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Can the Underdogs Speak?

Contemporary Greece's 'Subaltern' Political Theories through the Lens of Critical Geopolitics and Post-secularism

Doctoral Thesis

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Έχουν φωνή οι υποχωρούντες;

«Υποτελείς» πολιτικές θεωρίες στη σύγχρονη Ελλάδα, ιδωμένες μέσα από το πρίσμα της κριτικής γεωπολιτικής και της μετα-εκκοσμίκευσης

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ΥΠΕΥΘΥΝΗ ΔΗΛΩΣΗ

Με την παρούσα δήλωση:

1. Δηλώνω ρητά και ανεπιφύλακτα ότι η διπλωματική εργασία που σας καταθέτω αποτελεί προϊόν δικής μου πνευματικής προσπάθειας, δεν παραβιάζει τα δικαιώματα τρίτων μερών και ακολουθεί τα διεθνώς αναγνωρισμένα πρότυπα επιστημονικής συγγραφής, τηρώντας πιστά την ακαδημαϊκή δεοντολογία.

2. Οι απόψεις που εκφράζονται αποτελούν αποκλειστικά ευθύνη του/ης συγγραφέα/ως και ο/η επιβλέπων/ουσα, οι εξεταστές, το Τμήμα και το Πανεπιστήμιο Πελοποννήσου δεν υιοθετούν κατ' ανάγκη τις εκφραζόμενες απόψεις ούτε φέρουν οποιαδήποτε ευθύνη για τυχόν λάθη και παραλείψεις.

Ο δηλών

Σωτήριος Μητραλέξης-Γεωργακάκος

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Keywords

cultural dualism, underdog culture, Neo-Orthodoxy (Greece), Christos Yannaras, Theodoros I. Ziakas, critical geopolitics, postcolonialism, post-secularism

Abstract

This study focuses on the more theoretically nuanced among the contemporary outputs of what has been polemically designated Greece's "underdog camp" or "underdog culture." The study attempts to examine these theoretical nuances *on their own terms* and, subsequently, to assess them through the hermeneutic lens of critical geopolitics, post-secularism, and an understanding of the "underdog" endeavour as a *postcolonial* endeavour. The study begins with an examination of the "cultural dualism" narrative articulated and endorsed by various intellectuals of Greek statecraft, which is recognised here as an essentially Orientalistic narrative, comprising a peculiar "Greek Neo-Orientalism" (*neo-* in the sense of a particular mutation in the Orientalistic gaze, according to which one's *own* people and country is Orientalised in an unprompted way). Following this, what has been polemically described as Greece's "Neo-Orthodox movement" and its prime theoreticians, Christos Yannaras and Theodoros I. Ziakas, are singled out in an attempt to locate the more theoretically nuanced among the "underdogs." These theoretical nuances are prompted by developments in twentieth-century Greek theology, which are then examined. An analysis of Neo-Orthodoxy and of the ideas of Yannaras and Ziakas follows, concluding with an account of them in terms of critical geopolitics and post-secularism. The study's conclusions include the realisation that, all their shortcomings aside, the theorists in question may well be treated as *subjects* rather than as *objects* of critical geopolitics, countering Greek statecraft's political projections upon geographical, and as surprisingly (*post-*)modern thinkers in tune with global theoretical developments that are unbeknownst to them.

Έχουν φωνή οι υποχωρούντες;

«Υποτελείς» πολιτικές θεωρίες στη σύγχρονη Ελλάδα, ιδωμένες μέσα από το πρίσμα της κριτικής γεωπολιτικής και της μετα-εκκοσμίκευσης

Σημαντικοί Όροι (keywords)

πολιτισμικός δυισμός, παρωχημένη κουλτούρα, Νεο-Ορθοδοξία (Ελλάδα), Χρήστος Γιανναράς, Θεόδωρος Ι. Ζιάκας, κριτική γεωπολιτική, μετα-αποικιακές σπουδές, μετα-εκκοσμίκευση

Περίληψη στην ελληνική

Η μελέτη αυτή επικεντρώνεται στους έχοντες μεγαλύτερη θεωρητική επεξεργασία μεταξύ των σύγχρονων «λόγων» του από πολεμική σκοπιά χαρακτηρισθέντος «στρατοπέδου/ κουλτούρας των underdogs» (αδόκιμες μεταφράσεις που έχουν κατατεθεί στη βιβλιογραφία για τον όρο underdogs: των υποχωρούντων, των παρωχημένων, των υπόσκυλων). Η μελέτη επιχειρεί να εξετάσει αυτές τις θεωρητικές αποχρώσεις *με τους δικούς τους όρους* και, στη συνέχεια, να τις αξιολογήσει μέσω του ερμηνευτικού φακού της κριτικής γεωπολιτικής, της μετα-εκκοσμίκευσης και των μετα-αποικιακών σπουδών.

Η μελέτη ξεκινά με την εξέταση της αφήγησης περί «πολιτισμικού δυϊσμού» που έχει διατυπωθεί και υποστηριχθεί από αρκετούς διανοούμενους της ελλαδικής τέχνης της κρατικής διακυβέρνησης (statecraft), η οποία αναγνωρίζεται εδώ ως μια ουσιαστικά οριενταλιστική αφήγηση, που περιλαμβάνει έναν ιδιόμορφο «ελληνικό νεο-οριενταλισμό» (*νεο-* με την έννοια μιας συγκεκριμένης μετάλλαξης στο οριενταλιστικό βλέμμα, σύμφωνα με την οποία είναι ο λαός και η χώρα του ίδιου του οριενταλιστή που προσδιορίζεται με οριενταλιστικό τρόπο).

Ό,τι έχει περιγραφεί από πολεμική σκοπιά ως «νεο-ορθόδοξο κίνημα» στην Ελλάδα, καθώς και οι θεωρητικοί εκ των πρωταγωνιστών του, ο Χρήστος Γιανναράς και ο Θεόδωρος Ι. Ζιάκας, ξεδιαλέγεται σε μια προσπάθεια να εντοπιστούν οι πιο θεωρητικά επεξεργασμένες αποχρώσεις μεταξύ των «υποχωρούντων/παρωχημένων». Αναγνωρίζεται ότι αυτές οι ιδέες σχετίζονται αιτιωδώς με τις εξελίξεις στην ελληνική θεολογία του εικοστού αιώνα, οι οποίες στη συνέχεια εξετάζονται. Παρατίθεται μια ανάλυση της Νεορθοδοξίας και

των ιδεών του Γιανναρά και του Ζιάκα, καταλήγοντας σε μια αντιπαραβολή τους με την προσέγγιση της κριτικής γεωπολιτικής και της μετα-εκκοσμίκευσης. Τα συμπεράσματα της μελέτης περιλαμβάνουν τη διαπίστωση ότι, παρά τις όποιες ελλείψεις τους, οι υπό συζήτηση θεωρητικοί μπορούν να θεωρηθούν ως *υποκείμενα*, όχι απλώς ως *αντικείμενα*, μιας κριτικής γεωπολιτικής, ως διανοούμενοι αντίθετοι με τις πολιτικές προβολές της ελλαδικής statecraft στη γεωγραφία και ως (μετα-)νεωτερικοί στοχαστές σύστοιχοι με παγκόσμιες θεωρητικές εξελίξεις τις οποίες δεν έχουν κατ' ανάγκην οι ίδιοι υπ' όψιν.

Συγκεκριμένα, το πρώτο κεφάλαιο μελετά την επικράτηση, την υπεροχή και τις προϋποθέσεις του αφηγήματος του «πολιτισμικού δυϊσμού» (cultural dualism), το οποίο διαιρεί την ελληνική κοινωνία και την πολιτική της ζωή, με έναν σχεδόν ανιστορικό τρόπο (π.χ. ήδη από την ανατολική ρωμαϊκή αυτοκρατορία με τους «ενωτικούς» και «ανθενωτικούς»), αφ' ενός σε μια συντηρητική κουλτούρα «υποχωρούντων/ παρωχημένων» (underdogs) και αφ' ετέρου σε μια «μεταρρυθμιστική» κουλτούρα στραμμένη στη Δύση. Αυτή η αφήγηση αναγνωρίζεται εδώ με την ευρεία της έννοια ως η σιωπηρή ερμηνευτική προσέγγιση που χρησιμοποιείται σχεδόν καθολικά όταν μελετάται η όποια ασυνήθιστη πολιτική και πολιτιστική σκέψη στην Ελλάδα σήμερα, η οποία και ονομάζεται «underdog»: άλλες μορφές της περιλαμβάνουν τις διχοτομήσεις των «φυσιολογικών/ αντικειμενικών» έναντι των «αντιδυτικιστών», των «Ευρωπαϊστών» έναντι των «εθνο-λαϊκιστών» (που, περιέργως πώς, με τον όρο δεν εννοείται ποτέ ό,τι θα λέγαμε στη διεθνή βιβλιογραφία ethno-populism ή national-populism)», «εκκοσμικευμένων» έναντι των «θρησκόληπτων/ Ορθοδόξων/ μεσαιωνικών» κ.λπ. Προκύπτει η ανάγκη μιας εναλλακτικής ερευνητικής ατζέντας που θα εξέταζε, για πρώτη φορά, την «ασυνήθιστη» ελληνική πολιτική σκέψη που προσεγγίζει το βυζαντινό παρελθόν και το ορθόδοξο πολιτισμικό πρόσημο της Ελλάδας όχι μέσω της προσέγγισης πολιτισμικού δυισμού, αλλά μέσω μιας μεθοδολογίας κατάλληλης για το σκοπό αυτό.

Μετά τον εντοπισμό της ανάγκης αυτής για μια εναλλακτική ερευνητική ατζέντα, το δεύτερο κεφάλαιο προτείνει δύο περιπτωσιολογικές μελέτες για την προσέγγιση αυτή, δύο περιπτώσεις «νεο-ορθοδόξων»: την πολιτική θεολογία και φιλοσοφία του Χρήστου Γιαννάρα και την κοινωνική οντολογία του Θεόδωρου Ζιάκα — λαμβάνοντας επίσης υπ' όψιν τις αναστροφές τους από τον Στέλιο Ράμφο και τον Κώστα Ζουράρι. Και καθορίζει τη μεθοδολογία που θα εφαρμοστεί, δηλαδή μια μεθοδολογία που θα αντλεί από τις μετα-αποικιακές σπουδές, την κριτική γεωπολιτική και τη θεωρία της μετα-εκκοσμίκευσης. Με αυτόν τον τρόπο εντοπίζεται η ανάγκη για μια γενικότερη επισκόπηση της εξέλιξης της Ορθόδοξης θεολογίας στην Ελλάδα του εικοστού αιώνα (αλλά και στο εξωτερικό) ως αναγκαίο ερμηνευτικό πλαίσιο, μια επισκόπηση που λαμβάνει χώρα στο τρίτο κεφάλαιο. Το τρίτο κεφάλαιο εξετάζει τις κύριες εξελίξεις και τάσεις στην ορθόδοξη θεολογία του εικοστού αιώνα στην Ελλάδα ως προϋπόθεση και σημείο εισόδου για την εδώ έρευνα. Ξεκινώντας από την «Βαβυλώνια αιχμαλωσία» της ελληνικής θεολογίας, το κεφάλαιο εξετάζει τη θεολογική έκρηξη της δεκαετίας του '60, την πρόσληψη της θεολογίας της ρωσικής διασποράς και την εστίασή της στην πατερική μαρτυρία, την εκκλησιαστική ζωή και την εξωστρέφεια. Μετά από μια επισκόπηση των βασικών στοιχείων αυτών των εξελίξεων, το κεφάλαιο επικεντρώνεται στη

θεολογική συμβολή των πιο σημαντικών θεολογικών μορφών της δεκαετίας του ‘60. Συγκρίνονται η συμβολή και οι προοπτικές της θεολογικής γενιάς μετά τη δεκαετία του ‘60, ενώ το κεφάλαιο ολοκληρώνεται διερευνώντας πιθανές μελλοντικές εξελίξεις στην Ορθόδοξη θεολογία. Μετά από αυτήν την αναγκαία επισκόπηση, η μελέτη προχωρά στο τέταρτο κεφάλαιο, όπου εξετάζεται η πολιτική φιλοσοφία/θεολογία που μπορεί να εξαχθεί από τα έργα του Χρήστου Γιανναρά. Το κεφάλαιο εκκινεί με το ερώτημα εάν η πολιτική σκέψη του Γιανναρά μπορεί να χαρακτηριστεί ως «πολιτική θεολογία», καθώς μια σημαντική πτυχή της είναι θεολογικής φύσεως. Το κεφάλαιο εστιάζει (α) στην έννοια του «τρόπου υπάρξεως» για την εκκλησιαστική, την κοινωνική και την πολιτική ζωή, (β) στον τρόπο με τον οποίο μια πολιτική κοινότητα, όταν στοχεύει στο αληθεύειν και όχι αποκλειστικά στη χρησιμότητα και την αποτελεσματικότητα, ενδέχεται να επιχειρεί έναν τριαδικό εικονισμό, (γ) στη γιανναρική κριτική της ιδεολογίας, ενώ (δ) διακρίνεται το κοινωνικό και πολιτικό πλαίσιο μέσα στο οποίο εμφανίστηκαν για πρώτη φορά αυτές οι ιδέες. Μετά την εξέταση της γιανναρικής «σύγκρουσης πολιτισμών» μεταξύ Ορθοδοξίας και «Δύσης» και τον Ορθόδοξο κοινοτισμό ως τοποθετούμενο πέρα από τον κολλεκτιβισμό και τον ατομικισμό, το κεφάλαιο προχωρά στη μελέτη της ερμηνευτικής του πρότασης για την ευρωπαϊκή ιστορία και την αντίληψή του για τη «Δύση», μια έννοια θεμελιώδη στη σκέψη του. Το κεφάλαιο καταλήγει στο συμπέρασμα ότι ο Γιανναράς φιλοδοξεί να διατυπώσει μια ολοκληρωμένη εξ αντιθέτου πρόταση για τη σημερινή πολιτική και τον πολιτισμό, η οποία προέρχεται από το ιστορικό παρελθόν και επενδύεται από τον Ορθόδοξο χριστιανισμό, αλλά δεν συνίσταται στην έκκληση για επιστροφή στο εν λόγω παρελθόν (κάτι που θα ήταν μια συνηθισμένη συντηρητική χειρονομία). Αντίθετα, είναι μια έκκληση για να δημιουργηθεί κάτι νέο στη βάση της συλλογικής ιστορικής εμπειρίας, μια έκκληση για ανατροπή/υπονόμευση (subversion) σε κάθε επίπεδο, δηλαδή το πολιτικό, θρησκευτικό, πολιτιστικό, νομικό και φιλοσοφικό επίπεδο — ό,τι θα ονομάζαμε «ανατρεπτική/ υπονομευτική ορθοδοξία/ Ορθοδοξία» (subversive orthodoxy/ Orthodoxy).

Στο επόμενο κεφάλαιο, σε μια διάρρηξη της «φυσιολογικής» σειράς, εξετάζεται το «νεο-ορθόδοξο κίνημα» ως το πλαίσιο στο οποίο αναδύθηκαν οι εν λόγω ανατρεπτικές/ υπονομευτικές Ορθοδοξίες. Στο κεφάλαιο κατατίθεται το ερώτημα εάν η «νεο-ορθοδοξία» αποτελεί δόκιμο όρο και εξετάζονται οι συνιστώσες της, το κοινωνικό και ιστορικό πλαίσιο και τα πρόσωπα του «κινήματος». Το έκτο κεφάλαιο είναι αφιερωμένο στον Θεόδωρο Ι. Ζιάκα. Σε αυτό το κεφάλαιο εξετάζεται το θεωρητικό σύστημα ενός από τους λιγότερο γνωστούς στοχαστές του «νεο-ορθόδοξου κινήματος», με επίκεντρο τη δεύτερη, ώριμη τριλογία βιβλίων του (2001–2005). Ο Ζιακάς ξεκινά τη διαδρομή του στη μαρξιστική Αριστερά και, στην προσπάθειά του να βρει το θεωρητικό κλειδί για την κοινωνική αλλαγή, βαθμιαία στρέφεται προς μια βαθύτερη έρευνα σχετικά με τη φύση της εθνότητας ως πολιτισμικού φαινομένου, καθώς και σε μιαν επανεκτίμηση της ελληνικής ταυτότητας μέσα από τις ασυνέχειές της. Ο Ζιάκας θεωρεί πως υπάρχει άμεση συσχέτιση ανάμεσα στη φιλοσοφική ανθρωπολογία μιας εκάστοτε κοινωνίας, στην κοινωνική της θεωρία και στη μεταφυσική της στάση. Δηλαδή, υπάρχει άμεση συσχέτιση μεταξύ του εννοιολογικού περιεχομένου που προβάλλεται σε τρία διαφορετικά επίπεδα: στο

ανθρώπινο άτομο (ατομικό υποκείμενο), την κοινωνία (συλλογικό υποκείμενο), τον Θεό, το θείο ή το νόημα (θεϊκό υποκείμενο). Στη συνέχεια εντοπίζονται τρία πιθανά μοντέλα: το κολλεκτιβιστικό, το ατομικιστικό και το προσωποκεντρικό. Ο Ζιάκας θεωρεί ότι ο παγκοσμιοποιημένος κόσμος βιώνει έναν μηδενισμό που συνιστά ακύρωση και στα τρία επίπεδα (το ατομικό, το συλλογικό και το θείο) και που, όσον αφορά την ελληνική ιστορική εμπειρία, θυμίζει έναν συγκρίσιμο μηδενισμό κατά την ύστερη κλασική και ελληνιστική περίοδο. Υποστηρίζει ότι ο μηδενισμός μετά την ακμή του και κατά την παρακμή του ή καταλήγει σε μια κολλεκτιβιστική/δεσποτική υποστροφή ή σε μια προσωποκεντρική μετεξέλιξη. Η εργασία του Ζιάκα καταλήγει εν τέλει σε μια πολιτική θεωρία, αφού το κύριο μέλημα στις αναλύσεις του, παρά την φαινομενική εστίαση στο φιλοσοφικά ανθρωπολογικό ζήτημα της θέσμισης του υποκειμένου, έγκειται στο είδος και στην ανάπτυξη των κοινωνιών και στα πολιτικά τους συστήματα.

Στο έβδομο και τελευταίο κεφάλαιο η μετα-αποικιακή «νεο-ορθοδοξία» του Χρήστου Γιανναρά και του Θεόδωρου Ι. Ζιάκα εξετάζεται υπό το πρίσμα της κριτικής γεωπολιτικής με βάση κυρίως το έργο του Gearóid Ó Tuathail, καθώς και της μετα-εκκοσμίκευσης. Δεδομένου ότι οι εξεταζόμενοι στοχαστές αποδίδουν κεντρική σημασία σε ό,τι συνήθως αναφέρεται ως «θρησκεία», προκύπτει ένα δίλημμα ως προς την «καταλογογράφησή τους»: στην μία του πλευρά βρίσκεται η επίκληση της θρησκείας ως προνεωτερικό, αντιδραστικό ή φονταμενταλιστικό στοιχείο. Στην άλλη του πλευρά βρίσκεται η επίκληση της θρησκείας ως στοιχείο *μετα-εκκοσμίκευσης*, διερώτησης για τα *μετά* την νεωτερικότητα. Πού πρέπει να «καταλογογραφηθούν» οι υπονομευτικές Ορθοδοξίες; Η λύση προκύπτει από τη σύγκριση και την αντιπαραβολή των ιδεών αυτών με τρία θεωρητικά ρεύματα μετα-εκκοσμίκευσης, ήτοι με τη βοήθεια τριών παρεκβάσεων: (i) με την κατάδειξη της κατασκευασμένη φύση της κατηγορίας «θρησκεία» όπως κατατέθηκε στο έργο του ιστορικού Peter Harrison, (ii) με το Αγγλο-Καθολικό κίνημα της «ριζοσπαστικής ορθοδοξίας» (Radical Orthodoxy) του John Milbank και τις συνέπειές του για τις κοινωνικές επιστήμες, και (iii) με την αθεϊστική πολιτική θεολογία του Slavoj Žižek. Το γεγονός ότι μια τέτοια έρευνα αποτελεί ένα μετα-αποικιακό βλέμμα στο συγκεκριμένο θέμα συνάγεται εμμέσως ως το νήμα που συνδέει αυτές τις προσεγγίσεις. Η μελέτη ολοκληρώνεται με το ερώτημα για το τι συνεπάγονται αυτές οι «ανατρεπτικές Ορθοδοξίες» για την Ελλάδα και το μέλλον της.

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Introduction

This study focuses on the more theoretically nuanced among the contemporary outputs of what has been polemically designated Greece's "underdog camp" or "underdog culture." The study attempts to examine these theoretical nuances *on their own terms* —since, without achieving this, a sizable chunk of Greece's recent intellectual and political history cannot but remain beyond substantial grasp— and, subsequently, to assess them through the hermeneutic lens of critical geopolitics, post-secularism, and an understanding of the "underdog" endeavour as a *postcolonial* endeavour.

The study begins with an examination of the "cultural dualism" narrative articulated and endorsed by various intellectuals of Greek statecraft, which is recognised here as an essentially Orientalistic narrative, comprising a peculiar "Greek Neo-Orientalism" (*neo-* in the sense of a particular mutation in the Orientalistic gaze, according to which one's *own* people and country is Orientalised in an unprompted way). Following this, what has been polemically described as Greece's "Neo-Orthodox movement" and its prime theoreticians, Christos Yannaras and Theodoros I. Ziakas, are singled out in an attempt to locate the more theoretically nuanced among the "underdogs." These theoretical nuances are prompted by developments in twentieth-century Greek theology, which are then examined. An analysis of Neo-Orthodoxy and of the ideas of Yannaras and Ziakas follows, concluding with an account of them in terms of critical geopolitics and post-secularism. The study's conclusions include the realisation that, all their shortcomings aside, the theorists in question may well be treated as *subjects* rather than as *objects* of critical geopolitics, countering Greek statecraft's political projections upon geographical, and as surprisingly (*post-*)modern thinkers in tune with global theoretical developments that are unbeknownst to them.

The title of this study, "Can the Underdogs Speak?," alludes of course to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's classic paper, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"[1] in the Greek neo-Orientalistic context of the "underdog culture" narrative, as I shall elaborate upon in the first chapter. However, as should hopefully be obvious, I am not claiming that the thinkers under question are "subaltern" in the normal sense of the word or, for that matter, Spivak's sense of

[1] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (London: Macmillan, 1988), 271–313.

the word — thus the scare quotes in this study's subtitle. However, I *am* pointing out that this is precisely the way those thinkers are portrayed by intellectuals of Greek statecraft (instead of the distinctively "underdog" dimension of the latter portraying Greece as being in the hold of the former), particularly in the context of the "underdog/reformist" cultural dualism. Thus, by using the notion of "subaltern" I am indulging in nothing more than the adoption of the imagery concerning the "underdogs" that is projected by what I will proceed to call designate as "Greek Neo-Orientalism."

While informed by the methods and viewpoints of critical geopolitics, post-secularism, and postcolonialism, which I chose as tools and perspectives due to the nature and challenges of the material in question as will be demonstrated in the main body of this study, my primary methodology in this thesis will revolve around an emphasis on *discourses* and their analysis. That is, the object of study in this thesis is comprised of *texts* — books, articles, intervies, interventions, and so on — and the *ideas* to be found therein. My task consists in first presenting ideas and then criticising and analysing them, with particular problems, questions, and aims in mind. This is reflected in the structure of this thesis as well: the chapters leading up to the final one focus primarily on *presenting* the ideas related to our objects of study, followed by an *analysis* and *critique* thereof in the *final* chapter, which comprises about one third of the thesis' total length — rather than this final chapter merely being an aggregate of the conclusions arrived at through the preceding chapters. In this final chapter I find it of significant use to indulge in three seeming digressions, which are put forth in order to assist the reader in examining the thinkers in question through a perspective different than the "underdog/cultural dualism" one. I elaborate on the epistemological problems in using "religion" as a distinct category in the way we do today, both on an everyday basis and in scholarship, by alluding to Peter Harrison's relevant work in the field of history; I examine social theory's relationship to religion through the radical hermeneutic lens provided by John Milbank; and I analyze Slavoj Žižek's contemporary atheist political theology in order to show the timeliness of such considerations on politics and religion, particularly in certain strands of critical theory (and beyond), in a way that is parallel to yet different from Yannaras' and Ziakas'.

