971, 63) It is a metaphor that differentiates language from its utilitarian role as a tool of communication, while recognising the importance of its practitioners over its users, in keeping with Heidegger’s emergentist views that language is more than the sum of its parts.<sup>52</sup>

Theory of Language studies how the brain processes linguistic functions such as words, pronunciation, grammar and syntax as part of communication, and informs any linguistic analysis of texts, to ensure a broader and deeper understanding of utterances, and, hence, the aims and intentions of the characters issuing them, and to assess how descriptive or performative they may be, whether true, misleading or deceitful. (Austin

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<sup>51</sup> The rapid linguistic developments of the early twentieth century amongst English and American linguists focused its scope on the core area of meaning, its usage in communication, cognition and translation, and its relationship to reality or truth. Continental Philosophy has maintained its broader scope within the general area of logic as it is deemed necessary in assessing consistency which, in turn, underlies the semantics of linguistic interaction. “*The paramount reason why we need logic in the study of language is that logic is the formal theory of consistency and that consistency is an all-pervasive and essential semantic aspect of human linguistic interaction. This is true not only of single sentences but also, and in a much bigger way, of texts and discourses. And since presuppositions are, if you like, the cement that makes discourses consistent and since they are induced by the tens of thousands of lexical predicates in any language, it should be obvious that the logic of presuppositions is a prime necessity for natural language semantics.*” (Seuren 2009, 1)

<sup>52</sup> Heidegger centres his theory of language on speech, i.e. talking, listening and silence, considering speech to be the purest and most essential form of language, with writing being a supplement to it, as it gives rise to a reader’s internal speech while reading. (Heidegger et al. 2010: 155-56)

and Urmson 1975, 11) Major Theories of Language in the modern era have included Structural Linguistics,<sup>53</sup> Deconstruction or Post-structuralism<sup>54</sup> and Hermeneutics.<sup>55</sup>

Words or phrases are also used ‘literally’ when they have a well-defined meaning regardless of context, or ‘figuratively’, i.e. non-literally, when used with altered or exaggerated meaning.<sup>56</sup>

### 1.3.2. Cultural Communication

In his book *The Pleasure of the Text*, Barthes explores the conflict he identifies between popular culture with its novelistic writing, which he calls ‘doxa’, and the neutral writing he espouses as the ultimate goal of writing, which he calls ‘para-doxa’, that allows the reader the freedom and pleasure to read openly without been influenced and limited by the strict wishes of the author. Barthes recognises that his writing neutrality ideal is an elusive concept as, even in the case of carefully crafted texts, there will always be a risk

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<sup>53</sup> Structuralism, an intellectual movement which followed existentialism, advocated that human phenomena can only be analysed by examining their interrelations, which form an overarching structure, and that in order to understand how people perceive, think, feel and act, these phenomena need to be examined in the context of a larger system or structure. Apart from linguistics, the structuralist mode of reasoning has been applied in diverse fields such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, literary criticism, semiotics, economics and architecture. The most prominent structuralist thinkers include Lévi-Strauss, linguist Roman Jakobson, and psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. Structural linguistics was established in the early twentieth century by Ferdinand de Saussure.

<sup>54</sup> By the late 1960s, structuralism was criticised for its rigidity and ahistoricism and many of structuralism's basic tenets came under attack from a new wave of predominantly French intellectuals such as the philosopher and historian Michel Foucault, the Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser, the literary critic Roland Barthes and the philosopher and social commentator Jacques Derrida. Though elements of their work necessarily relate to structuralism and are informed by it, these theorists have generally been referred to as deconstructionists or post-structuralists and associated with postmodernism, a movement which marked a similar departure from modernism. Where modernism espoused a move towards re-examination of human values away from tradition, postmodernism was marked by a revival of historical and traditional elements and techniques, extending to religion and theology.

<sup>55</sup> Hermeneutics or Exegesis, the theory of text interpretation originally referring to the interpretation of biblical texts, now applies to the understanding of any written, verbal or nonverbal communication including semiotics, and aims to obtain a coherent explanation of the text.

<sup>56</sup> The differences between literal and figurative language was explored by Aristotle in the field of rhetoric.

of specific words with a ‘socially loaded context’ being misconstrued as having assertive intent.<sup>57</sup> (Barthes and Miller 1975, 28)

Contextuality, or regionality, of language is relevant to a number of linguistics subfields. Sociolinguistics, Cultural linguistics or Ethnolinguistics explore its different cultural facets to varying degrees and scopes. William Downes defines Sociolinguistics as “*the branch of linguistics which studies just those properties of language and languages which require reference to social, including contextual, factors in their explanation*”.<sup>58</sup> (Downes 1998, 9)

Cultural Linguistics is a branch of linguistics which explores the relationship between language, culture and conceptualisation, through analytical tools and theoretical notions predominantly used in cognitive linguistics and cognitive anthropology. (Sharifian and Palmer 2007, 1) Ethnolinguistics is the combination of ethnology and linguistics and is a field of anthropological linguistics<sup>59</sup> which explores the relationship between language and culture.<sup>60</sup> Ethnolinguistics explores the characteristics which distinguish

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<sup>57</sup> Barthes posits that people are all “*caught up in the truth of languages, that is, in their regionality, drawn into the formidable rivalry which controls their proximity. For each jargon (each fiction) fights for hegemony; if power is on its side, it spreads everywhere in the general and daily occurrences of social life, it becomes doxa, nature: this is the supposedly apolitical jargon of politicians, of agents of the State, of the media, of conversation; but even out of power, even when power is against it, the rivalry is reborn, the jargons split and struggle among themselves. A ruthless topic rules the life of language; language always comes from some place, it is a warrior topos*”. (Barthes and Miller 1975, 28)

<sup>58</sup> Sociolinguistics explores the effect that society and its cultural norms, expectations and context have on the way language is used, as well as the effect that language has on society, which is the traditional domain of sociology of language. It studies the different language variants used by groups of different gender, ethnicity, level of education, age, class status, religion, etc., and the way adherence to those codes places people in different socioeconomic classes.

<sup>59</sup> Linguistic anthropology studies language and identity. Anthropological studies of rituals, performance, socialisation and status describe types of speech but also types of speakers who formulate identities through their use of language. Language is the most pervasive and flexible symbolic resource in the cultural production of identity. “*The fact that so much scholarship on identity in sociocultural anthropology draws on linguistic evidence – such as life stories, narratives, interviews, humor, oral traditions, literacy practices, and more recently media discourses – attests to the crucial if often unacknowledged role language plays in the formation of cultural subjectivities*” (Bucholtz and Hall 2004, 369)

<sup>60</sup> An example of this relationship is the extensive vocabulary which certain languages or dialects develop in areas of particular specialisation of their industry, environment or way of life, e.g. the extensive auto

one community from another, and how different ethnic groups perceive the world, think, categorise their experiences and live their life. (Ferraro and Andreatta 2011, 10)

‘Cultural relativism’ is the idea that “*cultural traits are best understood when viewed within the cultural context of which they are a part*”.<sup>61</sup> This implies that any cultural practice should be viewed within its own cultural context rather than that of the observer, as different cultural groups have different conceptual schemes which are not always compatible with others. (Ferraro and Andreatta 2011, 17)

Greek identity has been hard to define in modern times. Mackridge links the Modern Greek identity with the Orthodox Church and the Greek language with its own alphabet, vocabulary and grammar and points out the association that Modern Greek has with the Ancient Greek language in the minds of educated Greeks.<sup>62</sup> (Mackridge 2010, viii)

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industry vocabulary of American English, or the numerous words describing types of snow among the Inuit.

<sup>61</sup> The ‘linguistic relativity hypothesis’ is the principle that asserts the existence of a two-way relationship between language and thought, and states that the structure of a language affects its speakers’ world view and the way they conceptualise their world, by influencing their cognitive processes – a theory known as Whorfianism or the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (a misnomer, as the hypothesis was not jointly formulated, though Whorf had been Sapir’s student). Language was regarded as the “*expression of the spirit of a nation*” by nineteenth century philosopher and linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt, who is acknowledged as the originator of the linguistic relativity hypothesis. (Underhill 2009, 73)

<sup>62</sup> Mackridge asserts that “*Greek national identity has been chiefly defined by two criteria that have been held to distinguish Greeks from non-Greeks. The first is membership of the Orthodox Church. The second is the possession of the Greek language. While there are other peoples in the world who are predominantly Orthodox Christian, the Greek language is clearly distinguished from all other languages in the world by its alphabet, its vocabulary, and its grammar. The Modern Greek language has constantly been associated in the minds of educated Greeks with the Ancient Greek language, together with the unique civilization (including the great achievements in literature and philosophy) that was expressed through it. In the minds of almost all Greeks, their language has also been connected, in an unbroken continuity upheld by the traditions of the Orthodox Church and by the chanting of texts in the liturgy, with the New Testament and other early ecclesiastical texts. This has given educated Greeks a sense that their nation possesses a unique cultural heritage. Their language both distinguishes them from all other modern nations and connects them with the civilization of ancient Hellas, early Christianity, and Byzantium. It is largely this complex connection between contemporary and older culture that has given rise to the development of the Greek national identity in modern times. In no other area has this connection been so problematic as in language*”.

The sense of honour derived from the links with a glorious ancient and byzantine past, in conjunction with a deeply-held conviction of constantly being misunderstood by other European nations, and of being perceived as an inferior pariah by them, has been responsible for the triptych of pride, shame and anger, each dominating in turn Greek political and social life at different times.

Even further back than the Greek Revolution of 1821, the great Greek humanist scholar, Adamantios Korais, who laid the foundations for Modern Greek literature, had recognised the importance of education, and of a consistent and purified language (‘καθαρεύουσα’ as previously mentioned in section 1.2.5) that could provide it. He had also recognised the importance of Greeks demonstrating their worthiness to the ‘enlightened nations of Europe’.<sup>63</sup> (Mackridge 2010, 113)

The positive role that Korais’ purist language ‘καθαρεύουσα’ played in the first century of the modern Greek state, however, was eventually overshadowed by ‘Linguistic Purism’.<sup>64</sup> Purist language or linguistic conservatism<sup>65</sup> ideologies which aim to protect a language from the uptake of foreign or non-native sources of innovation, when these are perceived as politically or socially threatening to the target language, still persist today, not overtly in the Greek setting anymore, but most notably in France in recent decades.

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<sup>63</sup> “Korais was constantly looking insecurely over his shoulder to gauge what western Europeans were thinking and saying about his fellow Greeks. Elsewhere he wrote: *If nothing else, it is good for us to appear, in the eyes of the enlightened nations of Europe, to be concerning ourselves with our own paideia [education/culture], and not to suffer them unjustly to snatch the honour of the rebirth of Hellas from our hands. We note here the importance of Greeks putting on a good outward show to enlightened Europe so that they can demonstrate that they are worthy of political freedom*”.

<sup>64</sup> In the Greek setting, this has led to the language wars of the early twentieth century.

<sup>65</sup> In an interview with Denis Byrne, Michael Herzfeld expounds: “*I wrote a piece for an Athenian newspaper called ‘The True Greek Tragedy’ and it was precisely about the imposition of, essentially, an eighteenth-century model of ancient Athenian culture on modern Greece. The idea was that if the Greeks couldn’t live up to it they clearly were somehow inferior. And of course there was a substantial part of the Greek elite that was complicit in that. My view is that Greece, like other countries, has had a vibrant modern culture and people have suffered greatly from having the things that they regarded as their everyday practices disrespected to that extent*”. (Byrne 2011, 151)

### 1.3.3. Translation Theory and Practice

Further to the definitions listed in previous sections, in its broadest sense, translation is a conversion of one form into another. In linguistic terms, it is the process of rendering or communicating the meaning of a certain source text, i.e. word, phrase, sentence, etc., into another language, or ‘target language’, in the way the author intended. (Newmark 1988, 5)

Translation entails the rendering of words, sentiments and ideas from one language and culture to another, and can thus enable communication, reveal the character of a culture to another, and keep cultures connected and part of a diverse, yet integrated and functional, multicultural world. By its very nature, a translation describes different ideas, a different culture or another world, and is a means of communicating ‘otherness’ rather than giving the false impression of the familiar: the self. As there are numerous ways of expressing an idea or describing a situation, so are there numerous ways of performing a translation of that idea or situation. The notion of ‘truth’ in translation is therefore a challenging one to prove.

When the source text allows many readings, every one of those readings constitutes a new interpretation, which also calls for a new explanation-exegesis to be reflected in the target text. Translation inescapably reflects the translator’s ideology. Lefevere points out that a translation is in effect a rewriting of the original text and, as such, manipulates it to “*various ideological and poetological ends*”, no matter what the translator’s intention had been.<sup>66</sup> (Lefevere 1992, 41)

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<sup>66</sup> According to Lefevere, the two factors that “*determine the image of a work of literature as projected by a translation ... are in order of importance, the translator’s ideology (whether he/she willingly embraces it, or whether it is imposed on him/her as a constraint by some form of patronage) and the poetics dominant in the receiving literature at the time the translation is made. The ideology dictates the basic strategy the translator is going to use and therefore also dictates solutions to problems concerned with both the ‘universe of discourse’ expressed in the original (objects, concepts, customs belonging to the world that was familiar to the writer of the original) and the language the original itself is expressed in*”.

Even though translation has been practised for millennia, it is generally accepted that it was only in the 1960s that translation studies became a discipline in its own right. George Steiner's book, *After Babel* (1975), was the first landmark publication to systematically investigate the contemporary theory and practice of translation.<sup>67</sup> Steiner's thorough and wide-ranging analysis of translation theory and practice is an exploration of language, interpretation, communication and hermeneutics.<sup>68</sup> (Weissbort and Eysteinsson 2006, 396)

In *After Babel*, Steiner argues that translation is "*formally and pragmatically implicit in every act of communication, in the emission and reception of each and every mode of meaning*", and we translate at every moment when speaking and receiving signals in our own tongue.<sup>69</sup> (Steiner 1998, xii) Understanding means translation and the primary function of language is for inward communication, with outward communication only being its secondary phase. (Steiner 1998, 125) Steiner also points out the difficulties encountered within the same language when communicating "*across spaces of historical time, of social class, of different cultural and professional sensibility*".<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> A second, revised, edition was published in 1992, and a third edition in 1998.

<sup>68</sup> "*Steiner's view and theories of translation in After Babel are embedded in a wide-ranging exploration of language and hermeneutics. While the book contains valuable analyses of translations of texts from one language to another, it also dwells extensively on the translatory nature of understanding, interpretation, communication, and various aspects of language. Steiner's philosophical, literary, and linguistic sources are legion, but prominent among them are hermeneutic traditions stemming from both Jewish Gnosticism and Kabbalism ... and the modern hermeneutic-existential philosophy of Heidegger and Gadamer.*"

<sup>69</sup> "*To understand is to decipher. To hear significance is to translate. Thus the essential structural and executive means and problems of the act of translation are fully present in acts of speech, of writing, of pictorial encoding inside any given language. Translation between different languages is a particular application of a configuration and model fundamental to human speech even when it is monoglot.*" (Steiner 1998, xii)

<sup>70</sup> Karalis explains one of the major difficulties when attempting communication across time periods: "*The greatest trap for modern Greeks is set by the Greek language itself. ... the same words have different meanings. However as history has been an ideological battleground of decontextualised abstractions, nobody dares to look back and reconstruct the appropriate meaning of each word. They lump all meanings together as if the same word from Homer means the very same thing to this day. Confusions follow: the reduction of the past to a footnote of the present, the loss of historicity and sense of specificity. Journalists thrive on such confusions.*" (Karalis 2014, 148-9)

From a post-structuralist perspective, as previously implied by Hilda Doolittle in her *Notes on Euripides*, section 1.2.4 footnote 28, it is argued that an ancient Greek text cannot be recreated in modern-day English, as we are now unavoidably conditioned by many layers of interpretations over generations, which makes it impossible to gain access to the original author's ideas and intentions. It is, however, also argued that a factual reading of ancient authors is indeed possible if the temporal framework used is informed by 'perceptual filters', built on enough information to allow a 'cultural encyclopaedia' to be created for that time period. (Griffiths 2006, 30)

There are two broadly distinct translation methods or strategies employed by practitioners in the course of translation, as proposed by Eugene Nida who coined the terms: 'Dynamic Equivalence'<sup>71</sup> and 'Formal Correspondence', also known as 'Formal Equivalence'. The former method is based on transferring the meaning of phrases and sentences, and the latter is based on word transfer, with a further potential aim to also retain sentence and grammatical structure. (Nida and Taber 1982, 27, 200-201)

When faced with specific difficulties of irreciprocity between languages, and there is no direct equivalent term or word for a certain concept in the target language, formal equivalence is not possible, and translators either use more dynamic translation and paraphrasing, or invent a neologism to represent the concept in the target language, something that is very commonly observed when ancient Greek words are transcribed into English in a number of disciplines.

Moreover, in an attempt to make a work of fiction relevant to a spatially or temporally foreign audience, some literary translators resort to taking on a creative role to 'improve' the text with their own interpretations of the original text's inherent

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<sup>71</sup> Dynamic equivalence aims to create a translation which will have the same effect on the reader of the target text as the one that the original text had on the reader of the source text, and is therefore more suited to literary translation, whereas in some other situations, such as legal or technical translation, the aim would be greater accuracy, obtained by greater adherence to formal equivalence. The task of finding equivalents is clearly the most challenging part of the translation process, and what quality assessment is mainly based on.

ambiguities which could conceivably, on many occasions, have been intentional and deliberate.<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, in the hands of a capable writer, a cultural transfer may retain its imagery of nuances and ambiguities, allowing a depth of interpretation, and engaging each reader on a personal level, rather than being easily dismissed by the majority of its audience as an irrelevant curiosity.<sup>73</sup>

### 1.3.4. Translating Cultures

The study of modern language and linguistic translation necessitates a deep understanding and knowledge of culture. Cultural translation presupposes a rigorous understanding of other cultures, recognition of the centrality of translation and cultural awareness of untranslatables, appreciation of the role and historical contribution of migrant communities and the prejudice and intolerance they have most probably faced in their process of integration into a new society. It also requires a thorough understanding of the dynamic relationships between cultures and the importance and inherent challenges of cross-cultural communication, in an effort to overcome the obstacles of ethnocentrism and monolingualism, as part of an interconnected, tolerant and inclusive world.

In *Translating Cultures*, David Katan examines translation at its interface with anthropology and linguistics and defines ‘culture’ as “*a system for making sense of experience*”.<sup>74</sup> (Katan 2014, 3) Beyond their traditional training in language, translation

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<sup>72</sup> These translations may read well and even be preferred by their target audience (Linguistics, Danmark, and Linguistics 1976, 62), with the addition of foreign elements, such as punctuation or idiomatic expressions, they can, however, transform the original work and remove nuances and ambiguities which gave it its unique character and value.

<sup>73</sup> According to Karalis, “*If the translated text looks and sounds as if it was originally written in that language, then the translation is nothing more than an imitative imposition of one cultural system onto another, by censoring the original and excising elements alien to the pattern of the new language*”. (Karalis 2003, 137)

<sup>74</sup> Katan introduces a “*basic presupposition ... that the organization of experience is not ‘reality’, but ... a simplification and distortion which changes from culture to culture. Each culture acts as a frame within which external signs or ‘reality’ are interpreted*”. He describes the synchronic and diachronic elements of culture, discusses the translation process in the broader domain of communication, and introduces the concept of the ‘cultural interpreter’ or ‘mediator’.

theory and practice, Katan stresses the importance of teaching culture to translators, interpreters and other mediators, in order for them to acquire cultural understandings in constructing, perceiving and translating reality in order to meet the demands of transcultural and intercultural communication. He cautions, however, against a ‘cultural’ perspective which ‘substitutes for rigour and coherence’.<sup>75</sup> (Katan 2014, 1)

For Katan, translators and interpreters ideally change “*identity, beliefs and strategies*” as their intercultural sensitivity and competence are enhanced while working “*towards intercultural awareness and mediation*”. This “*clearly highlights the difference between ethnocentric and ethnorelative beliefs regarding language, communication and translation*”. (Katan 2014, 4) ‘Ethnocentrism’<sup>76</sup> is a starting point and, in fact, a prerequisite for developing ‘ethnorelativity’<sup>77</sup>, a corollary of sorts to Goethe's maxim that “*no monoglot truly knows his own language*”.

Apart from the political importance of translation in terms of transmission of ideas, cross-language transfer can bring about changes in emotional state. In nationalist arenas, translation can be a source of mutual understanding and harmony, but also xenophobia, or cultural misunderstandings causing disappointment and frustration. (Shields and Clarke 2011, 2)

As indicated above, transference of cultural experiences and background is affected by the translator’s own background and beliefs as well as the receiver’s own cultural experiences, which are all further dependent upon their respective generation, mode of interpretation or mode of internalisation of events and other subjective factors.

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<sup>75</sup> In identifying the impact of ethnic intransigence and conflict around the world at the start of the twenty first century, Katan poignantly concludes that the task of translating cultures has clearly not been successful to date, as a global rift has even affected the “*usually quiet world of academic translators*” following “*responses to the Israel/Palestine conflict*”, while “*professional translators themselves ... have been remarkably uninvolved. They are still battling to keep up with deadlines, with an increasing amount of their work part-translated by machine, and in search of *le mot juste**”. (Katan 2014, 2)

<sup>76</sup> Ethnocentrism is defined as ‘viewing one’s own culture as being central to reality’.

<sup>77</sup> Ethnorelativity is defined as ‘experiencing one’s own culture within the context of other cultures’.

Translation cannot occur in isolation. A translator works using the cultural or linguistic knowledge they have acquired from their own personal, cultural, social, educational and professional background, including their own prior translating experience. (Pym 1992, 17)

Translation is a process involving an exchange of semantic codes and traditions, with their distinct lexical and verbal associations, between languages. This process of transcoding however requires the existence of equivalent codes in the target language, and that is not always possible, dependent on such diverse factors as history, geography, culture and even idiosyncrasy of different peoples.<sup>78</sup>

In conclusion, and on a strictly linguistic level, a thorough understanding of the source and target culture and language is essential in achieving communication. Without an understanding of the cultural context, translation is pointless and ineffective. The ‘right word’ is not appropriate unless it conveys a sufficiently accurate meaning, regardless of whether or not it is assessable as such by individual audiences.

## 1.4. Cinema

Cinema is the most recent major art form which involves the creation of moving, or motion, pictures. It is a visual medium used to tell a story, or present an idea acted out on screen, usually with sound, actors and a variety of other props. The first movies were called ‘actualities’ and were in the style of ‘cinéma vérité’, of short duration, and recorded natural, mundane, everyday scenes. Documentaries were developed later and, soon after, narrative filmmaking emerged, with scripted stories of play-like events.

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<sup>78</sup> As Karalis posits, “*Translation firstly means transcoding: discovering new codes in another language that will encase the given meaning or meanings in an analogical formulation. Transcoding however presupposes that analogous codes do already exist in the language of translation; codes with their own discursive potential and stylistic variety, established by previous writers in that tradition*”. (Karalis 2003, 134)

Synchronised sound was then added in 1923. Films, at the present time, are usually shot in colour and have voices and sounds, music and multiple types of digital effects.

### 1.4.1. Film Theory

Film theory<sup>79</sup> explores the concept of cinema and its relationship to reality, art and society, in terms of film semiotics, cinematography, design, art, philosophy, psychology, psychoanalysis, etc. Its original status as a theory in the humanities has been challenged in recent decades, from both filmmakers and theorists, based on the complexity, rigidity, arbitrariness and lack of rigor of its sub-theories and terminologies, with some calling for a formulation of a philosophy of the humanities instead, while others attributing its demise to its ultimate success and overwhelming acceptance and, hence, disappearance into the background.

Film studies have concentrated on the aesthetic, interpretive, and media industry studies paradigms, generating a number of major theories, e.g. psychoanalytic or Marxist film theory, cognitive film theory and analytic philosophy and, following through from trends in humanities which have been gaining critical authority recently, have branched out to such areas as feminism and queer theories.

