

been evident even after the collapse of the military junta in 1974 and the political democratization of Greek politics and the adoption of the constitution of 1975. Retention of the distinction between *ethnos* and *laos*, detailed state regulation and control of "private" associations, statements by political leaders, such as "a minority cannot disrupt the cohesion of the whole,"²¹ and strikers cannot "undermine the nation,"²² are indicative of the persistence of the underlying world view of the *ethnos* as an integrated entity embodied in the state. Thus the contradiction between autonomous individuals and/or groups and integral nationalism remains difficult to reconcile, despite political democratization and the existing multitude of constitutional and legal guarantees of rights.

Conclusion

It was argued at the beginning that, by definition, state sovereignty and the primacy of national interests inherently impede adherence to human rights. It was argued further that in some societies, such as Greece, their very nationalist ideology further compounds the difficulties in implementing rights and freedoms. The interconnection between tendencies towards repression, even in ostensibly democratic societies, and integral nationalist doctrines has not been analyzed in depth. Greece's experience, particularly after the demise of the Megali Idea and, hence, the abandonment of a territorially defined nationalism in terms of Byzantium, exacerbated the contradiction and intensified the tension between rights and freedoms and the protection of the integrity of the nation. The organic conception of the nation, the *ethnos*, operative as of the Metaxas era, is fundamentally incompatible and irreconcilable with a philosophy of inviolable basic individual rights. One of the challenges facing Greece since 1974 with the establishment of the most democratic regime it has had in the twentieth century, is the extent to which the prevailing doctrine of integral nationalism can be moderated and a recognition of rights, both for individuals and for private associations, can be recognized and accepted as the hallmark of a democratic society. Ferment for the institutionalization of rights and their unimpeded exercise is widespread, but the answer to these conflictual pressures is still an open question.

²¹Constantine Karamanlis, "Λόγος στην Βουλή," *Πρακτικά της Βουλής* (Athens, 23 August, 1977).

²²Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou's statement at a Cabinet meeting, Press Release 14 March, 1986 as reported in daily newspaper, *Ελευθεροτυπία*, 14 March, 1986.

Why Greek? A Case for Hellenism*

ANNE FARMAKIDES

DEAR GRADUATES: IN THE FIFTEEN MINUTES ALLOTTED TO THE Constantinos Paparrigopoulos Lecture which I have the honour to deliver this year, I should like to repay a debt, by attempting to offer an answer to the now often unanswerable question, "Why Greek?" I am grateful to Professor Harry Psomiades whose invitation gives me the rare opportunity to do so, on this appropriate occasion of your graduation from this Queens College Center for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, and in the presence of His Excellency the Greek Ambassador Mr. George Papoulias.

Mr. Chairman, dear Parents and honoured Guests, dear Colleagues, Mr. Dean, Mme President, Your Excellency, Πανιερώτατε.

Last year, when Archbishop Iakovos asked me what I would say to our young undergraduates of Greek descent to convince them that they should include Greek in their program of study, I answered that I could convince no one with words. Only in action, in the classroom, where students could see for themselves how valid their choice had been.

His Eminence knew of course that the question, "Why Greek?" is unanswerable if you are not a convinced humanist, and redundant if you are. His worry was about declining interest in the subject if this trend were to continue for another decade. The consequences are easy to guess, not for modern Greek Studies alone, but through them, for North Americans of Greek descent, for Greek Orthodoxy on this continent, and, eventually, for Hellenism itself. It is in this light that I invite you to look at the question, "Why Greek?"

Characteristically enough, Modern Greek Studies experience an erosion of their territory while they score remarkable scholarly achievements. One wonders why? Did they overshoot their target by growing beyond the immediate needs of their public? If the answer is yes, this disparity reflects a far wider trend, one which has

*A convocation address at the Center for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Queens College (CUNY).

affected all sectors of higher education, the humanities more particularly.

You will remember that only a couple of years ago, the Study Group on "The State of the Humanities in Higher Education" of the National Endowment for the Humanities reported the following disturbing trends and developments: A student can obtain a Bachelor's degree

— from 75% of all American colleges and universities without having studied European history, and from 72% without having studied American literature or history.

— Fewer than half of all colleges and universities now require foreign language study for the Bachelor's degree, down from nearly 90% in 1966.

— Since 1970, the number of students choosing majors in English has declined by 57%, in philosophy by 41%, in history by 62%, and in foreign languages by 50%.

This is by any standards a sharp decline. In the view of this Study Group, "it was caused in part by a failure of nerve and faith on the part of many college faculties and administrators."