Last but not least, I have to hint here to my criteria in choosing to focus on Christos Yannaras and Theodoros I. Ziakas from the variety of Greek "underdog" thinkers or, as a subcategory of the latter, "Neo-Orthodox" thinkers — a choice that is detailed in the main

body of this study. In doing this, I combined criteria of impact and visibility with considerations of theoretical depth and comprehensiveness. Thus, I singled out Yannaras as the most impactful of those thinkers that also possesses a work of considerable theoretical depth and nuance; I chose to focus on Theodoros I. Ziakas due to the fact that his work is characterised by such depth and nuance as well, in spite of the fact that his impact and visibility is more limited (or rather of a "stealth" nature — more on that in chapter six). On the other hand, I chose not to focus on, for example, the highly visible and quite impactful figure of Kostas Zouraris, since his work lacks a systematic nature that would make it suitable for our present undertaking. However, the wider social milieu of this particular strand of "underdog" intellectual currents that is the so-called "Neo-Orthodoxy" — this being in itself, as we shall examine, perhaps the most theoretically robust among other "underdog" intellectual currents — has not remained beyond the scope of the present thesis. A detailed chapter is devoted to it and to the figures and intellectuals that were prominent in it, thus highlighting the social context of the ideas under scrutiny here, particularly during the decades of the '80s and '90s in Greece. Such thinkers are indeed often overlooked by political science (and Greek policial science in particular), in spite of their multiform impact in the past and our present alike. Any claim at formulating a "political theology," irrespective of whether it is explicitly labelled as such, is similarly overlooked by political science in Greece to an almost complete extent, in spite of the fact that its bearing upon politics should have been rather obvious. The present thesis aims to shed light on such overlooked aspects, particularly now that the thematic of "identity," to which these aspects are directly related, occupies centre stage in Greece and abroad and finds itself at a critical juncture from a scholarly perspective (as well as an everyday one, in many respects).

Off to this study's structure. Chapter One studies the prevalence, pre-eminence and premises of the "cultural dualism" narrative, which divides Greek society and political life into an "underdog" conservative culture and a "reformist" Western culture, as well as its political usage in contemporary Greece. This narrative, broadly understood, is here identified as the implicit hermeneutic approach almost universally employed when studying non-standard political and cultural thought in Greece and dubbed the "overdog" reading of modern Greece: other forms thereof comprise the dichotomies of "normal/non-biased" versus "anti-Western," "European" versus "national-populist," "secular" versus "religious/Byzantine/Orthodox" etc. In doing this, this chapter locates an important research gap, underscoring the need for an alternative research agenda that would for the first time

examine non-standard Greek political thought that affirms Greece's Byzantine past and Orthodox culture *not* via the "overdog" approach, but through a methodology suitable to that end.

Following the identification of the need for an alternative research agenda examining non-standard Greek political thought that Greece's Byzantine past and Orthodox culture *not* via the "overdog" approach, but for the first time with a suitable methodology, Chapter Two proceeds (a) to propose two case studies for this approach, two cases of *subversive Orthodoxies*: namely, the political theology and philosophy of Christos Yannaras and the social ontology composed by Theodoros Ziakas—also taking into account their inversions by Stelios Ramfos and their deviations through Kostas Zouraris. And (b) to specify the methodology that will be implemented, namely one informed by postcolonial studies, critical geopolitics and post-secular theories. In doing so, the need for an overview of Orthodox theology's development in twentieth-century Greece and beyond as background and context is identified, an overview which will comprise the next chapter

Chapter Three discusses the main developments, trends and figures in twentieth-century Orthodox theology in Greece as a precondition and entry point for my enquiry. Starting from the "Babylonian captivity" of Greek theology, the chapter examines the theological explosion of the '60s, its reception of the Russian diaspora and its focus on patristic testimony, ecclesial life, its new *ethos* and its newfound extroversion. After a survey of the main figures of these developments, the chapter centres on the theological contribution of Christos Yannaras and of the Metropolitan of Pergamon John D. Zizioulas, the two most prominent figures of the '60s generation. The contribution and prospects of the theological generation *after* the '60s is assessed, while the chapter concludes by exploring likely future developments in Greek Orthodox theology.

In Chapter Four, I examine the political philosophy that can be extracted from Christos Yannaras' works. I start with the question, whether Yannaras' political thought can be described as a "political theology," since a major aspect thereof is that it is theologically informed. Yannaras, an academic philosopher, influential Christian Orthodox theologian and public intellectual intervening regularly in Greece's public sphere with his political commentary, does not consider his contribution as being a "political theology"; in fact, he criticizes the concept as such. However, a consistent, coherent and critical political theology, i.e. a theologically-informed political theory, is clearly visible in many of his works. I focus

(a) on his understanding of both the political and the ecclesial element of life and society as emerging from the same "mode of existence," (b) on the way in which a political community, when primarily aiming at *truth* rather than usefulness and efficacy, strives to iconize the Trinity, and (c) on his critique of ideology, while (d) discerning the social and political context in which these ideas first appeared. After examining the framework of his reception of human rights, his "clash of civilizations" between Orthodoxy and the West and his Orthodox communitarianism beyond both collectivism and individualism, I proceed to study his hermeneutic proposal for European history and his conception of "the West," a notion most central to his thought. I conclude that Yannaras aspires to formulate a *comprehensive counterproposal* to today's politics and civilisation at large. This counter-proposal *draws from* the historical past and is informed by Orthodox Christianity, but it does not consist of a call to *return* to said past (which would be a classic conservative gesture). Rather than that, it is a call to create something *new* on the *basis* of collective historical experience, something *new* which would overthrow and replace the current order of things on every level, i.e. the political, religious, cultural, jurisprudential and philosophical level. Seeing that this is the case, what we are dealing with here is indeed a *subversive Orthodoxy.*

Following this, in Chapter Five I disrupt what would have been a "normal" sequence of chapters and I examine the "Neo-Orthodox movement" as the context in which our subversive Orthodoxies first emerged. I question whether "Neo-Orthodoxy" is a terminologically viable category and analyse its premises, I examine the social and historical context, and I provide an outline of important figures of the "movement" besides Christos Yannaras (treated in the previous chapter) and Theodoros I. Ziakas (treated in the next chapter), i.e. —returning to remarks first made in Chapter Two— Stelios Ramfos' inversion of "Neo-Orthodoxy" and Kostas Zouraris' deviation from "Neo-Orthodoxy."

I study in Chapter Six the theoretical system of one of the lesser known thinkers of the "Neo-Orthodox movement," Theodoros I. Ziakas, focusing on his second, mature trilogy of treatises (2001–2005). Ziakas begins his itinerary in the Marxist Left and, in his attempt to find the theoretical key to social change, gradually gravitates towards a deeper inquiry on the nature of nationhood as a civilisational/cultural phenomenon, a reassessment of Hellenic identity through its discontinuities and a conjunction of the social/political and the theologico-philosophically anthropological. He theorizes that there is a direct correlation in any given society's implicit philosophical anthropology, its social theory and its metaphysical

stance. I.e., that there is a direct correlation between the semantic content projected on three different levels: the human person (individual subject), society (collective subject), God or meaning (divine subject). Three possible models are then identified: the collectivist one, the individualist one, and the prosopocentric one, i.e. the one reflecting the Eastern Orthodox theological anthropology of the person (πρόσωπο) as elaborated by Christos Yannaras and John D. Zizioulas. Ziakas holds that our current predicament consists in a nihilism/annulment on all three levels (the individual, the collective, and the divine) that, so far as the Hellenic historical experience is concerned, is reminiscent of a comparable nihilism during the late classical and Hellenistic period. He contends that as soon as this nihilism, the peak of an individualist cycle of civilisational development, reaches its natural limits, it is plausible that the globalised world as a whole will enter a *prosopocentric* phase similar to the anthropological transition that took place from late antiquity to Byzantium — or perish in intranscendable nihilism, in the voiding of all signifiers. Ziakas' elaboration on all this brings about a theoretical system in political theory, since the main concern of his analyses, in spite of a seeming focus on the philosophically anthropological question on the institution of the individual, lies in the types and development of societies and their political systems.

This leads me to Chapter Seven, the concluding chapter of this study. It has been consolidated in previous chapters that Greece's theory "underdogs" can indeed speak, if engaged with directly and not through neo-Orientalist narratives; their utterance has been heard, albeit coarsely summarised, yet the question of what is to be made of this utterance is still pending. In this final chapter, the "Neo-Orthodoxy" of Christos Yannaras and Theodoros I. Ziakas is observed through *critical geopolitics*, building mainly on the work of Gerard Toal/Gearóid Ó Tuathail, and post-secularism. Since these thinkers afford centre stage to what is usually referred to as "religion" in their social insights, a dilemma and crossroad, or rather spectrum, emerges: at its one side lies the invocation of religion as a pre-modern, reactionary or fundamentalist element; at its other side lies that invocation of religion as a *post*-secular element, as a glimpse of what may arrive *after* this late modernity of ours. It is a gaze mediated through post-secular thought that may allow us to decide what is here the case. Given that it is theory rather than societal changes that is approached here, post-secularism is employed in an indirect way, with the aid of three digressions: (i) on the constructed nature of the compartmentalised category of "religion" as demonstrated in Peter Harrison's work, (ii) on the conflation of theology and social theory in John Milbank's Radical Orthodoxy, and (iii) on the atheist political theology of Slavoj Žižek. The fact that such an inquiry constitutes

a postcolonial gaze on the matter at hand shall be the thread implicitly connecting these approaches.

My sincerest gratitude is owed to Professor Asteris Huliaras, under whose supervision the present work has been completed and whose attention to the development thereof has been of pivotal importance —as has been his tolerance for my atypical approaches and his welcoming of ideas he might not necessarily agree with—, as well as to Lecturers Dimitrios Rozakis and Sotiris Vandoros from the thesis' advisory committee. As the present study was written during the same years I was holding various teaching and research stints within the discipline of philosophy, I am also thankful to the institutions that have kindly hosted me in various capacities during those three years: the University of Bosphorus, the City University of Istanbul, the University of Winchester, the University of Cambridge, and Princeton University. Following the advise of Prof. Huliaras, early versions of material developed in the context of this study have appeared (or are currently in print) after successful peer-review in the *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*,[2] *Horizons of Politics*,[3] *Political Theology*,[4] an edited volume,[5] and an Oxford Handbook,[6] in order for the present scholarship to be judged and assessed by the academic community at large. Now this work is being submitted here as a whole, from beginning to end, humbly raising its claims in the context of the fields political theory, cultural studies, modern Greek studies, and international relations insofar as critical geopolitics is being utilised, in the sincere hope that it may prove to be somewhat distressing.[7]

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[2] Sotiris Mitralexis, "'A Luscious Anarchism in All of This': Revisiting the '80s and '90s Greek 'Neo-Orthodox' Current of Ideas," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* forthcoming (2019).

[3] Sotiris Mitralexis, "Studying Contemporary Greek Neo-Orientalism: The Case of the 'Underdog Culture' Narrative," *Horyzonty Polityki / Horizons of Politics* 8, no. 25 (2017): 125–49.

[4] Sotiris Mitralexis, "The Eucharistic Community Is Our Social Program: On the Early Development of Christos Yannaras' Political Theology," *Political Theology*, November 28, 2017, 1–20, https://doi.org/10.1080/1462317X.2017.1402550; Sotiris Mitralexis, "On Recent Developments in Scholarly Engagement with (the Possibility of an) Orthodox Political Theology," *Political Theology*, November 30, 2017, 1–14, https://doi.org/10.1080/1462317X.2017.1402551.

[5] Sotiris Mitralexis, "An Ontology of the Historico-Social: Christos Yannaras' Reading of European History," in *Mustard Seeds in the Public Square: Between and beyond Theology, Philosophy, and Society*, ed. Sotiris Mitralexis (Wilmington, DE: Vernon Press, 2017), 93–112. I am also using in Chapter Seven, in the section on Slavoj Žižek's atheist political theology, material of mine that will eventually be included in a forthcoming book chapter: Dionysios Skliris and Sotiris Mitralexis, "The Slovenian and the Cross: Transcending Christianity's Perverse Core with Slavoj Žižek," in *Slavoj Žižek and Christianity. With an Afterword by Slavoj Žižek*, ed. Sotiris Mitralexis and Dionysios Skliris, Transcending Boundaries in Philosophy and Theology (New York: Routledge, 2019).

[6] Sotiris Mitralexis, "Modern Greek Orthodox Theology," in *Oxford Handbook of Eastern Orthodox Theology*, ed. Andrew Louth and Andreas Andreopoulos (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), forthcoming.

[7] "Distressing" being taken here as the opposite of "inconsequential," i.e. the lamentable and unintended fate of most doctoral dissertations.

Chapter 1

Faring beyond the Overdog Culture?

Constructions of Cultural Dualism in Contemporary Greece: the Need for an Alternative Research Agenda

Abstract

This chapter studies the prevalence, pre-eminence and premises of the "cultural dualism" narrative, which divides Greek society and political life into an "underdog" conservative culture and a "reformist" Western culture, as well as its political usage in contemporary Greece. This narrative, broadly understood, is here identified as the implicit hermeneutic approach almost universally employed when studying non-standard political and cultural thought in Greece and dubbed the "overdog" reading of modern Greece: other forms thereof comprise the dichotomies of "normal/non-biased" versus "anti-Western," "European" versus "national-populist," "secular" versus "religious/Byzantine/Orthodox" etc. In doing this, this chapter locates an important research gap, underscoring the need for an alternative research agenda that would for the first time examine non-standard Greek political thought that affirms Greece's Byzantine past and Orthodox culture *not* via the "overdog" approach, but through a methodology suitable to that end.

There is arguably nothing more fulfilling for a scholar than witnessing one's hermeneutic *schema* becoming the standard frame of reference, giving shape and voice to preexisting discourses and achieving almost universal recognition—even more so if this *schema* describes one's own country, and if its acclaim emerges within the country itself. It is safe to say that this is precisely the case with Nikiforos Diamandouros' "underdog culture versus reform culture" theory:[8] the narrative that there is a fundamental division in Greek

[8] Nikiforos P. Diamandouros, "Cultural Dualism and Political Change in Postauthoritarian Greece," *Estudios = Working Papers / Instituto Juan March de Estudios e Investigaciones, Centro de Estudios Avanzados En Ciencias Sociales* 50 (1994). Later translated in Greek as *Πολιτισμικός Δυισμός Και Πολιτική Αλλαγή Στην Ελλάδα Της Μεταπολίτευσης: Πλαίσιο Ερμηνείας [Cultural Dualism and Political Change in Postauthoritarian Greece: Hermeneutic Frame]*, trans. Dimitris A. Sotiropoulos (Athens: Alexandria, 2000). The dominance of the "cultural dualism" narrative in accounts of Greece has been recently restated and reassessed by Dimitris

society and political life, a division into an "underdog" conservative culture on the one hand and a "reformist" western culture on the other, the former emerging as an impediment to progress, the latter as guaranteeing it. In Diamandouros' dichotomy, the "underdog culture" represents the majority of the Greek population; it has deep roots in Byzantine and Ottoman times as well as in Orthodox Christianity, and reflects tendencies towards populism and clientelism, nationalism and xenophobia. It sees domestic politics as well as international relations as a conflict between the powerful and the powerless, always sympathising with the ones it perceives as powerless, as the victims, Greece being one of them. It is a culture of protest and resistance, with an hostility against reform, modernisation, globalisation, Europe, the US and the West. On the other hand, the "reform culture" of the modernisers is its polar opposite: it has deep roots in the philosophical and political legacy of the Enlightenment and strives towards Europeanization, rationalisation, liberal democracy and an institutions-based state, the separation of state and society and cosmopolitanism. It affirms capitalism and the free market economy, and while it reflects a minority in the Greek people, its strongholds are certain political elites, academics, intellectuals, and the diaspora. Not without important fluctuations and occasional changes, Modern Greek history and political history in particular can, according to this theory, be read as a struggle between the "underdog culture" of the backward-looking majority and the "reform culture" of the Enlightened minority, with the latter losing the battle and the former winning it.

I do not only hold that this model of Greece is fundamentally flawed, but more importantly that its prevalence and pre-eminence in diverse analyses concerning contemporary Greece renders non-partisan (or, at the very least, less-partisan) readings of Greece impossible; it blinds us even to basic facts, dictating a problematic framework of interpretation and reference and becoming a very real impediment to the progress of social sciences as far as the scholarly engagement with modern Greece is concerned. For the "underdog culture versus reform culture" reading is not only prevalent in analyses of Greece's political culture, but spans to a surprising number of disciplines. Ioanna Ntampoudi is right to note that "disparate and varied research projects on Greek politics and society often begin their inquiries by referring to the well know cultural dualism that Diamandouros first elaborated,"[9] citing Kalpadakis and Sotiropoulos[10] on foreign policy change,

Tziovas, "From Junta to Crisis: Modernization, Consumerism and Cultural Dualisms in Greece," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 41, no. 02 (October 2017): 278–99, https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2017.4.

[9] Ioanna Ntampoudi, "The Greek 'Underdog' Political Culture: An Anti-European Political Identity?" (The Third Euroacademia International Conference: The European Union and the Politicization of Europe, Lisbon,

Paraskevopoulos[11] on social capital, Spanou[12] on reform, Halkias[13] on the politics of reproduction, Stavrakakis[14] on religion and politics, and so on.

My claim here is not that the perpetuation of this dichotomy in analyses of modern Greece's state *originates* in that paper by Diamandouros; rather than that, I am proposing that this narrative *gave voice* to this theoretical dichotomy and that it was later *recognised* as such—and that, consequently, it deserves to be examined as central to the present research enquiry. In referring to Diamandouros' "underdog culture versus reform culture" analysis, I am indicatively referring to a host of interrelated ideas and converging analyses by a particular group of influential scholars, with Diamandouros' being the most visible and celebrated one—but Diamandouros' theory itself is merely the starting point, not the object of my inquiry. That is, I am more interested in how this dichotomy *is used* and on how *it evolves* rather than on Diamandouros' argument *per se*—however, in order to be able to analyse the former, I will first have to present the latter.

Central to my argument is that such schematizations constitute a peculiar *Greek Neo-Orientalism*, in that they embody the very essence of cultural imperialism in Orientalism, which sees Western society as developed, rational, democratic, and thereby superior, while non-Western societies are undeveloped, irrational, inflexible, and implicitly inferior.[15] Here, the main traits of *Greek Neo-Orientalism* is that (a) it is voiced by *Greeks*, rather than by others, when they describe/criticize their own country,[16] (b) it employs typical Orientalist

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2014), http://euroacademia.eu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Ioanna_Ntampoudi_The_Greek-_Underdog_Political_Culture_-_-An_Anti-European_Political_Identity.pdf.

[10] George Kalpadakis and Dimitris A. Sotiropoulos, "Europeanism and National Populism: The Europeanization of Greek Civil Society and Foreign Policy," *Hellenic Studies* 154, no. 1 (2007): 43–66.

[11] Christos J. Paraskevopoulos, "Social Capital and the Public-private Divide in Greek Regions," *West European Politics* 21, no. 2 (1998): 154–77, https://doi.org/10.1080/01402389808425249.

[12] Calliope Spanou, "State Reform in Greece: Responding to Old and New Challenges," *International Journal of Public Sector Management* 21, no. 2 (2008): 150–73, https://doi.org/10.1108/09513550810855645.

[13] Alexandra Halkias, *The Empty Cradle of Democracy: Sex, Abortion, and Nationalism in Modern Greece* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2004).

[14] Yannis Stavrakakis, "Religious Populism and Political Culture: The Greek Case," *South European Society and Politics* 7, no. 3 (September 1, 2002): 29–52, https://doi.org/10.1080/13608740708539632.

[15] Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Pantheon, 2004), 32.

[16] This *new* Orientalism, which now proceeds from the very people it caricatures rather than from external colonisers, has partly been also described in the case of former Yugoslavia: Milica Bakić-Hayden and Robert M. Hayden, "Orientalist Variations on the Theme 'Balkans': Symbolic Geography in Recent Yugoslav Cultural Politics," *Slavic Review* 51, no. 01 (1992): 1–15, https://doi.org/10.2307/2500258. As shall be shown in the present study, however, Greeks have elevated this self-inflicted, masochistic Orientalism that constitutes their peculiar *Neo*-Orientalism into an art form. On the critique of Orientalism applied to Balkans/Greece in general, the reader may consult the critical review —critical in the sense of questioning the applicability of the term *Orientalism* given the absence of *literal* colonisation in Greece and the Balkans— of research up to the turn of

stereotypes, albeit appropriated accordingly, taking into account Greece's historical background (and proposing a rather peculiar hermeneutical framework for its understanding), (c) it always proposes, explicitly or implicitly, a further and enhanced political, cultural, and economic alignment with "the West" (however this is being defined by Greek Neo-Orientalists), while holding that such an alignment was never truly the case.

Greek Neo-Orientalism is similar to but distinct from "Balkanism" (as described by Todorova[17]); an analysis of this difference would be beyond the scope of the present article, but has to be addressed in the future. Suffice it to say it is central to Greek Neo-Orientalism that its narratives, in the particular form and state in which they emerge as Neo-Orientalism, originate in Greece, or at least by Greeks abroad, and may then be exported and reiterated by non-Greeks—rather than coming to Greece "from the outside" as it were, from external sources, and then becoming internalised. In insisting on maintaining a connection between the two terms, one could say that Balkanism evolves into Greek Neo-Orientalism precisely at the moment when its stereotypes are internalised and appropriated to the point that they undergo a fermentation and emerge as *original* ideas, having turned into the particular schematisations under scrutiny here, which are perceived as a distinct universe of ideas—often acquiring a loftiness and theoretical refinement that is not to be found in the original and by far surpass it.[18] In such an understanding, Neo-Orientalism is implicitly responding to the need prompted by Balkanism in Greek intellectuals: in attempting to escape being themselves characterised by the stereotypes of Balkanism, in attempting to "become Western/European," they take these very stereotypes to a whole new level *as original intellectual production*, to which they indeed result, rather than merely reiterating them. Thus, Greek Neo-Orientalism acquires its particular characteristics and deserves to be studied as a phenomenon of its own.

While Diamandouros centres in his "Cultural Dualism and Political Change" on "post-authoritarian Greece," i.e. on Greek *metapolitefsi* after the fall of the colonels' *junta* in 1974, he extends his analytical claims to the emergence of the modern Greek state in the nineteenth century and beyond, to the Ottoman rule and Byzantine times. Other scholars, such as emeritus Professor of Political History at the University of Athens Thanos Veremis,

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the millennium in K. E. Fleming, "Orientalism, the Balkans, and Balkan Historiography," *The American Historical Review* 105, no. 4 (October 2000): 1218, https://doi.org/10.2307/2651410.

[17] Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[18] Stelios Ramfos can be cited as an extreme example of this metamorphosis.

will compose similar narratives centring on the Greek War of Independence (1821–1829) and its aftermath, while others still will apply this reading to contemporary events and the Greek crisis (2008–?);[19] the July 2015 Greek referendum offered a regal occasion for the renewed implementation of such formulas in public discourse. Diamandouros' "underdog culture versus reform culture" analysis functions, thus, as a placeholder for all such cognate analyses and dichotomies such as "normal/non-biased" versus "anti-Western," "European" versus "national-populist," "secular" versus "religious/Byzantine/Orthodox" etc. The last dichotomy is exceedingly crucial, as all analyses and versions of these dualities place particular importance to the foundational role of religion, i.e. Orthodox Christianity, in the alleged reactionary backward orientation of what is identifier by Diamandouros as the non-reformist, non-modernising, populist, Eurosceptic, anti-American camp.

Before examining in detail readings that are *obscured* by the prevalence of Diamandouros' narrative, it is of essence to embark in a closer inspection of the narrative itself, as well as of its socio-historical context. I will begin with Diamandouros himself. Born 1942 in Athens, Nikiforos Diamandouros served as European Ombudsman for ten years, from April 2003 until October 2013. He was elected thrice to that post, in 2003, 2005, and 2010. From 1998 to 2003, he was the first National Ombudsman of Greece. He is Emeritus Professor of Comparative Politics at the Department of Political Science and Public Administration of the University of Athens. After graduating from Indiana University in 1963, he then attended Columbia University, where he was awarded an M.A. in 1965, an M.Phil. in 1969 and a Ph.D. in 1972. From 1973 to 1978 he held a research position at Columbia University and a teaching post at the State University of New York and later took up the role of Director of Development at Athens College in Greece (1980). In 1983 he moved to the position of Program Director for Western Europe and the Near and Middle East at the Social Science Research Council, New York, a post he held until 1988.

From 1988 to 1991 Diamandouros was Director of the Greek Institute for International and Strategic Studies, a research organisation in Athens. From 1995 to 1998 he served as Director and Chairman of the Greek National Centre for Social Research (EKKE), while he has also served as President of the Greek Political Science Association (1992-98) and of the Modern Greek Studies Association of the United States (1985-88). In 1999 and

[19] Anna Triandafyllidou, Ruby Gropas, and Hara Kouki, eds., *The Greek Crisis and European Modernity* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). in particular the "Introduction: Is Greece a Modern Country?," in *The Greek Crisis and European Modernity* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 1–24.