The study of the way film generates emotions in the audience is a major area of research in cognitive film theory<sup>80</sup> and helps identify the affective appeal of films and how they relate to the audience deriving pleasure from viewing them, especially in addressing the

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<sup>79</sup> In his book, *Film Theory and Contemporary Hollywood Movies*, Buckland posits that, like all theory, 'film theory' is "a form of speculative thought that aims to make visible the underlying structures and absent causes that confer order and intelligibility upon films. These structures and causes, while not observable in themselves, are made visible by theory." (Buckland 2009, 6) Contrary to being superseded, film theory is arguably now able to open up hybrid spaces between binary oppositions, such as that of the classical vs postclassical cinema, rationality of cognition vs irrationality of emotion, or emphasise moments of historical transformation, unstable identities and shifting boundaries. (Buckland 2009, 12)

<sup>80</sup> Cognitive film theory and Screen theory focus on the interface between film and spectator, but screen theory examines "the way a film addresses unconscious desires and fantasies", whereas cognitive theory analyses 'normative behaviour' such as "perception, narrative comprehension, social cognition, and the experience of garden-variety emotions such as fear and pity". (Buckland 2009, 10)

paradox of films which present depressing or traumatic events, yet they are enjoyable and popular.

Cinema's communication resources, or 'modes', include visual, spatial, aural, textual and linguistic elements which, apart from the medium they represent, are modified by social interactions. These 'semiotic modes' "*are shaped both by the intrinsic characteristics and potentialities of the medium and by the requirements, histories and values of societies and their cultures.*" (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, 35)

Films are multimodal artefacts as they are imbued with a combination of semiotic modes. This multimodality enables them to create meaning in different ways, and to engage and communicate with their audience to convey a concept or message. Images, sounds, gestures and language all play a significant and distinct part in a film's capacity to communicate ideas, and can be analysed by applying multimodal analysis to audiovisual translation. (McLoughlin, Biscio, and Mhainnín 2011, 12)

### **1.4.2. Genres**

Genre is a style or category of a piece of literature, art or entertainment and has its origins in Ancient Greek literature where it signified the style of prose, poetry or performance. Genres can refer to the type of industry (e.g. film genre, music genre, video game genre), or, in film theory they are generally based on those from literary critical theory, e.g. drama, crime, horror, war, documentary, comedy, etc. Additionally, they can refer to the target audience, e.g. family, kids, chick flick, etc. The genre examined here is drama with or without a component of comedy or parody.

As a genre, drama largely depends on character development and deals with emotional themes. Dramatic themes place their characters in conflict with themselves and society, and expose them to moral dilemmas in relation to a variety of issues, such as race, discrimination, intolerance, violence, sexuality, religion, poverty, corruption, etc.

Drama encompasses many subgenres such as period drama, romantic comedy and crime, and aims to involve the audience by appealing to their deepest emotions.<sup>81</sup>

Plurality of interpretations, especially in art movies, means that each reading constitutes a new interpretation, explanation or exegesis for each individual, or even for the same individual diachronically. This is still true for the genres of satire, parody or black comedy<sup>82</sup> where different experiences may prompt different reactions in a cross-cultural audience, and individuals of the same culture as well.

Comedies can offer escapism in times of economic downturn, while also tackling serious local issues. One of those films is Nikos Perakis' 1984 comedy, *Loafing and Camouflage* (*Loufa kai Parallagi*), about Greek soldiers in 1967-68 doing their military

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<sup>81</sup> Western genre theory can be traced back to Aristotle's *Poetics*, and the European classicists of the eighteenth-century considered genres as ideal types of artistic expression for emulation and refinement. Their popularity waned among nineteenth-century Romantic artists and writers, however, who regarded the academically defined rules of style and content governing genres in the arts as an over-regulation. When cinema arrived in the 1890s, genres were even less popular through their association with mass-market publishing and popular culture. Early film critics appreciated individual formative visions rather than generic popular forms. In the 1980s, two contradictory definitions of genre theory were discussed: genre as an 'ideological tool' in the production of cultural perspective, or, as a 'social ritual' in reflecting society's perspective, although, in general, ideological readings are based on textual rather than industry aims and analysis. It has been argued that genre films produced, for example, by a capitalist industry serve the cultural interests of that industry by maintaining the status quo, with a counter-argument that such a position amounts to economism, reductivism and cultural pessimism, and too simplified a model of noting only the influence of industry over audience rather a parallel reverse interaction. (Miller and Stam 2008, 36) Genres are currently used as descriptive tools by audiences and producers and for critical analysis and interpretation by critics and film scholars. There is often crossover or hybridity of genre within a film, and genre motifs are experienced intertextually. Derrida, in fact, suggests that a purity of unmixed genres is not possible, and historical research on 'classical Hollywood' genres has found that genre categories usually involve mixed genre descriptions, and film audiences have been found to resist uniform generic classifications. (Miller and Stam 2008, 39) Popular genre categorisations of films are often made according to a film's expected effect on its audience, e.g. thriller, suspense, horror, or tear-jerker, rather than broad descriptions such as documentary, romance, or art movie, thus indicating to the audience what to expect. (Miller and Stam 2008, 40)

<sup>82</sup> Comic devices and works listed in this thesis are largely synonymous, and are used here with the following broad meanings: parody (exaggerated imitation to a comic extent); irony (use of words to convey a meaning that is opposite to their literal interpretation); sarcasm (mockery by using irony), satire (literary work using humour to mock or ridicule); allegory (literary device conveying a hidden moral meaning); farce (humorous work that uses slapstick and buffoonery); black comedy (comic work which uses farce to criticise taboos)

service at the start of the military dictatorship.<sup>83</sup> It is well established that more entertaining genres such as comedies generally draw better attendances than darker or depressing films. The genre of extreme nationalism and violent consequences is not an entertaining theme when one is confronted by it in their everyday life.

When a similar-themed film comes celebrated from abroad, though, the uptake is more forthcoming for a number of reasons: curiosity about the foreign experience of a familiar theme; how such a theme is handled by a foreign director and how it can be modelled for local directors; looking for similarities in the experience and a deeper understanding of the problem; and, maybe, finding that the roots of the problem emanate, perhaps, from abroad, so that one can blame the foreign ‘Other’ for a local manifestation of the problem.

Home-grown films often tend to go largely unnoticed by their local public. This is often explained away by blaming the general public for being undiscerning, for their lack of sensitivity, or lack of support of the local film industry; or blaming the overall quality of a film, its ‘outmoded’ style, characters and/or actors, etc., for not resonating with the audience. This may, indeed, be the case for some films. However, this general lack of interest in local movies is not only a Greek phenomenon. Other countries, among them Australia, seem at times to be suffering a similar lack of interest in their local films.

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<sup>83</sup> Gartzonika and Serban have used *Loafing and Camouflage* to study “some of the ways in which the English subtitles represent the interaction between the characters on screen, with special focus on the politeness strategies which are adopted and, in particular, the ways in which potential face-threatening acts in the original dialogue are dealt with in the subtitles. It is full of disrespectful mockery of the military regime and of amusing asides on army life. Based on satire and dialogue, the film has been one of the big commercial successes of Modern Greek cinema. It is still occasionally broadcast in Greece, though it is watched in a different way than 20 years ago when it was first released. The film still inspires laughter, though the original political satire may be lost on present day young audiences for whom the seven-year military dictatorship in Greece (1967–1974) is a fairly remote episode in history. Also, due to the lapse of time, scenes which were very funny when the film was first released have lost part of their original appeal, and may even seem predictable (soldiers being caught by their superiors while they are with women) or naïve (soldiers peeping at beautiful fashion models who are changing their clothes). Older generations who first saw the film when they themselves were young watch it with nostalgia, and recognise many of the young actors in the film who have in the meanwhile become stars of the Greek television”. (Gartzonika and Serban 2009, 239)

Local films tend to also not be sufficiently promoted, most of them being independent and having a limited release with a small advertising and marketing budget that may, in any case, only be expected to appeal to the local intelligentsia which does not account for sufficient numbers. Some of these films are often accused of being self-indulgent exaggerations, made by state-funded intellectuals for intellectuals, with complete disregard and disdain for the general public, which misrepresent the issues faced by the public and offer an unfavourable one-sided view of each issue in favour of minorities.

The instantaneous illegal internet downloads of films, catastrophic as it may be deemed for the movie industry, provides a silver lining in making some films accessible to international audiences after a certain period of time. It is clear that the movie industry ought to implement new ways of distribution for those types of films.

Times of economic downturn also impose restrictions on the affordability of the movie-going experience for movies which do not come already heralded by the media or movie critics. Lesser known actors cannot generate the same interest in a movie as established international stars. Less costly technical production, script or direction can also cause a movie to suffer in comparison to international blockbusters which offer short-term escapism.

### **1.4.3. Audiovisual Translation**

Audiovisual Translation (AVT), or multimedia translation, is a branch of translation studies which involves subtitling or surtitling, dubbing and voice-overs in audiovisual or multimedia works. As a result of the increasing popularity of audiovisual media,<sup>84</sup> especially from and into the English language, the field of audiovisual translation is currently expanding at a rapid pace to enable communication between cultures. (Díaz-Cintas and Anderman 2009, 7-8)

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<sup>84</sup> It has been suggested that the AVT field's rapid development merits its own theoretical approach, independently of the field of translation, however the issues involved in AVT are more complex than simply its technical limitations and, as a result, AVT can arguably be researched as a branch of translation studies. (Karamitroglou 2000, 249)

Cinema encapsulates the culture, assumptions and values of a society and turns them into a simulated reality which informs, affects and influences, through audiovisual translation, an audience of a different culture. The power of audiovisual media conveys notions, stereotypes and views about social issues of gender, race or religion, to name but a few, and makes them accessible across cultures. Cinema constructs imagery that aims to mirror reality but, in so doing, it arguably also distorts it.

Issues of translation of stereotypes and identities are very complex for translators as it is near impossible to overcome the limitations of the medium in order to attend to the transference of nuances and particularities. The presence of a screen image and sound means that the semiotic content must be consistent with the linguistic mapping of the subtitles in the adoptive culture, in at least two different languages, one spoken and one written. (Díaz-Cintas and Anderman 2009, 9)

Unlike a typical linguistic translation, audiovisual translation requires acoustic and kinetic synchronicity between subtitles, dialogue, voice-over, sound effects and semiotic context. This complexity inherent in audiovisual translation demands the implementation of specific strategies beyond those involved in linguistic translation with the latter, however, still remaining its basic foundation.

Hence, each aspect of linguistic style or register, dialect, formal or colloquial language, language that conveys certain emotions such as anger, happiness, love, humour or hatred, or actions such as swearing, berating or praising, demands its own context analysis, as do cultural aspects, such as symbolism, cultural barriers and psychological conditioning; gender or gay issues; gender-specific expressions, language and vocabulary; semantic definitions, syntax, parts of speech; jargon, social linguistic varieties and norms; formal, informal and familial communication; registers e.g. language used by petty criminals or the underworld.

Each genre, such as melodrama, historical drama, comedy or thriller, also places different demands and constraints on subtitlers whose expertise in 'creative condensing' is a requirement of their role. Comedy is, in fact, considered the most

difficult genre for subtitlers when dealing with a great deal of idiomatic dialogue, puns and innuendo, cynicism or topical references, where paraphrasing is an art.

When jokes are untranslatable within the typical spatial subtitling constraints, they ideally need to be abbreviated or reworded while retaining the same essential meaning. If they cannot be interpreted, a different joke may be substituted, if one can be found within the time constraints. Slang and idioms are notoriously difficult to translate into another language, especially in shortened form, and context is usually different, even when the essential meaning is the same.<sup>85</sup>

In conclusion, the function of subtitles is to allow the audience to understand foreign text and, by domesticating the text through subtitle translation, the aim is to universalise it, so that it loses its foreignness. This is in effect, as stated above, a type of falsification of the text as it loses its otherness and its cultural or individual characteristics. Alternatively, the use of ‘abusive subtitles’ – when swearing is substituted with symbols, or labels declaring ‘untranslatable pun’ appear on screen, usually in comedy – redirects the spectator to the original text, often adding to the comedic effect. (Shields and Clarke 2011, 135)

#### **1.4.4. National Identity in Contemporary Greek Cinema**

The national identity depicted against an Arcadian rural setting which dominated Greek films in the nineteen fifties and sixties, and even in the non-idyllic settings of films in the auteur tradition of the seventies and beyond, has now been adapted to a harsh urban identity-less environment where the familiar traditions of the past are hard to identify, even if they underlie each new reality. The comfort and generational essence of the sea is nowhere to be found in the jungles of the urban cities where incompatible realities are forced to coexist.

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<sup>85</sup> Greetings can also be challenging, and are occasionally omitted when the subtitler makes a judgment that they are sufficiently known as such by the intended foreign audience. Insults also need to be adjusted for the target audience, while still retaining their ‘colour’ and register. Knowledge of the setting and time period requires detailed research on the part of the subtitler in order to retain credibility with the audience. (Stubbings 2012, 3)

The latent conflict between the notions of nationhood and humanity, canvassed in numerous films of the auteur tradition, forced individuals to make a choice between nationalism – by virtue of their citizenship, and morality – by virtue of belonging to the human race. Art movies<sup>86</sup> worldwide have often been exploring themes of racism, nationalism and prejudice or culture clashes, especially during times of rising population movements which tend to coincide with an increase in ultranationalist incidents, such as after the Kosovo crisis, post 1990. (OECD 2001, 68)

The themes of displacement and migration, which have always featured prominently in modern Greece, have been explored by numerous filmmakers throughout the history of Greek cinema, as impoverished or persecuted Greeks sought refuge in affluent Western countries, mainly in the three decades following WWII. As far back as the 1980s, however, a reversal occurred in the direction of migration, due to improving economic conditions in the periphery of Europe, and waves of migrants started arriving in Greece from Eastern Europe and the Balkans, primarily Albania, the Middle East and, to a lesser extent, from member states of the European Union. (Lazaridis and Poyago-Theotoky 1999, 719)

Today the migration problem has suddenly become more acute in Europe, as a result of the escalating situation in Iraq and Syria and the worsening humanitarian crisis. Nationalism provides an attractive choice for some, as morality is a complex concept, and indiscriminate altruism is not always convincing, especially when helping one group can endanger or harm another. Any discriminatory, xenophobic or racist act is

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<sup>86</sup> Theo Angelopoulos' 1995 pivotal epic masterpiece *Ulysses' Gaze* (*To Βλέμμα του Οδυσσέα*), which introduced a new aesthetic and questioned every certainty, influenced the direction of many subsequent films. Constantinos Giannaris' 1998 film *From the Edge of the City* (*Από την Άκρη της Πόλης*) presented the story of a family of Pontian Greeks, who returned to Greece, their homeland, from the former Soviet Union, only to be labelled foreigners. The only existence afforded them is a life of petty crime and prostitution at the margins of society and at the edge of the city. The film "*depicts the misery and squalor, violence and frustration, desire and disgust that immigrants feel in a hostile country ... [and] captures ... the anguish, horror, and panic of the immigrants as they confront a huge impenetrable social machine of exclusion and stigmatization.*" (Karalis 2012, 255) Other notable films on multiple manifestations of Otherness include Angeliki Antoniou's 2006 film *Eduart* which centred on Albanian immigrants and received eighteen awards around the world.

then ‘justified’ if carried out in the name of a nationalist group agenda. In an age where European unification is searching for a new borderless and shared transnational identity, individuals scrutinise their national credentials in their efforts to make sense of an uneasy coexistence with others of different cultural and/or religious backgrounds.

In an attempt to explore issues that cause extreme reactions against refugees and economic immigrants, and offer solutions for the alleviation of such phenomena, a number of filmmakers have been focusing on these issues, each in their different way, and generally in the urban and contemporary genres, mixed in, occasionally, with elements of comedy or humour, which can often ease tensions, make them more accessible and promote their effectiveness.

Though movies tackling such potent topics as racism, nationalism and xenophobia are clearly not a commercial movie genre and, hence, their mass appeal can only be described as limited – especially when depicting familiar attitudes and behaviours generally acknowledged as too hard to combat – today’s mass media have allowed an expansion in the appeal of such movies to a larger audience, in neighbouring or even more remote countries, and they have increasingly been gaining recognition and awards beyond their borders for their creators. Even when these films have a limited prospective audience in their country of origin, their international appeal can make the difference in their success or failure.

Once again, literature soon responded to the new settings and the ensuing human suffering, and fiction writers urged their indigenous readers to shed their indifference, and understand alterity, by giving the dislocated immigrants a multiplicity of viewpoints and voices.<sup>87</sup> Karalis reaches a similar conclusion with films dealing with

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<sup>87</sup> “The dramatization of immigrant consciousness forces the reader into the foreign subject’s sphere of presentness. Such an engagement with the other, apart from challenging racist and conformist behavior, can have a destabilizing energy. This is all the more apparent when the victimized self’s speech reverses the host’s position by suspending the distinction between indigenous and foreign, a distinction embedded in the production of social hierarchies and in the interconnectedness of sovereignty with the notion of nationality.” (Gotsi 2012, 174) Gotsi also cautions that “the depiction of the migrant subject aspires to western ideals of human equality and tends to overlook the particular by privileging the universal. Despite, then, their humane stance towards the immigrants’ plight, their harsh critique of the racism

these issues in an insular and repetitive way.<sup>88</sup> Post-1980s, cinema followed a similar path, and a number of gritty feature films appeared, dealing with themes of migration from multiple perspectives.<sup>89</sup>

Forced exile, a perilous journey full of obstacles that threaten their return at every turn, complete alienation in an inhospitable environment on their arrival in Athens, and cruel treatment by the authorities, are here menacing not their usual subjects, the dispossessed Greeks, but the foreigners at the hands of those who, a few generations or so ago, were themselves ‘the dispossessed’. But this may, indeed, be an oversimplified, naïve or populist view, for they do find wholehearted, yet, objectively, scant support from those who are themselves disadvantaged and marginalised: the strangers within, whose fortunes are yet to change after all these generations ago.

While Europe is searching for a unifying European identity which would allow for, and not suffocate out, the diversity of identities of its member nation-states, its continuing expansion and integration of Eastern European nations are creating challenges to its liberal values of recognising and celebrating an ever broader diversity while holding on to a central tenet of core liberal and democratic political, moral and cultural values. (Eleftheriotis 2001, 47)

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*underlying Greek society, and, most significantly, despite the value they place on the representation of different voices, these texts limit the possibility of destabilizing established ethnosocial hierarchies.”* (Gotsi 2012, 176)

<sup>88</sup> *“Many recent films seem to restrict themselves in depicting the misery and the confusion of contemporary life, the suffering of immigrants and the inability for effective communication in a domesticated and sanitized way that makes their social critique irrelevant and their political intervention harmless. Instead of revealing to the viewer what happens, by foregrounding the radical potential within the real, this new episodic realism fizzles out into either inconsequential fragments or cute micro-histories by wasting its energy on incomprehensible screams or doleful complaints.”* (Karalis 2012, 281)

<sup>89</sup> Sotiris Goritsas’ 1993 film *From the Snow* (*Απ’ το Χιόνι*), winner of a number of international awards, heralded *“a new representational style in Greek cinema”* for its treatment of the story of three Albanian illegal immigrants whose journey to Greece was marked by tragedy, with one dying, and the other two forced to return empty-handed. *“The film explored the unknown back alleys of the Greek capital, giving for the first time a clear image of the squalor and misery of many homeless people, local or immigrant”*. (Karalis 2012, 234-5)

These conflicting demands are a source of anxiety for its many levels of governing bodies as well as the ‘national’ cinemas of its member states, which bring into focus the requirements and criteria for prioritising areas of need, for example in films which promote shared histories and cultures, and those which bring to light cultural identities threatened with possible extinction, hence depriving Europe of its diverse constituencies. (Eleftheriotis 2001, 48)

Regional differences between populations which have been artificially unified, or have been on opposite sides of conflicts in the past, also threaten the impartiality of the depiction of some states’ national identities.<sup>90</sup> Yielding to pressure from one ethnic group against another can also have a distorting effect and negative impact on the European vision of preserving the true identity of each ethnicity which comprises it.<sup>91</sup>

In closing, although ‘national’ films aim to explore themes of identity and difference, they do need to attract transnational audiences in their endeavour to cross cultural borders. In the case of contemporary Greek films exploring issues of identity, the

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<sup>90</sup> “What is ironic about liberal celebrations of cultural diversity or even radical forms of cultural relativism is the fact that such recognitions of the value of the various cultures perceive them in isolation from each other ... [they] exist beyond politics and beyond interaction. From this perspective, many studies of national cinemas (especially European national cinemas) demonstrate the characteristics of the “cultural diversity” approach. National cinemas are usually studied in isolation, with their individual ‘value’ largely unquestioned (their study epistemologically justified precisely on the grounds of diversity), and often conceptualized in terms of meta-discourse – their contribution to the international development of the film form”. (Eleftheriotis 2001, 50)

<sup>91</sup> As part of the European Union, the people of its member-states have been handed a further European identity which superimposes on EU citizens its own set of rights and demands. The nature of a European identity differs from that of a national identity as the EU is clearly not a nation or nation-state. At its core, this identity, established by a political elite, aims at uniting European nations under an umbrella of carefully planned treaties, legislation and networks of institutions to govern its member states. In exchange for relinquishing aspects of their sovereignty, great benefits are derived from being a member of a prosperous collective economy and having access to expansive and open import and export markets within the EU and overseas. (Guibernau 2014, 36) The EU is founded on the shared history of its nation-states – which has none-the-less included violent conflicts, wars and enmities – and is committed to proactively supporting the diversity of languages and cultures within. While European identity relies on a shared sense of belonging to a political and economic power which espouses respect for freedom, human rights, liberal democracy, the rule of law, social welfare, progress and prosperity, enduring loyalty to the EU is ultimately dependent on expectations of tangible economic benefits derived from it, something not assured for every one of its states following the recent economic crisis. (Guibernau 2014, 37)

interest they have generated appears to be less confined to their local audiences and more appealing to Greek audiences in the diaspora, to varying degrees.

## **1.5. Concluding Remarks**

In this chapter we have endeavoured to outline theories of emotions, language, translation and cinema, which are relevant to the scope of this thesis. We attempted to define emotions, their history, classification and language, as well as their cultural expressions. We then focused on national identity and nationalism and its related emotions, including honour, shame, fear and anger.

In the translation section, we presented a brief theoretical outline of language and linguistics, cultural linguistics and sociolinguistics, translation theory and practice and cross-cultural communication. We then explored some key aspects of film theory, genres, audiovisual translation and subtitles.

In the next chapter we attempt a ‘reading’ of our chosen films, *Plato’s Academy* and *Red Hulk*, based on the theoretical framework discussed in this chapter.

## Chapter 2 – ‘Reading’ Emotions

### 2.1. Introduction

The two Greek films examined in this thesis, *Plato's Academy* (2009) and *Red Hulk* (2013), have crossed national borders and are recipients of a number of prestigious international European awards. *Plato's Academy* is a feature film which presents the story of a group of disgruntled Greeks who blame Albanian and Chinese migrants for the negative changes to their way of life, until the mother of the protagonist, Stavros, starts speaking Albanian after suffering a stroke. With his sense of identity under a cloud, Stavros has to confront his certainties, and those of his friends, to work out who he really is and what that means for his life.

*Red Hulk* is a short-length drama which deals with racist violence in a realistic and confronting way, and has successfully penetrated the foreign-language European market, undoubtedly helped by the coincidence of having been released on the day Greek anti-fascist hip-hop singer and rapper, Pavlos Fyssas, was murdered, having been stabbed to death by neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party members (see footnote 10).

Both films explore issues of national identity in their distinctly different ways. While in *Plato's Academy* the search for identity involves introspection, in *Red Hulk* identity is aggressively asserted. Yet, despite the different focus of each film, the characters' sense of identity seems to be threatened as a result of external circumstances (see section 1.2.5). In contrast, the issue of identity in diaspora populations is constantly called into question. Their cultural identity is often disputed and needs to be asserted or defended when surrounded by other, especially more dominant, ethnic groups with a stronger claim to the land.