This failure of nerve and faith brings us closer to the uneasy realization that we may be facing a cultural dead-end. And one which is not solely North American. The entire Western world seems to be in the same impasse. This is how a Catalan essayist, Joseph Ramoneda, sums up the general malaise:

We are disconcerted . . . in all areas of knowledge, no one knows what to do . . . what references to use . . . The anxiety is common to all. Sciences which were to save humanity, such as economics and sociology . . . stumble over insurmountable obstacles. Institutions which are the cornerstone of the system of learning, such as universities, have difficulty in adapting to the present, in finding their place in the world, finding their usefulness. The new technologies scare people . . . throw into confusion ways of being and ways of thinking . . . and full employment is unthinkable. This is our present-day crisis. It is caused by the threat of unemployment which destroys our notion of social peace, and by the threat of the bomb which destroys our notion of world peace . . . Its characteristic feature is nihilism . . . nihilism in the political and moral domains. It may result in a disaster, or it may open the road to another world, and generate another culture.

The crux of the matter seems to be that in this crisis of our culture, we are caught by panic, the panic of a world in disarray. Already some ten years ago, Harvard and other leading universities had come to the conclusion that their young graduates were unable "to think and write clearly, let alone appreciate the ways in which one gains knowledge and understanding of oneself, of society, and of the universe."

When the prospects of employment are so grim, answers the young North American undergraduate, why invest any time in subjects which do not serve my immediate and legitimate priority to find a job and earn a living.

How can I go on using the Greek language, says the young Greek Orthodox priest, if I wish people to understand what I say. English is what most Greek Orthodox Americans want to hear today, and English is the language I must use, if I want to make my message acceptable to men and women of a new age.

Since English has prevailed not only in Europe but all over the world, it is English that students all over the world want to learn as a second language, and some Greeks seem themselves to think that "in spite of its great historical value, and its great importance to the Greeks, the Greek language is insufficient to cover our needs in communication today, if we want to keep up with modern developments." Why then would North American students apply themselves to learn Greek, even students of Greek descent? Why Greek indeed?

The arguments seem entirely valid, but only if we look at the one side of the coin. Because the other side tells an altogether different story about the needs of the world in which today's students are to live tomorrow.

If American English is the planetary language of communication, educated Americans who are unilingual might find themselves to be the only unilingual educated people in the world, unable therefore to look upon that world in any other light than that of unilingualism, isolated by the very language which eases communication.

Cultural isolation and unilingualism are a thing of the past. As Dean Henry Rosovsky of Harvard University has put it: "an educated young American cannot be provincial . . . He should know about other cultures and other times . . . He should have some understanding of, and experience in thinking about moral and ethical problems . . ."

Being well aware of this, many American colleges and universities have responded by implementing a new core curriculum which is especially designed to meet these new standards. One of its five fields of study is Foreign Languages and Culture.

Now, if educated young Americans are expected to study a foreign language, then why those of Greek descent would not choose to study Greek? I have no doubt that most would, if they knew that, now more than even before, Greek needs them much more than they need Greek.

The Greek world is not the 3½ million people who live in greater Athens and Piraeus, and the 5½ million or so who live in the Greek province. Vital as these are, they represent ⅔ only of the whole body of Hellenism. The other ⅓ live beyond the geographical boundaries of Greece and expand beyond its national culture. 2½ million of these live in the United States and Canada.

Even so, we are few and we are alone.

To ask which of these three component parts is more vital to the shaping of Hellenism is to ask the wrong question at the wrong time. At this particular time, the right question to ask is how effective can any one part be alone, without the well-being and/or the support and cooperation of the other two.

Let me explain my use of the word Hellenism.

As a common noun, it is of course a synonym of humanism, one of the fundamental moral forces at the basis of our Western civilization. Hence, the former central place of Greek Studies in the humanities. Hellenism, as a proper noun, may have two uses. The more specific one, to designate the Greek-speaking people all over the world, and the broader one, to designate all those who are bearers of the Hellenic Tradition, whether these can speak Greek or not, are native speakers of Greek or not, are born of Greek parents or not.

What we call our Hellenic Tradition, with a capital "T," is not an aggregate of our songs and dances, arts and crafts, customs and beliefs. These are our traditions, with a small "t". These, in themselves, cut off from our Tradition, can become a mere reprint of a picturesque scenario which gives me the illusion of being someone I am not, or distracts me for a while, harmlessly if not also somewhat painfully.

These traditions are a mere manifestation of the spirit of our Tradition. These, and with them, our laws and our institutions, our history in its continuum, and our Greek language in its diachrony. What we call our Tradition is the spirit that has been shaping our intellect and guiding our actions. This unifying element of our historic self, this is what we call our Tradition.