2000, he was appointed member of Greece's National Commission on Human Rights and of the National Council for Administrative Reform respectively. Between 1988 and 1996, he served as co-chair of the Subcommittee on Southern Europe of the Social Science Research Council, New York, whose activities were funded by the Volkswagen Foundation. He was also joint General Editor of the Series on the New Southern Europe published by Oxford University Press, the Johns Hopkins University Press and Palgrave. In 2014 he was elected a member of the Academy of Athens, Greece's national academy and the highest research establishment in the country.[20]

After introducing the reader to scholarship on cultural dualism, Diamandouros asserts that the Greek case fits well into this general pattern. "The construction of a modern state in Greece during the first half of the nineteenth century entailed the introduction in that country of Western, liberal political institutions (e.g., constitutionalism, rule of law, legal-bureaucratic state, regular army) and their grafting onto traditional and pre-capitalist, indigenous structures that were essentially the product of the long Byzantine (Church law) and Ottoman (state) heritages."[21] This political and cultural reorientation in state-society relations engendered social, political, and cultural struggles between potential beneficiaries and potential losers: cultural dualism is here essentially power struggle. This is recognised by Diamandouros as *the* major critical juncture in modern Greek history, shaping its encounter with modernity and ultimately disclosing "two powerful and sharply conflicting cultural traditions, embedded in the novel (Western) and antecedent (Byzantine-Ottoman) elements of the modern Greek historical experience, which, over time, reproduced themselves through on-going and overlapping processes of interaction, accretion, assimilation, and adaptation."[22] The author holds that, despite later developments, the major premises of each culture remained quite identifiable over time and formed Greek society and politics from the emergence of the modern Greece nation-state until today. These two cultures are not always visibly formed into two opposing cults; Diamandouros stresses their *cross-sectional* nature, i.e. their "the tendency to cut across Greek institutions, strata, classes, or political parties in Greek society and not to become *exclusively* identified with any one such structure across

[20] For this biographical information, see "P. Nikiforos Diamandouros, European Ombudsman: Curriculum Vitae," accessed November 2, 2016, http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/showResource?resourceId=1347613718659_CV%20Diamandouros%20EN.pdf&type=pdf&download=true&lang=en; "Nikiforos Diamandouros," *Wikipedia*, September 11, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nikiforos_Diamandouros&oldid=738839350.
[21] "Cultural Dualism and Political Change," 12–13.
[22] 13.

time or even at any given moment. Put otherwise, though particular institutions or social actors, including political parties, have, in specific historical periods, tended to become more explicitly identified with one or the other of the rival cultures and to serve as their primary exponents, the extent of identification has varied from period to period and cannot be taken for granted;" this means that both cultures live on in virtually all Greek institutions, structures, and social arrangements, annulling the possibility of substantial consent.[23]

Diamandouros will then proceed to assign historical depth to the two cultures. What he will later describe as the underdog culture is "steeped in the Balkan-Ottoman heritage and profoundly influenced by the *Weltanschauung* of an Orthodox church which, for historical, intellectual, as well as theological reasons, had long maintained a strongly, and occasionally militant, anti-western stance";[24] this identification of the underdog culture as *primarily* rooted in Orthodoxy and Byzantium is of particular importance for the alternative reading I will later provide here. To offer a definition of the term with the meaning employed here by Diamandouros, "an 'underdog' culture can be conceived as a subcategory of 'traditional' that can be applied to societies or cultures which have experienced contact with more 'developed' systems, have established asymmetrical, subordinate relations with them, and have internalized this asymmetry in negative and defensive terms that have translated in a commensurately diffident and xenophobic view of the international order."[25] The author ascribes a number of (negative) qualities to this Orthodox/Byzantine current: introversion, a powerful statist orientation, a profound ambivalence concerning capitalism and the market mechanism, preference for paternalism and protection, adherence to pre-capitalist practices, moralism and parochialism, intolerance, authoritarianism, and a host of other negative characteristics.[26] Diamandouros' blaming of Orthodox Christianity for these negative characteristics is *the* central and most indispensable characteristic of his reading, which he presents in historico-theological terms:

> The significance of Orthodoxy for the development of this cultural tradition needs to be stressed. Situated at the outer perimeter of the territories which historically have constituted the European part of the Western world, Eastern Orthodoxy has been the dominant religion in societies which, over a long historical period spanning a number of centuries, were the first to experience the pressures, threats,

[23] 13–14.
[24] Diamandouros, 14–15.
[25] Diamandouros, 89-90n18.
[26] Diamandouros, 14–15.

> disruption, and devastation associated with wars and invasions of hostile ethnic and religious groups emanating from lands to its East or South. Thus, whether in periods of great ascendancy or in moments of weakness, the societies steeped in the cultural traditions of Eastern Orthodoxy have tended to think of themselves as frontier territories and cultures always exposed to potential threats from hostile forces. Accordingly, they have also tended to construct cognitive maps reflecting this perception of their environment. The gradual estrangement of the medieval Orthodox world from its Catholic counterpart and the formal break which occurred in 1054 added an extra dimension of external threat perception (this time from the West) to the culture of Eastern Orthodoxy. Over time, this sense of intense isolation emerged as a salient feature of Eastern Orthodoxy's dominant culture and helped shape its view of history and of its role in it.[27] [...] In line with this view, the purpose of Orthodoxy was, in theological terms, defined in strictly conservative terms which assigned highest priority to the preservation and defence of those social and political arrangements that were deemed most closely to reflect the meaning of the original covenant between man and God and actively to oppose efforts to alter it. At a more secular level, this same view, as elaborated by the Patriarchate in Constantinople, has historically expressed itself in four major ways or principles: first, in a powerful siege mentality which expressed itself in fears concerning "the contraction" of the Orthodox world under pressure from hostile forces surrounding it. Second, in a profound antipathy towards cultural and political structures identified with the Catholic Church and, more generally, "the West."[28]

Diamandouros concludes his historical treatment of this "powerful underdog culture" that is shaped by Orthodox Christianity and Greece's pre-modern past without being short on words and negative designations: this culture is represented by the "least competitive strata and sectors of Greek society," which are characterised "by low productivity, low competitiveness, the absence or tenuousness of economic, political, and cultural linkages to the outer world and to the international economy, the aversion to reform" etc. However, this enemy of modernisation can claim "the allegiance of a majority of the Greek population since independence."[29]

[27] 15.
[28] 16.
[29] Diamandouros, 22–24. I hope the reader will excuse the long quote from these pages, since understanding Diamandouros' schematization is crucial for our project: "In short, this can be described as a powerful underdog culture which, whether at the mass or the elite levels, became, over time, particularly entrenched among the very extensive, traditional, more introverted, and least competitive strata and sectors of Greek society and was more fully elaborated by intellectuals adhering to this tradition. The distinguishing characteristic of these strata was their involvement in activities (subsistence agriculture, petty commodity production not geared to exports, finance, import substitution industries, and the overinflated and unproductive state- and wider-public sector)

Following his exposition of the "underdog culture," Diamandouros proceeds to paint an idyllic picture of the "reformist culture."[30] A culture that "draws its intellectual origins from the Enlightenment and from the tradition of political liberalism issuing from it"; it is decidedly secular, extrovert and Western-oriented; with liberal and capitalist reform as its programme for society, economy, and polity. Favourable to the market mechanism, it is more receptive to innovation and less focused on the preservation of tradition. Outward-looking rather than parochial than its rival, Greece's reform culture favours "the creation and proliferation of international linkages for Greece" and its integration into the international system.[31] At the political level, it strives towards liberalism and constitutionalism; Diamandouros describes it as being characterised by a commitment to democracy, in implicit contrast to the Orthodox underdog culture. He also lists "a distinct and normative preference for the mediated exercise of power, through the establishment and gradual consolidation of modern political institutions suited to that purpose; and an expansive rather than restrictive conceptualization of civil and human rights and, more generally, a central and, over time, mounting concern with the nature and content of citizenship in the Greek the political system." This results, he argues, in a focus on institutions and on the rights of citizens and "the desire to diminish the pervasive influence of clientelistic relations in politics and the

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marked, above all, by low productivity, low competitiveness, the absence or tenuousness of economic, political, and cultural linkages to the outer world and to the international economy, the aversion to reform, and powerful, affective commitments to various adaptations of domestic structures inherited from the long Ottoman tradition. Reflecting this complex set of characteristics and system of meanings, this culture's *projet de societe*, that is, its vision of Greece at the national, regional, and international systems as well as its understanding of change and modernization is profoundly defensive, protectionist, and, in many ways, rudimentary. By far its most distinctive feature is the central, indeed preponderant, role it assigns to the state vis-a-vis civil society. Seen simultaneously as the 'natural' ally and protector of the weak and non-competitive strata and structures from the ever threatening and increasing pressures of the market mechanism and of the international system, the state has historically been regarded as the motor force for the defensive modernization of Greek society along lines that will minimize the disruption which change is likely to cause to these structures and strata. This is a view of modernization common among late developing societies, which reflects this culture's ambivalence towards the liberal, Western model of socioeconomic change and which historically manifests itself in the willingness to search for, and experiment with, 'alternative' routes to modernity. The sheer size of these strata, the lingering influence derived from their traditional dominance within Greek society, and an enormous capacity for adaptability which ensured their survival and even their proliferation rendered less discernible, for a long time, the mortal threat to their continuing vitality posed, over the long run, by the gradual modernization and development of the Greek economy, society, and polity. Reflecting both this long-term pressure and the incapacity of these strata, because of the lateness and weakness of industrialization in Greece, to forge strategies of collective action capable of generating viable alternatives to marginalization, the pivotal principle of this culture has been a pervasive, lasting, ever-adaptable but diffuse sense of defensiveness, inequity, victimization, and persecution, coupled by enormous staying power, tenacity, and an obsessive preoccupation with short- term perspectives to the detriment of long-term considerations. These characteristics permeate the mechanisms through which this culture perceives, interprets and internalizes events and developments, and constructs its imagery and system of shared assumptions. This, finally, is a culture which, despite fluctuations, can be said to claim the allegiance of a majority of the Greek population since independence."

[30] Diamandouros, 24–29.

[31] Diamandouros, 24–25.

dependence on particularistic arrangements and corporatist structures which it implies";[32] as we will later examine, this conceptualisation is, in practice, starkly contrasted to recent historical experience in Greece, where the reform camp has utterly excelled in clientelism, corruption and particularistic arrangements. It cannot but be remarked that the argument tends to being cyclical, in that words of cognate semantic content are used to explain and elaborate on other such words: thus, the "reform" and "modernising" culture is "progressive" in that it seeks to replicate the advancements of the "advanced" industrial West's "developed" democracies.[33] According to Diamandouros, the cosmopolitan Western reformist culture was on the rise in Greece from the last quarter of the nineteenth century until the mid-1930s. From then on it started its decline, while the underdog culture was experiencing an ascendancy in Greek politics.[34]

His study will then focus on the struggle of these two cultures during Greece's *metapolitefsi*, i.e. during the period after the fall of the 1967–74 military junta. Three aspects require our attention: firstly, that Diamandouros insists on the dissemination of both cultures across the political spectrum, i.e. that they are not two wholly distinct and visible camps. He points out that the two rival cultures do not neatly coincide with any one particular party: "the two cultures cut, to a very large degree, across the major Greek political parties and defied facile, unidimensional identifications with partisan structures" and singles out Costas Simitis as a clear representative of the reform culture.[35]

Secondly, he places his hopes on the European project for strong-arming the "underdog culture" and establishing the "reform culture" as the dominant political power in Greece,[36] contrary to the majority's alleged allegiance to the "underdog culture." Thirdly, he insists that reform is a *cultural* battle at least as much as it is a *political* battle—but, in any case, primarily a battle over power and influence: "to be sure, the realization of reform (and all that it implies) ultimately depends on the capacity of the domestic social actors identifying with this tradition successfully to profit from the powerful external support provided by the Community and its multiple structures and sufficiently to enhance their own position within Greek society, economy, and politics in order to overcome the confining conditions to the permanent ascendancy of the reformist culture which the tenacious resistance of the strata

[32] Diamandouros, 25–26.
[33] Diamandouros, 23-30.
[34] Diamandouros, 29–30.
[35] Diamandouros, 42.
[36] Diamandouros, 55.

adhering to the underdog culture ultimately represents." In this, Diamandouros lays out a plan for dominance and hegemony: "success in this direction would suggest that the forces identified with reform and modernization in Greece have managed (a) to overcome their historic inability to translate their temporary ascendancy into a permanent one; (b) to serve as the logic of integration in Greek culture and politics; and (c) to open the way for their eventual hegemony and the long-term marginalization and eclipse of the underdog culture."[37] The programme rests on *cultural* premises and as such is first and foremost a battle of symbols, minds, and public opinion, while it aims at the very *eradication* of the underdog culture, its eclipse. Seeing that the primary premise of this underdog culture is Orthodox Christianity and the symbolic holding onto Greece's Byzantine heritage, the implications of this for the reform culture enthusiast's code of conduct is quite explicit: for Diamandouros, the way to modernisation and reform is the battle against the impact of this heritage on the minds of Greeks.

Diamandouros is aware of the need to back up these bold claims by demonstrating a firm grasp of his material, i.e. a firm grasp of Orthodoxy's nature, history and theory; he is aware that without such a demonstrable grasp, such claims would appear as little more than arbitrary. To that end, he will summon an impressive array of bibliographical sources on Orthodoxy in note 14, which spans pages 84–86, leading the reader to recognise the erudition behind the author's claims. However, this bibliographical torrent can be seen as problematic in a number of ways; I will indicatively mention two of them. On page 85, Diamandouros invites the reader to consult two books "on Orthodox theology": P. N. Trembelas' *Dogmatique de l'Eglise orthodoxe catholique*, 3 vols. (Paris: Editions de Chevetogne, Desclee De Brouwer, 1966-68), a markedly scholastic treatise universally recognised by theologians today as much more Roman Catholic than Orthodox, in effect as a book on Roman Catholic Dogmatics, as I hope to demonstrate in the chapter on the development of Orthodox theology. This means that in order to back up his claims on Orthodoxy as a cause of Greece's inability to follow the West, Diamandouros cites a book outlining the theology behind the very historical developments of the West that purportedly Greece cannot follow up with due to its denominational distinctiveness. The pertinent question here is whether Diamandouros' theory is indeed based on a thorough knowledge of the theoretical and

[37] Diamandouros, 60.

historical subjects at hand to the extent that he claims it is, and this is a question with implications for the current of ideas that is formed, informed and represented by his theory.[38]

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Diamandouros recently updated and reaffirmed his theory, effectively claiming that it holds now true more than ever.[39] In spite of his schematisation's problems and shortcomings, some of which have been already discussed in Greece's public discourse,[40]—and in spite of the fact that this schematisation is the very essence of cultural imperialism in Orientalism, which sees Western society as developed, rational, democratic, and thereby superior, while non-Western societies are undeveloped, irrational, inflexible, and implicitly inferior[41]—he is exceedingly admired for precisely this schematisation by a host of Greek "reform culture" scholars, academics, journalists, and politicians, who employ it as a self-evident hermeneutic key, as a theory that *explains* and *proves*, but does not need to be *explained*, much less *proven*. Indicatively, drawing from the journalistic level of public discourse: Paschos Mandravelis, a prominent journalist and opinion maker of the newspaper *Kathimerini* (dubbed by *The Telegraph's* Ambrose Evans-Pritchard as "the voice of the Oligarchy"[42]) will present the Greek edition of *Cultural Dualism* as "impeccably researched" and "one of the

[38] For example, Diamandouros' second recommendation on Orthodox theology, on the same page, is "Vladimir Lessky's *Orthodox Theology: An Introduction* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989)." Of course, the celebrated theologian of the Russian diaspora is Vladimir *Lossky* and not Vladimir *Lessky*; this is not a transliteration variant, as the book in question was published in English and is cited as such. There would be no reason to regard this as anything more than a typographical error, were the same *Lessky* not to appear in the notes and bibliography of the Greek revised edition of Diamandouros' book six years later (Diamandouros, *Πολιτισμικός Δυισμός Και Πολιτική Αλλαγή Στην Ελλάδα Της Μεταπολίτευσης: Πλαίσιο Ερμηνείας [Cultural Dualism and Political Change in Postauthoritarian Greece: Hermeneutic Frame]*, 45n14, 148. For potential causes of this repeated error, the reader may consult Pierre Bayard, *How to Talk About Books You Haven't Read* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2009), a book I have not read.

[39] Nikiforos P. Diamandouros, "Postscript: Cultural Dualism Revisited," in *The Greek Crisis and European Modernity*, ed. Anna Triandafyllidou, Ruby Gropas, and Hara Kouki (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 208–32.

[40] Particularly noteworthy is Kostis Papagiorgis' review of Nikiforos P. Diamandouros, *Οι Απαρχές Της Συγκρότησης Σύγχρονου Κράτους Στην Ελλάδα, 1821-1828 [The Beginnings of a Modern State's Formation in Greece, 1821–1828]*, trans. Kostas Kouremenos (Athens: MIET, 2002). Nikiforos P. Diamandouros, "Political Modernization, Social Conflict and Cultural Cleavage in the Formation of the Modern Greek State: 1821 - 1828" (Columbia University, 1972). In Papagiorgis' "Η Επανάσταση Του 1821 Και Οι «Εκσυγχρονιστές» [The 1821 Revolution and the 'Modernisers']," *Ardin*, September 2012, available here: http://www.energia.gr/article.asp?art_id=97872.

[41] Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, 32.

[42] Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, "European 'alliance of National Liberation Fronts' Emerges to Avenge Greek Defeat," *The Telegraph*, July 29, 2015, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/economics/11768134/European-alliance-of-national-liberation-fronts-emerges-to-avenge-Greek-defeat.html. "The Greek newspaper *Kathimerini*—the voice of the oligarchy—reported that the charges would include [...]."

most important books analysing modern Greek political history."[43] During the summer of 2018, Nikos Marantzidis, professor of political science at the University of Macedonia, argued in *Kathimerini* that "there are certain foundational principles in the life of states, which define their position in the world; ours is a very simple one, lasting almost two centuries: we belong to the West" and proceeded to lenghtily present Diamandouros' cultural dichotomy as *the* perspective under which matters concerning Greece are to be examined — in this particular case, the Macedonia naming dispute.[44] George Pagoulatos, Professor of European Politics and Economy at the Athens University of Economics and Business, replicates the *Cultural Dualism* schematisation, noting how Diamandouros has elegantly conceptualized it.[45] Virtually every controversy entailing the Church of Greece will be explained in the media using this theory or at the very least this vocabulary, with titles such as former president of ELIAMEP Professor Couloumbis' "the underdogs bite back."[46] The "underdog culture" is casually cited as "the main source of resistance to the processes of modernization, Europeanization and globalization."[47]

The "underdog culture versus reform culture" theory has a prominent role in analyses published and disseminated by the "Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy"

[43] Paschos Mandravelis, "Τα «όχι» Και Τα «ναι» Στην Ιστορία Των Ελλήνων ['Yes' and 'No' in Greek History]," *Kathimerini*, June 11, 2011, http://www.kathimerini.gr/727614/opinion/epikairothta/arxeio-monimes-sthles/ta-oxi-kai-ta-nai-sthn-istoria-twn-ellhnwn.

[44] Nikos Marantzidis, "Το Ονοματολογικό Και ο Αναπόδραστος Εθνικός Δρόμος [the Macedonia Naming Dispute and the Unavoidable National Path]," *Kathimerini*, June 17, 2018, http://www.kathimerini.gr/969947/opinion/epikairothta/politikh/to-onomatologiko-kai-o-anapodrastos-e8nikos-dromos.

[45] George Pagoulatos, *Greece's New Political Economy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2003), 238n14:"At the same time, societal opening and cultural globalization obfuscate the left–right division by generating new tensions and debates that do not adhere to the vertical left–right partisanship. A range of new issues have entered the public agenda, issues of civic or cultural liberalism that cut across the party system traditionally structured along the left–right axis: national identity versus cultural cosmopolitanism, civil liberties, immigration policy, separation of church and state, foreign and Balkan policy. Over such issues the two main parties in Greece seem to be internally and horizontally divided, between a liberally minded, extrovert, Europeanist and reformist constituent on the one side, and a socially conservative, economically protectionist, more hostile toward supranational integration, nationalistic leaning constituent on the other. Diamandouros (1994) has elegantly conceptualized this horizontal cleavage cutting across the party-political domains of Left and Right as one between a 'reformist' versus an 'underdog' culture. With the help of an electoral system of reinforced proportional representation, horizontal dualism becomes absorbed by vertical partisan dualism, as both main catch-all parties (PASOK and ND) rush to suppress the intensity of the horizontal divisions by dodging ideological pronouncements and hedging policy practices, and by accommodating voices and followers of both ideologico-cultural streams."

[46] Theodore Couloumbis, "Greece's Underdogs Bite Back," *Forreign Policy*, no. 123 (2001): 87–88, https://doi.org/10.2307/3183161.

[47] See Ntampoudi, "The Greek 'Underdog' Political Culture: An Anti-European Political Identity?", where its purported anti-European element is challenged. See also Ioanna Ntampoudi, "Reflections on the (Greek) Underdog Culture: A Rebellious and Radical Political Identity?" (The 64th Political Studies Association (PSA) Annual International Conference 'Rebels and Radicals,' Manchester, 2014), http://www.gpsg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Ntampoudi-2014.pdf.

(ELIAMEP) and by scholars affiliated with it,[48] such as the aforementioned Theodore Couloumbis. Loukas Tsoukalis, Professor of European Integration at the University of Athens and the current president of ELIAMEP, does not explicitly mention the theory, but composes a similar analysis in his "Greece: Like Any Other European Country?"[49] For Professor Anna Triandafyllidou, Ruby Gropas and Hara Kouki, Greece is "a country that did not modernise," with "strong legacies of a backward political culture impregnated with clientelism and institutionalized corruption that can be traced back to the formation of the Greek nation state";[50] this is, according to the authors, demonstrated by Diamandouros in his underdog culture theory which has since "been disseminated to political discourse and has become a reference point for understanding modern Greece and the country's relation with Europe."[51] This distinction is presented as "profound" and "all-encompassing," so that "elements of both cultures are to be found across the political spectrum in both the left and right-wing forces of the political system", as the authors claim citing Diamandouros and in agreement with him.[52] Antonis Liakos, Professor of History at the University of Athens, former president of Costas Simitis' think tank OPEK "for the modernisation of our society"[53] and president of the SYRIZA government's committee for the restructuring of the education system up to November 2016 will speak of "the predictable backlash of the underdog culture" and its hegemony citing Diamandouros.[54]

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, my claim here is not that we are dealing with "Diamandouros' theory" per se in encountering versions of his dichotomy; these do not necessarily *originate* from his writings. I am claiming that an already existing theoretical dichotomy was fleshed out and epitomised in his version thereof, and that the authority vested in it by extension of its author's authority further reinforces both the cultural

[48] For information on ELIAMEP's formation and its role in Greece, the reader is asked to consult Dostena Anguelova-Lavergne, "La 'main invisible' de la transition: Think tanks et transition démocratique en Bulgarie après 1989" (PhD diss., Paris École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2008). This thesis centres on the role and formation of think tanks in Bulgaria but deals with Greece as well.
[49] Loukas Tsoukalis, "Greece: Like Any Other European Country?," *The National Interest*, no. 55 (1999): 65–74.
[50] Triandafyllidou, Gropas, and Kouki, "Introduction: Is Greece a Modern Country?," 1.
[51] Triandafyllidou, Gropas, and Kouki, 3. "While the former of the two cultures is a pre-democratic, nationalist, defensive culture, favouring clientelistic networks of power, bearing a strong imprint of the Orthodox Church, phobic of the Western world view, and rather ambivalent towards capitalism and its market forces, the latter—described in a more favourable light—is inspired by European Enlightenment, promotes rationalization in society and politics along the lines of liberalism, secularism, democracy, and free-market economics, and privileges the exercise of power through modern political parties."
[52] Triandafyllidou, Gropas, and Kouki, 4.
[53] Όμιλος Προβληματισμού για τον Εκσυγχρονισμό της Κοινωνίας / ΟΠΕΚ. http://www.opek.org.cy/.
[54] Antonis Liakos and Hara Kouki, "Narrating the Story of a Failed National Transition: Discourses on the Greek Crisis," *Historein* 15, no. 1 (2015): 54–56, 58–59, https://doi.org/10.12681/historein.318.

dichotomy narrative in general and its particularity as Diamandouros' theory. Furthermore, while I am refuting the correctness of his theory at large, I am certainly asserting that there is a multitude of actors in academia, politics etc. that see themselves as representatives of an elite cosmopolitan "reform culture," which is set against the majority's mindset; keeping in line with Diamandouros' vocabulary, I will call these "overdogs" later in this chapter. This position is a natural corollary of Diamandouros' theory and, most importantly, its reception. What Diamandouros' dichotomy and its reception demonstrate is much more the existence of an "overdog culture" camp seeing itself as such under the euphemistic term "reform culture," "modernisers" etc. rather than the accuracy of the dichotomy as such.