In the case of both *Plato's Academy* and *Red Hulk*, the external change that threatens the identity of the locals is the rampant influx of transient refugees or illegal immigrants whose aim is to gain a foothold into Europe from which they may ultimately move to affluent Western countries. If this is handled haphazardly, incorrectly or incompetently by the authorities, as has been the case in Greece, such an onslaught can have a massive financial and social impact which, in conjunction with other extreme problems such as

unemployment, can result in substantial, even existential, upheavals for local residents who then feel disenfranchised by their own government in their own country, as demonstrated in *Plato's Academy*.

Northern and Western EU countries, which had become host countries to bolster their populations and workforce in the first post-WWII reconstruction decades, have recently been adopting increasingly restrictive immigration policies while, at the same time, their popularity as preferred immigrant destinations has been rising. Countries in the periphery of Europe have been feeling the impact of these restrictive immigration policies by the traditional host countries since the mid-1970s.<sup>92</sup> The vast economic and political changes which also occurred in the 1990s, as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union, have caused a large wave of emigration towards EU states.<sup>93</sup>

In the following, we will attempt a 'reading' of emotions in *Plato's Academy* and *Red Hulk*, based on the theoretical framework of the previous chapter.

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<sup>92</sup> Triandafyllidou & Gropas suggest that these countries' "immigration experience has been characterised by the absence of consistent migration policies, leading to a high number of migrants remaining in these countries unofficially or without proper documentation. This is particularly the case in Southern European countries which have land and sea borders that are difficult to patrol and control. The irregular or illegal status that is common to large segments of the migrant population has implications not only for their employment conditions but also for their effective integration in the host society." Furthermore, the "economic difficulties or even crises that characterise most of these economies and the accompanying social frustration offer fertile ground to populist and far-right-wing parties. This has been steadily leading to the exacerbation of xenophobic reactions on the part of the majority populations. Religion, and in particular Islam, is becoming increasingly visible as a dividing factor between populations of non-immigrant and immigrant backgrounds." (Triandafyllidou and Gropas 2014, 390-1)

<sup>93</sup> As reported by the Guardian, "The cash-strapped Greek government said it spent €65m to protect the eastern seafront last year, with only €2m contributed by the EU. Rising numbers of refugees and migrants have fuelled support for rightwing politicians in Greece and Italy." (Harriet Sherwood, Helena Smith in Athens, Lizzy Davies in Rome and Harriet Grant: Europe faces 'colossal humanitarian catastrophe' of refugees dying at sea, The Guardian, 3 June 2014)

## 2.2. *Plato's Academy*

### 2.2.1. Introduction

*Plato's Academy* is a multi-award winning,<sup>94</sup> 2009 Greek dramatic comedy, or 'dramedy', with the subtitle *You will never become Greek* (a racist slogan used by ultra-nationalists), by director Filippos Tsitos.<sup>95</sup> Its claustrophobic setting is of a downgraded urban inner city suburb, *Akadimia Platonos*,<sup>96</sup> where the rampant influx of immigrants and refugees confronts local residents on a daily basis. The story deals with some of the most difficult issues currently facing Greece, and humanity as a whole, in an accessible and entertaining way, by incorporating elements of humour, parody, satire, sarcasm, allegory and irony. It uses exaggeration to magnify and distort aspects of settings, events and characters (Attardo 2014, 616), while retaining their realism and avoiding trivialising, caricaturing or stereotyping them.

The film captures a world in flux in the urban landscape of inner-city Athens at a time of rampant change, devoid of the familiar, and full of otherness. It illustrates the anger and fear at the lack of opportunity, security and a decent lifestyle, of the alienated and powerless Greek citizens who are ignored and taken for granted by their leaders, and are expected to bear the brunt of the consequences of their government's corrupt, out-of-touch, arbitrary and callous decisions.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Recipient of the 2009 Locarno Ecumenical Award, LUX 2010 European Parliament Film Prize, Official Selection Competition; 2010 Orpheus Award for best feature film at the Los Angeles Greek Film Festival; Locarno International Film Festival's Leopard for Best Actor (Antonis Kafetzopoulos); 2010 Hellenic Film Awards for Best Actor (Antonis Kafetzopoulos).

<sup>95</sup> Filippos Tsitos was born in Athens in 1966. He has studied marketing, worked as photographer, assistant director and producer, and in 1991, he moved to Germany to study film directing at the German Film and Television Academy of Berlin. In 1994, he won the German Short Film Award for *Parlez-moi d'amour*.

<sup>96</sup> Akadimia Platonos (Ακαδημία Πλάτωνος, meaning 'Plato's Academy') is currently a densely populated inner-city suburb of Athens, within a 3.5km radius from the Acropolis, believed to be the location of the ancient site of Plato's Academy. It is surrounded by the notable historical suburbs of *Kolonos* (*Oedipus at Colonus*) and *Votanikos*, with its ancient *Iera Odos* (*Sacred Way*) to *Eleusis* (*Eleusinian Mysteries*) running through it.

<sup>97</sup> As Karalis remarks, the film was made during the "worst economic meltdown of 2008/9, when the conservative government was simply plundering the country", and "implicitly reflected the great fear of

### 2.2.2. Assuming a False Identity

In his feature film debut, the 2001 comedy *My Sweet Home*, selected at the Berlinale, Filippos Tsitos dealt with expatriates lamenting their ‘refugee’ status in a Berlin café. In *Plato’s Academy*, the tables are turned and Tsitos focuses his inquisitive lens on the lives of those who are left behind. His characters are locals who, in the face of rampant, disorienting and unwelcome change, use their relationship with their homeland as an enduring entitlement upon it and a means of exclusion of others, newly-arrived immigrants, mainly Albanians and Chinese. Tsitos’ protagonist, Stavros, is a self-assured Greek, whose world is shaken when his Albanian ethnicity is suddenly and unexpectedly revealed.

Tsitos’ gaze upon his subjects follows in the footsteps of the romantic tradition. Instead of any bold views on immigration policy or cultural assimilation, his focus is fixed on individuals and their responses to the circumstances enveloping them. Greekness, an unquestioned state of being, taken for granted thus far by the protagonist, becomes a point of contention, demanding painstaking exploration in order to arrive at a definitive answer. Even if the protagonist’s cultural identity is initially considered by him to be well-defined and secure, the ‘Other’ gradually encroaches on the scene, until it will ultimately reach a point of no return that can no longer be ignored, having taken over the entirety of his identity. The question Tsitos asks of Stavros, the protagonist in this film, is to define, in practice, the essence of being Greek, and when, where and how he defines his Greekness.

When Stavros and his mother attend a follow-up consultation at the prescribed public clinic to have her assessed for dementia following a stroke, Stavros reports that she has started to call him by strange foreign names, Salih or Remzi. The overworked public

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*every modern Greek citizen: that within Greek society the great unknown is the Greek himself. Given also the fact that it is the mother that rediscovers her original language, one can easily understand the allegory: we don’t really know much about the motherland, her history, her origins, and her language.”* (Karalis 2012, 274)

doctor, in a poignant reference to the influx of Turkish serials that have become very popular in Greece of late, suspects that the mother is watching Turkish soap operas which are causing her to fixate on foreign names. He ironically warns Stavros that a second stroke could be fatal, as if there was anything Stavros could do about it, an irony that is not lost on Stavros, and only serves to irritate him at the lack of support and understanding he can expect from the state and its representatives, the public health professionals, in this instance.<sup>98</sup>

Stavros' rhetorical and rather prophetic question "*Can you take my life and give me someone else's?*" reflects on how difficult it is to own one's problems and do something about them, a universally acknowledged challenge. It also becomes a sign of the sarcastic responses we can expect from him, and signals the end of the consultation as they're ushered out the corridor of the public clinic, typically full of nameless patients standing up, resigned to waiting as long as it takes for their number to be called.

In the absence of his father, who passed away when Stavros was very young, and the resulting severing of any ties with his ancestral fatherland (πάτριά γη), it was solely his single mother's rational thinking that forged and imparted his Greek identity on him, by concealing their origins and native language. Just concealing their journey was sufficient for him to unquestionably recognise and identify Greece as his 'motherland' by default, without even a need for a deceitful story on her part to convince him of his Greekness. There had never been any hint in the past of his made-up and impermanent identity. While his mother was young and healthy, she had always acted rationally and never betrayed anything that could shake the foundation of his belief in his Greekness.

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<sup>98</sup> The doctor's subsequent question to the mother, asking her what Stavros' name is, to verify her dementia diagnosis, is met with her silence. But as soon as she hears the doctor's verdict, that the only good thing is the slow progress of her illness, she is awakened from her stupor, or deep reflection of the complex story she has never revealed to her son, to defiantly reply "*Stavros*", in a display of clarity at her single-minded adherence to her 'lie'. Unlike Stavros, she knows that 'Salih' and 'Remzi' are not both names for Stavros, as he mistakenly assumes, but are the names of her two sons. When Stavros asks the doctor for advice on how to alleviate his long-term insomnia, a sure sign of unresolved tension, frustration, insecurity and general lack of purpose and contentment in his life, the doctor poignantly asks him standard questions of whether he is under stress, what he does for a living, or if there is something wrong with his life.

His peer group and years of school education, his friends and acquaintances would have naturally added further reinforcement in establishing his identity, and galvanised his self-belief of who he was and what his customary duties would have to be towards Mother and Country, and his identity would be expected to become further entrenched with the passage of time. Surrounded by a – seemingly, yet not necessarily substantially – Greek monoculture, uniformity between him and his environment would undoubtedly be assured.

Without any memory of their journey or his father, or any reason to doubt that his place of abode was also his homeland, even his name, Stavros, attested to his Greek nationality. Not only was it indisputably Greek, but it was also Orthodox, given to him in honour of Christ's 'crucifixion', on the 'Cross'.<sup>99</sup> It provided extra certainty, and that is the reason it had so carefully been chosen by his mother, to encapsulate both Greekness and Orthodoxy, carrying the history of a race and faith diametrically opposite to the place and culture of his origin. Now his name-signifier was clearly found to be fake and untrue, but it could still be carried as a badge of his Greekness, thus giving him a public identity which was convenient but false, yet could dictate to him how to live and act out his life, if he chose to honour it.

It was a choice of desperation that had already led his mother to permanently sever ties with her own language and culture. Although no details are revealed throughout the film, it can safely be assumed that such a momentous decision could not have been taken lightly or on the spur of the moment, unless it was a life or death situation, the result of an anxious attempt to flee her country and culture for good, to 'throw a black stone behind her' (ρίξει μαύρη πέτρα) and never return, after the death of her husband.

When someone promised her safe passage to Greece, she seized the opportunity to flee, but had to leave the older boy behind when he became ill. A dreadful choice, made surely under major duress, and one that is clearly been tormenting her ever since, and

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<sup>99</sup> Σταυρός (Cross) / Σταύρος (Stavros): Like other names, e.g. Χριστός (Christ) / Χρήστος (Christos), the accent here serves to distinguish and differentiate them, thus avoiding any homonymic confusion and making a distinction between sacred and lay names.

still plays on her mind as she has always been on the lookout for her older son. Finding herself on her own in a strange land, with no family or friends for support, she was forced to keep strong and assume every role that had been lost to other family members in caring for her young son.

Under insurmountable obstacles, she had managed to stand on her own two feet, make a home and a living in a foreign land, learn the local language and raise Stavros as a self-assured member of Greek society. There had been no question that Stavros felt Greek to the core; a 'genuine Greek', just like his friends, and unlike the migrants that had flooded their neighbourhood of late. Yet, she was always secretly wary of the risks to his Greekness that his musical tastes exposed him to when he was young. He identified with foreign rock bands and went to rock concerts. Their frequent clashes were a testament to her fears, rather than the loudness of the music. Instead of detracting, however, Stavros knew that rock music only strengthened his Greekness. While it opened him up to a cosmopolitan European cultural citizenship, his Greekness was still evident in his distinctive interpretation of rock as a statement of rebellion and anarchy.

Yet, his frail mother had now started to speak Albanian. She had assumed an alien identity, foreign and vulgar to him, with her mother-culture duality magnifying his loss of both culture and sense of place. She reminded him of the immigrants around them, distinct in their non-Europeanness, even when they had come from Albania, within Europe's borders. Their different languages and systems of religion were significant factors at play that divided them, and so were their shared history on opposite camps and opposing socio-political systems. Even though religion was not playing an apparent part in either Stavros' or his friends' way of life, it did actually surface once in the film when talking to the icon, a sign that, like his identity, it, too, was coming under threat.

The claustrophobic view of identity Stavros and his friends appear to have imposed on themselves is really not all that different from their opinion of the 'closed' Albanian society with its insular interpretation of communist ideology. But claustrophobia could not be uncharacteristic of a society which had survived two world wars, civil war and years of instability that led to the military dictatorship, or 'junta', and further internal and external upheavals. Without a strong cohesive reaction to division, Greek society

could never be expected to survive. The development of a strong national identity was a valued and safe refuge for them.

Stavros was, therefore, left with no qualms when singing the racist slogan *Δεν θα γίνεις Έλληνας ποτέ, Αλβανέ, Αλβανέ* (*You're never going to be Greek, Albanian, Albanian*) along with his friends. As far as they could ascertain, the foreigners had come again, this time in peace, to threaten certainties achieved after countless sacrifices made by Greeks just over a generation or two ago. For Stavros, the environment he had been brought up in could not have been deemed insular, even if it could now be labelled as such by outsiders and the waves of incoming immigrants prepared to exchange their own insular environment for another, in the hope of creating a better life for themselves and their families anywhere they could find a hospitable host, or ultimately on their return to the country they had originally fled.

And yet, now that all certainties have melted away at the indisputable foreignness of Stavros' own mother, the tables are turned. If his mother is a foreigner, he has to answer the question of whether that means he is a foreigner too. Even if his father was a veritable Greek, his mother's tongue betrays a part of the foreigner in him. Alas, his father is no longer alive to assert at least half of his identity as genuine. In spite of her frailty, his mother still retains her role as catalyst through which Stavros can discover his identity but, due to her illness, he cannot extract enough consistently reliable information from her to launch an investigation into her story or his origins.

Their two-member household continues to seemingly operate normally and equitably, with Stavros' mother still committed to her traditional nurturing role imposed by patriarchy on a woman as a homemaker, even if she can now only cook for her sons on special occasions; yet nothing remains the same and the family's foundations have been irreversibly rocked. And Stavros is not the sole witness in the demise of his Greekness. With the mother realistically out of the picture on account of how little information she is able to provide, Stavros and his friends start by revisiting the story he has been told for any nuances that may betray morsels of facts from which the truth can be gleaned or explored.

He was initially told that his father had died in the northern Greek city of Ioannina, but he has now learned that his father died in Albania, when Stavros was one-year-old. Stavros cannot acquiesce with the identity issue hanging over him, but is surprised to find that his friends feel the same urgency in looking for an answer. Their friendship may not be possible to continue without a definitive outcome in their investigation, or it may even come to an end in the event of an unfavourable outcome.

Both sides keep looking at each other for guidance and clues. Any response from one party will have an effect on the decision of the other. They have been friends for far too long to be unaffected by each other's decision. Both sides acknowledge they are actively trying to figure things out, even if Stavros seems agitated when he finds them talking about him behind his back. Shaken by the realisation of the absurdity of scrutinising and mistreating their old friend, and deeply ashamed, they become overly supportive and try to reassure him that the outcome of their quest would make no difference and their friendship could overcome any obstacle. But their reassurances ring hollow when transformed to questions, and quite comical when they ask him to confirm that he does not speak a word of Albanian, even when they already know so, and it would still not be conclusive evidence of identity one way or another.

With his illusions and self-deceptions no longer able to withstand the massive wall of evidence that places him firmly in the camp of the foreigner on account of both his parents, Stavros has to start looking deep into his psyche to find answers about how and when his identity is felt, manifested and expressed. He clearly still feels Greek. We observe his genuine feelings of patriotic fervour during the Greece – Albania soccer match. He had also worn his patriotism on his sleeve when demolishing the monument to ethnic diversity.

But Stavros, whose overpowering, yet reasonably comical, scowl worn on his face (see facial expressions, sections 1.2.1 and 1.2.2) betrays bitter disappointment with his life, is constantly under overwhelming pressure. His frail mother is in need of ongoing attention due to her stroke, and his wife, Dina, has left him. Patriotism is never actively present in his interactions with the women in his life, yet it is still unconsciously operating in the background in all their exchanges.

His friends had started by being silent spectators, but their silence could not last and is broken as soon as they hear him echo the racist taunt during the soccer match. Denial of one's identity constitutes a clear violation of an unspoken moral principle that prompts their rage. They feel they could be willing to continue their friendship with an Albanian, if that Albanian was their old and trusted friend. But his flagrant self-denial is an affront to basic human dignity and values, and cannot be ignored. Conversely, for Stavros, their unwillingness to accept his chosen persona and their insistence on placing biology above psychology is a tipping point. His Greek identity is now challenged not only by his mother – as she has now revealed it herself – and by himself, but also by his friends, whose Greek identity puts them at odds with his own.

Though his deep-seated feelings about his identity remain unchanged and provide him with validation and consolation for the twists, turns and upheavals in his life, it is when he can no longer maintain his Greekness in the face of indisputable evidence to the contrary, that he will be forced to decide for himself whether his mother's Albanian background makes him Albanian too, or whether he can still claim he is Greek on account of his feelings. Only then will it be revealed whether the deciding factor in his identity will have been based on logic or emotion, and whether he is able to embrace his logically-derived new identity, or cling to the only subjectively 'real' one to him, yet objectively 'mistaken' for everyone else.

### **2.2.3. Shifting Foundations**

As discussed in section 1.2.3, emotions affect people's responses to their environment and, when shared, they have an impact on the collective psyche. The unfamiliar and changing landscape of haphazard and makeshift construction in *Plato's Academy* is unsettling and ominous to each and every one of the established inhabitants. The change to their immediate environment generates fear and suspicion and challenges their hopes for the future. Established citizenship norms have allowed them to subsist in an exclusivist, yet not necessarily homogenous, assemblage that temporarily shields its members from changes occurring in the outside world, but their world of certainties is shaken with its imminent collapse increasingly ordained.

As discussed in section 1.2.5, the development of identity allows self-knowledge and qualified connection with one's own environment, community and place. An awareness of self also enables the perception of one's difference from others in a community. When there is balance and order, integration of the self and the 'other' follows a natural process, readily assumed and accepted. At times of upheaval or rapid change, however, the 'other' can trigger fear of the unknown and feelings of anxiety about the future, causing inner turmoil and questioning one's place in their world.

In *Plato's Academy*, Stavros' mother's welfare has been paramount for him, a task he has dedicated himself to consistently and unbegrudgingly, even committing a traffic offence when she, unaware of changes in traffic regulations, and longing for stability and the familiar, insists that they ride the wrong way down the one-way street, on their way back from the clinic through the inner city streets. Her persistence on such a seemingly trivial and insignificant matter may be interpreted as the result of her developing dementia. But on closer examination, her insistence is indicative of her need to cling to a familiar world, confronted with all the changes of a brash new world she cannot help but observe when riding on the back of her son's motorbike.

Stavros' resolute compliance, after only a moment's hesitation and slight irritation, attests to the status of her character, and the symbolic power she still wields over her adult son. She is always respected as the most senior member, and perhaps even the head of the family, in the absence of a father figure. Nevertheless, when Stavros decides he does not want his 'brother' to visit his mother at home, he momentarily assumes the role of head of the family, and the sole ownership of the house. "*It's my house, ok? I don't want you in my house*", he says. Although Greek tradition renders the firstborn or oldest living male son as the head of a family, it is the mother figure that links Stavros to his culture and mother tongue (μητρική γλώσσα).<sup>100</sup> (Lacan and Gallagher 2002, 7)

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<sup>100</sup> cf analysis of 'mother tongue' vs 'fatherland' in Mimika Kranaki's novel, *I Philhellenes: Twenty Four Letters of an Odyssey* (Nazou 2005, 682)

When not busy at their stores, which they never appear to be, Stavros and his friends stare at the new urban landscape, filled with unfamiliar symbols and foreign cultures. The foreign workers and refugees who have burst on the scene in droves, in search of work, engage in a flurry of activity which dumbfounds the locals in their paralysing idleness. Disgruntled, frustrated, and with nothing better to do, they are reduced to mere spectators and sit around observing life from a distance.

Traditional enmities and prejudice also dictate a differentiation in the perception of each ethnicity, with Albanians considered slow in performing their duties, though admittedly involved in heavier building work, in comparison to the swift and agile Chinese workers who are considered smart and competent, notwithstanding the curiosity their unfamiliar habits and work practices excite. Their remote geographical location, and absence of any shared past history, which might have served in some way to discredit them, favours a more balanced and less biased perception of them.

When the Intercultural Solidarity Monument is about to be erected, as sanctioned by the local Municipal Council, Albanian workers are typically hired to build it. A structure such as this threatens the locals' sense of ownership over the open space of the square they use to kick the ball around (see section 1.2.5). It also seems to them as an unnecessary, and uncalled for, money-wasting exercise. They dispute any perceived need to have intercultural monuments erected, a concept they do not understand, they do not need, and is something foreign they have never been consulted about. No effort is spared in their attempt to have it demolished, as Stavros' argument with the contractor and subsequent action clearly attest to.

When combined with other sources of instability, such as the impotence of the state to implement any considered and rational policy to aid in integrating foreigners who may, at times, outnumber the local population, the results on the fabric of society appears catastrophic and old loyalties are tested to breaking point. The traffic infringement Stavros commits is a testament to that. It may be a display of tenderness and respect towards his mother, but it also undoubtedly stems from a feeling of defiant disobedience towards a government which keeps changing the rules without consulting its citizens, causing them to become estranged from their own country.

If viewed metaphorically, granting her wish to effectively break the law, and ride the wrong way down the one-way street, may also represent Stavros' bowing to his motherland, which longs to forget and ignore her desecration from foreign and introduced powers, or even the incapable government which is currently ruling over her. This new, introduced and unrecognisable reality has left her citizens with longing and nostalgia for a familiar and more functional past.

With no one else to effectively blame for their current predicament, the locals in the film's cultural mosaic turn their resentment towards the foreigners, who dominate the landscape. They feel that their citizenship should guarantee their right of place, unlike all those newcomers who have arrived for work uninvited and unannounced. The realisation of their lack of relevance in their own land, aptly symbolised by the scarcity of customers to their shops, makes the local shopkeepers feel divested of their citizenship entitlements, and their casual racism against the foreign workers could arguably be a coping mechanism.

Once they have developed a sense that their differences may only be essentially on the surface and it is in everyone's interest to put them aside for the common good, they will eventually begin to work together first tentatively and then in harmony, and multiculturalism may then be hopefully established, as it so often has in the Athenian milieu, throughout its history.

#### **2.2.4. Identity Crisis or Liberating Self-Discovery**

As discussed under Identification Theory in section 1.2.5, Stavros' identity crisis is a result of his changed circumstances. When he, conflicted, sends his Albanian 'brother' away from his house, his anxiety does not allow him to consider the results of his actions on his mother. Her slide into depression and rapid deterioration provide the impetus for his change of heart.

He gets on his motorbike to go find his 'brother', Remzi, and invite him back to the house. Having stopped at the traffic lights with other riders and drivers, he examines the faces of the people around him, pondering perhaps how secure they all are in their respective identities, and trying to figure out perhaps how secure they could even

possibly be. Arriving at his destination, he is barked at by the guard dog. Fully aware of the irony of the role reversal symbolism, he looks at the dog while the five workers, who are having a lunch break at the balcony, knowingly identify him as Greek on account of the barking dog.<sup>101</sup>

After his mother's passing in her sleep, only one person can possibly claim any tentative, though remote, biological link to himself: his 'brother', Remzi. Regardless of the existence of any actual biological bond, or not, there is a strong cultural bond between them. They are both Albanians who have found their way into Greece, and share a mother who was convinced they were both her sons. They would never be able to prove whether they are real brothers or not, and the possibility of their being siblings cannot be disproved, unless they resort to science for a definitive answer. Lacking any other family, the bond between them is their only tangible relation and, therefore, not one that can ever be given up lightly.<sup>102</sup>

During their initially laboured, but later more spontaneous discussion, peppered with high doses of humour ranging from misused and corrected words, to the foreigner's accent and the parties' endearing attempts at reconciliation, a deeper understanding is reached, and acceptance, even friendship, now appears to be possible. When it is time for the visitors to leave, Stavros stays behind at the home of his newfound 'brother', having fallen into a deep and merciful sleep, which signals his abjection of the mother<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> With Stavros' mother becoming frailer as the days go by, the other prominent female in Stavros' life, his ex-wife, Dina, remains as decisive and instrumental as ever in his life. The more Stavros' identity comes into question during the course of the film's plot, the more attached he becomes to his ex-wife who is gradually replacing his mother in her role as listener, supporter and adviser, and he remains at her mercy as she holds all the cards to any possibility of a joint future, having been the one who had terminated their relationship in the past.