Nor does the fact alone that I speak Greek necessarily make me a living expression of my Greek heritage. I am in fact a part of it when, consciously or not, I think and act in the spirit of that Tradition whose language I speak. But I could also be a part of it, perfectly legitimately,

if, even though I am born outside it, I share its vision, that vision which has sustained Hellenism through the ages, has given it continuity, has shaped its historical identity. And a well articulated vision this is, a vision of great humanity, genuine generosity, profound wisdom, inexhaustible resourcefulness, phenomenal imagination, and ineffable beauty.

It is this vision that departments of Greek Studies invite their students to share when they introduce them to the Greek language, Modern, Byzantine, New Testament or Ancient.

Dear Graduates: At this special juncture of the Western civilization, the threat to the humanities is very real and the choices which you make can be vital to their survival.

As for the survival of the study of Modern Greek, this is yet untapped source of the humanities in the North American universities, there is hope as long as there are people like you, courageous enough to penetrate the secrets of this language, and adventurous enough to discover for themselves the magic of this delicate instrument. As long as there are people prepared to do what you did, there is no fear that Modern Greek will forever remain on the critical list, for ever in need of a life-support system, as the case was in the pioneering years of this young discipline, and as the case is again now.

As for those of you who are of Greek descent, the fact that you have chosen to become literate and knowledgeable in your Greek heritage, that fact alone is the best proof that, while you need and use English to express yourselves and to communicate with each other, you have nonetheless preserved certain basic characteristics of the Greek mind, and that it is around these that the ideas of your time crystallize.

This is what determines your own dialectical progress, and this is what constitutes the ultimate cultural link for all North Americans of Greek descent who are wrestling with their Greek heritage. By welding well together in their minds the facts of their dual history, they fashion a new image for themselves. They cease to be a fading image of Greece, and to the benefit of all concerned, they become a dynamic new dimension of Hellenism.

So these are, I submit, some of the things that Modern Greek Studies can do for educated young Americans, and this is what they, in turn, can do for those Studies, and through them, for this world of Hellenism, the broader and the specific.

The choice is theirs, however. But as you see, a great deal depends on that choice, because, in the words of Elytis, Greece's greatest living poet, and a Nobel Laureate:

" . . . scarce the water
 . . .
 and the tree alone
 . . . / . . . / . . .
 sparse the earth beneath your feet
 so that you have no room to spread your roots
 and keep reaching down in depth
 and broad is the sky above
 so that you read the infinite on your own

THIS WORLD

This small world the great!"¹

Dear graduates:

Our hope is that successive generations of young graduates like you will continue like you did to sustain and enrich "this world" of Hellenism, "this small world the great." Its future is in your hands. Take good care of it and Godspeed.

¹Abridged excerpt from the translation of *The Axion Esti* by Edmund Keeley and George Savidis.

On Poetics: The Ostensible/Real Dichotomy

JOHN CHIOLES

WORKS OF CULTURE AND IDEAS THAT EXPLORE NEW GROUND seem to operate with an ostensible subject matter and a real subject matter. Often, as with Plato's dialogues, the ostensible is foregrounded and serves as shadow (or desire) for the enduring force of the real that remains in the background. *The Phaedrus* is thought to be about love; but it is really about composing in words and publishing, the "writerly project." One is the ostensible, the other, the real — both very important to the incisive development of the dialogue.

This dichotomy I take to be the anarchic spirit at the center of theory. Love/desire/lust is the contradiction, the non-being of the writerly world. The debunking of the rules in the scientific syllogism is Paul Feyerabend's understanding of anarchy in his seminal work on the philosophy of science, *Against Method*. Performing an action that is in direct opposition to the rules is a necessary condition for a radical view of reality. Any theory whose objective is to replace its predecessor must take a radical step against method. It must establish an ostensible grid before the real subject matter begins to emerge as a part of a radical, negative methodology. To prove a theorem requires arbitrary awareness of that *which is not* in the theorem. In that very arbitrariness is precisely where the anarchic spirit begins. Theory, as such, is a scientific construct which models and privileges reality. Aristotle did not leave us with a theory of art in his *Peri Poietikis*. That would be too tall an order for the philosopher who could not theorize art into a science.

The term theory has been loosely used by various disciplines in the last three centuries. But it was not until the last two decades that it has caused terror-like turmoil in literary studies. And, nowadays, it is used even more loosely than ever. As concerns literary theory, then, in this late "neo-decadent post-modernist fin-de-siecle" period of ours, a notion of poetics can only be one of a kind, useful for the one poet,

*A "dialogue" with Gregory Jusdanis' recent book, *The Poetics of Cavafy: Textuality, Eroticism, History*, (Princeton, 1987).