Seeing that numerous variations of the dichotomy circulate widely in Greek public discourse, why was Diamandouros' chosen as *the* theory *par excellence*? To this I would like to propose two possible explanations. Firstly, Diamandouros' own stature as a public figure imbues his theory not merely with a generic authority, but with precisely the *type* of authority needed for a theorist of the "reform culture." An academic trained at an Ivy League U.S. university, Columbia, who would then proceed to become the European Ombudsman, i.e. to occupy the primary seat of an important and respected European institution that is mediating between civil society and the European Union: Diamandouros is in many ways the very embodiment of the reform/overdog culture's ideal type. That this culture's theoretical narrative and academic self-understanding would be articulated by that embodied ideal type is, indeed, optimal. As such, every invocation of this dichotomy cannot but draw its authority from Diamandouros, and by doing so proves its accuracy and self-evident reality.

A second, supplementary explanation relates to the extremely polemical character of this discourse in the public sphere. Theorists and figures of the reform/overdog culture see it as a cultural warfare with the media and academia as its arena: their discourse is full of scorn, irony and depreciation towards the purported "underdog" majority of the Greek population, lamenting their backwardness (the aforementioned *Kathimerini* journalist Paschos Mandravelis is a prime example of this rhetoric). The fact that Diamandouros himself is *not* explicitly polemical but maintains an interpretative distance making his intervention academic rather than purely political plays a crucial role here, in an implicit invocation of a "wise old man" *topos* that is outside of the battlefield, so to speak. The landscape is highly polemical—while Diamandouros is not. To illustrate this polemical landscape, let it suffice to be said that Thanos Veremis, Professor of Political History at the University of Athens,

founding member (former director and chairman) of the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy ELIAMEP and a prime representative of the "reform culture" refers to what Diamandouros would call the underdogs as "the sprayed ones" (*psekasmenoi*), a derogatory term[55] which he himself aligns[56] with the American term "white trash," [57] a racial slur.[58]

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Cultural Dualism and Political Change appears in 1994, two years before Costas Simitis, who is largely known in Greece for his political programme known as *Modernisation* ("*eksynchronismos*"), will become the prime minister of Greece (1996–2004). In studying *eksynchronismos*, Kostis Stafylakis will frame it as part of the "clash between 'tradition' and 'progress'" posessing a historical depth reaching to the formation of the Greek state and further back in history. Stafylakis explicitly correlates *eksynchronismos* with Diamandouros' cultural dualism thesis, referring to the clash between the underdogs and the reformers, with the latter coming to power under Simitis.[59] Diamandouros' theoretical framework was repeatedly implemented by *eksynchronismos* theorists, but he himself had not yet appeared as a *political* figure. Other evolutions and variations of Diamandouros' dichotomy include the one created, or manifested and disclosed, by the 5 July 2015 referendum on the bailout agreement in Greece. We witnessed there a "We are Staying in Europe" coalition on the one hand (*menoume Evropi*), with references to modernisation and the Enlightenment (which were, obviously, not directly related to the matter at hand, i.e. the bailout agreement, but acted as the symbolic ammunition in this cultural warfare), against what was portrayed by said camp as a coalition of populism or, as it abruptly entered the press' and public

[55] Literally referring to a purported belief of the "underdog" majority in the chemtrails conspiracy theory but never actually mentioned in that context: it denotes extreme imbecility in general and tries to portray the majority as afflicted by it.
[56] Thanos Veremis, "Καθηγητής Βερέμης: Ο Τραμπ Εξέφρασε Τους Απογοητευμένους, Τους Τσαντισμένους Που Είπαν «τώρα Θα Σας Δείξουμε Εμείς»," *LiFO*, November 9, 2016, http://www.lifo.gr/now/politics/120741.: "τα λευκά σκουπίδια όπως συνηθίζουμε να τους ονομάζουμε, [...] όλους αυτούς τους «ψεκασμένους», όπως θα λέγαμε κατ' αναλογίαν με τους δικούς μας."
[57] "White Trash," *Wikipedia*, November 11, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=White_trash&oldid=748917429.
[58] Elsewhere, Veremis will complain about the "ασφυκτικό εγκλεισμό στον μικρονοϊκό εθνικισμό των ελληναράδων," a practically untranslatable phrase of extreme scorn, hostility and depreciation, targeting Christos Yannaras, one of our case studies here. Thanos Veremis, "Να 'τανε Το Εικοσιένα, Χρόνια Δοξασμένα [The Glorious Days of 1821]," *Kathimerini*, September 18, 2016, http://www.kathimerini.gr/875336/opinion/epikairothta/politikh/na-tane-to-eikosiena-xronia-do3asmena.
[59] Kostis Stafylakis, "Modernization (Eksynchronismos)," ed. Zbyněk Baladrán and Vít Havránek, *Atlas of Transformation*, Tranzit 7 (Zurich: JRP/Ringier, 2010), http://monumenttotransformation.org/atlas-of-transformation/html/m/modernization/modernization-eksynchronismos-kostis-stafylakis.html.

academia's vocabulary, "national populism" (*ethnolaikismos*).[60] The results of the referendum, 38.69% for the "We Stay in Europe" campaign and 61.31% for the "No" (*Oxi*) campaign,[61] ignited a new round of references to Diamandouros' dichotomy.

A few months after this referendum, new legislative elections would take place in September 2015. Whenever the formation of a provisional government was being discussed during Greece's economic and political crisis, in November 2011 and May–June 2012, Nikiforos Diamandouros' name was always on the table for the post of the Prime Minister of Greece; while he explained the reasons he declined the 2011 offer, he also hinted at his availability for the post after the then forthcoming 20 September 2015 national elections, should the need for a consensus provisional government emerge.[62] Diamandouros was a candidate for parliament during these elections, but not through popular vote; Greece's election system has a provision for twelve cross-country members of parliament, who are elected on the basis of the percentage of votes that each political party receives across the country. Diamandouros' name was the first in the cross-country list (*psifodeltio epikrateias*) of the party *To Potami* ("The River") headed by the journalist Stavros Theodorakis, a party distinguished for its Diamandourean persuasion and reform-driven, Western-oriented and Europe-centred rhetoric.[63] In spite of the fact that *To Potami* had achieved a 6.1% electoral outcome in January 2015, thus electing one MP from the cross-country list, the dawn of the 26th of September saw the party with a 4.1% electoral percentage and no cross-country list candidate elected—meaning that Nikiforos Diamandouros, who had hinted at the possibility

[60] "Menoume Europi," *Wikipedia*, May 6, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Menoume_Europi&oldid=718896932; Emmanouil Tsatsanis and Eftichia Teperoglou, "Realignment under Stress: The July 2015 Referendum and the September Parliamentary Election in Greece," *South European Society and Politics*, 2016, 1–24, https://doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2016.1208906; Alex Afouxenidis, "Social Media and Politics: Contestation, Mediation and Civil Society," *The Greek Review of Social Research* 144, no. A (2015): 3–19; Paris Aslanidis and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, "Dealing with Populists in Government: The SYRIZA-ANEL Coalition in Greece," *Democratization* 23, no. 6 (2016): 1077–91. See also Geli Mademli, "The Rise of the Peripheral Subject: Questions of Cultural Hybridity in the Greek 'Crisis,'" in *Peripheral Visions in the Globalizing Present*, ed. Esther Peeren, Hanneke Stuit, and Astrid Weyenberg (Brill, 2016), 182–197.

[61] See "Greek Bailout Referendum, 2015," *Wikipedia*, September 15, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Greek_bailout_referendum,_2015&oldid=739532970.

[62] Haris Ioannou, "Να Φτιαχτεί Μια Κυβέρνηση Προσανατολισμένη Στην Προαγωγή Των Μεταρρυθμίσεων ["A Reform-Oriented Government Should Be Formed", Interview with Nikiforos Diamandouros]," *I Efimerida Ton Syndakton*, September 15, 2015, http://www.efsyn.gr/arthro/na-ftiahtei-mia-kyvernisi-prosanatolismeni-stin-proagogi-ton-metarrythmiseon. And the interview's analysis by Haris Ioannou, "Διαμαντούρος: Γιατί Απέρριψα Την Πρωθυπουργία Το 2011 [Diamantouros: Why I Refused the Post of the Prime Minister in 2011]," The TOC, September 15, 2015, http://www.thetoc.gr/politiki/article/diamantouros-giati-aperripsa-tin-prwthupourgia-to-2011.

[63] Nikos Konstandaras, "From Pericles to Potami," *The New York Times*, April 24, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/25/opinion/konstandaras-from-pericles-to-potami.html.

of being proposed as a potential consensus prime minister after these elections in his interview just five days before them, did not succeed to be elected as an MP. With this, the attempts at electing Diamandouros as a pro-European reform prime minister based on parliamentary alliances rather than the leadership of a party winning national elections (that is, much in the style and pattern of Italy's Mario Monti) ended without success.

During these events, Diamandouros' role as a composer of ideology has not gone unnoticed. Upon the announcement of his candidacy for parliament in 2015, journalists immediately pointed out that this candidacy aptly demonstrates the ideological continuity of *To Potami* with Prime Minister (1996–2004) Costas Simitis' "modernisation" agenda (*eksynchronismos*), of which Diamandouros is credited as having been an ideological guru.[64] In a thorough analysis of Diamandouros' thought based on the Greek translation of *Cultural Dualism and Political Change in Postauthoritarian Greece* (an analysis that is also forthcoming in expanded, book-legth form) journalists Augustine Zenakos and Christos Natsis pointed then out that his theory forms the ideological backbone of a trajectory of political ideas starting with Simitis' *eksynchronismos,* passing through liberal-conservative Nea Dimokratia's 2004–2009 "middle ground" (*mesaios choros*) centre-oriented strategy and arriving at what Zenakos and Natsis dubbed Greece's political "extreme centre" (*akraio kendro*).[65] That is, a *there is no alternative* coalition which (a) presents itself as moderate, "common sense," centrist and liberal while (b) proposing and implementing policies that form a violent, radical departure from pre-existing social, political and economic order and (c) brands every other political option, space and narrative as utterly unacceptable for any moderate citizen, as political extremities, as the left-wing and right-wing "two extremes" (*ta dyo akra*) by positioning itself as the only reasonable and moderate political space.

Zenakos and Natsis note that by describing modern Greek history as a battle between reactionary underdogs and progressive reformists, Diamandouros formulates the narrative which will function during the crisis as a "theory of everything," systematically employed and implemented by virtually every public figure of the hegemonic social coalition of the "extreme centre." Zenakos and Natsis correctly identify that Diamandouros' theory is

[64] Augustine Zenakos and Christos Natsis, "Ο Νικηφόρος Διαμαντούρος, Το Ακραίο Κέντρο Και η Αριστερά [Nikiforos Diamandouros, the Extreme Center and the Left]," *Unfollow*, September 8, 2015, http://unfollow.com.gr/web-only/diamant/. For a right-wing perspective, see Andreas Stalidis, "Νικηφόρος Διαμαντούρος [Nikiforos Diamandouros]," *Antibaro* (blog), September 16, 2015, http://www.antibaro.gr/article/13596.

[65] Tariq Ali expands on the notion of the "extreme centre" in his *The Extreme Centre: A Warning* (London: Verso, 2015).

proposed as an axiologically neutral, distanced reading, in spite of his clearly discernible preference for the reformist camp. Diamandouros' paper is not explicitly polemical and does not form part of a collective polemical scholarly attempt, it is rather "the precursor to what happens after the battle, i.e. after *eksynchronismos* has already achieved its hegemony; as such, it functions as the model of the required style for deepening and widening this already existing hegemony, which can then be articulated in a moderate, low key, sober-sounding voice."[66]

Setting aside the fact that the "underdog" reading of Greek politics and culture is woefully simplistic, the problem persists: can we find traces in Greek public life validating the claims raised by the self-appointed modernist camp, the representatives of the "reform culture," and its most self-righteous elements in particular—i.e., the claim that this camp stand for the rule of law, liberal democracy, and the prudent running of the state *versus* the corruption and clientelism characteristic of the "underdogs"? To subject the *metapolitefsi* period of Greece under close scrutiny with this criterion in mind would be the focus of a comprehensive study of its own, and a fascinating one indeed.

Let it suffice to be said that it is under the *eksynchronismos* regime of the archetypical prime-ministerial figure of the "reform culture" camp, Costas Simitis, that the country suffered arguably the worst and most far-reaching scandals of corruption, clientelism and bribery. Costas Simitis himself was dubbed the "archpriest of corruption" in parliament by the opposition, while major scandals erupted, hinting at Simitis' inner circle. In the context of one of them, the Siemens scandal, Theodoros Tsoukatos, one of the senior and closest consultants to Prime Minister Simitis, confessed to having illegally received one million German marks (500.000 Euros) from the company Siemens in 1999 and to having deposited them to the treasury of Simitis' party, PASOK, with the party denying the allegation.[67] Cabinet ministers of the reform camp's inner circle were also involved: "the only Greek politician to have been convicted because of the scandal is PASOK's ex-Transport Minister Tasos Mantelis, who was handed a three-year suspended sentence in 2011 after he admitted

[66] Zenakos and Natsis, "Ο Νικηφόρος Διαμαντούρος, Το Ακραίο Κέντρο Και η Αριστερά [Nikiforos Diamandouros, the Extreme Center and the Left]."
[67] K. P. Papadiochos, "«Ομολογία» Θ. Τσουκάτου Για Siemens [Th. Tsoukatos 'Confesses' on Siemens]," *Kathimerini*, June 20, 2008, http://www.kathimerini.gr/326195/article/epikairothta/politikh/omologia-8-tsoykatoy-gia-siemens.

to accepting 450.000 deutschmarks (230.000 Euros) from Siemens between 1998 and 2000"[68] for his (re-)election.

Concerning that Siemens scandal in Greece, *Der Spiegel* reported that "'anyone who pays bribes to get a government contract can pad his margin with a few extra million,' says one investigator. 'The excessive prices are of course shouldered by taxpayers'."[69] Costas Simitis' "Socialists were in government when most of the kickbacks are alleged to have been paid;"[70] it is precisely the "modernisation" (*eksynchronismos*) project, a dream of the reform camp come true, that made this unprecedented extent of corruption and bribery possible. Even more telling was the reaction to corruption, and more importantly to attempts at bringing it to a halt: according to former PASOK Minister Haris Kastanidis' evidence, "there was a bill of law in 1997 which would bring transparency to the procurement process, but due to Mr Simitis' handling it never reached Parliament."[71]

The torrent of scandals also involved distinguished "reform camp" members from other political parties, such as the conservative-liberal Nea Dimokratia's Mitsotakis-Bakoyanni family, validating Diamandouros' observation concerning the cross-party emergence of certain common characteristics but annulling the basic premise of his analysis, as it is here the "reform culture" that engenders corruption, scandal, clientelism, and a profound disrespect for even the most basic commitment to abide by the laws of a modern democratic nation-state. The sheer magnitude of the refutation of the Diamandouros dichotomy by recent events and the *eksynchronismos* regime of 1996–2004 seems like a true irony of history, but this does not seem to hinder the hermeneutic *schema* from being revisited, cited anew, employed as a key concept and updated with miniscule revisions.

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Henceforth, my aim in this study will not be to argue against the underdog culture theory: that could be the aim of an entirely different project. Rather than that, what interests

[68] Deutsche Welle, "Greece Indicts 13 Germans over Siemens Bribery Scandal," September 3, 2015, http://www.dw.com/en/greece-indicts-13-germans-over-siemens-bribery-scandal/a-18304651.
[69] Jörg Schmitt, "Complicit in Corruption: How German Companies Bribed Their Way to Greek Deals," Spiegel Online, May 11, 2010, http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/complicit-in-corruption-how-german-companies-bribed-their-way-to-greek-deals-a-693973.html.
[70] "Answers Sought in Siemens Scandal," *Kathimerini*, January 31, 2008, http://www.ekathimerini.com/54917/article/ekathimerini/news/answers-sought-in-siemens-scandal.
[71] Christos Bokas, "Kastanidis 'Opens Fire' on Simitis," *Proto Thema*, May 13, 2011, http://www.protothema.gr/news-in-english/article/121939/kastanidis-opens-fire-on-simitis/.

me is the *usage* and *impact* of such analytic patterns—or, more concretely, the alternative viewpoints that are obscured and rendered impossible when these patterns achieve hegemony.

Instead of arguing against the underdog culture theory, in the main chapters of this study I will pass directly to an analysis of contemporary Greek thinkers that see Greece in a quite different light. Arguably, understanding modern Greece's political mentality through the perspective of its Orthodox and Byzantine roots has long been a monopoly of "underdog culture versus reform culture" readings exerting ideological hegemony through this schema. What I intend to do is to shed light on alternative viewpoints, with the hope of achieving an understanding of modern Greek mentality that was, so to speak, in the dark side of the moon up until now, seeing that it was dominated by "underdog culture versus reform culture" readings and thus rendered invisible for scholarship that would not approach it with this particular bias.

Seeing that Diamandouros *et al.* identify Orthodox Christianity and the Byzantine past as guiding forces behind the underdog culture, I will centre on thinkers assessing these traits *positively*. For them, what shapes modern Greece, dominates its political scene and decisively puts its currently unfolding history in specific tracks is precisely the modernist camp and a Western-oriented political and cultural mentality—to which they aspire to counterpropose a postcolonial identity, one drawing from Greece's Byzantine past and the Greek people's Orthodox tradition. In many ways, these contemporary Greek thinkers see themselves as refuting a triumphantly victorious "modernising," i.e. Western-oriented, programme for Greece, precisely on the basis of their religion and of the awareness of their historical past but *not* from a pre-modern point of departure. If an underdog is "a person or group of people with less power, money, etc. than the rest of society" and "the person or team considered to be the weakest and the least likely to win in a competition",[72] then those thinkers would affirm the nature of the victorious Western-oriented camp as the "overdogs," an overdog being "one that is dominant or victorious."[73] Seeing that this is the case and that my attempt consists in trying to see these thinkers with their own eyes rather than through the Diamandouros *et al.* dichotomy, from this point onwards I will refer to the reading affirming Diamandouros' formula as "the overdog culture": as a reading imposed by the "overdogs," an

[72] "Underdog: Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary," accessed November 3, 2016, http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/underdog.
[73] "Overdog: Meaning in the Merriam-Webster English Dictionary," 2016, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/overdog.

analytical/theoretical emancipation from which would be most timely. My task, then, is to offer a reading of particular contemporary Greek thinkers *beyond the overdog culture.*

(In a case of self-fulfilling prophecy and cyclical argument, precisely this could be seen as affirming Diamandouros' theory, as the opponents of the "reform camp" see themselves and the version of Greece they represent as victims. While such a conclusion would be a logical fallacy, it is quite interesting that both "camps" see themselves as the ones losing the battle.)

This task responds to the need for an alternative research agenda examining Greek political thought that affirms Greece's Byzantine past and Orthodox culture, for virtually the first time, *not* via the "overdog" approach but with a proper methodology, thus opening up a field of scholarly enquiry on contemporary Greece that had been effectively "locked up." In the next chapter I will explore the methodology that would be suitable for such an undertaking, as well as the optimal sources, thinkers and case studies to that end.

Chapter 2

Tools for Approaching Subversive Orthodoxies:

An Alternative Research Agenda through Postcolonial Studies, Critical Geopolitics, and Post-secularism

Abstract

Following the identification of the need for an alternative research agenda examining non-standard Greek political thought that Greece's Byzantine past and Orthodox culture *not* via the "overdog" approach, but for the first time with a suitable methodology, this chapter proceeds (a) to propose two case studies for this approach, two cases of *subversive Orthodoxies*: namely, the political theology and philosophy of Christos Yannaras and the social ontology composed by Theodoros Ziakas—also taking into account their inversions by Stelios Ramfos and their deviations through Kostas Zouraris. And (b) to specify the methodology that will be implemented, namely one informed by postcolonial studies, critical geopolitics and post-secular theories. In doing so, the need for an overview of Orthodox theology's development in twentieth-century Greece and beyond as background and context is identified, an overview which will comprise the next chapter.

For the reasons identified in my survey of the "underdog culture versus reform culture" reading, I am herewith proposing an alternative research agenda examining Greek political thought that affirms Greece's Byzantine past and Orthodox culture, for virtually the first time, *not* via the Orientalist "overdog" approach but with a proper methodology, thus opening up a field of scholarly enquiry on contemporary Greece that had been effectively "locked up." Seeing that the criterion of the affirmation of the Byzantine past and Orthodox culture (rather than the demonising thereof that defines the overdog culture) is of importance, I will focus on two thinkers, on two "case studies," that my heretofore research indicates as most suitable for such a research project: the political theology and philosophy of Christos Yannaras (b. 1935) and the social ontology composed by Theodoros Ziakas (b. 1945)—also

taking into account their inversion by Stelios Ramfos and their deviations through Kostas Zouraris.

What would be the criteria for choosing Greek thinkers as case studies in an attempt to fare beyond the overdog culture? The answer is to be traced in the discourse produced by Greek public intellectuals and academics who share the following two common traits: (a) a claim that Greece possesses a cultural otherness in comparison to Western Europe and the "West" in general, which (b) is to be traced in its Orthodox Christian and Byzantine roots, from a religious and historical perspective respectively. To the best of my knowledge, the most influential Greek intellectuals meeting the above mentioned two criteria are Christos Yannaras,[74] an academic philosopher, theologian, and public intellectual, and Theodoros Ziakas, a mathematician and former executive at the Greek State Treasury as well as author of treatises on Greek Orthodox identity and idiosyncrasy. These thinkers have a qualitatively different but, as a whole, quantitatively considerable public impact. In spite of this impact, their work and thought have not yet been exhaustively researched at an international level and from a comparative perspective, thus forming a gap in the academic overview of current Greek sociopolitical thought. Covering this gap will prove important for the study of contemporary Greek consciousness' relation to Europe and "the West" and the problems that arise from it.

Christos Yannaras, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at the Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences in Athens, has written extensively on ontology, epistemology, cultural diplomacy, theology and politics. Yannaras is a public figure of considerable influence in Greece today due to his widely read weekly feuilleton in the newspaper "Kathimerini," were he usually voices positions contrary to the newspaper's opinion, thus contributing to its diversity. A more extensive philosophical/theological portrait will be attempted in the next chapter outlining the development of Orthodox theology in twentieth-century Greece, in which his books in English will be presented; however, some theoretical political books should be mentioned here in which Yannaras analyses cultural differences between East and West, namely his *Chapters in Political Theology*,[75] his socio-historical ontology of Europe that runs throughout his work but is crystallised in *The Schism Gave*

[74] Two edited volumes dedicated exclusively to Yannaras' thought and reception appeared in 2018; these might prove to be interesting to the reader. Andreas Andreopoulos and Demetrios Harper, eds., *Christos Yannaras: Philosophy, Theology, Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2018) and; Sotiris Mitralexis, ed., *Polis, Ontology, Ecclesial Event: Engaging with Christos Yannaras' Thought* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2018).
[75] Christos Yannaras, *Κεφάλαια Πολιτικῆς Θεολογίας [Chapters in Political Theology]* (Athens: Grigoris, 1983).