<sup>102</sup> With Stavros' mother death, the friends get an opportunity to reconcile at her funeral. The fragile peace, hinged once again on the question of identity, is violently broken when Stavros' friends dispute the identity of the mother in the Albanian's photo and a fight between the 'brothers' ensues before the open grave. In the end, tired of fighting and of their futile resistance in acknowledging an indisputable truth, they decide to put aside their suspicions and cultural differences and calm down. After some deliberation on who is entitled to mourn the mother's death, in a gesture of goodwill facilitated in turn by members of each party, the Albanian invites them to his place to have the customary, for both Albanians and Greeks, funereal drinks and, in a role reversal, the visitor is visited when the friends accept the Albanian's invitation.

and provides a catharsis of sorts, having finally come to terms with the dramatic changes in his life and the collapse of his old certainties.

With his mother's passing, he has also reconciled with his own past, his friends, and potential brother, who shares with him the same history and taste in music, regardless of whether he is actually his brother or not. A new bond with a brother has been forged by his mother in her role as facilitator and catalyst within the family.<sup>104</sup>

Stavros is now aware that his choice is between a solitary existence without friends or family, or his compromised identity which has already opened up potential links with family, friends and, hopefully, partner. The choice is clear and probably inevitable. It is ultimately a choice between life and death and the only rational one for individuals in a changing and challenging society. It is a self-discovery that challenges the possibility of certainty in one's own identity in favour of a complex one for one and all.

By embracing the foreign within himself, he can allow integration to be established between him, his friends and the foreigners who may not be so foreign after all. He can also establish a claim to a harmonious future, which would not be devoid of challenges or drama, but could be hopeful and dynamic nonetheless. His mother's serene and content countenance on her death bed may have betrayed her confidence in his decision, which also reflected her own some decades earlier.

Gaining a brother without losing his friends would be Stavros' ultimate compensation for parting with his blissful, but fake, identity. Breaking away from his self-imposed

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<sup>103</sup> As posited by Kristeva (Beardsworth 2012, 133)

<sup>104</sup> With his mother's wishes now finally fulfilled, she has no further role to play in his life, and he is free to share his new freedom with Dina. Her reactions regarding his identity are significant when he visits her outside of her apartment block to tell her epigrammatically: "*Hi... I wanted to tell you... My mother died.*" "*I heard about it*" she replies. "*I'm Albanian.*" "*I heard that too.*" He goes on. "*You said, you didn't breathe with me...*" Fearing a repeat of his pleas, she shuts the door and moves away. Just before she disappears behind the elevator door, he smashes the glass to open the door to the building, rushes to the elevator and manages to enter it. "*I cut myself...*" he says looking at his bloodied hand, and continues. "*So... I love you*". A decision about their reunion is now entirely up to her, as he, for the first time, is ready to resume their relationship, liberated as he has been of his tangible and self-imposed chains.

confines would offer him a greater sense of liberation than if the chains were externally inflicted. Without the agony of the struggle, reaching the ultimate destination could not have been as meaningful as the life experience gained throughout the journey.

## 2.3. Red Hulk

### 2.3.1. Introduction

*Red Hulk*<sup>105</sup> is a confronting, multi-award winning<sup>106</sup> short film produced in 2013 in Athens, Greece, by Film Director, Producer and Screenwriter, Asimina Proedrou, who has received high praise for her creative and brave treatment of the themes of nationalism, racism and neo-fascism in the film. The Director has said that *Red Hulk* was her ‘low budget’ graduation project for her film school (AMC, Athens – Film Directing Department).<sup>107</sup> In an interview,<sup>108</sup> she explained her motivations.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> The film’s official title is in English and has only rarely ever been translated into Greek, as *Κόκκινος Χαλκ*. According to the official synopsis, “*Giorgos lives on his own in Athens. He lacks purpose, self-confidence, identity and peer acceptance. He fills the void by becoming the ‘Red Hulk’, as he is known at his football team’s fan club. Until the day he gets involved in racial violence, entailing new problems and dilemmas...*”

<sup>106</sup> The film has been awarded the *Grand Prix (Best Film)*, *Best Male Actor* and *Cinematography Award* at the Drama Film Festival (2013); *Best Short Film* at the Athens International Film Festival (2013); *Cinematic Award* at the Thessaloniki International Short Film Festival (2013); *Best Short Film* at the Los Angeles Greek Film Festival (2014); *Special Jury Award* at the Yerevan (Armenia) International Film Festival (2014), *Best Short Film (Fiction)* at the Clermont-Ferrand (France) International Short Film Festival (2014) and *Best Short Film (Fiction)* at the Tirana International Film Festival (November 2014).

<sup>107</sup> “*The story takes place in Greece, in the current environment of rising chauvinism and racism, and deals with the matter of the distortion of a person’s personality as he experiences the excessive need of belonging to, and becoming a member of a group. The movie explores the effect on the character’s psychological state as he faces the potential consequences of his choices, raising questions about how the social, family and work environment can affect him.*”

<sup>108</sup> Interviewer’s question: [my translation] “*Your film’s character, Red Hulk, is a hero with an identity crisis, a man looking for certainties and values to hang on to. How could he escape from the quagmire he finds himself into? In a Greece controlled by the TV channels and Troika, is hatred the only answer for a lost soul?*”

<sup>109</sup> [my translation] “*Firstly, I do not want to advise my heroes... Also, with this film I did not want in any way to give advice, nor did I want to show how ‘bad’ Golden Dawn is, if you know what I mean... I just wanted to ask some questions... Questions dealing with the process of turning a society towards fascism, the social, economic, familial conditions that impact on it but also on the individual himself...*”

In an unfortunate and ironic twist of fate, the timing of the film's premiere screening, at the annual Drama<sup>110</sup> Short Film Festival on the evening of September 17<sup>th</sup> 2013, coincided with the murder of 34-year-old Greek anti-fascist hip-hop singer and rapper, Pavlos Fyssas, by members of the neo-Nazi *Golden Dawn* party (see footnote 10), which reinforced fears of the real threat neo-Nazi violence presented, not only to foreign immigrants, but also to Greek nationals.

Unlike the humour underlying the *mise-en-scène*, or visual theme, of *Plato's Academy*, the only humour, if any, to be found in *Red Hulk* is arguably in its name, which is linked to Marvel Comics.<sup>111</sup> The nickname, 'Red Hulk', seems fitting for the dysfunctional protagonist, Yiorgo.<sup>112</sup> It is an apt metaphor for the comics superhero who transforms into a giant when he gets upset or emotional, becomes violent and cannot be reasoned with, but transforms back into his calm persona after the crisis has passed. It also symbolises Yiorgo's general athleticism and body shape, his Olympiakos soccer club's colours and red hoodie he often wears.

Yiorgo is a young fitness and sports fan whose life is equally divided between work, boxing practice and soccer. He is an active supporter of the *Olympiakos* soccer team but his club membership has lapsed for two months, as he, along with his co-workers, have not been paid for over four months. This has been a common consequence of the

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*the distortion that could occur in his personality under the insurmountable need for integration and 'easy' acceptance."*

<sup>110</sup> Refers to the Northern Greek city of 'Drama' (η Δράμα) – a feminine noun in Greek, not the literary or film genre (το δράμα) which is neuter gender; they are not homophonic when they appear in different grammatical cases, and no paronomasia, or pun, is involved.

<sup>111</sup> The etymology of 'hulk', from the original meaning of the shell of a non-seaworthy, clumsy or wrecked ship, directs to the massive and bulky superhuman-size character 'Hulk', the fictional Marvel Comics superhero, who first appeared in *The Incredible Hulk* in May 1962. The character 'Red Hulk' is based on 'Hulk' and first appeared in a comic in March 2008. As the name suggests, his colour is red, unlike his green-colour predecessor, 'Hulk'. The nickname 'Red Hulk' is given to Yiorgo after the popular 2012 *The Incredible Hulk 2* film, featuring the new 'Red Hulk' superhero creation.

<sup>112</sup> Greek for George. The transcription 'Giorgo' appears in the English subtitles.

crisis, where the massive, over fifty percent, unemployment among young people, and over twenty-five percent overall, has ensured that workers have been suffering increasingly adverse working conditions in order to avoid retrenchment.<sup>113</sup>

*Red Hulk* has found a very receptive audience in Europe which, plagued by a rise in ultra-nationalism, is actively seeking narratives to understand and contain it. In the ‘abbreviated’ medium of film, it is clear that what is important is not only what is shown on screen but also what is omitted. This is especially the case with *Red Hulk*. We never actually hear the initial response of the victim, nor do we gain any insight about who he is, what he does, his character or morality.

The fast pace of the action definitely also prevents the inquisitive spectator from seeking or pondering any details too extensively. It seems clear from his features and colouration that he is not a local. He looks and sounds like a foreigner, maybe one of a disproportionately large number of usually transient migrants hoping to gain access, through Greece, to an advanced European economic power.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> In his 2013 paper *The Greek crisis: social impact and policy responses*, Manos Matsaganis concludes that “*The social cost of the Greek crisis has been unnecessarily high. National income has declined by almost a quarter. The gap in living standards relative to the rest of Western Europe is back to what it was half a century ago. Unemployment affects over a quarter of the workforce. Average real earnings for those in employment are below their level in the late 1990s. The proportion of the population below the 2009 poverty line reached 38 per cent in 2012, and was even higher among families of unemployed workers with children, whose plight has become the new social question. The average real income of those in the poorest 10 per cent of population in 2012 was 56.5 per cent lower than that of the poorest 10 per cent of population in 2009. Inequality remained stable at first, but began to take off as the economy sank deeper into recession. The austerity policies pursued did not compensate, and eventually reinforced, the adverse effects of the recession on income distribution.*” (Matsaganis 2013, 33)

<sup>114</sup> Schapendonk describes the trajectories of African migrants towards the EU as highly fragmented and dangerous. His research indicates that “*The border agency has estimated that 80% of the total number of irregular migrants to the EU passes through Greece*” (Schapendonk 2012, 30) and that “*Spain and Greece are seen by migrants as access points from where the rest of the EU can be easily reached.*” (Schapendonk 2012, 34) He also lists the detention periods of some of the European borderlands used as access points, with Spain having set the maximum period of detention at forty days, Italy at 180 days, Greece at six months (or twelve months in exceptional cases), and Malta at 18 months, which is the uppermost allowable limit under EU regulations. These are on top of the considerable periods of ‘immobility’, or waiting periods, spent in each country that irregular immigrants pass through. (Schapendonk 2012, 37)

We never really find out exactly what has been said between the parties, as the sound is remote and muffled by the many voices synthesising it. Instead, we are left to rely on what we can gather, mainly from the visuals, though the subtitling is more succinct in places than the dialogue itself – an element designed to enhance delivery of the message to a foreign audience less adept at identifying nuances than the original one. However, the specifics, in fact, seem to be totally superfluous. If anything is lost in the audio, it is definitely not lost in the action, or the translation. There is intent to ‘punish’ the foreigner who, by his physical appearance and implied ethnicity, represents an anathema for the purity of identity of the city’s young men whose self-appointed role is to defend it.

The allegation creates a feeling of *déjà vu* – the familiar basis of conspiracy theories which apply where there is a police state or corrupt regime. Yiorgo’s feelings of guilt are also definitive in assessing his role as the perpetrator of an unprovoked and heinous racist crime. There are no extenuating circumstances and no fault on the part of the victim. His victimisation has been unequivocal and undeserved.

### **2.3.2. A State of Corruption**

The causes for the socioeconomic and political conditions underlying both *Plato’s Academy* and *Red Hulk* have been largely unchanged in the four intervening years between the two films, but the lack of progress and economic stagnation have added more weight to the gravity of unemployment and financial hardship for the majority of the middle and lower classes. The rising social injustice and resulting instability have been the cause of further deterioration in the degree of people’s disaffection with the state institutions, which are in turn being blamed for their lack of focus, application, capacity for change and political will to tackle the worsening conditions.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> There have been more broken promises across the political spectrum, with any reforms promised by governments falling way short of the mark when it comes to the restructuring of a chronically ailing and inequitable financial system. In this environment, people in positions of power and authority tend to forgo any idealistic notions of altruism and fairness they had promised to uphold when elected or appointed, and become cynical realists in line with their more uninhibited colleagues. Distrust of the government can make people indiscriminately challenge every one of the government’s policies, thereby

Amid this background, the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party (see footnote 10), which was founded in 1980 and entered the 1996 elections winning only 0.1% of the vote, has followed a similar path to other European neo-fascist parties, and saw its numbers swell to around 7% after the global financial crisis, due to the massive unemployment rates and the fear and instability that ensued. The party's ultranationalist rhetoric, violent attacks on immigrants and strong links to state-led corruption, helped along by the state's neoliberal policies, are a big threat to democracy and to human rights.

The more this situation is prolonged, the greater the suffering and the more severe the chasm becomes between the ruling class and the rest of the population. Disillusionment has set in and transcends their previously regimented, traditional party-line supports. The ineffective and clientelist system of governance has not allowed any development or modernisation<sup>116</sup> of the country to occur, which has added to the unfair distribution of wealth,<sup>117</sup> lack of cohesion among the people and lack of loyalty towards the state, even while people profess their historic, albeit nebulous, feelings of patriotism towards their country.

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creating a vicious cycle of civil discontent that can never be broken. No event or fact can be relied upon and demagogues and manipulators in politics and the media can then flourish to such an extent that it can become impossible to distinguish between genuine and corrupt officials. The results can be catastrophic and corruption is rendered inevitable.

<sup>116</sup> Since before the 1950s, successive governments have promised and made numerous attempts to reform and streamline the Greek administrative apparatus, but none of their efforts have been successful, with Greece's bureaucracy remaining as complex, arbitrary and unresponsive to the needs of the citizens as ever. A 1998 public opinion survey found that "*inefficiency and corruption continue to pervade every aspect of the state machinery*". (Danopoulos, Danopoulos, and Farazmand 2001, 953)

<sup>117</sup> When surrounded by endemic and entrenched corruption, it is certainly easier to overlook ethical considerations and seek an unfair personal advantage in line with everyone else. Any material advantage gained from one's position is easier to accept, or even seek, on behalf, and for the benefit, of one's children and family. By employing family members to key posts in the public service, accepting 'gifts' for services or favours, shifting their private wealth to safe havens in Switzerland and overseas, and other disguised or open corruption, they have collectively caused the state assets to dwindle away and the citizens to be left to carry the Atlassian burden of supporting wanton government spending on their own.

Corruption involving both citizens and politicians has been a feature of the Greek state for at least the last thirty years.<sup>118</sup> Even though ninety-eight percent of Greek citizens identify corruption as a major problem in Greece, the mutual distrust between citizens and the government, and various schemes legitimising corrupt activities, have reinforced the problem. Corruption and tax evasion can be traced back to the Ottoman period of Greek history, where tax evasion was also considered a form of resistance against Ottoman rule.<sup>119</sup> (Litina and Palivos 2013, 5-6)

In the film *Red Hulk*, when Yiorgo's colleague invites him for lunch, his invitation is based on his trust towards the well-presented, unfrivolous, diligent and dependable young man who lives on his own and aspires to the Greek ideals of sport and fitness. He has assumed a somewhat protective role of Yiorgo, not dissimilar to that of an older brother's, as he recognises his isolation from his family, which lives away in the country. Yiorgo's shoplifting act, though rather surprising for the unsuspecting audience, stems from his strongly-held need to abide by the Greek custom of offering a gift to the child of the house when visiting.

He picks up the little toy from the shelves of a small grocery shop and puts it in his pocket when the shop assistant is not looking, distractedly busy with her phone. He makes no attempt to conceal any of the items he has chosen for himself, but only steals

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<sup>118</sup> Whereas there is ongoing pressure on government spending on essential services, sustaining a self-serving supesize bureaucracy, whose only raison d'être is to provide jobs to more of the 'chosen' people and keep unemployment at artificially lower levels, is allowed to flourish at the expense of a properly-run administration and, ultimately, all of the citizens. Citizens are, in essence, regarded guilty by the state representatives until their paperwork can prove them innocent, instead of being facilitated by those whose job description is exactly to facilitate, in their everyday dealings with the state administration. Ample anecdotal evidence suggests that errors, even in the spelling or transcription of names, made by officials are increasingly rarely acknowledged or corrected, requiring citizens to undertake prohibitively complex, costly and time-consuming procedures, often involving the overburdened courts, to resolve or overcome them, thus keeping the state and private apparatus busy and in constant employment. This may partly explain the reason why so many Greek parents have traditionally been keen to find their children employment in the public service and/or pressure them into studies in related disciplines.

<sup>119</sup> According to Litina et al., "*despite the existence of a legal framework that is quite similar to that of most European countries, the existing infrastructure is inadequate to handle such extensive corruption, thereby giving rise to a generalized sentiment of non-punishment and an underestimation of the probability to be caught and punished. Second, this inefficiency of the system reinforces honest citizens' dissatisfaction and ultimately leads to a subconscious legitimization of corrupt acts, as a surviving mechanism in a corrupt society.*"

the gift he is clearly unable to pay or budget for that he has picked up for the family's young daughter. Traditional customs of civility and politeness seem to weigh more on his mind than upholding the law, an indication of his alienation from what is generally considered, at least among his peers, as enforced ethics of a corrupt state (see footnote 119).

The disinterested female shop assistant, sole employee running the shop, who is 'playing' with her mobile phone, reinforces the stereotype of an alienated employee (see next section 2.3.3), who does not care for her job, something that is probably not lost on Yiorgo. Her sex also fits the stereotype of females working in low-paying retail jobs, which do not provide either the satisfaction or the monetary incentive, considered, at least by themselves, commensurate with their skills or attributes, thus generating further dissatisfaction and indifference.

The act of theft committed by Yiorgo fits neatly within the mosaic of corruption in contemporary Greek society, but, as mentioned above, can simultaneously be seen as both an act of corruption and an act of rebellion against a corrupt state. Yiorgo's shoplifting is, on reflection, typical of the distrust between citizens and authorities (see section 1.2.5). Shop owners represent a class of independent private business proprietors who are thought to have at their disposal a range of means for manipulating the state revenue system in order to evade tax. Yiorgo would not be in the minority in thinking that a little plush toy dog is not going to make a dent in the financial state of the shop, or the country's economy.

With no job satisfaction in this climate of scarce supply of jobs, where having any job is first priority for the majority of unemployed youth, their type of job is what ultimately determines their state of engagement or alienation from the workplace and professional life in general, and ultimately their overall social engagement or alienation.

### **2.3.3. Profound Alienation and the Outlet of Sport**

The idea of alienation has a long and diverse history from antiquity to the present day. Marx's adaptation of Hegelian dialectics to the theory of materialism allowed him to articulate the concept of alienation in his Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts in

1844.<sup>120</sup> As work (in a Marxian sense) and education have lost their creative meaning for a major part of the Greek population, the country has become stagnant and uncompetitive, and has been especially vulnerable to the spectre of globalisation which has allowed others to take advantage of the unique opportunities it offers, for example, in exporting their products to established and emerging markets.

On an individual level, globalisation has accentuated the feelings of alienation as individuals increasingly realise that their unique identity is becoming less pronounced and is under constant threat and even undermined from within by questions relating to its true essence and characteristics. The old triptych slogan ‘Πατρίς, Θρησκεία, Οικογένεια’ (Country, Religion, Family) has now become a distant memory, even if it still invokes in some people a nostalgic fondness for all things past, though historically heavily tainted with all manner of negative connotations from the way, and by whom, it had been extolled and touted.

With the country in disarray, and organised religion having been found guilty of many crimes in recent years, while taking on very oppressive and fundamentalist tinges in its persistent attempts to maintain its relevance by stealth in modern society, family is the only one of the old values that may still retain some tangible germaneness. It operates, however, under constant threat of attack through many of its intrinsic or extraneous shortcomings, such as geographic distance between family members, vastly different educational levels, patriarchal oppression or lack of understanding of current problems plaguing today’s youth, all of which are major factors in the breakdown of meaningful communication between parents and children.

And this is precisely what plays out in the film *Red Hulk* when we see Yiorgo at a crossroads; with his resolve wavering, he realises that the only thing still available to

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<sup>120</sup> “Marx conceptualised alienation as the separation of a worker from the product that was created, the process by which it was created, or from others who are involved in the production or consumption of the product. [...] other factors identified originally by Marx act as precursors of alienation that are experienced in the modern workplace, such as lack of meaningful work, not ‘having a say’ over the work process, and the extent to which an individual perceives his or her skills to be utilised in the course of work”. (Shantz, Alfes, and Truss 2014, 2530)

him that could possibly help him pull away from his inescapable predicament is the support of his family. He leaves Athens to visit them at the regional town where they live, but it is only his mother and young brother that are overtly happy to see him, with tensions being rekindled as soon as his intimidating father appears on the scene, with his impenetrable and emotionally overpowering presence hindering any expressions of affection towards Yiorgo by the rest of the family.

Yiorgo's family proves unable to help him at his time of crisis. His mother and brother live away from him, in a traditionally patriarchal family and in fear of a chauvinistic father, unable to show the older son the affection he and they crave, or to even speak to him openly or unhindered. Any comment they make becomes a constant reminder that it can, and does, lead to an argument that the father always has the last and decisive word over. They need to constantly monitor and temper their reactions in the presence of the father, or risk a reprimand and/or an escalation of conflict.

A question about his studies at the dinner table is all it takes for Yiorgo's father to seize the opportunity to show his displeasure at his son's perceived lack of application. The question is charged with an underlying emotional grievance, seething in the background. Parental concern is common in Greek families when it comes to their children's education. Yiorgo's instinctive outburst "*I'll do whatever I feel like*" (or more literally, *I'll do whatever pleases me*) is also a common curt response, revealing his unrestrained emotion, bordering on animosity, at the disapproving remarks directed at him. Modern society has empowered children and young people, especially sons, to speak their minds but, in so doing, they inadvertently risk alienation from familial supports which, albeit, are still functioning under the oppressive rules of an overpowering, misogynistic and unwieldy patriarchy.

Yiorgo, feeling the pressure on him from all sides, storms out, with a breakdown in their relationship looming as an inevitable outcome. The atmosphere of patriarchal oppression and the dynamics of fear over the wife and sons are all too evident. Yiorgo leaves the next morning, much to the chagrin of his repressed mother and brother and,

undoubtedly, his own. The news bulletin<sup>121</sup> he overhears in the coach on his journey back, where the police are now blaming the crime on settling old scores within a drug-trafficking ring, is a clear indication that his powerful new friends have exerted their influence over the police<sup>122</sup> to protect him and, in so doing, secure his cooperation in planning future attacks.

Yiorgo may not be an enthusiastic student, but he is a dedicated fitness fan as glimpsed by his constant boxing practice against a punching bag when he is not cooking or relaxing at home. Boxing gives him the strength and control he lacks in his everyday life. It creates in him a sense of empowerment and purpose, to counteract the hopelessness of his situation and, by extension, that of many of his peers in the harsh and alienating post-financial crisis urban society they have chosen, by default, for pursuing their studies, finding work, or both.

His physical strength has gained him prominence among his close environment. His prowess is praised by both his friends and colleague/s and that is undoubtedly a contributing factor in his devotion to it. It has also endeared him to the group of neo-Nazis who see in him the physical qualities they lack and wish to possess by proxy when they have clinched his participation into their group.