Birth to Europe,[76] his treatise on political economy[77] and on human rights,[78] as well as his exposition on Greek cultural diplomacy[79] and an epitome of his thoughts on modern Greek identity.[80] While Yannaras' thought has attracted international attention in recent years (dissertations, conferences, articles) from a theological and philosophical standpoint, the aspects of his work pertaining to his political philosophy corresponding to Greek Orthodox identity and its impact on Greek society have not yet been properly examined from a scholarly perspective.[81]

Theodoros I. Ziakas, a mathematician and writer as well as holder of a managerial position within the Greek State Treasury until recently, has composed (among other treatises) a trilogy of books on what he describes as *social ontology*. Beginning with the cultural background of the decomposition of the contemporary subject as a human being and citizen alike (*The Eclipse of the Subject: The Crisis of Modernity and Hellenic Tradition*[82]), the author proceeds to analyse the possibilities of transcending this decomposition (*Beyond the Individual*[83]) and examines the potential contribution of Greek (Orthodox) identity and tradition (*Becoming a Reflection of the Self*[84]). In the overall scheme of this undertaking, Ziakas attempts to ground the social and political event in the categories of ontology and to explain and analyse thereby the cultural frictions within Europe and the Western world. It is to be noted that while Yannaras has attracted some international attention, Zouraris and

[76] Christos Yannaras, *Ἡ Εὐρώπη Γεννήθηκε Ἀπὸ Τὸ Σχίσμα [The Great Schism Engendered Europe]* (Athens: Ikaros, 2015).
[77] Christos Yannaras, *Τὸ Πραγματικὸ Καὶ Τὸ Φαντασιῶδες Στὴν Πολιτικὴ Οἰκονομία [The Real and the Imaginary in Political Economy]* (Athens: Domos, 2006).
[78] Christos Yannaras, *Ἡ Ἀπανθρωπία Τοῦ Δικαιώματος [The Inhumanity of Rights]* (Athens: Domos, 2006).
[79] Christos Yannaras, *Πολιτιστικὴ Διπλωματία [Cultural Diplomacy]* (Athens: Ikaros, 2003).
[80] Christos Yannaras, *Ἡ Νεοελληνικὴ Ταυτότητα [On Modern Greek Identity]* (Athens: Grigoris, 1983).
[81] A first attempt at this is Daniel P. Payne's *The Revival of Political Hesychasm in Contemporary Orthodox Thought: The Political Hesychasm of John Romanides and Christos Yannaras* (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2011).
[82] Theodoros I. Ziakas, *Ἡ Ἔκλειψη Τοῦ Ὑποκειμένου. Ἡ Κρίση Τῆς Νεωτερικότητας Καὶ ἡ Ἑλληνικὴ Παράδοση [The Eclipse of the Subject: The Crisis of Modernity and Hellenic Tradition]* (Athens: Armos, 2001).
[83] Theodoros I. Ziakas, *Πέρα Ἀπὸ Τὸ Ἄτομο. Το Αἴνιγμα Τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Ταυτότητας: Γενικὴ Εἰσαγωγὴ [Beyond the Individual. The Enigma of Greek Identity: A General Introduction]* (Athens: Armos, 2003).
[84] Theodoros I. Ziakas, *Αὐτοείδωλον Ἐγενόμην. Τὸ Αἴνιγμα Τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Ταυτότητας: Εἰδικὴ Εἰσαγωγή [Becoming a Reflection of the Self. The Enigma of Hellenic Identity – a Focused Introduction]* (Athens: Armos, 2005). Recent books include Theodoros I. Ziakas, *Ὁ Σύγχρονος Μηδενισμός: Μικρὴ Ἀφήγηση Γιὰ Τὴ Μοῖρα Τῆς Ἐλευθερίας [Contemporary Nihilism: Narrating the Fate of Freedom]* (Athens: Armos, 2008); *Πατριδεγωφάγος: Ἡ Νόσος Τῆς Πόλεως [Homeland-Self-Eater: An Urban Disease]* (Athens: Armos, 2012). Before his main trilogy, Ziakas had published treatises on the relationship between the Left and the nation: *Ἐθνισμὸς Καὶ Ἀριστερά [Nationhood and the Left]* (Athens: Pelekanos, 1990); *Ἔθνος Καὶ Παράδοση [Nation and Tradition]* (Athens: Enallaktikes Ekdoseis, 1993); Theodoros I. Ziakas and Vangelis Korovinis, *Ἀναζητώντας Μιὰ Θεωρία Γιὰ Τὸ Ἔθνος [Towards a Theory of the Nation]* (Athens: Ekati, 1988).

Ziakas are virtually unknown internationally, especially to the Western European public, in spite of their impact in Greece.

Apart from focusing on Yannaras and Ziakas, I will also take into account the inversion of their different projects by Stelios Ramfos and the deviation therefrom by Kostas Zouraris.

Kostas Zouraris (b. 1940) is a political scientist with academic credentials and university teaching experience in France (Université de Vincennes à Saint-Denis/Paris VIII), a prolific author and since 2015 a member of the Hellenic Parliament as an MP of "Independent Greeks" (*Aneksartitoi Ellines*), the right-wing minor coalition partner; in November 2016, he assumed a ministerial position in the SYRIZA-ANEL coalition government as Under-secretary of Education.[85] A controversial public figure in Greece, his books *Inferior Godlikeness: Introduction to the Destitution of Politics*,[86] *Elements and Sprites Concerning the Greek Controversy*,[87] *Introduction to the Ascension of Politics*[88] and *Cultivating Refinement Through Rebellion: Coaching towards a Hyperanarchist Polity*[89] established him as an obscure public intellectual with frequent television appearances. Zouraris maintains that a continuity of Greek identity and political thought can be traced in texts written in Greek (i.e. citing language as their common denominator), spanning from Thucydides through Orthodox Byzantium to modern times—a continuity that is irrespective of biological descent, but dependent on cultural heritage. This Greek political thought is, in Zouraris' view, fundamentally antithetic to contemporary "Western" thought, political and otherwise. However, these remarks mainly concerns his main and productive years as an author and intellectual, as he has recently grown increasingly erratic in the meantime.

Born 1939 in Athens, Stelios Ramfos studied law and philosophy at the universities of Athens and Vincennes respectively. He then followed a short teaching career in philosophy at

[85] Zouraris resigned from this ministerial position on 14 January 2018 (remaining an MP for ANEL) following widespread outrage over his insults against Olympiacos F.C. In Greece, major football clubs perform a very tanglible oligarchical function, commanding immense political influence.
[86] Kostas Zouraris, *Θεοείδεια Παρακατιανή. Εἰσαγωγὴ Στὴν Ἀπορία Τῆς Πολιτικῆς [Inferior Godlikeness: Introduction to the Destitution of Politics]* (Athens: Exandas, 1993).
[87] Kostas Zouraris, *Γελᾶς Ἕλλὰς Ἀποφράς. Στοιχεῖα Καὶ Στοιχειὰ Στὴν Ρωμέηκη Ἀγχιβασίην [Elements and Sprites Concerning the Greek Controversy]* (Athens: Armos, 1999).
[88] Kostas Zouraris, *Εἰσαγωγὴ Στὴν Ἀπογείωση Τῆς Πολιτικῆς [Introduction to the Ascension of Politics]* (Athens: Armos, 2001).
[89] Kostas Zouraris, *Φιλοκαλοῦμεν Μετ' Ἀνταρσίας: Προπονητικὴ Γιὰ Τὸ Πολίτευμα Τῆς Ὑπεραναρχίας [Cultivating Refinement Through Rebellion: Coaching towards a Hyperanarchist Polity]* (Athens: Armos, 2010).

the University of Paris VIII (1969–1974), after which he returned to Athens and devoted himself to writing and lecturing on classical and modern philosophers, initially cultivating an interest in Orthodox heritage, patristics and the writings of the Desert Fathers alongside his mainly Neoplatonic philosophical interests. His visibility increased considerably during the Greek crisis, before which he is credited with exerting considerable influence on George A. Papandreou, who would become Greece's prime minister in 2009.[90] Especially during the first years of the crisis, Ramfos would often appear on Greek television expounding his views on the crisis and modernity, mainly defending the position that the Greeks' hardships are their own fault and responsibility, due to them not having been properly and fully Westernised and, thus, not having properly entered modernity, precisely due to their Orthodox and Byzantine heritage (this can be dubbed a meta-Diamandourean reading ascribing philosophical depth to the overdog schematisation of Greece). His books in English include *Yearning for the One: Chapters in the Inner Life of the Greeks*, *Like a Pelican in the Wilderness: Reflections on the Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, and *Fate and Ambiguity in Oedipus the King.*[91]

The reasons for naming the work of Ramfos and Zouraris an "inversion" in the former case and a "deviation" in the latter shall become apparent in the chapter studying their thought and presence. Examining the case studies of Yannaras and Ziakas while taking into account the "exceptions" of Ramfos and Zouraris should offer a representative account of the reading I am attempting here.

*

As *political theories*, Christos Yannaras' and Theodoros Ziakas' works are not conservative, looking back to a distant glory; instead of this, they can be approached as, in many ways, subversive. In fairing beyond the overdog methods for approaching modern Greece analytically, one cannot but ponder at the nature that is ascribed to Orthodox Christianity in the thought of Yannaras and Ziakas: their voice does not call upon us to return to a certain past, nor to conserve a certain given tradition. Rather than that, they discover elements in the Orthodox Church and its Byzantine past guiding them to formulate original

[90] Dimitris Mitropoulos, "Homo Cogitus: An Interview with Stelios Ramfos [in Greek]," *Status Magazine*, July 27, 2005, http://antifono.gr/portal/πρόσωπα/ράμφος-στέλιος/γραπτός-λόγος/1329--status-.html.
[91] Stelios Ramfos, *Yearning for the One: Chapters in the Inner Life of the Greeks*, trans. Norman Russell (Brookline, Mass: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2011); *Like a Pelican in the Wilderness: Reflections on the Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, trans. Norman Russell (Brookline, Mass.: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2000); *Fate and Ambiguity in Oedipus the King*, trans. Norman Russell (Boston: Somerset Hall Press, 2005).

social and political theories that are *subversive*, that describe a subversion and overthrow of the social and political reality, as well as the beliefs, established by the overdog culture and its order.[92] Consequently, the objects of my enquiry in this study are two *subversive Orthodoxies*, two case studies of social and political theories seeking to undermine the current state of affairs through elements traced in Orthodox ecclesiastical tradition and its Byzantine historical actualisation.

How should these be approached? Surely not on the premises of the assumptions inherent in the overdog dichotomy, as usually happens, but rather by examining the premises of *their own* assumptions. Three methodological tools can be implemented in order to arrive at a reading of these *subversive Orthodoxies* that would escape the schematizations of the overdogs:

(a) A postcolonial approach, since our subversive Orthodoxies question and reinvent the manner in which modern Greece is being viewed, challenging the narratives expounded by the overdogs.

(b) Critical geopolitics, since the geographical categories of "East" and, more importantly, "West" play a pivotal role in these systems and in the totality of the relevant discourse.

(c) A post-secular approach, since instead of pronouncing religion dead or moribund, these thinkers draw from it the means to describe a different future and see it as arriving from the future rather than from the past—a tendency that can be seen as parallel to a similar resurgence of religion in many parts of the globe, in spite of the prophesies of secularism theorists during the '80s.

With these methodological tools in hand and with the implicit implementation of their perspective, criteria, and premises throughout our reading of these subversive Orthodoxies, an alternative research agenda highlighting the role of religion and culture in contemporary Greek political theory can prove most fecund.

[92] Again, Diamandouros *et al.* see, in a markedly Orientalist way, the "underdog culture" as preserving a *status quo* and the "reform culture" as seeking to radically change it: i.e., precisely the opposite of what is described here.

Postcolonialism

Without being explicitly influenced by critical theory, Yannaras and Ziakas certainly speak of what would be termed as Western cultural imperialism; Yannaras' *Orthodoxy and the West*[93] is a prime example of his exposition of a centuries-long enforced theological and, as such, cultural dependence from "the West," i.e. a cultural colonisation.[94] While a *proper* colonisation in the manner of e.g. India is of course not attested, cultural imperialism is implicitly recognised as a reality shaping public discourse, the state, education and politics in Greece. "Cultural" *writ large*, in that Yannaras will often comment on how German laws were simply translated into Greek during the formation of the modern Greek state etc. Yannaras' and Ziakas' work consists in attempting to see their own culture and heritage in a Greek way, i.e. not through the eyes of "the West," which as they maintain was the predominant if not the only way to theoretically approach Greece. At the same time, Yannaras will declare that he is a Westerner, "a Western person"[95] trying to trace back what it is to be *other* than Western, trying to see his culture through de-colonialised eyes. Seeing that this is the case, seeing that both Yannaras and Ziakas are attempting to articulate such a perspective while attesting to a *hybrid* identity (since Yannaras "is a Westerner" and since they are working with Western analytical tools), their work can be approached as a postcolonial attempt at analysing Greece. In seeing it thusly, postcolonialism is not merely implemented as a tool in order to read non-overdog Greek thinkers, but postcolonialist methodology is itself furthered by being opened up in this new direction.

Postcolonialism observe how the subject is constituted by the dominant discourse but can also negotiate it in an original way, arriving at hybrid identities. Postcolonialism begins in 1978 with Edward Said's *Orientalism*.[96] In applying this book's foundational thesis to contemporary American conceptions of Islam, Mamdani will summarise Said's position as follows: "The first dogma is that the same Orientalist histories that portray 'the West' as

[93] Christos Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West: Hellenic Self-Identity in the Modern Age*, trans. Peter Chamberas and Norman Russell (Brookline, Mass.: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2006).
[94] Usually this colonisation is seen as starting in 1204 with the Fourth Crusade's sacking of Constantinople or in 1354 with the first translation of Aquinas' works in Greek.
[95] Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West*, ix.
[96] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003).

'rational, developed, humane [and] superior,' caricature 'the Orient' as 'aberrant, undeveloped [and] inferior.' Another dogma is that 'the Orient' lives according to set rules inscribed in sacred texts, not in response to the changing demands of life. The third dogma prescribes 'that the Orient is eternal, uniform, and incapable of defining itself; therefore it is assumed that a highly generalized and systematic vocabulary for describing the Orient from a Western standpoint is inevitable and scientifically 'objective'."[97] "Oriental" can be read here as anything that is "non-Western," and an Orientalist perspective is not only externally imposed, but also internalised by the very non-Western populations it looks down to as culturally inferior. In general, the object of postcolonialism's enquiry concerns the power and the dominance of Western modes of the production of knowledge and reasoning in the academic, political, and cultural spheres of decolonised countries.

However, it is important to note that postcolonialism has long ago disjuncted itself from analysing discourses that emerge *only* in the context of *stricto sensu* historical colonialism and its aftermath in decolonised countries: it now studies all identity formation and identity projection that is implicitly or explicitly imposed from the centre to the periphery by extension of its focus on the legacy of imperialism. An example of how essentially Orientalist logic still permeates most domains of Eurocentric thought irrespective of a colonialist context can be witnessed in Hamid Dabashi's recent book, *Can Non-Europeans Think?*[98] Consequently, speaking of a postcolonial perspective in Greece's case would be certainly tenable, if not ideal since postcolonialism has not truly focused on Greece's case yet.

For a comprehensive introduction to the field, the reader may consult Ania Loomba's *Colonialism/Postcolonialism,*[99] as well as Daniel Carey's and Lynn Festa's *The Postcolonial Enlightenment: Eighteenth-Century Colonialism and Postcolonial Theory*[100] and Gyan Prakash's *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements*[101] for a historically grounded overview. Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?"[102] is a classic text on

[97] Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, 32.
[98] Hamid Dabashi, *Can Non-Europeans Think?* (London: Zed Books, 2015).
[99] Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2005).
[100] Daniel Carey and Lynn Festa, eds., *The Postcolonial Enlightenment: Eighteenth-Century Colonialism and Postcolonial Theory* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).
[101] Gyan Prakash, ed., *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1994).
[102] Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

the notion of "subaltern." A quite early look at postcolonialism and globalisation is David Slater's "Postcolonial Questions for Global Times."[103]

Importantly for our endeavour, "postcolonial scholarship has only recently begun to make an impact in the discipline of international relations."[104] Tarak Barkawi's and Mark Laffey's article "The Postcolonial Moment in Security Studies"[105] criticizes the taken-for-granted Eurocentric character of security studies as it has developed since World War IIand counterproposes the development of a non-Eurocentric evolution of the field; Tariq Jazeel's "Postcolonialism: Orientalism and the Geographical Imagination"[106] connects postcolonial questions to geography, and as such should be read in conjunction with the bibliography on critical geopolitics that will follow. Other contributions include the collective volume by Sanjay Seth, *Postcolonial Theory and International Relations: A Critical Introduction*,[107] as well as the collective volumes *Power, Postcolonialism and International Relations*[108] and *Religion, Postcolonialism, and Globalization.*[109] Particularly timely for this task is Kyriakos Mikelis' "'Neocolonial Power Europe'? Postcolonial Thought and the Eurozone Crisis",[110] which studies current developments during the Greek crisis. With these in hand, the reader should acquire an adequate grounding in the first methodological tool I will implement in my reading of Greek subversive Orthodoxies.

Due to the countries that postcolonialism studies, Christianity is usually seen as an indispensable part of colonisation, the point being in looking *beyond* it. However, in Greece's case we encounter an inversion of this criterion, since (a) cultural imperialism here consists of imposing "Western" forms of Christianity (Roman Catholicism, forms of Protestantism or, more importantly, Westernised versions of Orthodoxy) upon the predominantly Eastern Orthodox cultural texture of its people, and (b) the imposition of the foreign, "Western"

[103] David Slater, "Postcolonial Questions for Global Times," *Review of International Political Economy* 5, no. 4 (1998): 647–78.
[104] John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens, eds., "Postcolonialism," in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, Epub edition (New York: OUP Oxford, 2010).
[105] Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, "The Postcolonial Moment in Security Studies," *Review of International Studies* 32, no. 2 (April 2006): 329–52, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210506007054.
[106] Tariq Jazeel, "Postcolonialism: Orientalism and the Geographical Imagination," *Geography* 97, no. 1 (February 21, 2012): 4–11.
[107] Sanjay Seth, ed., *Postcolonial Theory and International Relations: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2013).
[108] Chowdhry Geeta and Sheila Nair, eds., *Power, Postcolonialism and International Relations: Reading Race, Gender and Class* (London: Routledge, 2014).
[109] Jennifer Reid, ed., *Religion, Postcolonialism, and Globalization: A Sourcebook* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).
[110] Kyriakos Mikelis, "'Neocolonial Power Europe'? Postcolonial Thought and the Eurozone Crisis," *French Journal For Media Research* 5 (2016), http://frenchjournalformediaresearch.com/lodel/index.php?id=753.

notion and programme of secularisation on a population that would otherwise be religious. This remark should be borne in mind.

It is here, after these remarks on postcolonialism and prior to an introduction to critical geopolitics, that a crucial remark would be in order. Not all attempts at approaching subjects such as ours follow the same criteria, and this can be the case even when they are presented as such, i.e. as articulating the same postcolonialist, critically geopolitical perspective. The edited volume *Orthodox Constructions of the West*[111] appears as an attempt to approach Orthodox cultural and, consequently, implicitly political discourses precisely on the basis of examining "constructions of the West" (which alludes to critical geopolitics) and through a postcolonialist viewpoint. The book deals with Orthodox countries in general, not only with Greece, but many of the papers therein do deal with Greece and will prove most pertinent to my project and important for it, particularly the ones focusing on our modern times. However, the way in which the volume's editors, George E. Demacopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou, understand postcolonialism merits a closer look. In their introductory chapter entitled "Orthodox Naming of the Other: A Postcolonial Approach,"[112] the editors begin expounding their postcolonial perspective by stating that "the story of Western colonization of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries must be expanded to include the once-Ottoman-colonised eastern European countries; the Orthodox postcolonial story includes both the Ottomans and the Western European empires who would come to occupy most of the tri-continental area."[113]

However, in the section entitled "Postcolonial critique as a possible way forward" (p. 18 onwards), postcolonialism is given a rather uncommon twist. While "postcolonial critique has typically been employed to scrutinise and combat the residual effects of Western exploitation of the colonial subject, the 'subaltern,' in all of its cultural, political, and economic manifestations,"[114] what is identified as problematic is not the Orientalist outlook asserting what is Western as superior and what in this case is Orthodox as inferior (as, for example, is the case in Diamandouros' Orientalist narrative), but rather the very attempts at postcolonial outlooks, which are dubbed as "anti-Western." This being the case,

[111] George E. Demacopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou, eds., *Orthodox Constructions of the West* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013).
[112] George Demacopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou, "Orthodox Naming of the Other: A Postcolonial Approach," in *Orthodox Constructions of the West* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 1–22.
[113] Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou, 10–11.
[114] Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou, 18.

Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou will speak of "Christos Yannaras construct[ing] an anti-Westernism that diametrically opposes West and East in terms of ethos,"[115] and of "the hypocrisy in the modern Orthodox attempts to self-identify vis-à-vis the West,"[116] while "it is paramount for Orthodox scholars to take a series of critical steps forward in their examination of their tradition and experience".[117] Outlooks identified as "anti-Western" are shunned as nothing short of blasphemous, since the editors' "method, intention, and aim is to avoid an idolatrous faith based on negative projections of what is other than Orthodox. Such projections are typically about what we wish God to be rather than who God is."[118] Consequently, Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou label attempts at counterproposing a postcolonial reading to the dominant quasi-Orientalist narrative as anti-Western, idolatrous, hypocritical, in essence both toxic and obsolete; in doing so, they are labelling their own reading as postcolonial! What should be obvious to the reader is that such a project is in reality a *neo*-colonialist project rather than a *postcolon*ialist one.

Orthodox critiques of the West are dubbed by the authors and editors in question as "constructions of the West"; postcolonialism consists in striving to see a given culture with eyes other than the dominant Western ones. Attempts at demonising and dismissing this strife while deconstructing and dissolving its fruits can hardly be named a postcolonial approach. Stating that there is no such thing as Western cultural dominance, and that claiming there is would be hypocrisy, cannot be labelled as a postcolonial analysis. It is the very opposite of this: it is, verily, neo-colonialism, and in many ways an apt definition thereof.

We witness, then, a tendency at constructing Orientalism *by* Greeks *for* Greeks, a tendency that continuously feeds itself anew and which has, knowingly or unknowingly, Diamandouros' dichotomy and narrative or variations thereof as its implicit political/cultural reference. This forms a common *scholarly language*, a dominant discourse without which peer recognition could seem like a much more challenging feat. This could perhaps explain why scholars with important contributions in the study of contemporary Orthodoxy as a social phenomenon will succumb to the temptation of describing it, with an implicit Orientalist perspective, as *anti-Westernism.*[119] An indicative example of this tendency's problematic nature would be the following one: Orthodox scholars are labelled as "anti-

[115] Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou, 15.
[116] Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou, 19.
[117] Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou, 18.
[118] Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou, 21.
[119] See, for example, Vasilios N. Makrides and Dirk Uffelmann, "Studying Eastern Orthodox Anti-Westernism: The Need for a Comparative Research Agenda," in *Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Europe*, ed. Jonathan Sutton and Wil van den Bercken, Eastern Christian Studies 3 (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 87–120; Vasilios N. Makrides, "Orthodox Anti-Westernism Today: A Hindrance to European Integration?," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 9, no. 3 (2009): 209–24.

Western" precisely when and precisely because they contrast an "Orthodox" world to a "Western" world, considering them as fundamentally different due to differences ultimately pertaining to religion. The question is, when Samuel P. Huntington does exactly the same in his famous article[120] turned book[121] on the "Clash of Civilisations," is it still anti-Westernism?[122] Or is it anti-Westernism only if one is Greek, Orthodox, or in any case not "purely" Western? Whatever one's opinion of Huntington's theory is, this question is pertinent and must be addressed by scholars implementing the label of "anti-Westernism". A thorough postcolonial analysis of such discourses, i.e. of the very tendency of naming postcolonial analytical attempts in Orthodox countries "anti-Western," would be a seminal contribution to the progress of the field.

Critical geopolitics

The "West" in "anti-Westernism" brings us to the need to examine this *geographical* term critically. What is "the West"? Lewis and Wigen identify seven different versions of the "West," and many could argue for more:

> The portion of the earth denoted by the term *West* varies tremendously from author to author and from context to context (the area enclosed by a heavy black line is what has been called the West):
>
> (1) One extreme incarnation, where the West includes only England ("The Wogs begin at Calais,'" as an old racist, xenophobic refrain has it).
>
> (2) The standard minimal West, which is essentially Britain, France, the Low Countries, and Switzerland. As interpreted by Thomas Mann, this West is basically centred on France.
>
> (3) The historical West of medieval Christendom, circa 1250.
>
> (4) The West of the Cold War Atlantic alliance, or Europe and its "settler colonies" (with Japan often included as well).

[120] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs*, June 1, 1993, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/1993-06-01/clash-civilizations.
[121] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).
[122] However, on a critical stance towards Huntington's schematization, among many critical responses, see Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space* (London: Routledge, 1996), 246–49.

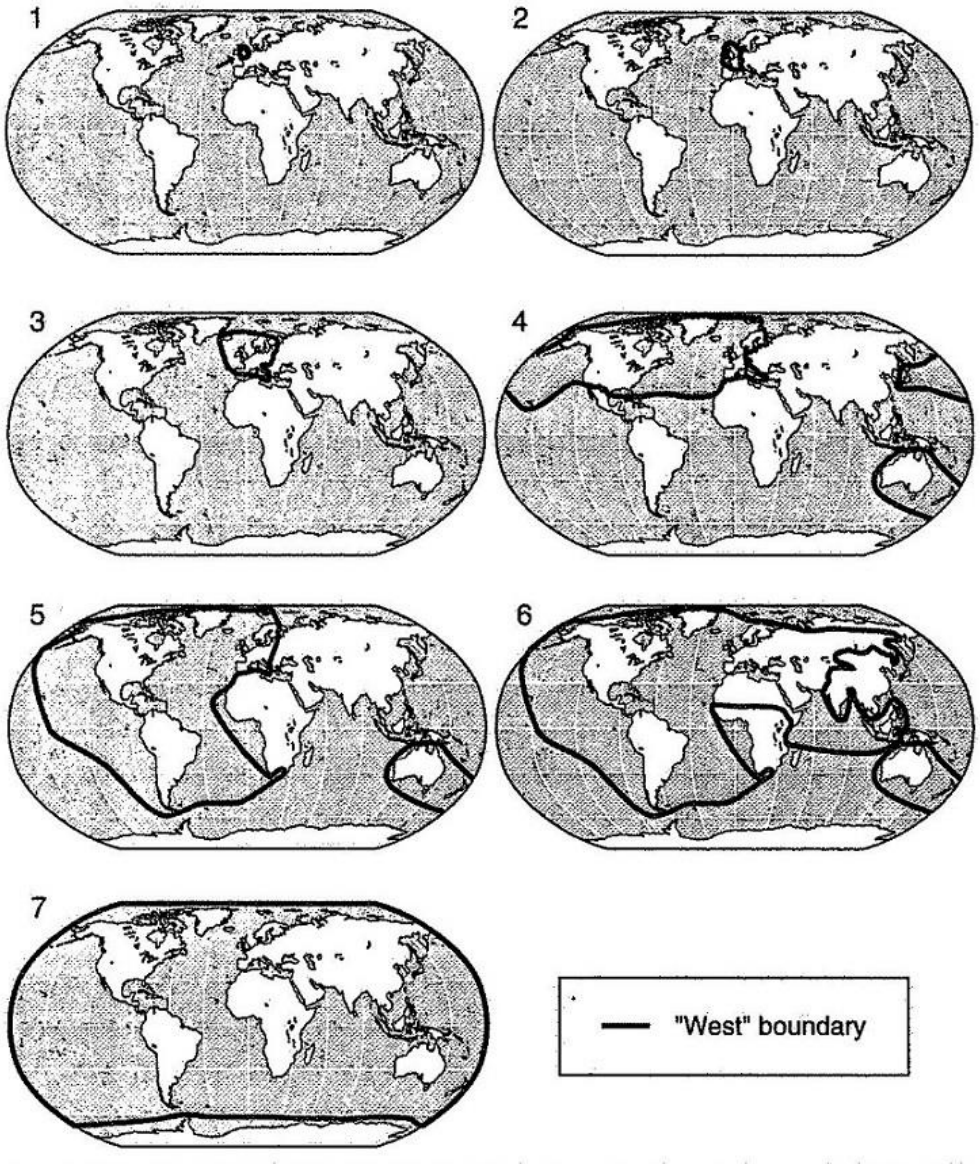
> (5) The greater "cultural" West. By the criteria of language, religion, and "high culture," Latin America and the areas of concentrated European settlement in South Africa are added to the West. The Philippines is sometimes included here as well. (Those more concerned with "race," on the other hand, are inclined to add only Argentina, Uruguay, and southern Brazil.)
>
> (6) The maximum West of the eco-radical and New Age spiritual imagination. In this formulation, all areas of Christian and Islamic heritage are included.
>
> (7) The global (future?) West of modernization. See, for instance, Arnold Toynbee's cartography showing the entire globe as under Western hegemony in one form or another, whether political, "associative" (India, Iran, Ethiopia), or "in the heterodox form of Communism" (Toynbee 1934-61, volume 2 [1959], pages 192-93).[123]

As we can see, "the West" is a quite unstable concept. (However and importantly for this study, as Lewis and Wigen also argue, "the original and persistent core of the West has always been Latin Christendom, derived ultimately from the Western Roman Empire—with (ancient) Greece included whenever the search for origins goes deeper," while "the most significant historical divide across Europe was that separating the Latin church's *Europa Occidens* from the Orthodox lands of the Byzantine and Russian spheres."[124] How does a geographical, spatial notion acquire cultural and political content and significance?

[123] Martin W. Lewis and Kären Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 51.
[124] Lewis and Wigen, 49.

Figure 2.1.

Boundaries of the "West"[125]



Critical geopolitics is a field within IR and political geography that strives to critically examine the way in which political value is ascribed to geographical notions and spatial notions in general—"East," "West," or even "Europe". As far as the Anglophone sphere is concerned, its founder is Gerard Toal, born 1962 (Gearóid Ó Tuathail in its proper Irish version), Professor of Government and International Affairs and at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia. In accepting his first peer reviewed

[125] Taken from Lewis and Wigen, 50.

journal article in *Political Geography* for publication in 1986[126], the editor Dr Peter Taylor described it as "critical geopolitics," and thus the term was coined.[127] Ó Tuathail elaborated his theory in his book *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space*,[128] on which the field is practically grounded, having first prepared the field with his article "Critical Geopolitics and Development Theory: Intensifying the Dialogue,"[129] among other publications. Apart from Ó Tuathail, scholars associated with the field are John Agnew, with his seminal article "The Territorial Trap: The Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory"[130] (cf. also his "Religion and Geopolitics"[131] and his recent re-evaluation of the territorial trap idea[132]), Simon Dalby[133] and others. The correlation between geography and warfare is further examined in Colin Flint's edited volume *Reconstructing Conflict: Integrating War and Post-War Geographies*,[134] and in general the field undergoes a phase in which it gains in scholarly popularity.

As far as analyses of Greece through the perspective of critical geopolitics are concerned, these are limited to Asteris Huliaras' and Charalambos Tsardanidis' article entitled "(Mis)understanding the Balkans: Greek Geopolitical Codes of the Post-Communist Era,"[135] which examines three geopolitical ideas of the '90s: the "muslim arc" theory, the image of the Balkans as a Greek natural hinterland, and the notion of the Balkans as an

[126] Gearóid Ó Tuathail, "The Language and Nature of the 'New' Geopolitics: The Case of US -El Salvador Relations," *Political Geography Quarterly* 5 (1986): 73–85.
[127] Gearóid Ó Tuathail, "CV," *Critical Geopolitics* (blog), January 19, 2011, https://toal.org/publications/.
[128] Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space*.
[129] Gearóid Ó Tuathail, "Critical Geopolitics and Development Theory: Intensifying the Dialogue," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 19, no. 2 (1994): 228–33, https://doi.org/10.2307/622757. See also Gearóid Ó Tuathail et al., "New Directions in Critical Geopolitics: An Introduction," *GeoJournal* 75, no. 4 (2010): 315–25.
[130] John Agnew, "The Territorial Trap: The Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory," *Review of International Political Economy* 1, no. 1 (March 1, 1994): 53–80, https://doi.org/10.1080/09692299408434268.
[131] John Agnew, "Religion and Geopolitics," *Geopolitics* 11, no. 2 (July 1, 2006): 183–91, https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040600598619.
[132] John Agnew, "Revisiting the Territorial Trap," *Nordia Geographical Publications* 44, no. 4 (2015): 43–48.
[133] Simon Dalby, Paul Routledge, and Gearóid Ó Tuathail, eds., *The Geopolitics Reader* (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, 2006).
[134] Colin Flint, *Reconstructing Conflict: Integrating War and Post-War Geographies*, ed. Scott Kirsch (Routledge, 2016). Cf. also Paul Reuber, "Conflict Studies and Critical Geopolitics: Theoretical Concepts and Recent Research in Political Geography," *GeoJournal* 50, no. 1 (2000): 37–43.
[135] Asteris Huliaras and Charalambos Tsardanidis, "(Mis)Understanding the Balkans: Greek Geopolitical Codes of the Post-Communist Era," *Geopolitics* 11, no. 3 (2006): 465–83, https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040600767909.

integral and undisputed part of Europe. Furthermore, Huliaras has contributed an introduction to critical geopolitics in Greek, entitled *Geographical Myths of World Politics.*[136]

However, critical geopolitics is not merely about analysing the ascription of political value to space and geography. Rooted in poststructuralism, it focused on discourses: a fundamental concept behind it is that intellectuals of statecraft construct ideas about places, which influence and reinforce political behaviours choices as well as how the public processes spatial notions politically.[137] A constitutive element of critical geopolitics is that it focuses on the political uses of geography *when adopted by political power* for its aims, not merely the vague public use of geographical concepts. The aim of critical geopolitics is the "deconstruction of the means by which political elites, in their exercise of power, describe and depict places[; t]he critical approach, therefore, seeks to demystify the geographical fantasies that all kinds of powers put forward".[138] Critical geopolitics deconstructs the public use of geography by power, the creation of top-down syntheses, and not the public use of geography in general. In examining case studies of critical geopolitics such as our discourses concerning "the West," the question arises: who sets the tone? Whence do geographical narratives come from? And, in the case of thinkers such as Yannaras and Ziakas, are they in a position to articulate a normative/statecraft discourse, making their readings the *object* of critical geopolitics? Or rather do they *refute* top-down geographical narratives, thus making them the *subject* of critical geopolitics? This question will guide my analytical engagement with the current project's case studies.

It should be noted that the perspective of critical geopolitics should be most timely in analyses concerning contemporary Greece and its legacy given the recent actuality of geographical terms, as the impact of such terms on public discourse implies their impact on public life. Recently, we witnessed a further intensification of the implementation of geographical terms as if they were political, cultural and historical, an intensification that has as its focal point two circles of events. On the one hand we had the rhetoric that was developed prior to the 5 July 2015 Greek referendum, as I mentioned in the first chapter. The "Yes" side and campaign had as its main slogan and self-determination the phrase "We remain in Europe": the spatial/geographical meaning of Europe, in which we should

[136] Asteris Huliaras, *Γεωγραφικοί Μύθοι Της Διεθνούς Πολιτικής [Geographical Myths of World Politics]* (Athens: Roes, 2004).
[137] Erin H. Fouberg, Catherine J. Nash, and Harm J. de Blij, *Human Geography: People, Place, and Culture*, 10th edition (New Jersey: Wiley, 2012), 535.
[138] Huliaras, *Γεωγραφικοί Μύθοι Της Διεθνούς Πολιτικής [Geographical Myths of World Politics]*, 109–10.

"remain," summarizes a number of historical, cultural and political attainments that, according to that campaign, lie far beyond the simple standard of prosperity. That side got 38.7% of the referendum vote and lost to the 61.3% of "No" votes, in spite of the fact that it was supported by the widest possible range of media, organisations and individuals with an active presence, influence, impact and power in the arena of public discourse, an aspect of chief interest in terms of critical geopolitics—despite the fact that the government was promoting the "No" campaign.

On the other hand, we witness the variety of public discourses that have emerged in Greece after the terrorist attacks which took place in Paris on 13 November 2015. As in other European countries, in Greece the concept of "the West" used as a cultural rather than a geographical term came to dominate, as its "principles and values" had to be "protected" against an enemy that expresses hostility to its very existence and threatens its integrity. Especially in Greece, the unfolding of this rhetoric took interesting turns, as in far-right areas of public discourse the need for "new Crusades" came up, in order for the "West" to confirm its "Westness." This should sound quite grotesque in the case of Greek public discourse in particular because, in contrast with Western European countries, the Crusades do not form a part of Greek historical memory and cultural identity (if anything, the opposite is the case, as *mutatis mutandis* "Greece" became their victim with the sacking of Constantinople in 1204).

Thus, the excessive use of the concept of the "West" in Greek public discourse on the occasion of the attacks, in conjunction with the more marginal but suggestive call for Crusades, can only be understood as a rhetorical attempt at a more comprehensive integration of Greece to the mantle of the "West," even though it marks the adoption of a historical past that is devoid of concrete historical content to Greeks, rather than an attempt to defend Greece's own historical, cultural, political and ultimately "geographical" identity. In other words, the Greek defence of the "West" against its enemy as this defence emerged in public discourse does not imply the protection of the collective self defined as "the West," but rather an attempt by Greece to be more fully adopted by the "West" following Greece's enthusiastic adoption of Western historical past.

It should be noted here that the concept of the "West" was not contrasted to that of the "East," "Asia" or any other geographical concept, but to "Islamic State," "Islam" and "terrorism." That is, what we dealing with here is the juxtaposition of an adopted geographical concept with a non-geographically defined opponent.

The above serves as evidence of the importance acquired in public discourse by the geographical concepts of "the West" and "Europe," which make the implementation of a perspective informed by critical geopolitics most timely.

Post-secularism

"The seminal social thinkers of the nineteenth century—Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud—all believed that religion would gradually fade in importance and cease to be significant with the advent of industrial society."[139] In the '50s, religion was practically pronounced dead-in-waiting: "Once the world was filled with the sacred—in thought, practice, and institutional form. After the Reformation and the Renaissance, the forces of modernization swept across the globe and secularization, a corollary historical process, loosened the dominance of the sacred. In due course, the sacred shall disappear altogether except, possibly, in the private realm."[140]

To make a long story short, history has shown precisely the opposite. None other than Peter L. Berger[141] himself, who during the '50s and '60s primarily advocated the secularisation thesis, recanted it just before the dawn of the new millennium: "The world today, with some exceptions [...] is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labeled 'secularisation theory' is essentially mistaken."[142] Harvey Cox would follow the same route of refuting himself.

Many different meanings have been ascribed to the term "post-secularism," with Jürgen Habermas and Charles Taylor being noted thinkers who have been associated to some of these meanings; there are scholars who use the term to refer to the period *after* secularisation (as if this indeed became a reality) rather than to the period after the disclosure

[139] Pippa Norris, *Sacred and Secular: Religion And Politics Worldwide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 3.
[140] C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 32–33.
[141] E.g. Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Anchor, 1990).
[142] Peter L. Berger, ed., *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Washington, D.C. : Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1999), 2.

of the secularisation thesis' sociological bankruptcy. In any case, in this study I will be referring to the *refutation* of the secularisation thesis that we are currently witnessing, as I outlined above. There is an abundance of studies on the subject, with most of them involving (a) the *public* character of religions and (b) the intersection of religion and politics: among them one can list José Casanova's *Public Religions in the Modern World*[143] and Erin K. Wilson's *After Secularism: Rethinking Religion in Global Politics,*[144] as well as volumes such as *Global Secularisms in a Post-Secular Age,*[145] *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics,*[146] *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World,*[147] *Rethinking Secularism,*[148] *Rethinking Secularization: Philosophy and the Prophecy of a Secular Age,*[149] *The Post-Secular in Question: Religion in Contemporary Society*[150] etc.—the homogeneity of the titles themselves is also to be noted.

The term is also associated with Christian theologies refuting the secularisation thesis and the delimitation in the private space themselves, such as the Anglo-Catholic current of *Radical Orthodoxy* (John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock etc.): see James K. A. Smith's *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy: Mapping a Post-Secular Theology*,[151] but also Britain's ResPublica think tank director Philip Blond's *Post-Secular Philosophy: Between Philosophy and Theology*.[152] A more philosophical overview is attempted in Jolyon Agar's *Post-Secularism, Realism and Utopia: Transcendence and Immanence from Hegel to Bloch*,[153] while implications for modern societies and ethics are also engaged with in Clive Hamilton's *The Freedom Paradox: Towards a Post-Secular Ethics*[154] and Christopher Hartney's

[143] José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).
[144] Erin K. Wilson, *After Secularism: Rethinking Religion in Global Politics* (Basingstoke: AIAA, 2011).
[145] Michael Rectenwald, Rochelle Almeida, and George Levine, *Global Secularisms in a Post-Secular Age* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2015).
[146] Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Samuel Shah, *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011).
[147] Hent de Vries and Lawrence E. Sullivan, eds., *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006).
[148] Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, eds., *Rethinking Secularism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
[149] Herbert De Vriese and Gary Gabor, eds., *Rethinking Secularization: Philosophy and the Prophecy of a Secular Age* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009).
[150] Philip Gorski et al., eds., *The Post-Secular in Question: Religion in Contemporary Society* (Brooklyn: NYU Press, 2012).
[151] James K. A. Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy: Mapping a Post-Secular Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2004).
[152] Philip Blond, ed., *Post-Secular Philosophy: Between Philosophy and Theology* (London: Routledge, 1998).
[153] Jolyon Agar, *Post-Secularism, Realism and Utopia: Transcendence and Immanence from Hegel to Bloch* (London: Routledge, 2013).
[154] Clive Hamilton, *The Freedom Paradox: Towards a Post-Secular Ethics* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2011).

Secularisation: New Historical Perspectives.[155] Of particular importance is the interrelation of the resurgence of religions and demographics, which is a strong indication of future developments given the comparative inflexibility of demographical realities on the short term: Eric Kaufmann's *Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth?: Demography and Politics in the Twenty-First Century*[156] is an example. Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*, an account of the transition from a pre-modern society in which it was virtually impossible to challenge belief in God to one in which belief in God is one of multiple and contested options, is usually cited as a work in post-secularism, in spite of the fact that it critically describes the road to secularism rather than its transcendence.[157]

In Greece, Dimitris Peponis, a research associate at the Institute of International Relations (IDIS), is virtually the only scholar that has articulated a post-secular theory that takes into account demographics.[158] Effie Fokas has also noted that the applicability of Peter L. Berger's refutation of the secularisation thesis in the case of Greek Orthodoxy,[159] while Demetrios Bathrellos has recently authored a book on post-secular challenges for Christians today.[160]

When Yannaras and Ziakas first began articulating political worldviews inextricably linked to religion and Orthodoxy in particular, religion itself as well as the role of religion in the public sphere was seen by sociologists as gradually diminishing in importance, leading eventually to a complete eclipse. Such thinkers were the last voices of a dying world, so to speak. Today, the opposite is the case: we witness a worldwide resurgence of religion and the refutation of secularisation theories, making thinkers such as Yannaras and Ziakas the early voices of a world that comes from the future. As such, I intend to examine my sources with this seminal global change in mind. Thus, I shall focus on post-secular theoretical output (in

[155] Christopher Hartney, *Secularisation: New Historical Perspectives* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014).
[156] Eric Kaufmann, *Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth?: Demography and Politics in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Profile Books, 2011).
[157] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007).
[158] Dimitris Peponis, "Εισαγωγή Στην Εποχή Της Μετα-Εκκοσμίκευσης [Introduction to the Postsecular Era]," *INSPOL / Hellenic Conservative Policy Institute* (blog), December 13, 2015, https://inspol.gr/2015/12/13/postsecular1/; Dimitris Peponis, "Πληθυσμιακές Εξελίξεις, «Δύση» Και Μετα-Εκκοσμίκευση [Population Changes, 'the West' and Postsecularism]," *INSPOL / Hellenic Conservative Policy Institute* (blog), January 25, 2016, https://inspol.gr/2016/01/25/postsecular2/.
[159] Effie Fokas, "Religion in the Greek Public Sphere: Debating Europe's Influence," in *Orthodox Constructions of the West*, ed. George Demacopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 181–92.
[160] Demetrios Bathrellos, *Οι Χριστιανοί Στους Χρόνους Της Μετα-Εκκοσμίκευσης [Christians in Post-Secular Times]* (Athens: En Plo, 2016).

philosophy, history, and political theory) rather than on the mere sociological assertion of the return of religion and desecularisation processes.

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In order to properly understand the intellectual and historical trajectory out of which our case studies emerge, an examination of Orthodox theology's development in twentieth-century Greece and beyond would be required; Yannaras played a pivotal role in these developments, while Ziakas, as well as Ramfos and Zouraris, were substantially influenced by them. The next chapter is dedicated to such an examination.

Chapter 3

The background:

Developments in Twentieth-century Greek Theology

Abstract

This chapter discusses the main developments, trends and figures in twentieth-century Orthodox theology in Greece as a precondition and entry point for my enquiry. Starting from the "Babylonian captivity" of Greek theology, the chapter examines the theological explosion of the '60s, its reception of the Russian diaspora and its focus on patristic testimony, ecclesial life, its new *ethos* and its newfound extroversion. After a survey of the main figures of these developments, the chapter centres on the theological contribution of Christos Yannaras and of the Metropolitan of Pergamon John D. Zizioulas, the two most prominent figures of the '60s generation. The contribution and prospects of the theological generation *after* the '60s is assessed, while the chapter concludes by exploring likely future developments in Greek Orthodox theology.

The figures and currents of ideas that form the main object of my enquiry have not emerged in a vacuum; the understanding of the developments in the field of theology in twentieth-century Greece are preconditions for approaching these currents and these ideas.

The dawn of the twentieth century finds Greek theology in a "Babylonian captivity" of its own, to recall Georges Florovsky's famous expression. Five centuries after the fall of the Byzantine Empire to the Ottomans, and thus the dissolution of the remnants of the predominantly Orthodox and Greek-speaking imperial entity, and less than one century after the formation of the Modern Greek state under heavy Bavarian military, legislative and spiritual influence, Greek academic theology oscillated between Roman Catholic scholasticism and Protestant morality, with Orthodoxy's difference from those traditions and denominations not forming an object of theological enquiry. Far from them being at the

centre of attention, neither its patristic legacy nor the distinctive features of the Orthodox Church were studied, developed or taught. This changed radically with the Greek "theology of the '60s," which marks the first truly substantial development of Greek-speaking Orthodox theology since the fourteenth century, i.e. since the time of Gregory Palamas and the Hesychast controversy, and with it a change of theological paradigm.[161]

As far as the twentieth century is concerned, two important figures can be discerned during the era prior to the theology of the '60s: Christos Androutsos and Panayiotis Trembelas. Both of them authored comprehensive *Dogmatics of the Orthodox Church*, which dominated academic classes on Dogmatics for many decades while at the same time betraying the "Babylonian captivity" of Greek academic theology to mainly Roman Catholic standards.

Christos Androutsos (1869–1935) was the first academic theologian in Greece to achieve a reputation extending well beyond the walls of the theological school of the University of Athens due to his erudition and diversity of interests. Next to his treatises on Dogmatics and Symbolics, he authored works on Stoicism and Plato, Nietzsche and Bergson, Freud and psychology. It is this erudition that established him as an authoritative figure in Greek theology and made his *Dogmatics*[162] the classic textbook on the subject in the decades to follow, on the basis of which scores of theology students and future members of the clergy would be educated on the basics of their faith. However, it is today commonly if not universally asserted that little in this *Dogmatics* is particularly Orthodox: from the absence of any reference to the essence–activities (ἐνέργειαι) distinction or to the patristic legacy as a whole to the legalistic, intellectualist and scholastic spirit of his exposition (for example, the Anselmian satisfaction theory of atonement), Androutsos' theological understanding seems to be formed entirely of Western treatises and textbooks. This reality notwithstanding, it is with him that we can for the first time speak of a systematic academic theology in Modern Greece: it is with him that the western *idea(l)* of academic theology becomes, for the first time, a *reality*—whatever the exact nature of this theology, at a time when the very question of Orthodox theology's distinctiveness had not even been formulated at an academic level.

[161] I am not including here prior important developments such as the "Kollyvades movement," as these did not create a body of written theology. On theological developments after the fall of Constantinople and up to the dawn of the twentieth century the reader may consult Christos Yannaras' *Orthodoxy and the West*, 3–197.
[162] Christos Androutsos, *Δογματικὴ Τῆς Ὀρθοδόξου Ἀνατολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας [Dogmatics of the Eastern Orthodox Church]* (Athens: Τυπογραφεῖον τοῦ «Κράτους», 1907).

Panayiotis Trembelas (1886–1977) was a co-founder (1907) and a major figure of the Zoë Brotherhood and its movement, which played a decisive role in shaping twentieth-century public Christianity in Greece: in many ways, the "theology of the '60s" was precisely a dynamic reaction to the version of Christianity represented by the Zoë Brotherhood and its impact. In contrast to the Leipzig-educated Androutsos and the ideal of graduate education on Europe (mostly Germany), Trembelas studied exclusively at the University of Athens' School of Theology. He soon developed into a staggeringly prolific writer, totalling more than two thousand publications during his lifetime. In 1939 he became Professor of Practical Theology at the institution of his studies, becoming active in virtually all fields of academic theology. For Trembelas (and the Zoë movement in general), the most important aspect of Christian truth and life is ethics and the impeccable moral conduct of the individual: everything, from the reality of the Church and the historical presence of Jesus Christ to the final goal of humanity and even deification, is subjected to this ultimate goal, the perfection of morality as an annulment of sin. In contrast to Androutsos' *Dogmatics*, Trembelas'[163] is punctuated by numerous patristic references, a novel practice in Greek academic theology which in his case did not result in escaping his markedly pietistic approach. Christos Yannaras will later comment that "Trembelas' *Dogmatics* is an interesting construct: a non-Orthodox treatise compiled from Orthodox materials. ... Appealing to the Fathers does not guarantee Orthodoxy, nor does appealing to Scripture. Selected patristic passages can be used to construct a scholastic dogmatics."[164] Later in his life, Trembelas will fiercely condemn apophaticism and the mystical elements of Orthodox tradition, a move which further undermined his posthumous theological fame.

Androutsos and Trembelas are both examples of profound erudition and productivity whose presence shaped Greek theology during the first half of the twentieth century and did much to establish it as an academic discipline to an unprecedented degree; however, the scholastic overtones of the former's work and the pietistic ones of the latter's effectively obscure any distinctively Orthodox trait in their work. And while the following cannot be said of Androutsos, Trembelas was still operating at a time when the paradigm-shifting Orthodox theological contribution of the Russian diaspora was starting to take shape, while Roman Catholic *ressourcement* theology was reassessing the fecundity of the Greek Church

[163] Panagiotis N. Trembelas, *Dogmatique de l'Église orthodoxe catholique*, 3 vols. (Paris: Éditions de Chevetogne, 1966).
[164] Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West*, 210. Pages 202–216 offer a critical overview of Androutsos' and Trembelas' contributions.