Soccer provides Yiorgo and his friends with a sense of identity by being a part of a network of people with similar interests. It also gives them the opportunity of an outlet for venting their frustrations, a ‘release valve’ which can at times take an aggressive form against fans of the opposing team in this bleak urban society, plagued by a severe

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<sup>121</sup> “There’s been a new development in the case of the brutal murder of the 30-year-old Pakistani, who was found stabbed last Friday in Nea Ionia. Senior police officials expressed certainty that the murder of the 30-year-old was in fact a death contract to settle old scores, as the 30-year-old was a member of a drug trafficking ring. This dismisses early claims which attributed the murder to racist violence...”

<sup>122</sup> The police has always been accused of being slow to investigate crimes perpetrated by ultra-right-wing groups for decades, and even before the dictatorship, with the assassination of Grigoris Lambrakis, the Greek medical doctor, politician and track-and-field athlete in May 1963, the subject of the Costa Gavras film ‘Z’.

financial crisis, where frustration at the failing institutions gives rise to racism, sexism, intolerance, violence and fear.

The stadium is an inclusive arena and attracts fans of every race and gender, but is often used as a battlefield between opposing teams, or opposing ideologies by forces that aim to divide, as is the case with the xenophobic neo-Nazis. The ultimate purpose of their hooliganism is to intimidate, implicate and attack other teams' fans, but also to promote their agenda of racist violence by involving hapless victims, chosen at random for their race or colour. Times of crisis provide them with an easy opportunity for causing chaos and disorder.

### **2.3.4 Initiation and Conversion**

It is not only the ineffective government and political elite that are preying on the people and their national assets. In this climate, all kinds of opportunists and ultranationalist ideologues (like Golden Dawn, discussed previously in section 2.3.2) find fertile ground to promote their dubious ideologies by cultivating a tsunami of narratives highlighting the lack of cohesion within a people in turmoil. The state mechanisms, paramilitary organisations, militant groups, rogue elements in the police force and unidentified individuals can all play their part by assisting them in their unsavoury endeavours. In his recent book *Demons of Athens*, Karalis quotes a conversation he had in Greece with a member of the conservative party, who explained the mechanism his party employed for controlling every facet of public debate.<sup>123</sup> (Karalis 2014, 106-7)

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<sup>123</sup> *"It is the media, the press, the magazines. We don't have to do it. Journalists will do this for us. They know how to deal with dissent — they exoticise the dissidents, inflate them beyond their dimensions and thus neutralise and dissolve their possible effects in one go. Some of them also think that they are autonomous, which makes them more charming and appealing. ... But there is no way for them to express their mind in public and influence other people. As long as we control public debate — let them know everything in the comfort of their couch, let them talk endlessly in the cafes, playing backgammon, let them complain continuously in front of the cameras, let them practice self-oblivion in the mass spectacles of soccer and political rallies. We have established the rules of the game and we remain in control of everything step by step."* (Karalis 2014, 106-7)

Yiorgo's neo-Nazi friends exemplify these exact tactics. Like all types of opportunists or religious fanatics, they seek to appropriate and convert everyone to their way of thinking, and promote their causes by fear mongering and blaming every single problem in modern society on women, immigrants, or any other group they may wish to demonise. The emancipation of women has effected changes which have disturbed their treasured status quo and they leave no stone unturned in their efforts to vilify and blame them. They use propaganda and stop at nothing in order to 'proselytise' their members by appealing to their nostalgia for utopian ideals, religious doctrine or old-world values.

They seek prospective members among vulnerable groups of young, weak, alienated and inexperienced individuals who have the energy and are willing and active pawns in furthering their masters' causes. They lure them by promising them sexual favours and a pleasurable and purposeful life. They build up their victims' confidence by boosting their ego, offering them ample and initially complimentary support, and then secure their permanent participation in the group's activities by implicating them in acts of violence that would normally result in their prosecution and imprisonment had it not been for their 'help'. It is then an irreversible process that binds new members to the group for fear of repercussions were they to be found out, and, like any cult, they pledge and demand loyalty, and offer protection by utilising their links with corrupt police, in a final act of conversion and ultimate brainwashing.

They destabilise society by any means possible and then present their own insular vision of stability as a better alternative. Their modus operandi is based on violence of one type or another. A knife in the hand of a 'believer' or 'patriot', as they consider themselves to be, is an essential instrument of intimidation, or death, to help cleanse their society of the alien elements which have penetrated it. The same implement in the hand of an immigrant would be a sign of aggression worthy of severe punishment, and the neo-Nazis would be unscrupulous enough to falsely claim provocation had it not been any.

Women, unseen and non-existent among the neo-Nazis, are vulgarly referred to in totally objectified forms, as commodities to be used and shared among the group's current and prospective members. They are part of the illicit slave trade, usually orphaned or victimised from a young age who, due to their family situation or child-

like innocence, end up in a foreign land, trapped and exploited with the aid of drugs and no means of escape.

### **2.3.5 Innocent Victims, Desperate Killers**

In the film's opening minutes, a carful of neo-Nazis, including Yiorgo, randomly pick on a thirty-year-old Pakistani man waiting at a bus stop, talking on his phone and oblivious to the danger awaiting him. The car stops, the thugs alight and start mocking and abusing their random victim, making ape gestures at him. The relatively sparse but instrumental dialogue throughout the film is laden with racist and sexist references and remarks by the neo-Nazis. They give chase, five against one, and catch him in a secluded area under a building. While the other four hold him down, Yiorgo is relentlessly and frantically urged by the four thugs to stab him, on the implied pretext that he is physically the strongest member of the group.

Yiorgo's momentary hesitation is undoubtedly caused by feelings of fear forcing his hand (see sections 1.2.2 and 1.2.4). He is trapped. Having no time to react, Yiorgo seems to obey, and that signals the moment of his entrapment by the group. It had not been his choice to kill. In fact, even though we see Yiorgo holding the threatening knife at the start of the frenzied attack, we can only hear the repeated stabs and the victim's groans in the critical seconds that follow and, without being able to see, we can only guess at who has actually been holding the knife. Yiorgo's decision to obey, if he has actually done so, had been definitely forced. Four against one, himself, his situation would have felt utterly precarious. He could not possibly have sided with the stranger, or they would have surely all turned on him.

The moment of stabbing had also come too quickly for him to be able to react in a rational manner within the story's timeframe. The fatal stabbing of the innocent Pakistani takes place within the first few minutes of the opening scene. This intentional positioning of the stabbing at the start of the film, which leaves the audience numb and overtaken by shock, is a reflection of how powerless Yiorgo must have felt, and how aware he must have been of his lack of control in the moments leading up to this dramatically escalating situation.

The overall confusion, shared among Yiorgo and the audience, is also reflected in the dialogue, consisting of unclear and muffled words uttered by unseen characters. Though unclear, their effect is nevertheless definitive, absolute and final. They unmistakably urge quick and irreversible action. A collective command, instigated for and on behalf of the whole group, to be executed without delay. An action that aims to prove the loyalty of each member to the group and its agenda that will, in turn, bind its members together in a web of secrecy towards a goal much bigger than any of its individual members would be able to pursue on their own.

Though never visually confronted by gruesome or gratuitous violence, the audio component, emanating from unidentified characters hidden behind others or around the edges of the frame, has left the audience no room for misapprehension. This is a secret society bonded by what its members consider as ideals of racial purity and patriotism. And it was arguably racial purity which, as recently as last century, inspired and united whole nations in fighting two world wars with catastrophic consequences on human lives, destruction of cultural monuments, and tremendous loss of potential cultural, social and scientific progress.

The perpetrators leave the victim dead, and flee. On his return home after the murder, Yiorgo is totally distraught and his profound guilt causes him to vomit violently. He washes the blood off his clothes and tries to get to sleep, but keeps tossing in bed. He has great difficulty coming to terms with what has happened and his own involvement in it, and tries to block it from his mind by not answering the neo-Nazi group leader's persistent calls to his mobile phone. Yiorgo never seemed to share with his neo-Nazi friends any emotions of racism, xenophobia, intolerance or prejudice against foreigners. This is, in fact, a point of contention with his soccer friends, as can be gauged from how very critical they have been over his new-found allies, further suggesting he had never harboured such negative feelings before in the past.

Any aggression seemingly exhibited by him in his demeanour, scowl (see section 1.2.2 on facial expressions), mannerisms and short outbursts can be readily explained away by the difficulties and challenging circumstances of his daily life which become apparent as further events unfold. Fitness, not aggression, is his way of coping with pressure, tension, anger or fear. We always catch him reserving his blows for his trusted

punching bag, which serves him both as an instrument of fitness and of stress relief. His generation's hopelessness and lack of prospects have not turned him into a ruthless thug like his new cold-hearted neo-Nazi friends, who are devoid of any sympathy towards others. There is a sincere and gentle side to Yiorgo's character.

Yiorgo's attempt to distance himself from the group is thwarted when the group leader surprises him by visiting him at home to express his support, in a seemingly friendly and comforting manner, allaying his fears and giving him assurances that his police contacts will extend their protection to him. He attempts to entice him with prostitutes, all the while using sexist and misogynistic language when referring to women, and warns him there will be more attacks to come and his involvement will be crucial and valued.

Yiorgo declines all persistent invitations from the neo-Nazis, and escalates his efforts to distance himself from them. His repeated attempts to rebuild severed bridges with his soccer club friends, however, are thwarted by his increasingly intolerant response to their anguish at his association with racists, especially as he realises that they are not aware of how deeply this association actually runs.

His guilt (see sections 1.2.2 and 1.2.4) for the murder cannot but magnify the guilt he already feels for his involvement with fascists and for misleading his friends, and that, in turn, creates a vicious cycle of increasing frustration and more aggressive behaviour. When he revisits the soccer club to renew his lapsed membership, his tough guy persona and explosive reactions ensure communications are treading on egg shells. He interprets any hint of criticism as deep contempt, and his former mates are not willing to accept back to the fold the undesirable troublemaker he has clearly become, with his expulsion from the club now assured.

Yiorgo's frantic, but fruitless, attempts not to succumb to the intense pressure of the neo-Nazis, heighten his exasperation at the inevitability of his fate and irreversible choices. He is at the end of his tether and faces the biggest challenge of his life. His realisation that he is standing on the razor's edge looking down a precipice, so powerfully represented by his playing with a lighter at his workplace, as if he is about

to burn down the world and himself along with it, culminates in his complete meltdown and unresponsiveness at work.

An argument ensues between himself, his demanding and self-centred boss, and his co-worker who tries to defend him by reminding the boss they have not been paid for four months. When Yiorgo, lost in pondering his predicament, now totally alienated from family, friends and even his standardised, monotonous and uncreative work (Goldson and Muncie 2006, 33), does not return the favour to defend his co-worker, their relationship has most certainly stalled.<sup>124</sup>

Wondering whether he is still in danger of being captured by the police, and with nowhere else to go, his only option lies with the neo-Nazis who, despite his desperate attempts to avoid them since the killing, continue to treat him well and pledge their protection to him, in keeping with their predetermined recruitment plans.

In a clear struggle to rid himself of the nightmare of the crime, Yiorgo has made repeated attempts to re-establish relations with his estranged friends, family and colleague. His isolation is profound after his old friends decline to extend a helping hand, and sneer at him for not heeding their warning. They have their own battles to fight against the racist mob he has now joined, and will have to defend themselves against them at their team's games. Like him, they, too, feel betrayed by his sudden and inexplicable turn.

The only female characters ever fleetingly shown on screen are of Yiorgo's repressed mother, a young woman in the soccer club, a disinterested shop assistant and the young daughter of Yiorgo's co-worker. Yiorgo embraces the little girl once with tenderness,

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<sup>124</sup> When a deeply conflicted *Red Hulk* starts playing with his cigarette lighter at work and the boss accuses him of paying him for nothing: "*What's up Yiorgo? Having a good time? I'm not paying you to sit on your asses*", his co-worker defends him by reminding the boss he has not paid them for four months. The boss replies "*If you don't like it, why don't you go somewhere else?*" Yiorgo does not defend him, and the co-worker asks him "*Yiorgo, I stand up for you and you don't say a word? So, you only act tough at the stadium? What happened, Yiorgo? Am I wrong?*"

an indication of his naturally gentle disposition. Perhaps the presence of a woman in his life might have had a mitigating effect on his association with the ultra-nationalists, for whom females are solely sex toys to be used for their own gratification, and as a lure to attract members, and then readily discarded.

In the tragedy's closing act, he re-joins the racist mob, all seen leaving their headquarters, walking down the stairs, armed and ready for a confrontation and the ensuing battle they have been planning for the conclusion of the soccer match. Though the outcome is never shown, it is expected to go well beyond any casual hooligan vandalism and extend into acts of murder against any fan who is unlucky enough to be in the vicinity of the neo-Nazis, in some scene reminiscent of the Nika riots of the Byzantine Hippodrome.<sup>125</sup>

## 2.4. Concluding Remarks

In this chapter we have attempted a 'reading' of emotions related to nationalism in our chosen films, *Plato's Academy* and *Red Hulk*, based on the theoretical framework in the first chapter.

We examined how emotions were expressed in the visuals and the audio components of each film and discussed relevant issues of national identity, nationalism, corruption, alienation, and violence in music and in sport.

In the next chapter we attempt a 'translation' of the emotions we identified in this chapter.

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<sup>125</sup> Deliberate acts of mass violence are well documented to have been occurring from antiquity. The Nika riots of 532 AD in Constantinople originated from the rivalry between the factional chariot racing teams of the Blues and the Greens in the Byzantine Hippodrome, resulting in a standoff between them and Emperor Justinian which lasted a week causing the death of tens of thousands of people and the destruction of nearly half the city including Hagia Sophia, later rebuilt by a victorious Justinian.

## Chapter 3 – ‘Translating’ Emotions

### 3.1. Introduction

In this section we explore how the films’ emotions that were previously ‘read’ actually ‘translate’ to an Australian multicultural audience, including people of a Greek background, with a particular focus on the familiarity or foreignness of the Athenian landscape, characters and language, as well as the significance of these elements for the audiences. This process of adaptation, or ‘localisation’, discussed in section 1.3, involves interpretation of the visual, as well as the linguistic components of each film to a target audience.

As discussed in section 1.4.3, cinema constructs a simulated reality which aims to encapsulate the cultural characteristics of its subjects and reveal them to an audience from a variety of cultural backgrounds through its audiovisual content. This includes moving images, subtitles, symbols and sounds. In our analysis, we will briefly refer to the role and function of the image in communicating the films’ messages to new cultural environments; the language and cultural function of the subtitles/surtitles; the cultural translatability of symbols, history, attitudes and behaviours, and the translatability of emotions, specifically nationalist emotions.

Starting with the moving image, the common saying ‘a picture is worth a thousand words’ is testament to its power in succinctly conveying more information than any textual description could ever do. The image can be paramount in the process of ‘interpretation’ and ‘translation’. Yet, although some images have universal application and appeal, others can often be misunderstood, or have dramatically different impact and connotations in other cultural environments.

Subtitles and surtitles, each being used by different media based on the practicalities of their application, generally frame and clarify the action and messages delivered by the visuals. As discussed in section 1.4.3, the semiotic content must be consistently mapped between the spoken source language and the written target language. However, even where there are overwhelming similarities between cultures, intertextual nuances can be pervasive and have significant consequences on how they are received. Whereas

some expressions may have a positive tinge in one language, the same expressions literally translated into another language may have negative undertones.

A film's audio component, which normally consists of dialogues, monologues or voice-overs, often assisted by sound effects and music, aims to seamlessly link to the action and engage with the audience, imparting a deeper understanding of characters and events on the people.<sup>126</sup> The role of subtitles is then to convey the cultural function of the spoken language and allow and facilitate an understanding of the cultural messages.

The cultural translatability of symbols, history, attitudes and behaviours depicted in a film can be a complex issue, both semiotically and technically. Translation requires interdisciplinary skills, and the merging of visual and verbal elements adds another level of complexity to the task, as it requires multidisciplinary expertise in a wide range of areas. Due to the nature of screen translation, the opinions of the audience are of primary importance in assessing the quality and impact of the audiovisual transfer, and subtitling is always audience-centred. (McLoughlin, Biscio, and Mhainnín 2011, 12)

The translatability of emotions is largely dependent on the collective idiosyncrasy of each culture or its constituents over time, as Steiner pointed out (see section 1.3.3). Primary emotions can be universal, especially among cultures with a shared history, such as the peoples of Europe. This can also hold true for social or high-order emotions, such as nationalism, an assertion that would concur with the translatability hypothesis of nationalist feelings. Conversely, as discussed in section 1.2.4, the untranslatability of some emotions serves to highlight issues of identity and diversity, and the importance of cross-cultural communication.

The treatment of nationalism in each of the films examined here is very different and, as a result, 'translates' differently to the Australian audience which inhabits a space among the 'Other'. Each ethnic group in Australian society is a minority within a

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<sup>126</sup> Occasional departures from these norms in some experimental, avant-garde or art movies, such as Andy Warhol's split-screen 1966 film *Chelsea Girls*, only serve to highlight a distinctly different way of looking at the medium of film.

multicultural Australia, where the core Anglo-Saxon (or Anglo-Celtic) element dominates, notwithstanding its own cultural diversity, vis-à-vis racial origins. The ‘Other’ is hard to define within such a mix of cultures, with new arrivals generally forming a clear distinction, based on readily identifiable traits, where language plays a major role. Fluency and accent are the first and primary identifiers of otherness, even where skin colour is not.

In the absence of racial and linguistic distinguishers, Australian multiculturalism has been successful in ensuring broad acceptance of cultural expressions involving art, entertainment and food. Greek dance, music, theatre, cinema and literature proliferate in major cities of Australia, depending to a large extent on active participation in community-run events, talks and festivals, attended by diverse people affiliated with Greek culture through racial origin, friendship ties or general interest.

Integration of different ethnic groups from Europe and Asia has followed, relatively seamlessly, the initial and foreboding policy of assimilation, taking advantage of the much touted ‘classless’ Australian society, with interracial marriages, including those with its Aboriginal inhabitants, playing a significant part in paving the way for a uniquely Australian mix of cultures.

This has bestowed a certain sheltered security to many Australian communities’ multifaceted identity which has made it hard for them, until relatively recently,<sup>127</sup> to comprehend flare-ups of extreme violence overseas that occasionally feature on our news bulletins. Violence (see section 1.2.5) at music or sporting events in Australia remains largely uncommon and, when it occurs, it is often tied with events overseas, as has been the case with Balkan conflicts in the not-too-distant past. Racism is, however, still a contentious issue which is claimed and counter-claimed by activist groups in

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<sup>127</sup> The Cronulla riots started on 11 December 2005 following tensions between youths of Lebanese and Anglo-Celtic backgrounds at Sydney’s beachside suburb of Cronulla and surrounding suburbs, causing extensive property damage. They were a wakeup call for the community and were widely condemned.

support of, or against, specific minorities, and largely confused, consciously or unconsciously, with religion.

Poor language skills among new immigrants into any destination country, though encumbering the scope of communication, are not enough to halt it, and a mixed-language vocabulary, often aided by some basic English as a lingua franca, seems sufficient for building bridges and ultimately harmony, at a neighbourhood or community level. This process is not characteristic only of what happens in Australia, but occurs in any Western country with an influx of migrants.

When mutual communication is established between diverse people, it builds rapport and alleviates the initial fear of foreigners, which enables them in time to realise that, below the surface, everyone is subject to the same human condition. This melting pot of cultures may ultimately open up new horizons and possibilities, as it did on a macro level for the New World in the sixteenth century and beyond or, on a micro level, for Stavros in *Plato's Academy*.

In this chapter, I, as a native Greek speaker, born and raised in the inner-north suburbs of Athens who attended the Seventh Girls High School at Akadimia Platonos, will attempt an interpretation of the emotions on display in the Athenian setting, the characters' body language and actual language used in the film's dialogues. As a long-term Sydney resident, I will explore how these 'translate' into an Australian multiracial audience which includes first and second-generation Greeks.

In the following sections of the present chapter, I will be discussing the role of the image, the language, the cultural translatability of the history, symbols, attitudes and behaviours, and the translatability of emotions and, by extension, those which relate to nationalism for each of the two films, *Plato's Academy* and *Red Hulk*. The chapter ends with a synopsis of the commonalities and differences in the way the films work in new cultural settings.

## **3.2. *Plato's Academy***

### **3.2.1. Introduction**

The following sections address the role of the image, language, cultural translatability and translatability of emotions and, in particular, nationalism in *Plato's Academy*. When discussing the visuals, our main focus is parody, as it underlies and qualifies them throughout, which reflects on the next section's title. Subsequent sections bear similar titles that reflect their particular focus, although there is a certain crossover of themes between them.

The second section explores language and subtitles through the prism of names, as they are of major importance to the film's characters. Semiotic translatability is discussed in the next section through the characters' views on Rock Music, and, lastly, the fourth section deals with the translatability of emotions, identity and nationalism.

### **3.2.2. The Visuals of Parody**

Filippos Tsitos has infused an abundant measure of humour in *Plato's Academy*. Parody, satire and the richly-textured and nuanced comic element have lightened the Director's serious social and political commentary, which would otherwise have been intense for the audience to handle in a sombre drama dealing with so many interrelated and challenging issues. The film's sense of morality, equality and justice is facilitated by its humour. Humour is the catalyst that enables communication and dialogue between cultures, even though the parodic device is often largely 'untranslatable' and likely to miss, if one is not familiar with the cultural references on display. (Milne 2013, 197)

The film's title is the name of an actual inner-city suburb of Athens and its choice is indicative of the liberal dose of parody throughout. This is the presumed locality of Plato's school, the Omphalos of Philosophy in the city-state which created democracy, where the ancient philosophers were trained in rational thinking. A marked contrast to today's decline, where the new inhabitants are very proud to hold on to their ancestors' grandeur, yet have only the foggiest of ideas of what stood there, beneath their feet,

millennia ago, while they are currently living in a state of lethargy and blissful ignorance; except that the bliss has now been breached by the waves of foreigners who breathe new purpose to the still life of the decayed relics of a glorious past.

Soon after the opening credits, we see Stavros, the main character of the film, and his mother at the clinic for her check-up. The scene, as described in section 2.2.2, is in the black comedy style, with farcical elements in the dialogue and body language making light of the mother's serious condition.

The doctor's reference to Turkish soap operas would probably appear humorous for both native and diaspora audiences. His remark, though likely to bring a knowing smile upon the local audience, would arouse curiosity in any Greek Australian unfamiliar with the new reality, who entertains notions of entrenched animosity between the perennial enemies. On closer examination, the reality of centuries-old coexistence between the two peoples, Greeks and Turks, could not be ignored and there have been attempts for cultural exchange and collaboration as far back as the 1930s in the post-WWI period.<sup>128</sup>

This contemporary Athenian society, in deep recession, appears demoralised and stagnant, looking elsewhere even for its daily dose of entertainment, where the average TV viewer's recreation includes a diet of Turkish serials that bring him closer to his neighbour across the Aegean, to a country 'on the road' to EU membership, a largely unknown culture, traditionally viewed with suspicion and fear. A country that features in daily news reports involving conflict: over Cyprus, the islet of Imia, Greek airspace infringements by Turkish fighter jets, and other acrimonious and hostile acts.

And yet, despite that country's official standing in Greece, its people, represented by the onscreen characters, created by Turks for their local audience, portray a familiar and traditional family image of humorous rivalry when faced with cross-cultural love

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<sup>128</sup> Attempts for Greek-Turkish collaborations in the 1930s included the co-production *The Evil Way* (1933), made in Istanbul and directed by Mushin Ertuğrul, with the great Greek theatre actresses Marika Kotopouli and Kybele, but proved untenable due to nationalistic criticisms. (Karalis 2012, 24-25)

affairs and interracial weddings with Greeks.<sup>129</sup> Apart from their intercultural themes, and nostalgic look at traditional family life and values, these serials have been successful in showing how similar the two cultures actually are in temperament, behaviour, personality traits, loyalty, gestures, cuisine, foods, eating habits, and even some shared vocabulary. They poke fun at the old nationalistic and xenophobic attitudes, light-heartedly suggesting that anachronistic ideas need to be overcome for a European-sanctioned peace to be established.

They also demystify Turkish insecurities about entry into the EU, their widely-held view that Greece is a ‘passport’ to Europe, and allow a glimpse at current issues and shared anxieties from a different perspective. Importantly, they reflect on the two communities’ shared history, the Greek origins of some families in Istanbul, and the significance of its Greek landmarks, Fener (Φανάρι), Hagia Sophia (Αγία Σοφία) and others, as well as the memories, nostalgia and sadness over a long-lost, worldly past.<sup>130</sup>

TV entertainment plays a significant role in acquainting the viewer with the ‘Other’, and the EU television industry has started to appreciate its substantial intercultural role in bringing together its twenty-five member states, each representing a different cultural background with unique characteristics, by “promoting unity through diversity” (see section 1.4.4). (Serafeim 2010, 52)

In the scene at the clinic in *Plato’s Academy*, the audience will also not miss the queues of weary patients in the surgery corridor, which add a surreal eccentricity to the Greek

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<sup>129</sup> Commenting on the popular, in Greece, Turkish series “*Ξένος Γαμπρός*” (*Foreign Groom*), or “*Τα Σύνορα της Αγάπης*” (*Love’s Borders*) as it was pompously translated into Greek, Papailias notes that it “portrayed the taboo relationships of Turk and Greek, Orthodox and Muslim, through Turkish eyes. The serial offered Greek viewers the rare opportunity to peek into Turkish homes, to overhear their conversations, to glimpse their, perhaps unexpected, nostalgias, insecurities, and desires, and, above all, to find out how they imagine and remember ‘us Greeks’.” (Papailias 2005, 2)

<sup>130</sup> Having reached saturation point in the last couple of years, however, and having largely exhausted their scope and novelty value with their Greek audience, Turkish serials are now being slowly replaced by Greek ones which have started to adjust to smaller budgets and more artistic productions to compete. Greek television is reinventing itself by devising better formulas, and utilising new formats to improve communication with their audience while actually tackling significant issues in engaging ways.

health system with its low doctor-to-patient ratios.<sup>131</sup> In contrast, the queues encountered in the neighbourhood square, outside Stavros' shop, are productive and busy, organised as they are by private enterprise.<sup>132</sup>

Here, intertextuality applies in reverse in interpreting the scene of the 'production line' formed by busy Chinese workers. The only curiosity the scene would excite to an Australian audience, used to Chinese workers who form a large percentage of the multicultural mix in Australia, would be the reaction of the Greek shopkeepers. Their amusement, mixed in with a dose of racism, produces the ironic comment "*Is the guy that just came out the same guy that went in before?*" Their curiosity is presumably also piqued by the foreigners' efficiency and hard work, as juxtaposed to their own idleness and inefficiency, which, in conjunction with their lack of entrepreneurship, will eventually prove costly for them.

As if the power of the image was not enough to gauge idleness, the spoken word comes to reinforce it when the Chinese shopkeeper offers Stavros money to buy his shop in broken Greek (not evident in the English subtitles), where he makes allusions to the idleness of the local shopkeepers. "*Εσύ κάθεται όλη μέρα χωρίς νοίκιο καλό. Γιατί να μην κάθεται όλη μέρα με νοίκιο καλό;*" (*You sit all day without good rent. Why not sit all day with a good rent?*) Humorously sarcastic, this poignant observation is also an indictment at those people who cannot, or are not willing to, help themselves, and blame everyone else for their own grave predicament.

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<sup>131</sup> To an Australian audience, the scene may well be considered a comical device to add to the entertainment, but to the local citizens it serves as a reminder of the endless and unproductive waiting they are forced to endure in their day-to-day dealings with many public services, who may already have first or second-hand knowledge, from family or friends, of how unwieldy bureaucracy can be, and how impossible it often is to deal with the state, unless one utilises the means to sidestep the bureaucratic processes through bribing, corruption or an intermediary with government contacts.

<sup>132</sup> Chinese entrepreneurs and workers, renowned for their efficiency the world over, are setting up a fashion shop in the middle of Athens, having taken over from the small, privately-run boutiques which used to be abundant in the inner suburbs of Athens and provided self-employment for many enterprising people, mostly women and, indeed, mothers. The demise of the local artisan and innovative businesses has now only left shops which supply basic commodities, the bare essentials of life which, for the citizens of the tobacco-producing country, are food, drinks and cigarettes, the bulk of the offerings at the three general stores in the square.

When the Chinese businessmen hire Albanian workers for building work, the locals realise the different roles and specialisation of each nationality, and how the labour force is utilised by foreigners in their own country. *“The Chinese have woken up and are taking the Albanians away from us”*, notes Stavros’ friend, which in the subtitles appears as *“The Chinese are stealing our Albanians now!”* What is foreign and familiar for the locals is respectively familiar and foreign in the Australian milieu, where the Chinese minority boasts almost a million residents, whereas residents of Albanian extraction number less than fifteen thousand; similar ratios but in reverse between Greece and Australia, and inversely proportional to their relative geographical positions.

The Intercultural Solidarity Monument, referred to in section 2.1.3, provides another parodic element, satirising, among other things, the superficial and haphazard approach of a dysfunctional government towards the serious issues of racism and xenophobia. By opting to enforce tolerance from above, it fails to consider the views of its local citizens and shrugs its responsibility to provide leadership in educating them.

Australian audiences, already accustomed to a broad-based multiculturalism, with its Australian idiosyncrasies, would be rather amused at the difficulty the locals encounter in trying to read, and comprehend, the Greek word for ‘intercultural’ (διαπολιτισμικό). The relative orientation of the sign and the heads turning sideways to read it, while following its passage, heighten the comical effect, with their sense of bewilderment adding a serious undertone to the seeming lack of tolerance exhibited by their Greek monoculture. Theirs is, perhaps, not truly a monoculture as it has never actually ceased to absorb diverse elements, but would appear to be so, as a defence mechanism of a culture under existential pressure.

As discussed in section 2.2.2, existential pressure is what makes Stavros appeal to a higher authority at a local church to overcome the chaos in his life and find divine answers to the question of why his newfound brother had to be from Albania. Surrounded by empty space, with only one woman praying and another cleaning the church, Stavros can have direct and unconditional access to Saint Peter’s icon to make

his plea. *“I don't even care. After all, everyone comes from somewhere. So many places, so many countries... He had to be from Albania?”* he moans.

An ironic twist of fate, not uncommon in real life, that connects him to his most despised race. A race that his mother, while she was in control, was able to erase from his identity, only to come to the surface now that she is unable to suppress it anymore – a story that would resonate with anyone, of any race and creed, and echo, in reverse, stories of Janissaries taught at Greek school to a few generations of Australian Greeks.

For all of Stavros' hyperbolic gestures and inflated antics, Tsitos has been careful to dispel any suggestion of bigotry or racism on his part. Stavros' plight resonates with ordinary people, the average individual who maintains a sense of wonderment and puzzlement at the world, but eventually comes to accept what he cannot change. The story he tells Dina, about the fifty euro note that he found on the ground but allowed someone else to pick it up instead, reveals his childlike naivety, hesitation and ambivalence at something bigger than himself that may eventually lead him along a path to self-knowledge.<sup>133</sup>

### **3.2.3. What's in a Name and What Lies Beyond**

The linguistic content of the film consists of dialogue, monologues and subtitle translations. Apart from the humour that permeates them, discussed in the previous section, a key part of the dialogue centres around names. Names are used to identify and differentiate, and Tsitos has purposely chosen or made up names that imbibe the characters with cultural context. As Karalis posits, *“names ... signify difference, alienness”*, (Karalis 2003, 136) and Stavros' name, carefully chosen by his mother to

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<sup>133</sup> Stavros' innocence is also revealed when he seriously wonders whether his mother's ethnicity dictates his own too. His friends reveal a similar naivety when they try to assure him that his Albanian roots would make no difference to their friendship, but still ask him “You don't speak a word of Albanian, right?” Tsitos' sensitivity and respect for his characters, their ponderings, behaviours and qualities are paramount throughout the film, and the unbiased spectator in any audience would be able to discern the nuances in their musings, only limited by the degree of their shared knowledge with the author and the work, as is inherently the case with parody. (Wright 2012, 146)

affirm the identity she has chosen for him (see section 2.2.2), has played its part in assuring him of his Greekness and, by extension, distancing him from any other ethnicity and, indeed, his own.

His mother's name, Χαρίκλεια, from χάρις (charis/grace) and κλέος (kleos/glory) does not rate a mention in the subtitles. It is a typical Greek female name with ancient roots, used in Greece today either whole by typically older women, sometimes preceded by κυρά (Mrs) as she has been addressed here, or abbreviated by younger women in the oral language<sup>134</sup> to Χάρης (Charis) or other modern-sounding variants to avoid old clichés and stereotypes. Whether it was chosen accidentally or deliberately by the filmmaker, it is fitting for the character's new identity and age group and substantiates her status.

It is not only the mother's name that has been deemed irrelevant, or excessively evocative of 'otherness' for English-speaking audiences, to mention in the subtitles. The entire whimsical phrase "*Μπράβο σουζέ κυρά Χαρίκλεια!*" (*Bravo, well done Mrs Charikleia*), exclaimed by Stavros' friend when the mother first recognises her long-lost son in the Albanian and calls him by the name of 'Remzi', has been rendered as "*Check that out!*" The usage of 'σουζέ' from the French variant (succès) of 'success' for 'smash hit' is too metaphorical and ironic for the brevity demanded of the subtitles. It follows Stavros' bewildered interjection "*Are you nuts, mom?*" and is a humorous and courteous way by a bystander to defuse any conceivable tension between the three people directly involved in the exchange, namely Stavros, his mother and the Albanian.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Even though given names are commonly abbreviated in oral speech in Greece, it is the formal given name that is always recorded in their official documents.

<sup>135</sup> Names and/or descriptions of shops are another untranslatable historical and cultural element, both in terms of products sold and, indeed, description or name. The general stores in the square bear descriptive names such as: "*Ψιλικά Τσιγάρα Αναψυκτικά*", roughly translated as: *Everyday essentials, Cigarettes, Soft drinks*. They sell, literally, everyday consumables, cigarettes and soft drinks, reflecting the vastly higher ratios of smokers in Greece compared to Australia. A similar 'corner' shop in Sydney may be identified and/or labelled as a 'convenience store' or 'general store' and offer a different mix of daily consumables. A generation ago they were known as 'milk bars', but the widespread availability of dairy products, and milkshakes, has repurposed many of those still remaining.

Agisilaou Street, named after the Spartan king Αγησίλαος (Agesilaus), is an actual street in the neighbourhood where Stavros' shop is supposed to be located, and it is likely it would have provoked exasperation among the local residents when it changed to a one-way street, as many local streets have had to over the years, in order to cope with the ever-increasing traffic.

Unlike the British or Aboriginal-derived street names in Australia, roads in Athens are named after prominent personalities from antiquity to this day, and always appearing in the genitive, or possessive, case. The reference to the city of Γιάννενα or Ιωάννινα (Ioannina) as Stavros' city of origin and his father's place of death, though, is replaced by 'the North' in the subtitles, deemed too complicated and ultimately confusing for any further details to be on display.<sup>136</sup>

Apart from building a communication platform with the Albanian, the etymologies of names explained during the mother's wake include a link to a shared history, with the name Αργύρης and its connection to the old Greek town of Αργυρόκαστρο, now Albanian Gjirokastër. The way the etymology is explained in simple, even trivial, terms adds a human dimension of equality and tolerance, where the foreign becomes familiar to both sides, and to the audience, and the catharsis of the long-awaited sleep brings the 'brothers' closer together.

In any ethnicity, given names normally reflect a community's history, religion and culture and, more directly, the parents' hopes for their children's future. Apart from a name's sonority and appropriateness for the child's appearance and demeanour, the choice of name usually reflects the parents' wish that their child may inhabit their chosen name and emulate the importance or achievements of the historical or

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<sup>136</sup> Other names omitted from the subtitles include the doctor's assistant at the clinic, 'Αναστάσης' ('Anastasios' – from 'anastasis', the Greek word for 'resurrection' – usually referring to Christ), and the names of the Athenian football stadiums hosting rock concerts. The two stadiums, the old 1948-built multi-purpose stadium in the outer suburb of Rizoupoli, or the 1968-built Sporting Stadium are deemed irrelevant to mention for a foreign audience, though even a younger Greek audience would now be unfamiliar with the history surrounding their usage and maintenance needs.

mythological figure who bore it. In Greek tradition, children are predominantly named in honour of their grandparents or other ancestry. Nicknames are also often assumed or given for a variety of reasons, and Greece is certainly no exception in terms of the number of surnames which derive from ancestors' nicknames, professional ranks or occupations.

Stavros' Albanian 'brother' has been given the name Marenglen as a result of contraction of the triptych of Marxist leaders, Marx-Engels-Lenin. To the uninitiated, this may appear as a curious or invented detail, but in reality it is quite a common name for Albanians, a fact that hints at how respected the three stalwarts of the Soviet Revolution had been for the neighbouring country, and also how closed and dogmatic their political system was. It is also a worthy inclusion by Tsitos, in his multilayered narrative. Local audiences may be aware of the name's derivation in a country with a sizeable Albanian minority of almost five percent, a similar percentage to the Chinese minority in Australia. This fortuitous reverse analogy facilitates drawing comparisons between the respective audiences in Greece and Australia.<sup>137</sup>

When the Albanian tells Stavros his name is Nikos, he is readily scorned by him. For Stavros, changing one's name is akin to trying to alter their identity which, for him, is permanently fixed and unchanging and, hence, so should be one's name. For Stavros, 'Nikos' is a Greek and not an Albanian name and, therefore, it is unconscionable for a foreigner to appropriate it. A name should be a tag of national pride in one's identity and be always worn as a badge of honour by a patriot. Conversely, if identity is not permanently fixed, a name is also subject to change, a pertinent point of inner conflict for Stavros, following his inevitable transformative revelation.

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<sup>137</sup> Australians are flexible with name changes, which are easily effected in the user-friendly Australian registration system. It has been common practice for people who have migrated from countries of different dominant languages and cultures to adapt their names to forms that are familiar or easier to pronounce by the English-speaking population. Many Greek migrants have changed or shortened their first names and/or surnames to a more accessible or anglicised form. Apart from avoiding errors and constant mispronunciations, such changes have prevented many instances of negative discrimination against migrants, allowing them to integrate into society and eventually even hold positions of power. In the years after migrant communities become established, the practice usually subsides, and many foreign names tend to become more familiar to the mainstream culture over time. Yet, in Greece, name changes are still quite uncommon and can cause consternation for the locals.

Marenglen is not the only Albanian who has had to change his name in the film. The Albanian boy who is barked at by the dog when he comes to pick up beer from the shop is addressed by the Christian name 'Thomas'. "*You are letting an Albanian alone in the store?*" comments one of the friends, but no negative reaction ensues. The age and native-sounding language of the boy seem sufficient to allow him into the shop by himself. Such reaction, or lack thereof, would be readily understandable in Australia, where invisible qualities, such as place of birth, are normally secondary to anyone but the authorities, over outward signs of presumed belonging, such as speaking without an accent. Accent can signal 'otherness' more than most other traits.

As discussed in 1.4.3, idioms characteristic of the Greek cultural expression are used to good effect to convey with an image the depth of each characterisation. The impression that the Chinese workers' zest for life and *modus operandi* leaves on Stavros' friends is described by "*οι Κινέζοι πιάνουν την πέτρα και την στύβουνε*", during a conversation between them. "*Bursting with life*" is an articulate brief rendering of the literal translation 'wringing the stone' to get any last drop of moisture out of it but, as is generally the case with translating idioms, the background information conveyed by the original is somewhat lost in translation.<sup>138</sup>

Another idiom "*Δεν φτούραγε*" is also sidestepped when Stavros tries to conceal the fact that the Albanian is his brother, by claiming he is his mother's carer, and has sacked him because he could not last the distance, which in the subtitles appears as "*He wasn't any good*". What is significant about this conversation is not the difference in the explicitness of the answer, but that Stavros' dismissal of the Albanian causes his friends disappointment, indicating their change of heart and willingness to accept the stranger

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<sup>138</sup> It is an interesting juxtaposition that the body language of the energetic, productive and enthusiastic Chinese workers is perceived by their Greek neighbours as laborious and back-breaking. Their lethargy, which the audience cannot help but register in the way they slump in their chairs, inactive and with frowns as their resting expression, is threatened by any activity in their vicinity. The only pursuits that awaken them from their stupor are soccer and passive aggression. Ironically, the very thing that causes them revulsion could be the remedy to their situation.

on his relative merits which were, according to their criteria, that he was a good soccer player, a good worker and Status Quo fan.

The linguistic style or register, as mentioned in section 1.4.3, is of a colloquial variety, with the occasional expletive peppering the dialogue, reflecting momentary anger or frustration. The language is informal, day-to-day, non-gender-specific and representative of a modern-day Athenian and, as such, has been successfully transferred to an equivalent register for a typical English-speaking audience. Anger is expressed in seemingly threatening, but over-the-top pronouncements,<sup>139</sup> which are too metaphorical or humorously gory to be taken seriously, but have the required effect in diffusing the utterer's anger.

However, the racist and nationalistic slogan, “*Δεν θα γίνεις Έλληνας ποτέ, Αλβανέ, Αλβανέ*” (*You're never going to be Greek, Albanian, Albanian*), mentioned in section 2.2.2, is devoid of humour as it is lifted straight from football arenas, where racism has flourished around the globe, and Australia has not been immune to it, with recent incidents directed against indigenous sportsmen of repute. Violence associated with sport, most commonly referred to as ‘hooliganism’,<sup>140</sup> discussed in the next section, has many causes and manifestations, with racism often being a directly or indirectly contributing factor.

### **3.2.4. Hooliganism, Rock and Social Inclusion**

Cultural translatability is discussed here through the prism of the characters' history, attitudes and behaviours on key issues such as rock music, identity and social

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<sup>139</sup> Examples: “*Κομματάκια θα σε κάνει η οργή του ψηφοφόρου*” rendered as “*the voter's anger ... [will] tear you to pieces*”, or “*Πάνω από το πτώμα μου θα περάσετε ρε!*” which translates as “*Over my dead body!*” but has not been included in the subtitles.

<sup>140</sup> Hooliganism derives its name from the Hooligan Boys of London in the late nineteenth century. The phenomenon has re-emerged on a number of occasions since then, most notably in St Petersburg in the period 1900-1914 (Neuberger 1993, 3) which included a variety of public disturbances dubbed ‘hooliganism’ after the events in London, and in the UK during the 1970s mainly during football matches, though widespread during concerts in large venues such as open stadiums.

acceptance, and the extent to which these can be interpreted and transferred to a new cultural setting. As mentioned in section 1.3.4, language is central to the expression and translation of emotions. In music, it comes in the form of lyrics, which reflect the particular culture and make-up of its people.

Rock and Roll (Rock 'n' Roll) music originated in the USA in the 1940s and 1950s, drawing its influences from American country music and Rhythm and Blues (RnB or R&B). It is a popular music played for the people by the people, with open rules and free expression and, as such, very accessible to all. Unlike the R&B lyrical themes which were often lamenting the poverty and hardships of African-Americans, R&R lyrics reflected the appeal of the music on youth of all races, and covered the full spectrum of human experience, including love, angst, rebellion, introspection and even abstract language.<sup>141</sup>

Taboo subjects started to be talked about, which pushed boundaries and helped bring diverse people closer together. From the 1960s it spread around the world influencing world music and culture. Its accessible musical form with uncomplicated rules spurred a whole new way to experience music the world over, unlike other established musical forms such as baroque, classical and twentieth century music which are characterised by their own set structures and etiquette on audiences.<sup>142</sup>

Music has always been influenced by political events and anti-establishment sentiments that have given rise to new genres, such as 1970s Punk, which originated in the English slums of socioeconomic disadvantage, and exemplified an aggressive and rebellious

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<sup>141</sup> “*But rock 'n' roll borrowed mostly from the blues and from R&B, a mix of blues and jazz. From blues came boogie-woogie piano, gruff singing, and gritty lyrics about day-to-day living, distorted guitars, slide guitar technique, and other down-home blues styles that got updated, plus African American rhythms*” (Komara 2006, 838)

<sup>142</sup> Empowered by the technological revolution that allowed rampant changes in all walks of life, this powerful combination of culture and technology spawned an unprecedented tsunami of people who believed in a dynamic anti-establishment ideology of youth that could change the world to a freer, more democratic and egalitarian society. With experimentation at its core, its adherents pulled no stops in testing the boundaries of alternative lifestyles, sexual liberation and drugs, in their ‘sex, drugs and Rock 'n' Roll’-fuelled exploration of spirituality that rivalled religion.

nonconformity message accompanied by protests, riots and vandalism which also spawned its own type of art, fashion and literature. Their lyrics were a ‘call to arms’ against conservative government policies in England, the commercialisation of Rock and a variety of other issues. (Dale, Hawkins, and Burns 2012, 30)

The punk subculture had been staunch in their uncompromising anti-establishment stance and opposition to the status quo, mainstream ideologies and lifestyles. Rock concerts featuring punk bands were known to be exposed to acts of vandalism by fans, and the kind of hooliganism experienced at sports games. When Stavros declares “*Rock music isn't just music! It's a concept. It's an ideology*”, he is perfectly in tune with the spirit of the late 1970s and 1980s punk movement, both in Greece and in the UK.

In spite of the vastly different political systems in the two countries, the prevailing conditions among the working class were not too dissimilar, as Greece had suffered enormous hardships, upheavals and persecutions under the military junta which seized power in the 1967 coup d'état, but was finally able, in 1974, to rid itself of the dictators.<sup>143</sup>

It is interesting to highlight the subtle difference between the subtitles and Stavros' actual expression, “*Δεν πηγαίναμε για ν' ακούσουμε μουσικούλα*” (*We were not going to listen to 'little music'*). The diminutive form for ‘music’, transferred into English by adding the word ‘just’, is used here in a pejorative sense with a meaning of ‘unimportant’, to scoff at the suggestion that the reason for going to such concerts could be the music. The music provided them with a welcome excuse to stage a revolution. In that sense, the addition of ‘just’ in the translation could even be perceived as an act of ‘deception’ (Eleftheriotis 2010, 191), yet it is arguably justified for the average English-speaking viewer.

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<sup>143</sup> Growing up in this climate, and suddenly allowed a new sense of freedom, Stavros relates that in his youth, he was a fan of rock bands such as the Police and Rory Gallagher. He reminisces with fondness about how he and his friends used to go to their concerts, not for the music but for the ensuing hooliganism they had initiated: “*We tore the whole stadium apart... And the speakers! People were running away! At the concert of the "Police" we went crazy too...We always went crazy! We didn't go just for the music! That's what rock is!*”

It also indicates the vast difference in the way rock concerts were perceived in Greece and abroad, depending undoubtedly on the music genre. For Greeks, English-language concerts were opportunities for revolt. Even while they liked to listen to this music in the comfort of their homes, and were fans of the artists, deep down there were seething tensions about the ongoing treatment of Greece at the hands of the English-speaking superpowers. Open-air concerts gave them a chance to protest against international politics and be part of the global protest movement.

Misgivings against the USA, in particular, have been widespread amongst Greek people who have, rightly or wrongly, always blamed America for every foreign policy disaster to befall Greece, from the Greek civil war of December 1944 - January 1945 and 1946-49, through to the 1967 coup d'état, the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus, and a variety of recent events. Although the USA has been the primary target of anger, the UK has shared the blame for supporting, assisting or being in collusion with the Americans in perpetrating these acts.

Twenty years on, Stavros has retained the integrity of his old musical tastes and is not eager to adapt to the norms of a modern society. He does not like today's popular bouzouki music that his younger friend plays on the cassette player, and wants it turned off. When he listens to music, it is always the rock of his youth that remains a concept and an ideology to him. He boasts about his generation's idealism ("*Rock music isn't just music!*"), and recklessness ("*We tore the whole stadium apart*"), and is not swayed by current musical trends that reek of utilitarianism (dance music), and commercialism, which he finds impossible to tolerate.

In the few intervening years separating the ages of the foursome, rock, in its multiple variants, does not seem to dominate to the same degree the musical predilections of the younger generation, who have returned to a form of 'λαϊκή μουσική', or popular bouzouki music, that lends itself to their preferred forms of entertaining and dancing.