Fathers. The tension between domestic academic theology and these developments would, along with other important factors, erupt in what was later called "theology of the '60s."

The phrase "theology of the '60s" refers to a generation of theologians who emerged publicly for the first time during the '60s: this is not, however, to say that their main contributions themselves emerged during that decade. Most, though not all, of those thinkers reached a stage of maturity in their work in the '90s, while many of them are still active today—as is the case for example with the two most important thinkers of that generation, Metropolitan of Pergamon John D. Zizioulas and Professor Christos Yannaras. Given that this is the case, the phrase "theology of the '60s" is schematic, denoting a generation rather than a decade. Up to that decade, virtually the only extrovert and active version of Christianity in Greece was the pietistic one represented by the Christian Movement, the multitude of organizations clustered around the Zoë Brotherhood of celibate theologians. However, the internal conflicts and divisions within the Zoë Brotherhood itself, figures within the movement that oriented themselves towards a rediscovery of the Fathers of the Church (particularly the Cappadocians, Maximus the Confessor and Gregory Palamas) and of monasticism, the influx of new ideas from the Russian diaspora, and a multitude of other causes effected a profound change. "By 1960, academic theology and extra-ecclesiastical pietism were losing their authority. Theology was becoming reintegrated with ecclesiastical life. New themes were being discussed: the eucharistic rather than the institutional constitution of the Church, an experiential or apophatic approach to dogma, an existential rather than a legalistic understanding of sin."[165]

Dimitris Koutroubis[166] (1921–1983) acted as a catalyst within the Zoë movement, introducing new theologians to a different *stance* towards theology and the Church. With Fr John Romanides' (1927–2001) doctoral thesis on the ancestral sin[167] at the University of Athens, and the clash with Trembelas that followed,[168] a non-legalistic approach to theology was introduced for perhaps the first time in modern Greek theological discourse. Nikos

[165] Yannaras, 273.
[166] See Andrew Louth, *Modern Orthodox Thinkers: From the Philokalia to the Present* (London: SPCK, 2015), 251–54.
[167] John S. Romanides, *The Ancestral Sin: A Comparative Study of the Sin of Our Ancestors Adam and Eve According to the Paradigms and Doctrines of the First- and ... the Augustinian Formulation of Original Sin*, trans. George S. Gabriel (Ridgewood, NJ: Zephyr Publishing, 2002). Fr Georgios Metallinos, now emeritus professor of the University of Athens, can be named as Romanides' disciple.
[168] John S. Romanides and Panayiotis N. Trembelas, *Ἐγχειρίδιον : Ἀλληλογραφία π. Ι. Σ. Ρωμανίδου Καὶ Καθ. Π. Ν. Τρεμπέλα [Handbook: Correspondence between Fr. J. S. Romanides and Prof. P. N. Trembelas]*, ed. Georgios D. Metallinos (Athens: Armos, 2009).

Nissiotis (1926–1986), who later went on to become an emblematic professor of theology at the University of Athens, published a doctoral thesis on the relationship between Christianity and existentialism (in his case, Søren Kierkegaard, Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre), which stirred debate due to its fresh perspective.[169] Panayiotis Nellas[170] (1936–1986) founded the theological journal *Synaxi*, through which the new voices in theology were heard and which is still today the most important theological journal in Greece.

Monasticism in general and Athonite monasticism in particular experienced an unprecedented revival after the '60s; Vasileios Gontikakis,[171] who later became abbot of the monasteries of Stavronikita and Iviron on Mount Athos, was one of the first well-educated, cosmopolitan young people to "leave the world" in order to join the then-deteriorating Holy Mountain. His monastery, Stavronikita, would soon reach its capacity, unable to host more monks from the unprecedented influx of young people that was taking place. Furthermore, the School of Theology of the University of Thessaloniki (Panayiotis Christou,[172] who published editions of Palamas' works, Georgios Mantzaridis,[173] Nikos Matsoukas and Georgios Martzelos) soon became a centre for the study of the Fathers and St Gregory Palamas in particular.

I will focus on the theological contribution of arguably the two most prominent figures of this theological generation, Zizioulas and Yannaras.

Christos Yannaras (born 1935) studied theology at the University of Athens, clashed with the Zoë Brotherhood where he was a prominent member and proceeded to study philosophy in Bonn, Germany (1964–1967) and to undertake doctoral research in philosophy at Sorbonne University (Paris IV). A doctorate in theology from the University of

[169] Nikos Nissiotis, *Existentialism and Christian Faith [Ὑπαρξισμὸς Καὶ Χριστιανικὴ Πίστις]* (Athens: Minima, 1956).
[170] Panayiotis Nellas, *Deification in Christ: Orthodox Perspectives on the Nature of the Human Person* (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1987). See also Louth, *Modern Orthodox Thinkers*, 191–93. It is worth mentioned that in the in-between of the '60s generation and the preceding theological landscape, Savvas Agouridis, also from the University of Athens, played an important role in the rekindling of interest in Biblical studies.
[171] Vasileios of Stavronikita Gontikakis, *Hymn of Entry: Liturgy and Life in the Orthodox Church*, no. 1 (Crestwood, N.Y: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984). See also Louth, *Modern Orthodox Thinkers*, 211–13.
[172] Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West*, 278–79.
[173] Georgios I. Mantzaridis, *The Deification of Man: St. Gregory Palamas and the Orthodox Tradition*, trans. Liadain Sherrard (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997). See Louth, *Modern Orthodox Thinkers*, 189–91.

Thessaloniki would follow. His visiting professorships in philosophy in Paris, Geneva, Lausanne and Crete would be followed by a professorship in philosophy and cultural diplomacy at the Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences in Athens, which sparked an intense public debate on the relationship of philosophy and theology (1982). No other thinker had such a profound influence on the development of modern Greek theology.

The rediscovery of the patristic legacy, the engagement with the thought of the Russian diaspora (particularly Vladimir Lossky), the encounter with the corporeality of tradition and ecclesial life as well as the challenges put forth by the philosophical thought of Martin Heidegger and, later, Ludwig Wittgenstein are the elements that initially sparked Christos Yannaras' theological originality. Having already played an important role in the gradual turn from pietism and scholasticism to the new era of Orthodox theology in Greece through the publication of the journal *Synoro* (1964–67), Yannaras will proceed to receive theological stimuli such as Lossky's underscoring of the importance of personhood and to articulate an original synthesis, which has yet to be systematically engaged with to an adequate degree.[174]

Starting in 1967 with *The Theology of the Absence and Unknowability of God*,[175] Yannaras understands apophaticism as something much more fundamental than the *via negativa* or the limitation of the unknowability of God's substance. For Yannaras, apophaticism is a comprehensive epistemological principle, it is the *stance* towards knowledge that "refuses to exhaust the content of knowledge in its formulation, which refuses to exhaust the reality of things signified in the logic of the signifiers. It correspondingly refuses to verify knowledge merely by controlling the correct representational logic of the signifiers."[176] Formulations of truth can only refer to the signified truth or knowledge, not exhaust it. By coming to know the formulations that *refer* to truth, one does not *know* truth . Yannaras understands apophaticism as being the primary epistemological stance implicitly permeating the whole of Greek philosophical and theological tradition, classical and Christian alike. By extension, this brings about a *communal* epistemology, as knowledge must be shared to be verified and validated, it cannot remain ossified in impersonal formulations and

[174] Having first been translated in French, Yannaras' books started becoming available in English mostly after the 2000's, usually translated by the indefatigable Norman Russell. Consequently, an English *reception* of his thought (and not merely an overview) is still pending, despite Yannaras' enormous influence on Greek theology.
[175] Translated in English as *On the Absence and Unknowability of God: Heidegger and the Areopagite*, ed. Andrew Louth, trans. Haralambos Ventis (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2005).
[176] Christos Yannaras, *Postmodern Metaphysics*, trans. Norman Russell (Brookline, Mass.: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2004), 84.

still be true: "apophaticism means also the symbolic character of every epistemic expression: its role in bringing together atomic (i.e. individual) experiences and embracing them within a common semantic boundary marker, a process which allows epistemic experience to be shared and once shared to be verified."[177] (With this, and armed with Wittgenstein's insights, Yannaras will build an ecclesial philosophy of language in order to encounter the problem of death.[178]) This epistemological assertion full of implications and consequences permeates the totality of Yannaras' work, and leads us to the second pillar of his thought: personhood, *eros* and *shesis*, relation. "No intellectual definition (whether conceptual or verbal) can ever exhaust the knowledge afforded to us by the immediacy of relationship, consequently the logical definition of essence (as the common principle of examples of the same form) follows and does not precede the otherness of each existent, which I know in immediate relationship with it. Thus, if God exists, he is primarily known as a person (hypostasis) in the immediacy of relationship, and not primarily as an essence with its conceptual definition."[179]

To *know* is to be *in relation with*. And Yannaras finds this reality entrenched in the very word for person in Greek, *prosopon*:

> By the word *prosopon* ("person") we define a referential reality. The referential character of the term is revealed fundamentally by its primitive use, that is, by its grammatical construction and etymology. The proposition *pros* ("towards") together with a noun *ops* (*opos* in the genitive), which means "eye," "face," "countenance," form the composite word *pros-opon*: I have my face turned towards someone or something; I am opposite someone or something. The word thus functioned initially as a term indicating an immediate reference, a relationship. *Prosopon*, or person, is defined as reference and relation and itself defines a difference and relation. The word's primordial semantic content does not allow us to interpret personhood simply as individuality outside the field of relation.[180]

From this understanding of *person*, human and divine, as the exact opposite of what "individual" means, Yannaras will form an ontology of the person, a *prosopo-centric*[181] ontology. The fundamental categories of *hypostasis* as the particular existent and of substance

[177] Christos Yannaras, *Relational Ontology*, trans. Norman Russell (Brookline, Mass: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2011), 9.
[178] Christos Yannaras, *Τὸ Ρητὸ Καὶ Τὸ Ἄρρητο: Τὰ Γλωσσικὰ Ὅρια Ρεαλισμοῦ Τῆς Μεταφυσικῆς [The Effable and the Infeffable: The Linguistic Limits of Metaphysics' Realism* (Athens: Ikaros, 1999).
[179] Yannaras, *On the absence and unknowability of God*, 29.
[180] *Person and Eros*, trans. Norman Russell (Brookline, Mass.: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2007), 5.
[181] I am employing this word to distinguish Yannaras' ontology from the varieties of personalism.

(*ousia*) as the homogeneity of the particulars will prove to be the basic tools for this ontology. The Church's testimony concerning God's reality, that He is a trinity of *persons*, also dictates the anthropology of the beings that have been made in His image: "The fact that the identification of the terms *person* and *hypostasis* was originally used to logically clarify meta-physical references of the ecclesial experience does not restrict this identification from being used in the field of anthropology. However, a prerequisite for that would be to retain the communed experience of relations as the criterion of the formulations in language."[182] For Yannaras, *Imago Dei* is located in *personhood*—and personhood means absolute otherness, as every human hypostasis is unique, dissimilar and unrepeatable; an otherness that is manifested and disclosed in relation to and communion with other othernesses. Personal otherness makes existential freedom possible, as it marks the capability and inclination to go beyond the predeterminations of nature and instinct, which belongs to the *genus*, not to the person. The very constitution of each human being is personal and relational rather than individualistic, as it emerges through God's call from non-being into being, though God's invitation to reality, as a dialogical existential event. Relation means in this case *self-transcendence*, and this self-transcendence is designated with the word *eros*, the word that the Areopagite writings prefer to *agape* (love). Yannaras will evolve this not only into a comprehensive theological proposal, but also into a contribution to the field of philosophy, a relational ontology.[183] This relational ontology cannot but be a *critical* ontology due to its apophatic precondition: propositions of a critical ontology are never finite, granted, or "closed": they are always subject to communal verification or refutation, to the communal criterion of truth, due to the fact that there is no way of individually "securing the truth" of said propositions.[184]

Alongside substance and hypostasis, the *activities* (ἐνέργειες) play a major role in Yannaras' philosophy and theology. However, Yannaras will not focus on God's uncreated activities, but on activities as an ontological category in general. For him, the activities are an indispensable part of ontology guaranteeing its pragmatism, for it is through the activities that the natural homogeneity of the substance is turned into the unique particularity of the hypostasis. The activities are common within a certain substance: for example, smiling/to

[182] Christos Yannaras, *Six Philosophical Paintings [Ἕξι Φιλοσοφικὲς Ζωγραφιές]* (Athens: Ikaros, 2011), 104, my translation.
[183] Yannaras, *Relational Ontology*.
[184] Christos Yannaras, *Προτάσεις Κριτικῆς Ὀντολογίας [Propositions for a Critical Ontology]* (Athens: Domos, 1985).

smile, or laughing/ laugh, is an activity of the human substance and nature, and it is to be found in every human being, in every particular manifestation of "humanity." However, each human person manifests smiling or laughing, i.e. smiles and laughs, in a completely unique way, in a way that actualizes her substance as a hypostasis, in a way that actualizes complete otherness. The activities, being distinct from both the substance itself and the hypostasis itself, *belong to the substance but actualize the hypostasis*: they are hypostatically manifested activities of the substance.[185] Strictly speaking, and from an implicit phenomenological perspective, we encounter neither hypostases nor substances, but only *activities*: what we encounter is the mode in which a person uniquely actualizes the common activities of her substance. This, in turn, elevates the importance of the notion of *mode* (tropos), of *how* something is realized—a notion that Yannaras picks up from Maximus the Confessor's *logos-tropos* distinction, expanding it.[186] In this philosophical and theological vocabulary, the activities of God's uncreated substance are, by definition, uncreated.

The *difference* of the uncreated God to creation marks a difference in modes of existence (*tropoi yparxeos*). The mode of existence of the uncreated is the *personal* mode of existence: God is consisted as existential referentiality, as self-transcendence, since the "Father" does not make sense outside of His ontological reference to his "Son," the Spirit is "the Spirit of the Father," etc.: "God is love" (1 John 4:8), and Yannaras sees in this the only *definition* of God we have: God is love, i.e. self-transcendental referentiality, and life—His mode of existence is pure personhood. On the other hand, createdness lacks its source and cause, as this (i.e. God) lies outside of itself: without it, it has no life. Conceiving creation *in itself*, without its life-giving relationship with its Creator, is knowing it as death, as deterioration, as corruption.

The human person actualizes life as a continuous decision between answering God's call affirmatively and attempting to live by one's self, i.e. between existing *as a person* or *as an individual.* Between existing in the mode of love, in the mode of the uncreated that is life, or in the mode of createdness isolated of its source, in the mode of individuality, in the mode

[185] See Yannaras, 4.21, 4.211, 4.212, 4.213. I have elaborated on this in Sotiris Mitralexis, "Relation, Activity and Otherness in Christos Yannaras' Propositions for a Critical Ontology," in *Polis, Ontology, Ecclesial Event: Engaging with Christos Yannaras' Thought*, ed. Sotiris Mitralexis (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2018), 120–32. On a general introduction to Yannaras, see my "Person, Eros, Critical Ontology: An Attempt to Recapitulate Christos Yannaras' Philosophy," *Sobornost* 34, no. 1 (2012): 33–40.

[186] For a detailed account of Yannaras' notion of *tropos* and his appropriation of the Maximian *tropos*, see Dionysios Skliris, "The Philosophy of Mode (Tropos) in the Thought of Christos Yannaras," in *Christos Yannaras: Philosophy, Theology, Culture*, ed. Andreas Andreopoulos and Demetrios Harper (London: Routledge, 2018), 26–40.

of death. This transforms *ethics*: changes in *behaviour*, actions and thoughts alike, cannot save one from death, for that person would still be subject to the limitations of createdness, of mortal human nature. In this context, morality cannot emerge from authority or convention, it cannot be a codified moral law dictating behaviour, for a person merely conforming to this law is still destined to die and perish. Morality now emerges from *ontology*, and concerns the mode of existence, i.e. whether one's life is constituted *personally*, reflecting the Trinitarian prototype, or as an individual, incarnating the mode of death. The publication of Yannaras' 1970 book *The Freedom of Morality*[187] was in many ways revolutionary, as it circulated in a society where following a set moral code was synonymous with Christianity, more or less exhausting the content of what it is to lead a Christian life.

Christ's incarnation renovates existence, as now for the first time uncreated life and created nature have been hypostasized in one person. This grants humanity with the ultimate capability of actualizing its created substance and nature through uncreated, divine activities: this grants humanity the capability to become *deified*, to exist in the mode of the uncreated. The *locus* for this is Christ's body, the Church, where the body of the faithful employ the material basis for life, food,[188] *not* for biological needs and subsistence, but to actualize *communion*, to iconize the Trinitarian mode of existence—and to receive creation, the world, as a gift, referring it back to the Creator in thanksgiving. In this, the body of the faithful verily becomes Christ's own body: the faithful incorporate His body and are *incorporated* in it. The Eucharist manifests and discloses the Church, the *ecclesial event*: an event in particular space and time, not a theory or an ideological construct. And participating in the ecclesial event constitutes a continuous *ascesis* at realising life in the mode of existence of the uncreated God, in the mode of existence of the Trinity.

Yannaras will underscore the fundamental difference of this community of *faith*, i.e. of trust to the constitutive Other of our very existence, from *religion*, from the biological need to believe in a God which is turned into a set of ideological "beliefs": he will distinguish *ecclesia* from religion in an antithetical manner, declaring that participating in the ecclesial

[187] Christos Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality*, trans. Elizabeth Briere (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984). John Zizioulas will masterfully follow this line of thought in his "Ontology and Ethics," *Sabornost* 6 (2012): 1–14, https://doi.org/10.5937/sabornost6-3109.
[188] Bread and wine in particular which, as Yannaras notes, recapitulate the whole cycle of the year in Mediterranean agrarian societies, where these were central elements of work, food and life.

event means being against religion.[189] In the same spirit, Yannaras will elevate the question whether salvation is a *communal* event of an *individual* event, whether salvation is achieved individually or communally, as the central criterion of ecclesial genuineness today.

It is impossible to correctly divide Yannaras' works into *philosophical* and *theological* works (a distinction in which he does not believe): on the one hand, he has published monographs on the history of philosophy,[190] ontology,[191] epistemology,[192] philosophy of language,[193] ethics,[194] political economy,[195] the relation between contemporary physics and philosophy,[196] hermeneutic approaches to the historical background of the clash of civilizations,[197] etc. On the other hand, the thread connecting the totality of his work is clearly visible, and it is founded on his understanding of personhood, on apophaticism and its implications for knowledge and language, on the ontological notion of *mode* (tropos), on the created-uncreated distinction and its transcendence in Christ, and on the ecclesial event.

Furthermore, a central aspect of his vision is the enquiry into the differences between Western civilisation and the Greek-speaking civilisation in which the Church, undivided at first but Orthodox later on, initially blossomed. This is not mere *Kulturkritik*, as it evolves into a comprehensive contradistinction of *modes*: not of secondary differences, but on diverging *stances* towards being, knowledge, history, and the Church. It is of utmost importance, however, to clarify that this contradistinction is *internal* rather than *external*: it consists in the *self-criticism* of a Western thinker in a culturally wholly Western world, not in the comparison of today's West to today's Orthodox Church or, much less, to today's Greece. Yannaras laments a past, non-Western paradigm and approach to reality, the *criteria* of which are long gone in East and West alike. In his words:

> Let me therefore make one thing absolutely clear. The critique of western theology and tradition which I offer in this book does not contrast "Western" with something "right" which as an Orthodox I use to oppose something "wrong" outside myself. I

[189] Christos Yannaras, *Against Religion: The Alienation of the Ecclesial Event*, trans. Norman Russell (Brookline, Mass.: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2013).
[190] *The Schism in Philosophy* (Brookline, Mass.: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2015) translation of his Σχεδίασμα Εἰσαγωγῆς στὴ Φιλοσοφία [Introductory Sketch to Philosophy].
[191] *Person and Eros*; *Relational Ontology*; *Propositions for a Critical Ontology*.
[192] *On the absence and unknowability of God*.
[193] *Τὸ Ρητὸ Καὶ Τὸ Ἄρρητο: Τὰ Γλωσσικὰ Ὅρια Ρεαλισμοῦ Τῆς Μεταφυσικῆς [The Effable and the Infeffable: The Linguistic Limits of Metaphysics' Realism*.
[194] *The Freedom of Morality*.
[195] *The Real and the Imaginary in Political Economy*.
[196] *Postmodern Metaphysics*.
[197] *The Great Schism Engendered Europe*.

> am not attacking an external Western adversary. As a modern Greek, I myself somebody both the thirst for what is "right" and the reality of what is "wrong": a contradictory and alienated survival of ecclesiastical Orthodoxy in a society radically and unhappily Westernised. My critical stance towards the West is self-criticism; it refers to my own wholly Western mode of life. I am a Western person searching for answers to the problems tormenting Western people today.[198]

This is a hermeneutical key. Without this, Yannaras makes no sense; an approach of his stance as "Anti-Western" would make his texts woefully impenetrable and his contribution out of the reader's reach.

Yannaras might have been most influential in Greek theology, but a different, though most cognate, thinker of the "theology of the '60s" would become better known and unprecedently influential on an international level. Due to his academic career in the United Kingdom and his involvement in the ecumenical movement as a representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, John Zizioulas (born 1931) is the best known representative of the '60s generation of Greek theology abroad, with considerable influence on international Christian theology. A student of Georges Florovsky at Harvard, whose neo-patristic synthesis he furthers, Zizioulas held academic posts in systematic theology at the University of Edinburgh, the University of Glasgow, King's College London and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, later becoming chairman of the Academy of Athens. A layman of the Orthodox Church up to that point, in 1986 he was directly elected titular metropolitan of Pergamon by the *athroon* procedure. It is an interesting historical phenomenon in itself that, while he has in many ways traversed a quite different path in life (without, for example, an involvement in the pietistic Christian movement in Greece), his and Christos Yannaras' theology largely run in the same vein, with an emphasis on personhood, ontology, otherness and St Maximus the Confessor as well as a eucharistic understanding of the Church, thus giving internal coherence to the theology of the '60s and demonstrating the continuity of the implications of its premises. Were one to attempt to identify their *differences* within that otherwise unified, single theology, one would comment on Zizioulas' stress on eschatology, the primacy of the Father and ecclesiology rather than Yannaras' stress on apophaticism, the importance of activities and philosophical ontology, as well as Yannaras' "bottom-up" theology, starting with humanity and the world in order to arrive at the Trinity, versus

[198] *Orthodoxy and the West*, viii–ix.

Zizioulas' "top-down" theology, beginning with the examination of the Trinity in order to explain the world.

His first book, written as a doctoral dissertation in 1965 for the University of Athens' Faculty of Theology and today considered a classic study in ecclesiology, studies the relationship of the unity of the Church in the bishop and the Eucharist during the first three centuries of the Church's life[199] and introduces Zizioulas' reception and appropriation of eucharistic ecclesiology. Following Yannaras' doctoral dissertation, *The Ontological Content of the Theological Notion of Personhood* (1970),[200] which then developed into *Person and Eros*, Zizioulas develops a systematic theology of personhood and relationship between substance and hypostasis integrally connected to all domains of theology: ecclesiology, Christology, Pneumatology, ethics, anthropology, but also domains such as ecology. This turn is inaugurated with the text "From the Mask to Person" (1977)[201] and blossoms in the books *Being as Communion*,[202] *Communion and Otherness*[203] and *The Eucharistic Communion and the World.*[204]

It is often said that the Christian West chooses to focus on God as one substance, whereas the Christian East chooses to focus on God as three persons/hypostases. Metropolitan John demonstrates that this is not a matter of perspective, but a crucial matter of ontology: *God is God, because God is the Father*—or else we return to a mere appropriation of ancient Greek ontology. The persons of God are neither attributes of the Godhead nor merely the subjects of intra-Trinitarian relations, but actual and absolute othernesses. The being of God is identified with the person, and person means existential referentiality:

> Among the Greek Fathers the unity of God, the one God, and the ontological "principle" or "cause" of the being and life of God does not consist in the one substance of God, but in the hypostasis, that is, the person of the Father. The one God is not the one substance but the Father, who is the "cause" both of the

[199] John D. Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*, trans. Elizabeth Theokritoff (Brookline, Mass.: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001).
[200] An early review by Rowan Williams: "The Theology of Personhood: A Study of the Thought of Christos Yannaras," *Sobornost* 6 (1972): 415–430.
[201] Published in English as "Personhood and Being," in *Being as Communion. Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985), 27–65.
[202] *Being as Communion. Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985).
[203] *Communion and Otherness. Further Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: T & T Clark, 2006).
[204] *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, ed. Luke Ben Tallon (London: T&T Clark, 2011). A book on his university lectures in Dogmatics has also been published: *Lectures in Christian Dogmatics*, ed. Douglas H. Knight (London: T&T Clark, 2009).