For Stavros and his peers, rock had provided an opportunity to challenge and shake up the establishment. For their generation and the one immediately before it, rebellion was about renewal, whether they were rebels without a cause, or had legitimate reasons for

defying authority. Renewal was also sought on the social front, and the sphere of interpersonal relationships, and was arguably achieved around the globe, though new challenges have always emerged to take the place of the old.

### **3.2.5. Appealing Emotions**

This section explores emotions depicted in the film, and their translatability to an Australian audience. Emotions centre around the issue of identity and the way it reflects on every aspect of a person's life, as discussed in sections 1.2.5 and 1.3.2. We have seen how vital a concept Stavros' identity has been for him, who only understood its significance when it was brought into question. He has acknowledged it himself during the fight with his 'brother' at the cemetery when he asked him, *"Do you know who you are? You're Albanian. What about me? You don't know, do you? Neither do I! Wake up one day not knowing who you are... and then you tell me what matters and what doesn't!"*

The despair expressed above by Stavros and his accompanying physical attack on his 'brother' show the depth of his internal conflict, as discussed under Identification Theory in section 1.2.5. Identification Theory can also partly explain his 'brother's' calm demeanour insofar as it is not due to his natural character. The Albanian's identity has not been questioned and he has no reason to defend it. He knows who he is and this is the point that Stavros is making above, with his desperate plea. Stavros' lack of a secure identity is a threat to his survival and he resorts to physical violence in defence of his life.

In *Plato's Academy*, a full range of emotions are on display, including all the primary emotions of fear, anger, sadness, surprise, joy and love (see section 1.2.2). The fear of a new world order, replacing the old and familiar, is inescapable for the locals when their lives are turned upside down and their livelihood is threatened by hordes of newcomers. Not only are their neighbourhoods unrecognisable, but even their governments appear estranged, catering more to the strangers than to their own citizens. In the end, the foreign merges with the familiar, their friends and even their family. Their fear turns alternately from worry and anxiety over what tomorrow might bring, to apprehension about how to handle it, and dread over their inability to counteract it.

Their anger is an inevitable reaction to their powerlessness, morphing from rage and exasperation to outrage and hostility. Stavros is outraged and openly hostile to the contractor in charge of erecting the Intercultural Solidarity Monument. In his rage, he and his friends take down the monument's foundations with enthusiasm and glee for the revenge they have exacted. Their fleeting joy is soon followed by feelings of hopelessness and dismay at their inability to turn things around, yet watch the Chinese workers in amazement, amused at their ability to work together so efficiently. Life for them has been fraught with drama and difficulty that can only be overcome by embracing change, restoring friendships and love between Stavros and Dina, the mother and her two sons.<sup>144</sup>

The locals' love of country, mixed in with the memories and nostalgia for a long-lost past, is what binds them together and to the land, and brings their patriotism to the surface, inadvertently tainted by other overarching tensions during football games. During the soccer match between Albania and Greece, Stavros is prevented from celebrating the Greek win with the nationalist fervour of the past. As discussed in sections 2.2.2 and 3.2.3, the comment made by one of his friends that he, in effect, may not be entitled to sing the racist slogan "*Albanian, Albanian, you'll never be a Greek*" now that his ethnicity is in doubt, results in Stavros' bitter disappointment and anguish, and eventual retreat into his home. Sadness and anger bring relations between them to a complete halt.

Inside the house, the mother is watching the game too, absentmindedly. She surprises us, however, when she turns to her newly-found son the next day to express her disappointment at the Albanians' loss. "*You lost yesterday... It's a pity*". It is, surprisingly, not a loss she considers her own. She has given up her original identity in

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<sup>144</sup> Stavros' ex-wife, Dina, a driving instructor who owns and operates a successful driving school, is his refuge when he finds himself under sustained pressure. Her strength and power enable her to run her business in a male-dominated profession, with mainly women among her clientele, and her financial independence ensures that she is not subjected to the same degree of patriarchal authority as other women in urban or regional settings, who are dependent on their husbands for their own status in society. (Bottomley 1974, 14)

favour of her acquired one. All these years in a new land have changed her self-definition, even if she maintains her fluency in the language she once knew as her native. She had deliberately changed her identity when she made the decision to migrate, and she has not been at its mercy, even if the conditions, back then, had forced her hand.

The mother's willingness to espouse her new identity, and not inhabit the twilight space between the old and the new, is testament to her resoluteness and deep understanding of what it would entail. In the microenvironment she inhabits, she has made the right choices and earned commensurate respect, not unlike the respect shown by Greek-Australian families to their elder relatives, who paved the way for their descendants to succeed and thrive in their adopted country through their own sacrifice.

These emotions are shared among the people of Australia, a land of immigrants. Although colonial Australia, as a young country, has had a very different history to Greece, it has welcomed a multitude of migrants over the last two hundred years, and gained a wealth of maturity from its multicultural population which is an integral part of its future.

Greece, like most of Europe, has been a melting pot of cultures over its tri-millennial history. In recent times, in spite of its severe economic conditions, unemployment, the refugee crisis and illegal migration, Greece, traditionally renowned for its hospitality, has opened its doors and welcomed wave upon wave of refugees fleeing war-torn zones, and its generosity has not been extinguished by the rates of poverty afflicting its population.

Overall, attitudes and behaviours are shared by the two peoples, helped along by their long-term connection as tourists, migrants and residents. National days commemorating wartime heroism and sacrifices are celebrated with patriotism and introspection during parades and other festivities. Sporting events, usually of the football code variety, also appeal to the fans' patriotic sentiments, and spectator participation contributes to a lively and entertaining game. In spite of the occasional nationalism-related incident, often magnified or blown out of proportion by well- or

not-so-well-meaning advocates or sensationalist media, tolerance is, on balance, practised by the majority of people in both countries.

### **3.3. *Red Hulk***

#### **3.3.1. Introduction**

Following through from *Plato's Academy*, the next sections explore the role of the image, language, cultural translatability and translatability of emotions relating to nationalism in *Red Hulk*. Unlike *Plato's Academy*, *Red Hulk* is characterised more by action than by words and the characters' body language plays an even more critical role in unlocking their intentions. Yet, the scarce words spoken are instrumental in qualifying and specifying each piece of the action. As violence colours every aspect of the film throughout, the imagery in the first section will be viewed through the prism of violence, or threat of violence, from the scene of the chase and subsequent murder, right through to the closing scene of the march of the neo-Nazis towards the execution of their unconscionable schemes.

The film's linguistic component works in synergy with the visuals of violence throughout its curt, offensive and sexist content, and the sparseness of the dialogue highlights its significance. Therefore, subtitles are discussed not only within the framework of language in section 3.3.3, but also in other sections, where applicable. Themes of sexism, misogyny and homophobia, which tend to operate in tandem with racism, are explored in section 3.3.4 in the context of cultural translatability with a focus on swearwords and slang, and section 3.3.5 follows through with an analysis of the translatability of emotions underlying nationalism, fear and bullying aided by political expediency and police corruption, which have allowed ultranationalism to proliferate.

#### **3.3.2. The Visuals and Idiolects of Violence**

*Red Hulk* is a hard-hitting film whose depth and insight into racist violence more than make up for its short duration. Violence, be it physical, verbal or psychological, colours every aspect of the film's visuals, from the scene of the chase and subsequent murder,

through to the seething tensions at the workplace, soccer club and family dinner table, up until the very last scene where the group of neo-Nazis embark, armed and equipped for their next racist attack.

In the film's opening minutes, described in section 2.3.5, we witness a carful of aggressive young men passing a lone male waiting at a bus stop, talking carefree on his mobile phone. Totally unprovoked, the five men stop the car, get out and start circling around the hapless immigrant like a pack of wolves, hurling abuse and mocking him in a provocative and aggressive manner, with one of them repeatedly making racist ape-like gestures at him. Their deliberate mocking actions and insults aim at eliciting a response, to justify the act of aggression they have planned against their victim: "*Wow, wow, wow! What have we here? Cheese pie? What, you had cheese pies in Pakistan?*"

He has not been targeted on account of his behaviour or to settle an argument. He is not known to them. It is a random attack against a defenceless and unaccompanied immigrant. He only happens to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, and fits the racial profile of their intended victim. They belittle and verbally abuse him on account of his foreign ethnicity, which has not vested him with the entitlements bestowed on themselves, the locals, the 'owners' of the land, its language, and even its food. Cheese pie has been arbitrarily elevated to their chosen national food to serve as an example of what only *they* have a right to savour.

Yiorgo has, in fact, first used the untranslatable diminutive of 'cheese pie', 'τυροπιτούλα', not as a form of endearment, but in a pejorative sense as a device for magnifying the mocking quality of the phrase. The first person plural, 'Είχαμε' ('We had'), is not used here for inclusiveness, but in a disparaging way, as if talking to an inferior person or child, to further intensify the mocking effect, and is translated using the second person plural, 'you had', in English. Both words, i.e. 'τυροπιτούλα' and 'Είχαμε', are paraphrased, as they are literally untranslatable, without any actual loss to their overall meaning and purpose.

After the straightforwardly-translated expletives that follow while the victim is being chased, the order to kill is thus spoken: "*Φά 'τονε, ρε Hulk*" ("*Waste him, Hulk*"), and then "*Κάρφωσε τονε, ρε!*" ("*Stab him, man!*"). The subtitles are a competent translation

for the idiomatic Greek expressions. ‘Stab’ correctly represents the meaning of the order being given. The Greek word means ‘pin’ or (metaphorically) ‘betray’, where ‘pin’ would have been the most appropriate of the two. The literal word ‘stab’ works better in this context for the metaphorical ‘κάρφωσε’, as it avoids any ambiguity of equivocation, as alluded to in section 1.3.1 (McKeon 1947, 31), in the Greek word, as in ‘pinning down’ or ‘keeping something stationary’, which is arguably not what is intended, judging by the visuals as well as by the outcome.

The untranslatable colloquial form of address ‘ρε’, in both commands, is a shorter form of ‘βρε’ or ‘μωρέ’. It is used either as an expression of familiarity, or in a pejorative sense. (Babinotis 1998, 1550) In the first instance, it is indeed meant to express familiarity and lessen the harshness of the command, much like the function of any of the English expressions ‘mate’, ‘friend’, ‘pal’, ‘man’, ‘dude’, ‘bro’, etc. would, and its omission is an appropriate choice considering the space limitations. In the second instance, it takes a more urgent and decisive tinge which reverses the mild intent of the former, with the translation ‘man’ reflecting this change of tone.<sup>145</sup>

When Christo, the neo-Nazi group leader, visits his home in the next scene, the newly-anointed-hitman Yiorgo, burdened by his overwhelming guilt, is in no mood for frivolity. Christo, completely unaffected by the crime, continues on with his plan of manipulating Yiorgo into ever more violent attacks, and asks him “*Να σου πω ρε; Από όπλα ξέρεις τίποτα; ή μόνο από πετροπόλεμο με τους fans;*” (“*Do you know anything about guns? or only how to hurl stones at the Panathinaikos fans?*”) Yiorgo is then warned about the escalating violence of the planned attacks: “*You ain’t seen nothing yet*”, an indication of Christo’s grand plans. The first four-word sentence that has remained untranslated in the subtitles is a colloquial form of an opening question to

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<sup>145</sup> One may wonder why the literal word ‘μαχαίρώνω’ (to knife something or someone) was not used instead of ‘κάρφώνω’ in the second sentence, however, it could be argued that the use of a metaphorical word adds to the depth of drama by enhancing the emotion of the irreversible act. It also objectifies the victim by conjuring up images of pinned insect specimens on mounting boards, thus reducing, perhaps, the feeling of guilt felt by the perpetrator of the racist crime. Regardless of any attempts at diminishing his guilt for the murder of an innocent man, however, the murder scene concludes with utter revulsion painted over Yiorgo’s face, resulting in his violent retching as soon as he returns home.

draw someone's attention, much like the English "*Let me ask you...*" and its use only reveals someone's personal style or street cred.

The word 'πετροπόλεμος', which literally translates as 'stone war' or 'war with stones', is not reflected in the translation 'hurl stones'. By adding the qualifier 'at the Panathinaikos fans', however, it steers the meaning into a more definitive direction. The English word 'fans', spoken in the Greek dialogue instead of the equivalent Greek 'οπαδούς' or 'φιλάθλους' (accusative case, plural, in this context), alludes to the widespread popularity of English football around the globe, and to the lingua franca status of English.

Yiorgo's mobile phone keeps ringing at work and afterwards, but he never answers it. He decides to visit his Olympiakos fan-club instead, to see his friend Nick who, in a scene fraught with diffuse tension, realises from his body language that Yiorgo is in deep trouble, and sneers at him that he had warned him not to get involved with those neo-Nazis he calls "*εθνίκια*" ("*nationalist pricks*").<sup>146</sup>

The word 'μάγκας' Nick uses to describe Yiorgo's previous street cred status is a challenging one to translate, as it is laden with heavy historical baggage. Its meaning varies according to context, and it appears in many 'rebetika' songs, where a frequently used English translation is 'spiv'. The Greek word is much more widely used than 'spiv', however, and more common alternatives include 'lad', 'buster', 'dude', 'guy', 'honcho', etc. The meaning of 'leader', implied in this context, renders 'number one' and 'head honcho' the most appropriate translations for 'πρώτος μάγκας'.

The anger and disappointment conveyed in their exchange, leave Yiorgo no option but to flee the club and take out his anger on his trusty punching bag. A newspaper article

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<sup>146</sup> "*Didn't I tell you not to mess with the nationalist pricks? You were number one, the head honcho here and now you're file and rank for the assholes. So, tell me, at the shakedown with the Panathinaikos fans, what are you gonna do? Single out the ones who are part of those guys, so you won't beat them as well? Listen, mate. That's your business. Leave me the hell out of it*"

headline on his laptop reads: “*Brutal murder of a Pakistani immigrant in Nea Ionia*”. Overwhelmed by fear, guilt, grief and desolation, he visits his co-conspirators at the neo-Nazi club. They are supportive and flatter him, but he is still in no mood to join them when they embark on their next round of intimidation attacks. They loosen the noose and let him go this time, yet the phone keeps ringing unanswered while he walks home, through a sea of shops run by immigrants.<sup>147</sup>

The body language between the mother and the boys is indicative of her ongoing silent frustration and the boys’ sombreness at the familiarly oppressive scene which is the dampener that drains all happiness at family gatherings, and an omen for what is next to come. The father starts by questioning Yiorgo as to the reasons for his impromptu visit, a preamble to a serious conversation that the mother tries to evade by offering to bring out the wine. Yet, it is her obligatory question about his studies that provides the trigger for the brewing clash between the father and the older son coming to a head.<sup>148</sup>

Back at work, his friendly co-worker, Stathi, introduces him to his little daughter at the end of their working day. Yiorgo hugs her and looks with longing at the father and daughter walking away. At a park bench, with families and children in the playground, Yiorgo contemplates a life away from his ever-pressing troubles. At the next opportunity, he takes the initiative to invite Stathi to the soccer game, and is counter-invited to Stathi’s home for lunch before the game. Another family opens its doors to him, even if it is not his own. A glimmer of hope still unextinguished for Yiorgo.

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<sup>147</sup> His next stop on his desperate search for support is the coach terminal where he jumps on a coach to visit his parents in a country town. His little brother’s jubilant playfulness at the dinner table, which betrays his happiness at being reunited with his big brother, is an affront for the father, with the mother assuming her customary peacemaker role to diffuse any possible repercussions by calling the young boy to order. The austere father, annoyed at the frivolity he perceives between the brothers, asks his wife for a knife and takes his anger out on her for not bringing it faster.

<sup>148</sup> When the father raises his voice at his older son with the command “*Drop the “what now, mom” act, OK? How many subjects have you yet to pass?*”, Yiorgo leaves the table with a definitive “*What the hell is it to you? I’ll do whatever I feel like*”, and the two bystanders, mother and younger son, are prevented by the father from intervening to try to ease the rift. The next morning finds Yiorgo teary in bed, pretending to be asleep, after his mother opens the curtains and gives him a wakeup kiss; but after he hears his parents arguing and his despotic father imposing, yet again, his will on his mother, he is back on the coach heading for the capital. The Pakistani’s fatal stabbing, now attributed to gang-related score settling, is all over the news bulletins. The phone keeps ringing but remains unanswered.

The escapist utopian dream, however, of resuming a normal life by not answering his phone and ignoring the grave situation he is currently in, cannot last long, and the neo-Nazi leader, Christo, soon lies in wait for him. Sitting in Christo's car, Yiorgo's features return to their usual hardness and surliness – as always when in Christo's presence. Christo makes a derogatory remark about two passing foreigners, before getting down to business and asking Yiorgo why he has not been answering the phone. *"My guys are worried, they don't know you well ... Don't make me look like an idiot"*, he warns. Yiorgo understands the implication and can only reply in the affirmative. *"Fine"*, he says as he is given the order. *"Tomorrow we'll meet at the Acharnon St. place. Be there."*

With his entrapment complete, Yiorgo's playing with the cigarette lighter and total unresponsiveness at work, as outlined in section 2.3.5, draw the ire of the domineering boss, with Stathi leaping to his defence at his own risk and the boss not missing an opportunity to threaten them with dismissal. When Yiorgo continues to remain unresponsive and does not intervene to defend Stathi, the latter is incensed. *"I stand up for you and you don't say a word? So, you only act tough at the stadium?"*<sup>149</sup>

From the first to the last, these scenes have painted a harsh picture, universal to any society, where nationalist attacks can quickly escalate with unpredictable outcomes, especially when peer pressure and mob mentality are involved and dominate over reason and tolerance, leaving the individual no chance to escape the cycle of violence and intimidation. As we see from Yiorgo, victims of such attacks are not only their

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<sup>149</sup> Having his plans now in tatters, Yiorgo listens to the match at home alone, with the stolen toy dog's bell tolling the end of yet another attempt at reaching out to the people he has alienated as a result of his new friendships. With the score at 1-1, his punching bag ready to take his hits, the phone unanswered, and the flame of his lighter precariously close to his bed sheets, Yiorgo is turning in bed, but to no avail. At long last, he ventures out to the soccer club to make one last-ditch attempt to reconnect and pay up his dues. The greeting *"Well, if it isn't the Es-Es"* he receives from his old friend, Ari, becomes the trigger for a fist fight that his friend Nick breaks up, leading Yiorgo by the arm out the door for the last time. This unconditional rejection has proved the final straw for Yiorgo. After another punching bag session, with a *Jason Statham 'Safe'* film poster in the background and the phone incessantly ringing, he has nowhere else to hide. The die is finally cast and he accepts the hand fate has dealt him resolutely, leading the group of eight ready assassins, all armed and prepared for battle, down the stairs and out the door of the neo-Nazi club. The tragic outcome is easy to guess, though never shown.

intended targets, but also some of the perpetrators who, by their own misguided actions, are implicated and bound within a group, rendering them hostages to extremists and unable to ever extricate themselves from them.

The scene at the family table is also devoid of state borders, and typical of any place where patriarchy rules and women are kept subservient. It is a scene played out countless times anywhere around the globe, where men are taught to fulfil a tough and unemotional stereotype in order to become the head of the family unit, make all the decisions and then impose them on their family members on account of their physical prowess. Where women are expected to remain silent, diffuse tensions or mediate between family members to avert conflict and a breakup of the family unit.

Domestic violence, be it psychological, verbal or physical, is a worldwide scourge and children are often as much at its mercy as women, as recent statistics in Australia have demonstrated. For children-survivors, learning how it works and how to navigate through it from a young age is a vital skill but also the ultimate loss of innocence. The onset of violence, whether gradual, brewing over days or years, or sudden, can turn lives upside down in a matter of seconds and have a devastating effect on family members. It often also converts victims to perpetrators, with the cycle of violence continuing in perpetuity.

Asimina Proedrou's film is distinguished by an authentic universality that has engaged foreign audiences in its narrative, despite the identifiable Greek locality of the particular settings and situations it portrays. The events and circumstances she has detailed have clearly shown the well-trodden path that lead a vulnerable young man to establish ties with neo-Nazis and let his life descend into chaos, regardless of his existing supports from family, friends and colleagues. His own errors of judgment, augmented by the human inadequacy of his supports, have rendered his descent irreversible.

Catastrophe could have possibly been averted had any of Yiorgo's attempts not met with further conflict, and it could surely have played like that in similar circumstances, in real life the world over. There would, however, also be numerous individuals like Yiorgo who have been drawn into extremist or fundamentalist groups, firmly held together by ideology or religion, and posing a threat to humanity's safety, progress and

values. More than a cautionary tale, the realism of the story has become evident from its first official screening, as stated in section 2.3.1.

### 3.3.3. Engaging Subtitles

The translation of the dialogues and verbal cues of *Red Hulk* is both straightforward and challenging in equal measures. Even though the translator is only dealing with colloquial language and not burdened by asynchronicity issues, s/he aims to engage the audience and introduce it to the cultural identity and character of everyday Athenians, convey their anger, fear, cynicism, hopelessness and frustration, as well as their pride, conceit and sentimentality, without trivialising their emotions and behaviours.

To achieve this, s/he has had to find a new linguistic code in order to transfer the experience of one culture onto another and bring the semantic and language codes over to another verbal tradition, as discussed under Translating Cultures, section 1.3.4. Instead of the often-touted idea that a translation should read as if it had been originally written in the target language, an effective translation should actually bear the characteristics of the original language, in order to establish a link with this ‘other’ culture and introduce the audience to its foreignness. “*Having the idea of an original text in the new language is not simply erroneous but also an illusion.*” (Karalis 2003, 136)

As previously noted, *Red Hulk* is a laconic, non-verbose film. The number of Greek words spoken comes to a total of only 785, translated into 888 English words in the official subtitles. Despite the requirement for subtitles to be succinct, this actual increase in the target text wordcount is consistent with, and within the boundaries of, the admittedly anecdotal ‘expansion ratio’ of approximately 15%<sup>150</sup> between target and source wordcount, depending on language pair and type of text. This is largely due to translators’ efforts to convey the most accurate overall meaning when faced with

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<sup>150</sup> As gleaned from my professional translating experience, and from other unofficial sources, such as discussions with other translators, translating websites, etc.

untranslatable words or phrases, as indicated when discussing paraphrasing, in sections 1.3.3 and 1.4.3.

The English subtitles in *Red Hulk* are in keeping with the style and register of the original, and generally manage to effectively retain its literal or metaphoric nature when this does not interfere with the clarity of the concepts and nuances of the text, and the space limitations inherent in subtitling. They bear the hallmarks of bilingual translators (see section 1.2.4) and work equally well for an English audience as for a Greek one, which is not meant to imply that there is a single appropriate translation for each phrase, as there is, in fact, a multiplicity of ways to successfully translate and convey the meaning of a source text.

Trivial matters of omissions, additions, typos, or inconsequential differences between source and target texts, are not discussed here. Analysis is generally focused on a few relevant points which are considered noteworthy indicators of cultural significance and difference in the film, for the role they play in mirroring and emphasising the visuals, such as the use of metaphors, diminutives and euphemisms, and the reverse polarity of expression between Greek and English.

In linguistics, polarity is the grammatical category associated with an affirmative or a negative style of expression. Apart from its primary usage in expressing opposite utterances, polarity is employed for stylistic purposes, such as when ‘multiple negatives’ appear in a clause to emphasise a point. This is exemplified by ‘litotes’, a figure of speech where the device of understatement, created by using a direct negative (words such as ‘non’, ‘not’, ‘never’, etc.), or indirect negative (words such as ‘barely’, ‘hardly’, ‘doubt’, etc.), is used to emphasise a positive observation, or soften a harsh one.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> In some languages, including Ancient Greek, double negatives cancel each other out and produce a positive, while in other languages double negatives intensify each other, as is the case with English. Languages in which multiple negatives intensify each other are defined as having negative concord. Languages without negative concord can use negative polarity indirectly with negating words instead of additional negatives which could have rendered their meaning confusing.

In Modern Greek, double negation tends to add impact, succinctness, and produce a more flowing expression, as in Christo’s statement “έχασες που δεν ήρθες”, translated as “*you should have come*” instead of the literal “*you missed out by not coming*”, which is also considerably longer. Other instances of polarity inversion (with the relevant points marked in bold) include: **Σας πληρώνω** να κωλοβαράτε (*I’m **not** paying you to sit on your asses*), Καλά, **μην** ξοδεύεσαι (**Go easy** on the money, man), **Σώπα**, ρε! (**You’re** the one to talk!), Στάθη, **έχεις** και οικογένεια, ε; (*Stathi, **don’t** you have a family, too?*), εγώ σε υπερασπίζομαι κι **εσύ μούγκα**; (*I stand up for you and you **don’t** say a word?*), **Καλώς** τα Es-Es (*Well, if it **isn’t** the Es-Es*).

The language of fear and intimidation, peppered with verbal abuse or sarcasm throughout the short film, is an instrument of choice when it comes to enforcing repression. References are masked, where it suits the utterer, by using metaphors (as discussed in sections 2.3.1, 3.3.2 and 3.3.3), diminutives (numerous occurrences, including τυροπιτούλα, discussed in section 3.3.2) and euphemisms, that is, positive-sounding, indirect and vague expressions to skirt around unpleasant, offensive or taboo subjects, a widespread and universal mechanism to camouflage any perceived offence in literal language.

There are a number of examples of euphemisms in the minutiae of the dialogues, most notably in a conversation among the members of the racist mob, intended to mock and mask the intimidation they have planned for later on in the day, the true meaning of which would not be lost on any type of audience. “Πού πάμε; -Λιοσίων, πάμε να δούμε αν ο Hassan έκανε καλό φαλάφελ απόψε” (“*Where are we off to? -Liossion street, let’s see if Hassan cooks a good falafel tonight*”). Other occurrences include: “θα καθαρίσουν τα φιλαράκια σου” (“*your new mates are gonna take care of it*”), and “Είσαι θηρίο, ρε.” (“*You’re a beast, man.*”)

### 3.3.4. Translating Vulgarity

The violence that permeates, overtly or covertly, every scene of *Red Hulk* is laden with cultural stereotypes of sexism, misogyny and homophobia which are continually operating in the background (see section 1.4.3). Sexism, misogyny and homophobia

may seem unrelated to racism or nationalism at first glance, yet, on closer examination, their connection is tangible, albeit subtle. They are all manifested through intimidation and fear. They espouse hostility, antagonism and hatred between races or the sexes, and amount to inequality and deprivation of freedom. In their extreme forms, they resort to violence in order to dominate and restrict people's human rights and self-determination, and that holds true in any cultural setting to a greater or lesser degree.

Homophobic vitriol and sexist slander are uttered consistently throughout the short film, the first instance being when the neo-Nazi group leader visits Yiorgo to ask where he was when he was trying to contact him: "*Τι έχεις πάθει ρε μαλάκα; Ο Red Hulk είσαι, όχι κανένα πουστάκι.*" ("*Why aren't you picking up the phone? What's the matter with you? You are the Red Hulk, not some little faggot*"). The word 'μαλάκα' (wanker) has been omitted from the translation as it has been deemed too common, inconsequential and, perhaps, contradictory to be included in this context. References to homosexuality are meant to imply weakness, magnified here by the use of the neuter gender diminutive '-άκι', translated literally as 'little', as discussed previously, in section 3.3.3.

In urging Yiorgo to prove his manhood by exacting injury and death to hapless immigrants, a clear association is made between brawn and sexuality, interspersed with sexist references demeaning of women. "*Οι δικοί μου ανησυχούνε, δεν σε ξέρουνε. Τους είπα ότι είσαι εντάξει, ότι έχεις αρχίδια, δεν είσαι καμιά κότα.*" ("*My guys are worried, they don't know you well. I told them you're OK, that you got balls, you ain't no pussy.*") It is only the last word 'κότα' (chicken) where the English translation deviates from the original in the idiom used.

The word 'chicken' could have easily been chosen as a direct translation, but it would not have conveyed the same impact as 'pussy', which combines the intended meaning of 'coward', with an animal (cat instead of chicken) and a slang metaphor (for women's genitalia or a weak male). The feminine gender of the Greek word for chicken adds to the sexism of the utterance, which is arguably balanced by the multiple meanings of the English translation. It could, however, also be counter-argued that the chosen translation is an attempt to 'improve' on the original by making it more definitive, or pertinent to the linguistic register, as discussed in section 1.3.3, thus altering any of its inherent ambiguities or nuances.

The same English word is also used to translate a different word in another context. In order to entice prospective members, the neo-Nazis invite them to clubs manifestly involved in prostitution and human trafficking: “*Έχασες που δεν ήρθες χθες, ... ξηγήθηκε καλά ο Στέργιος. Πήγαμε στο Domenico. Έφερε κάτι γκόμενες καλύτερες από την άλλη φορά. Μουνάρες!*” (“*You missed out yesterday, you should have come. Stergios really came through. We went to Domenico’s. The broads he brought were better than last time. First class pussy!*”)

There are significant cultural differences in the above translation, especially in the choice of the singular ‘pussy’ instead of the plural used in Greek. Whereas the use of the plural is arguably meant to further objectify women by increasing their number and, hence, decreasing their significance, it could also be argued, that the singular English further objectifies them by elevating their anatomical feature to their sole *raison d’être*. Another difference is that the augmentative suffix ‘-άρες’ used in Greek, has, in fact, been translated into English with a diminutive by using reverse polarity, as discussed in section 3.3.3.

There are also a number of jointly racist/sexist<sup>152</sup> and sexist/homophobic<sup>153</sup> utterances. Unsurprisingly, misogyny is underlying the language used by Yiorgo’s father towards his wife, as well. Her role as a wife and mother is inextricably linked with her ongoing treatment by him as a servant, in keeping with existing male chauvinist traditions when giving her orders: *Γυναίκα, φέρε μου ένα μαχαίρι. Έλα, ρε γυναίκα. Δυο ώρες; Κρασί.* (*Woman, fetch me a knife. Come on, woman. What’s taking you so long? Wine.*)

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<sup>152</sup> Another occurrence of racism and sexism used together is “*Τι είπε ρε το μουνί;*” (“*What did the cunt say?*”) which is a direct and non-challenging translation and refers to the victim. Another direct translation is: “*Έχει γεμίσει ο τόπος από δαύτους και είναι κι οπλισμένοι οι σκατιάρηδες.*” (“*Those shitheads are all over the place and they’re carrying pieces.*”) The only challenging part of this translation is the slang “*they’re carrying pieces*” for the Greek “*είναι κι οπλισμένοι*” (*they’re even armed*).

<sup>153</sup> In the following reference addressed at Yiorgo, “*Τι είναι ρε μαλάκα; Γιατί είσαι σαν κλαμένο μουνί;*” (“*What’s up, man? Why do you look like a weeping fag?*”), the sexist phrase has been changed to a homophobic one, as it retains a direct translation for its first component (*κλαμένο/weeping*), with a suitable overall meaning.

The type of slang used exclusively by the neo-Nazis in the film, heavily laden with racism, sexism and misanthropy, is an authentic representation of audience expectations regarding the typical language used by these groups, both in the Greek dialogues and in the English subtitles (see sections 1.2.4 and 1.4.3). The language of intimidation is authentically transferred from Greek to English, without significant omissions, which indicates that the universality of these themes render them more translatable than many others (see section 1.2.4).

Only side issues, peripheral to the film's main objectives, may lose in translation some of the impact they have on a local audience, as the filmmaker has taken great care to leave no room for misinterpretation of what she has clearly considered important, either in the visuals or in the dialogues. Yet, the background of the slang words and phrases used have their own history and significance for a deeper understanding of the characters and the substrata of society they represent, and that would imply diminished translatability in those instances.

### **3.3.5. Fear, Police Corruption and Complicity**

In this section, we discuss the translatability of emotions underlying nationalism, with fear being chief among them (see section 1.2.2). Yiorgo operates under constant fear after the murder of the innocent victim, and this is evident from the news bulletins he listens so attentively to, and the newspaper article on his laptop. Fear of capture is only one facet of his anxiety, however, with the fear of neo-Nazis being more prominent in his psyche, as gauged by the numerous times he has not answered his incessantly ringing phone.

Mixed in with that fear is his worry about his future, as evidenced by his attempts to extricate himself from the neo-Nazis. Yet, they do hold the key to his safety, as he, and everyone else, is aware of the silent collaboration between neo-Nazis and the police. The dialogue in Greek and English, below, illustrates the widespread recognition, among the population, of police corruption and complicity, which is also borne by facts:

*“Και δε μου λες; στο ραντεβού με τους ΠΑΟδες,<sup>154</sup> τι θα κάνεις δηλαδή; Θα κοιτάς να δεις ποιος είν’ από δαύτους, για να μην τον πλακώσεις; Άκου να δεις. Αυτά είναι δικές σου δουλειές. Μένα μη μ’ ανακατεύεις. Και πού ’σαι; Μη φοβάσαι. Ό,τι και να ’γινε, θα καθαρίσουν τα φιλαράκια σου τώρα, ναι; Θα γίνεις και φιλαράκι με τους μπάτσους. Κολλητάρια θα γίνετε.”<sup>155</sup>*

A similar example is the assurance uttered by the neo-Nazi group leader: *“Να σου πω; Δεν τρέχει τίποτα μ’ αυτό που έγινε προχθές”* (“Listen, what happened to you the other day, was no big deal.”) It is noteworthy that the English here is more directly personal with the inclusion of ‘to you’ which is absent from the Greek, indicating perhaps that the magnitude of corruption needs to be more direct to be believed by an Australian audience that may not be familiar with the way it transpires.

As already mentioned, the complicity of political parties and institutions is widespread and widely known. In an insight offered by Karalis, quoting from the same conversation he had in Greece with the member of the conservative party in section 2.3.4 above, he explains how the party manages to disorient the citizens from being able to get to the root of their problems and demand change.<sup>156</sup> (Karalis 2014, 107) With the greatest cynicism and scorn, the conservative politician goes on to debase the language of communication and further discredit the value of public conversation that can be had on any issue.<sup>157</sup> (Karalis 2014, 109)

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<sup>154</sup> ΠΑΟδες is the plural for the fans of ΠΑΟ, acronym for Panathinaikos F.C. (Football Club) – not to be confused with ΠΑΟΚτζής who is a fan of ΠΑΟΚ (Πανθεσσαλονίκειος Αθλητικός Όμιλος Κωνσταντινουπολιτών - Pan-Thessalonian Athletic Club of Constantinopolitans).

<sup>155</sup> Translated as: *“So, tell me, at the shakedown with the Panathinaikos fans, what are you gonna do? Single out the ones who are part of those guys, so you won’t beat them as well? Listen, mate. That’s your business. Leave me the hell out of it. Hey, man! Don’t sweat it. Whatever happened, your new mates are gonna take care of it now, see? You’ll make friends with the cops, too. You’ll become buddies.”*

<sup>156</sup> *“By establishing the parameters of meaningful conversations ... by insisting on the symptom, the side-effect, the epiphenomenon. By entrusting uneducated journalists to define the language of all influential conversations. By stressing minor errors as if they were monumental failures. Consequently, in the public arena, it is predetermined what can be raised and how it can be addressed.”*

<sup>157</sup> He also explains the ineffectiveness of a deliberately fragmented education, judiciary, the teaching of history, and what they aim to achieve from these policies: *“by establishing an education which gives a bit of everything but nothing sufficiently, by instituting a legal system in which a multitude of laws cancel*

These facts would be of a revelatory nature for any audience, including Greeks and Australians. However, Greeks are quite familiar with the machinations of power behind closed doors. For Australians, who have generally learned to have faith in their governing institutions, such actions are almost inconceivable and the motivations behind them impossible to understand. Yet, political expediency, exploitation and corruption pose an equally serious threat to all, and naivety can be as dangerous as distrust under the right conditions.

### 3.4. Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, we have attempted an exploration of the impact of the two films' emotions on an Australian multicultural audience. The localisation process has involved interpretation of the visual elements and the linguistic components of each film to a target audience, including people of a Greek background, with a focus on a number of key features for each film.

The visuals of both films have hinted at the overwhelming extent of the immigration crisis in Greece. The use of humour in *Plato's Academy* shines a way of working through these problems in a human and humane way that has actually been, by default, in effect for centuries, without resorting to extremes and violence.

Conversely, *Red Hulk* shows the path of violence and its escalating inevitability, that only makes existing problems worse while also creating numerous new ones. It also debunks popular but superficial views as to who the supporters of ultranationalist parties are, by showing the path to extremism and the opportunities lost in

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*each other, by making the vagueness of past history the ultimate code of contemporary self-definition, by raising issues of belonging but not of being, by creating conditions for a perpetual struggle against each other. ... We establish a mindset and a framework of action that makes them believe in the values that legitimise and vindicate their own subordination. They become dependent on the state, expect everything from the state and thus become in themselves unable to act, desire and think about alternatives."*

‘deradicalising’ at-risk individuals, especially when they are making repeated efforts to extricate themselves from extremist groups. It shows how unprepared are trusting families, friends and colleagues when trying to comprehend the radicalised individual, as well as their own potential role, and the care they need to take in their endeavour to help them.

Art, Literature, Theatre and Cinema play a significant role in uncovering social weaknesses and illuminating the way towards finding viable ways to address them, and these films are no exception. Each, in their own way, has managed to shed light on the individual, and the way they interact with their environment and cope with change. They have both also been able to cross borders and be as relevant to their local as to their antipodean audiences, impart a deep humanity to their characters, bring people together and give them insight into understanding nuanced complexities.

In the next chapter, we will be summarising the conclusions drawn from each of the chapters on theory, ‘reading’ and ‘translating’ emotions, and will attempt a synthesis on the importance of interrogating preconceived ideas in order to obtain valid and unbiased insights on the issue of nationalism and what it means for the individual as well as for society as a whole.

## Conclusions

Our exploration of the films *Plato's Academy* and *Red Hulk* has revealed strong links between language and emotion which, when studied together, reveal insights into the cultural identity of different nationalities, and reflect aspects of what makes them unique and diverse. Nationalism has been a particularly valuable access point to start this exploration, as it remains fundamental to our existence. In its multiple manifestations, it defines our identity at the core of our psyche and sense of belonging: to a family unit, community, town, nation, and world. We feel the need to be part of a whole, but the closer we get to that whole, the more fragmented and divided it seems to become. Every war we have fought has been testament to this duality of being together but apart, united but at odds, or part of a divided whole.

Films are important in having the power to bring us closer to an experience we otherwise would not have been able to be exposed to in one lifetime. They are a window into different people, communities and cultures. Their creative forays into a certain fragment of reality provide us with an opportunity to analyse the reactions of the characters and compare them to our own. By observing them, we get to know ourselves. We can relive their concentrated lives in fast forward, and experience how they change and mature themselves, and how they change and mature us. By using their knowledge, we can avoid repeating their mistakes. They are a window to ourselves.

Both films, *Plato's Academy* and *Red Hulk*, hint at the effects and curse of unemployment and financial anxiety on an already insecure, ignored and neglected people, under pressure from numerous external and internal threats, and depict a similar milieu to each other which, however, is more claustrophobic and has undergone further degradation within the four intervening years between their release, due to the exceptionally harsh conditions of the Greek financial crisis, the severe refugee issue, and resulting social problems. In spite of their topicality, the themes are universal. A number of countries may, to a greater or lesser extent, be exhibiting, or afflicted by, similar phenomena.

Apart from their imagery, the two films' important themes and currency have been a key reason in their selection for this thesis. Their accessible and contemporary language

is relevant to a broad audience, and their unique perspectives offer relevant insights into the mosaic of problems that afflict Greece, and the world, today. Their respective humour, or lack thereof, provides a platform for comparison and a different perspective. The awards they have received overseas add a dimension of acknowledged universality to their themes, broaden their scope and validate their international viewpoint and appeal. Their different genres, comedy and drama, have allowed a different approach to reality and its challenges. They use different ‘languages’ and show different aspects of behaviours, even when they may be equally dramatic.

The two films, *Plato’s Academy* and *Red Hulk*, offer different glimpses on perspectives of cultural identity, similarity, difference and diversity from the vantage points of ‘dramedy’ and realism, respectively. Whereas *Plato’s Academy*, though open-ended, offers a way of understanding difference and overcoming the notion that it must always be divisive, the way neo-Nazis deal with difference in *Red Hulk* is to obliterate it. But the major role of *Red Hulk* is that it offers insights into how conceptualisations of difference can lead to violent action, especially in times of crisis. It also provides us with a way out, before we are ever at risk of becoming ourselves embroiled or compromised in circumstances such as those depicted in their narratives.

However, the fact that this has not been the case for *Red Hulk* indicates a fundamental difference between the currency of the two films. Whereas introspection has offered hope for the protagonist of *Plato’s Academy*, and would undoubtedly have a positive impact on others in a similar situation, the more recent film reflects much closer the current global reality of division and fear where neo-fascism has been allowed to proliferate within a framework of neoliberal policies that pose an international threat to democracy and human rights.

In *Plato’s Academy*, similarity and difference are interdependent and, before long, roles are suddenly and unexpectedly reversed. After their initial exclusivity, cultural borders are crossed through a gradual and dialectic process of communication which, though initially undesired and fraught with difficulty, is finally established, with mutual relations now seemingly able to be resolved. Humour has served as our access point to the characters in allowing us to identify some of our own anxieties and apprehensions in them.

First generation Greeks who are recent, post-financial crisis arrivals in Australia will be certainly most conversant both with the films, and the events or scenarios depicted. Older Greek migrants may find some scenes rather confronting but still quite familiar. For second or third generation Greeks, the context may be harder to grasp, unless they have maintained close ties by visiting or staying in Greece for some length of time. Their view or relationship to the films, though still valid, could be coming from a different context, and through the borrowed lenses of a usually parental dynamic, more specific, perhaps tinted and narrow in size. The experience of watching these films and others like them, however, is sure to broaden their perspectives and extend the plurality of viewpoints that can enhance comprehension of their unique protagonists, characters and settings.

Depending on the audience, the only aspect of the landscape they may be positively able to identify as distinctly Greek is a number of Athenian landmarks, and the language spoken and written on signs or graffiti, although they themselves are often hybridised and ‘enriched’ with English words or Latin transcriptions, characters or symbols. Some scenes of Athenian roads appear very familiar to a native Greek audience: the urban landscape daubed with unpleasantly-inscribed graffiti on almost every building and every concrete highway sidewall; motorcycles and cars wholly or partly parked on footpaths, enormous queues of patients standing wearily, waiting to be seen by the social security doctor assigned to them; the Christian icon above the mother’s bedroom; the Church icon.

The most valuable component would perhaps be in gaining access to their language, beyond vocabulary and register. There is a wealth of expressions and idioms used to communicate a multitude of emotions in this topical, Athenian, vernacular language, in a variety of settings. *Red Hulk* is spartan in its dialogue, but *Plato’s Academy* is richly endowed; the ever-present element of humour ensures that. The foreign viewer will probably not be able to appreciate the language in quite the same way, although the rhythms, body language and gestures are not likely to be lost on them.

In spite of this, something has been ‘lost in translation’ from the richness and historicity of the Greek vocabulary used, which could not possibly be included in the subtitles,

and that is also the case with the ‘language’ of the visuals. The migrants’ foreign accents, which add to the dramatic or comedic effect, as the case may be, are an additional determinant of the characters’ identities. The landscapes of the inner city suburbs of Athens are a sight to behold. They are a melting pot, as they have always been through the ages from antiquity. A diverse mix of cultures, even when they were considered, or considered themselves to be, monocultural. Fallen on bad times for much of their history, they maintained their qualities, as an underprivileged but eventually welcoming habitat and haunt for those who sought refuge from persecution or poverty.

Proximity to the prized Acropolis has not currently affected their working-class origins or appearance. But life in the area is a shared experience. People sit out and look at one another, and that includes women, who hold positions of power within the family, especially when they are single, widowed or divorced. The integral presence of two strong women, Stavros’ mother and ex-wife is pivotal and never questioned. They do not stay isolated, protected by the four walls of their homes. Even during this period of immense poverty and insecurity, they all feel secure enough to live communally. This has always been the Greek way of life.

It is certain that audience members will each view the two films from their own unique standpoints, though collective perspectives may classify them into a number of categories. For the native Greek, however, such scenes may bring back actual images imprinted on their memory, some of which are much more irritating than depicted in a film whose aim is not to satirise the behaviour of a self-centred motorist. Scenes of obstructed pedestrians, walking on the street and risking their lives with prams and strollers, because cars are parked on the footpath so close to the buildings that there is no room left for the average human to fit through; graffiti that is so widespread that it will not spare the smallest freshly whitewashed piece of wall in the inner-city suburbs of Athens.

Built on the ruins of ancient settlements, the foundations of their homes may be only marginally separated from remarkable archaeological treasures. Every dig, and there is some find. No in-depth knowledge of history is needed for people to realise they are walking over layers of civilisation. Criticisms for lack of appreciation are usually hurled

at them from foreign sources who, by being out of their context, are unable to comprehend the Sisyphean burden of history on the Modern Greek shoulders.

For all their faults and misery, however, these characters are striving to maintain purpose. Their struggles make them interesting and human. Their course of action imparts on us a certain sense of what is actually possible. They instinctively recognise the honourable course of action, even if they are somehow forced into following a wrong path. And that is the dichotomy in the final catharsis, and what these contemporary films share with ancient comedy and tragedy, respectively. They may be more open-ended than their ancient counterparts, but that could be because they are calling upon us and urging us for an ethical action.

Their original outlet of nationalist sentiments is the characters' shield against the doom of impending change. They prefer the familiar, no matter how uncomfortable it has possibly been. But this shield soon becomes their walls of confinement. Fear of change is a prison they build to protect their pseudo-certainties. When the unknown ever becomes more familiar, it will soon lose its strangeness and allow contact with an altered external reality. Instead of being victims to their fear of change, they can start to embrace it. The 'other' can then eventually become one with the self in the hope that, having started the process, the rest of the integration could follow suit one day.

On reflection, the two films, *Plato's Academy* and *Red Hulk*, revisit the nature vs nurture debate. On the question of how much genes can contribute to a person's identity, and what role they play if they leave us oblivious of our history and ancestry, our reading appears relatively clear. Identity can be forged by our parents or peers, our readings or inspirations, our free choices or limitations, in all of which our genes may have a rather limited role to play.

At this point in our study there are a number of questions of interest arising. In looking to convey the bigger picture, is there, perhaps, something lost in translation in terms of context and nuance? To what degree are the characters' arguments trivialised when eliciting a black-and-white response from the audience? Would a typical western or central European audience be at greater risk of missing out on the nuances, by generally

ignoring starkly unfamiliar elements such as the prominence of graffiti or the use of footpaths as motorcycle or car parking spaces?

Would a Balkan or even a Chinese audience relate more to *Plato's Academy* than to *Red Hulk* simply because of the characters portrayed on screen, the chain of Chinese workers setting up a ladies' fashion shop, or by even the mere mention of the name of their respective country? Can we assume that a shared history, such as with a Balkan audience, could create a special bond with it, thus enhancing the translatability of emotions between these cultures, and what are the shared or familiar elements of those depicted in the natural or urban landscape scenes?

An interesting topic in continuing this research would be a deeper foray into the conceptual aspects of 'reading' and 'translating' and, specifically, George Steiner's idea that "*inside or between languages, human communication equals translation*", as detailed in *After Babel*, in juxtaposition with Jorge Luis Borges' ideas on 'reading', 'interpreting', prose translation, the creative licence he espoused as a translator, and his ideas in *The Library of Babel* from his *Personal Library* project.

It would also be of considerable relevance in the current climate of acute financial and refugee crisis to examine the potential role played by religion, whether cohesive or divisive, as it operates within and between refugees, migrants and illegal immigrant groups, as well as between those groups and the local communities, in the context of a well-established secular society. Of particular interest would be to investigate the impact on, and response of, local churches, to reflect on whether the path to fundamentalism or perpetual conflict may be inevitable, and what, if anything, may be done to counteract it. A rational and lucid analysis, commitment to altruism and rejection of bigotry would be essential components for an equitable solution which respects humanity while preserving one's distinct sense of identity and freedom.

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