> generation of the Son and of the procession of the Spirit. Consequently, the ontological "principle" of God is traced back, once again, to the person. Thus when we say that God "is," we do not bind the personal freedom of God—the being of God is not an ontological "necessity" or a simple "reality" for God—but we ascribe the being of God to His personal freedom. In a more analytical way this means that God, as Father and not as substance, perpetually confirms through "being" His *free* will to exist. And it is precisely His trinitarian existence that constitutes this confirmation: the Father out of love—that is, freely—begets the Son and brings forth the Spirit. If God exists, He exists because the Father exists, that is, He who out of love freely begets the Son and brings forth the Spirit. Thus God as person—as the hypostasis of the Father—makes the one divine substance to be that which it is: the one God. This point is absolutely crucial. For it is precisely with this point that the new philosophical position of the Cappadocian Fathers, and of St Basil in particular, is directly connected.[205]

This absolute otherness of the divine persons, together with the fundamental importance of *creatio ex nihilo* and the gulf between created and uncreated being, dictates a number of implications for our world. The contingency of created existence discloses it as a gift, while the Incarnation and hypostasis of Christ (and the uncreated *logoi* of creatures, a Maximian theme) offers the possibility of bridging the ontological gulf between creation and God. On the level of theological anthropology, a perfect balance of otherness and communion is disclosed in the reality of the person: "the person is otherness in communion and communion in otherness".[206] Personhood is an ontological identity (not a psychological or behavioural one, not a secondary one but the person's very being) that emerges through relationship, i.e. through communion, while otherness emerges as a personal mode of existence, as identity as otherness can only be manifested within the relationship and communion with other othernesses. This means that personhood constitutes freedom, i.e. the freedom of being *other*, beyond the limitations of one's nature and not merely different in qualities: "this freedom is not freedom *from* the other but freedom *for* the other. Freedom thus becomes identical with love."[207]

It is important to note that the understanding of personhood, Trinitarian and anthropological alike, by both Zizioulas and Yannaras do not run parallel to personalistic currents in Roman Catholic theology, existentialism etc.; it would be erroneous to label such

[205] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion. Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 40–41.
[206] Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness. Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 9.
[207] Zizioulas, 9.

ideas as "Orthodox personalism,"[208] since what we encounter here is a radical existential relationality and referentiality rather than a focus on the individual: for Zizioulas and Yannaras, the individual as such *does not exist*—as a person, at least.

This theological outlook of Zizioulas defines his eucharistic ecclesiology, which sees the Church, the body of Christ, as being realized through the believers-members of that body coming together in the Divine Liturgy to celebrate the Eucharist presided by the local bishop, who guarantees the unity of the whole ecclesiological architecture, local and universal alike. The *balance* of different aspects of theology is important for Zizioulas, particularly the balance between Christology, Pneumatology ecclesiology, to which end the Metropolitan of Pergamon employs H. Wheeler Robinson's notion of corporate personality.[209]

While Yannaras maintains an apophatic stance concerning the details of the *eschata*, eschatology forms a dominant aspect in the Metropolitan of Pergamon's theology. What we encounter within creation is not *true* being, for true being in its wholeness will only be disclosed in the *eschata*. The truth of beings is located neither in the present nor in some distant past, but is yet to arrive and to be realised. Consequently, what we have here is an eschatological ontology,[210] an ontology that arrives from the future. This incompleteness within history and this march of history and of the ecclesial community towards the *eschata* elevates the foretaste of the Kingdom that can be achieved in the Church through the Eucharist to our only hope of encountering truth (i.e., the eschatological Christ) in the present age.

Metropolitan John's involvement in the ecumenical dialogue is a vital part of his contribution, in that his theology has thus been developed in dialogue with the theology of other Christian denominations, turning it into a continuous *ascesis* in sharpening the criterion of what is Orthodox and what is not, while his visibility through the ecumenical movement granted him with an international impact unprecedented in modern Greek theology.

[208] On Zizioulas' refutation of personalism and against his designation as a personalist, see John D. Zizioulas, *The One and the Many. Studies on God, Man, the Church and the World Today* (Los Angeles: Sebastian Press, 2010), 19–24.
[209] E.g., Zizioulas, *Being as Communion. Studies in Personhood and the Church*, 145–49.
[210] John D. Zizioulas, *Remembering the Future: An Eschatological Ontology* (London: T&T Clark, 2018).

An assessment of the theological landscape *after* the paradigm shift of the '60s might still be premature; however, a short sketch thereof, subjective as this might be, would be in order. My criterion for singling out the thinkers I will briefly present here is not merely their theological or scholarly merit in general, but more specifically the extent to which they open new ways for Orthodox theology, rearticulating the patristic ecclesial vision in a contemporary context; this means that I have to leave out, for example, excellent historians of theology or *stricto sensu* patristic scholars.

Not everything is filled with light—particularly due to the shadow that the towering figures of modern Greek theology cast on the next generation. There are three great temptations we encounter in much of the next generation of Greek theology after its recent paradigm shift: the first temptation consists in the repetition of the *vocabulary* of the '60s without their *originality*, resulting in an ideological dryness instead of the ecclesial freshness of the '60s. The second temptation is its exact opposite: striving at all costs for an originality that would challenge the exceptional benchmark set by the '60s generation, which when turned into a priority results in theology that indulges in a wholesale import of new theological trends from outside the Orthodox world just for the sake of their novelty; usually this current violently refutes the importance of previous contributions, or rather only of those representatives of the '60s that lack institutional ecclesiastical power and authority, i.e. Yannaras.[211] The third temptation is that of a dual fundamentalism: on the one hand, we encounter in parts of Greek theology a *fervent Anti-Westernism*, which attacks every new voice in theology (including most of the generation of the '60s) as overly influenced by the West, as "non-patristic" in spirit or quite often as explicitly heretical—usually targeting Zizioulas. On the other hand, we witness a *rampant Anti-Easternism*, according to which every statement that highlights theological differences in East and West, that does not condemn Georges Florovsky's "Christian Hellenism" or that simply portrays the Eastern Church's differences in a positive light is conservative, reactionary, backward-looking, quite often explicitly nationalistic—usually targeting Yannaras. Both types of this symmetrical

[211] Many, though not all, of the papers in Pantelis Kalaitzidis, Athanasios N. Papathanasiou, and Theodoros Abatzidis, eds., *Ἀναταράξεις Στὴ Μεταπολεμικὴ Θεολογία: Ἡ Θεολογία Τοῦ '60 [Turbulences in Postwar Theology: The Theology of '60s]* (Athens: Indiktos, 2009). are emblematic of this tendency, i.e. the next generation's "revenge," as it were.

fundamentalism, *sola traditio* and *sola modernitas*, have been supported by parts of the institutional Church.[212]

In spite of its three temptations, contemporary Greek theology shows some very promising signs for the future. One could refer to a number of notable Greek theologians and scholars active today, for example to Metropolitan John Zizioulas' disciple, Stavros Yangazoglou.[213] I will focus on two thinkers here: father Nikolaos Loudovikos and Athanasios N. Papathanasiou.

Born in 1959, fr Nikolaos Loudovikos is professor of Dogmatics and philosophy at the University Ecclesiastical Academy of Thessaloniki; an expert on Maximus the Confessor, he engages in creative dialogue with contemporary developments in theology, philosophy, and psychology. His *Eucharistic Ontology*,[214] a reading of Maximus the Confessor focusing on the Maximian notion of the *logoi*, appropriates this notion as a *dialogical reciprocity* between Creator and humanity, in which the whole of creation is dynamically encapsulated. *Church in the Making* proposes an apophatic ecclesiology of consubstantiality: according to Loudovikos, Maximus the Confessor "gives us the mode of ecclesial being, which is thus defined not fundamentally in structural, existential, or institutional terms, but as a dynamic fact of participation in the mode of divine being. Ecclesial being is defined ultimately by the apophatic mode of such participation alone. This apophatic mode of the actual ecclesial fact overturns every static definition of the Church's being … [a] *Church in the making.*"[215] Loudovikos formulates a Maximian ecclesiology of *consubstantiality* in that "despite the different and divergent natures of the multitude of beings, God draws them, because of their deep relationship to him, to a catholic 'inclination towards each other', an ontological convergence toward each other [that] demonstrates the reference of each one to the

[212] To state an example of this institutional support in Greece: the Metropolis of Piraeus is home to a number of initiatives belonging to the former type of fundamentalism, while characteristic of the latter type of fundamentalism is the Volos Academy of Theological Studies, a research cluster recognised by the Greek state (though not a degree-granting institution) and founded by the Metropolis of Demetrias in Thessaly.

[213] Born in 1962, his books include *Κοινωνία Θεώσεως: Ἡ Σύνθεση Χριστολογίας Καὶ Πνευματολογίας Στὸ Ἔργο Τοῦ Ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Τοῦ Παλαμᾶ [Communion of Deification: The Synthesis of Christology and Pneumatology in the Work of St Gregory Palamas]*, Athens (Domos, 2001); *Κοινωνία Ἐσχάτων: Δοκίμια Ἐσχατολογικῆς Ὀντολογίας [Communion of the Eschaton: Essays in Eschatological Ontology]* (Athens: Indiktos, 2016). Were space to permit it, the following contemporary theologians would also be presented: Dimitrios Moschos from the University of Athens, Chrysostomos Stamoulis and Ioannis Kourembeles, the Orthodox recipient of the 2016 Ratzinger Prize, from the Thessaloniki School of Theology, the Maximian scholar Fr. Dimitrios Bathrellos, and others.

[214] Nikolaos Loudovikos, *A Eucharistic Ontology: Maximus the Confessor's Eschatological Ontology of Being as Dialogical Reciprocity*, trans. Elizabeth Theokritoff (Brookline, Mass.: HC Press, 2010).

[215] Nikolaos Loudovikos, *Church in the Making: An Apophatic Ecclesiology of Consubstantiality* (Translated by Norman Russell. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2016), 44.

wholeness of being, the totality of common, created and caused nature in relation to its one, single, uncreated and supernatural Cause. God demonstrates … the consubstantiality of created beings [which takes place] in Christ's human nature [in which] the Church as the Body of Christ participates."[216] Loudovikos' saturated notion of consubstantiality, which he applies creatively to a number of theological issues, refers to the realisation of the "consubstantiality" of all creatures due to them being of a *created* nature, which in turn effects their existential reference to the Creator of this nature, the locus of this encounter being the Church, Christ's Body. In Loudovikos' works, the mode of application of patristic, mostly Maximian, insights to modern theological questions opens new perspectives of considerable originality while remaining faithful to the spirit of the Fathers—a most delicate balance. He is also known for his harsh theological critique of Metropolitan John Zizioulas' system[217] and, less so, Christos Yannaras'—a critique which, in turn, has been criticized as based on a misreception of said thinkers. Premature as this assertion might be, it is quite safe to say that Loudovikos' work up to now establishes him as one of the most interesting theological voices of his generation.

The same can be said of the current editor of *Synaxi* Athanasios N. Papathanasiou (born 1959), but on quite different premises: Papathanasiou focuses on the implications of Orthodox theology and the Church on society and politics, and on the *ethos* that the patristic heritage dictates. He contributes to an ongoing dialogue between Liberation Theology and Orthodox theology, proposing an Orthodox *patristic* liberation theology rather than an exclusively *biblical* one.[218] From missiology and political theology to engagement with pressing contemporary problems like the refugee crisis, social justice and the future of the Orthodox Church, Papathanassiou strives to highlight the immediacy of the Christian hope with startling freshness: this is not limited in his written theological witness, but extends to his public presence in his native Athens as well.[219]

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[216] Loudovikos, 45.

[217] Nikolaos Loudovikos, "Person Instead of Grace and Dictated Otherness: John Zizioulas' Final Theological Position?," *The Heythrop Journal* 52, no. 4 (2011): 684–99.

[218] Athanasios N. Papathanasiou, "Liberation Perspectives in Patristic Thought: An Orthodox Approach," *Hellenic Open University. Scientific Review of Post-Graduate Program 'Studies in Orthodox Theology'''* 2 (2011): 419–38. Available online at https://www.academia.edu/13435941/Liberation_Perspectives_in_Christian_Patristic_Thought (accessed on 29 Oct 2016).

[219] For two examples of Papathanassiou's output, see "Christian Fasting in Postmodern Society: Considering the Criteria," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 60, no. 1–2 (2016): 249–268; *Ἡ Ἐκκλησία Γίνεται Ὅταν Ἀνοίγεται: Ἡ Ἱεραποστολὴ Ὡς Ἐλπίδα Καὶ Ὡς Ἐφιάλτης [The Church Is Realized in Opening Itself Up: Mission as Hope and as Nightmare]* (Athens: En Plo, 2008).

As far as a generation younger still is concerned, Dionysios Skliris (born 1979) stands out as a representative of a current of younger theologians that avoid both the Scylla of an unholy idolization of tradition against the spirit of the Fathers and the Charybdis of a wholesale import of modern theological trends into Orthodoxy—indulging in the theological *ascesis* of a creative appropriation of patristic heritage and the paradigm shift of the twentieth century in order to respond to today's questions while being in dialogue with contemporary discourses beyond theology.[220] His thesis on St Maximus the Confessor's notion of *mode*[221] demonstrates the fecundity of this *ascesis* in balancing between academic scholarship and living theology, between ancient voices and contemporary challenges.

Twentieth century Greece has been profoundly influenced by the historical presence of three modern saints: Saint Nectarios of Aegina (1846–1920), St Porphyrios the Kapsokalyvite (1906-1991) and Saint Paisios of Mount Athos (1924–1994). While this in itself is not directly relevant to theoretical theology, it is central and crucial to the ecclesial body that begets it.

In all this, we witness the following general trends in Greek theology: (a) a turn towards theological anthropology and ecclesiology; (b) a focus on the Church as the Body of Christ and body of believers as disclosed in the celebration of the Eucharist rather than a focus on (Orthodox) "Christianity," (c) a creative engagement with the Fathers of the Church, particularly the Cappadocians, the Corpus Dionysiacum and St Gregory Palamas,[222] but above all St Maximus the Confessor, who is thus recognised as perhaps the most *comprehensive* Church Father from a theological and philosophical perspective; (d) a reception, appropriation and continuation of the turn effected by the Russian diaspora towards new paths; (e) a willingness to engage modern philosophical thought (predominantly existentialism), disciplines such as psychology and art, as well as theological currents from outside the Orthodox world and pressing social issues, and, through all this, (f) a blossoming of the theological priorities of the '60s in each and every aspect of theology. It seems, in spite of all shortcomings, that the well of Orthodox theology in Greece has not dried up.

[220] See, for example, his collection of essays on Maximus entitled *On the Road to Being: St Maximus the Confessor's Syn-Odical Ontology*, ed. Maxim Vasiljević (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2018).
[221] Dionysios Skliris, "Le Concept de Tropos Chez Maxime Le Confesseur" (PhD diss., Université Paris IV-Sorbonne, 2015).
[222] St Isaac the Syrian's ascetical writings and St Symeon the New Theologian should also be mentioned here.

Chapter 4

On Christos Yannaras' Political Philosophy: The Eucharistic Community as a Social Programme

Abstract

In this chapter I examine the political philosophy that can be extracted from Christos Yannaras' works. I start with the question, whether Yannaras' political thought can be described as a "political theology," since a major aspect thereof is that it is theologically informed. Yannaras, an academic philosopher, influential Christian Orthodox theologian and public intellectual intervening regularly in Greece's public sphere with his political commentary, does not consider his contribution as being a "political theology"; in fact, he criticizes the concept as such. However, a consistent, coherent and critical political theology, i.e. a theologically-informed political theory, is clearly visible in many of his works. I focus (a) on his understanding of both the political and the ecclesial element of life and society as emerging from the same "mode of existence," (b) on the way in which a political community, when primarily aiming at *truth* rather than usefulness and efficacy, strives to iconize the Trinity, and (c) on his critique of ideology, while (d) discerning the social and political context in which these ideas first appeared. After examining the framework of his reception of human rights, his "clash of civilizations" between Orthodoxy and the West and his Orthodox communitarianism beyond both collectivism and individualism, I proceed to study his hermeneutic proposal for European history and his conception of "the West," a notion most central to his thought. I conclude that Yannaras aspires to formulate a *comprehensive counterproposal* to today's politics and civilisation at large. This counter-proposal *draws from* the historical past and is informed by Orthodox Christianity, but it does not consist of a call to *return* to said past (which would be a classic conservative gesture). Rather than that, it is a call to create something *new* on the *basis* of collective historical experience, something *new* which would overthrow and replace the current order of things on every level, i.e. the political, religious, cultural, jurisprudential and philosophical level. Seeing that this is the case, what we are dealing with here is indeed a *subversive Orthodoxy*.

"Christos Yannaras is nothing if not controversial":[223] Norman Russell's concise statement, coming from the translator who is responsible for most of Yannaras' works in English, could not be more accurate. Academic philosopher,[224] theologian,[225] public intellectual and a profusely productive author with about seventy book titles[226] currently available in Greece, Yannaras has authored treatises in philosophy (mainly ontology and epistemology), theology, and political science, while both his weekly *feuilleton* in the major Greek newspaper *Kathimerini* and his frequent television appearances establish him as a well-known figure in Greece's public sphere. His impact in Greece is undeniable,[227] but international engagement with his thought is steadily on the rise as well: [228] while his treatises "began to be translated into Western European languages in the early 1970s,"[229] the first decade of the new millennium has seen most of his books in English come to print, with translations of his works appearing now in twelve languages.[230] Approaching him mainly as a theologian, Jonathan Cole is correct in remarking that Yannaras "must rank as one of the most prolific living theologians writing in any language, and he may very well be one of the highest profile public theologians in any country,"[231] as this combination of academic philosophy, theology, and a high public profile make his case a rather unusual one.

Interestingly, he is controversial both as a philosopher and as a theologian, both in Greece and abroad (and, last but not least, as a political commentator in Greece, in spite of

[223] Norman Russell, "Christos Yannaras," in *Key Theological Thinkers: From Modern to Postmodern*, ed. Svein Rise and Staale Johannes Kristiansen (New York: Routledge, 2013), 725.
[224] Yannaras is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at the Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences in Athens, following a PhD in Philosophy at the *Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines* of Paris IV—Sorbonne and visiting professorships in philosophy at the universities of Paris, Geneva, Lausanne and Crete. Apart from his academic trajectory in philosophy.
[225] He also holds a PhD in theology from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and has been awarded doctorates *honoris causa* from the University of Belgrade, St Vladimir's Seminary in New York and the Hellenic College/Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts.
[226] Most of them, though not all, are listed in the last pages of his most recent book at the time of this writing, Christos Yannaras, *Ἡ Ὀντολογία Τοῦ Προσώπου (Προσωποκεντρικὴ Ὀντολογία) [The Ontology of the Person (Prosopo-Centric Ontology)]* (Athens: Ikaros, 2017)., while two more are currently in press.
[227] Russell notes that "his books had huge sales" in Greece: Russell, "Christos Yannaras," 725.
[228] For a more or less full bibliography of studies on Yannaras up to 2014 see Basilio Petrà, *Christos Yannaras: L'Orizzonte Apofatico Dell'Ontologia* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2015), 172–79. It should be noted that the emergence of secondary literature is increasing its pace, with new studies appearing in English and other languages.
[229] Russell, "Christos Yannaras," 725. See also Norman Russell, "The Enduring Significance of Christos Yannaras: Some Further Works in Translation," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 16, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 58–65, https://doi.org/10.1080/1474225X.2016.1152448.
[230] Apart from English, these include French, Italian, German, Finnish, Polish, Slovenian, Russian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Ukrainian and Serbian, while some translations in other languages are underway.
[231] Jonathan Cole, "Personhood, Relational Ontology and the Trinitarian Politics of Eastern Orthodox Thinker Christos Yannaras," *Political Theology*, February 22, 2017, 1–14, https://doi.org/10.1080/1462317X.2017.1291127.

him never having joined a Greek political party or being identified with one), for reasons that include his very approach to these disciplines, including politics, and their relationship: "it is difficult to categorise Yannaras' thought. His work proceeds as if there were little distinction in practice between theology and philosophy, and even political theory. In that sense he transcends what can still be in the West rather rigid conventional boundaries between disciplines,"[232] proposing an alternative understanding thereof, with the controversy that such a move necessarily entails. This has led to mutually exclusive criticisms: Yannaras has been charged *both* with subordinating theology to philosophy *and* with subordinating philosophy to theology, for exhibiting *both* a disregard for Orthodox Christianity's continuity in tradition[233] *and* a traditionalist fixation on the past, for maintaining *both* a nationalistic anti-Westernism[234] *and* a cosmopolitanism that denies the Greek nation-state to the point of undemining it.[235] "Controversy" seems to emerge as an accurate designation of Yannaras' reception. Has he, however, contributed to the field of political theology, either directly or indirectly? Is it possible to attribute a distinct Christian Orthodox political theology to him based on his writings?

A political theology?

There are roughly two ways to define political theology, an exclusive and an inclusive one. The *exclusive* one centres on that trajectory of thought were the legacy of Carl Schmitt or liberation theology loom large, drawing on classics of Western thought such as Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* or Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*. It studies thinkers and traditions of thought that *explicitly* consider themselves as engaging with political theology, and is usually confined to Roman Catholic and Protestant religious traditions. One might also include on the periphery of this understanding of political theology contemporary thinkers

[232] Jonathan Cole, "The Communo-Centric Political Theology of Christos Yannaras in Conversation with Oliver O'Donovan," in *Mustard Seeds in the Public Square*, ed. Sotiris Mitralexis (Wilmington, Delaware: Vernon Press, 2017), 61–92.
[233] See, for example, the reactions to his *Freedom of Morality*, detailed in Christos Yannaras, *Τὰ Καθ' Ἑαυτόν [Autobiographical Sketch]* (Athens: Ikaros, 1995), 95–100.
[234] Makrides, "Orthodox Anti-Westernism Today: A Hindrance to European Integration?"; Pantelis Kalaitzidis, "Ελληνικότητα Καὶ Ἀντι-Δυτικισμὸς Στὴ Θεολογία Τοῦ '60 [Greekness and Anti-Westernism in the Theology of the '60s]" (PhD diss., Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2008), 209–584.
[235] Yorgos Karambelias, *Ἡ Ἀποστασία Τῶν Διανοουμένων [The Intellectuals' Apostasy]* (Athens: Enallaktikes Ekdoseis, 2012), 229–71.

who are not always speaking from a Christian's viewpoint, but who explicitly deal with Christian political theology, e.g. Jürgen Habermas, Giorgio Agamben, Simon Critchley, or Slavoj Žižek.

The *inclusive* definition would consider as political theology any political philosophy, theory, stance, narrative or action that can be described as theologically informed, be that explicit or implicit and irrespective of whether an affiliation with a religious community is retained or not.[236] This means that in this "big tent" sense, even theories whose authors would perhaps not desire them to be described as political theologies can be approached as such, as long as a theological nucleus can be discerned therein, a vital if not explicit connection to Christianity.

While Yannaras makes a distinction[237] between his philosophical treatises, his theological writings and his "chronography" as he names it, i.e. the yearly publication of his weekly political newspaper feuilletons (first in *To Vima*, then in *Kathimerini*) in book form, it should be obvious to the reader that he does not have a different *Weltanschauung* for each category of texts: his ecclesial philosophy[238] does form the backbone of his theoretical explorations, even when this *Weltanschauung* itself is subjected to critical falsifiability, as is the case in his *Propositions for a Critical Ontology*.[239]

In an attempt to distinguish Yannaras' theoretical writings (i.e., excluding his political chronography) that directly pertain to the political in order to name them implicit treatises in political theology for the purposes of this study, I would single out his books *Rationality and*

[236] A similar distinction is made by Vincent Lloyd and David True, "What Political Theology Could Be," *Political Theology* 17, no. 6 (November 1, 2016): 505, https://doi.org/10.1080/1462317X.2016.1241062. However, a third category is mentioned, which would also form part of the inclusive definition mentioned above: "There is a third and more expansive sense of political theology, encompassing both of the first two. It names critical inquiry into the connections between religion and politics broadly understood, including ideas, practices, affects, and histories. As such, political theology in this third sense is an intellectual landscape welcoming to both critical scholars positioned as "outsiders" and participants in religious traditions exploring the relationships between the fabric of their own tradition and the political world. This conversation welcomes scholars of Christianity but also beyond Christianity, religious studies scholars but also political theorists, literary critics, anthropologists, and those with other disciplinary homes."

[237] e.g. Yannaras, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 9–12.

[238] On my take on the lack of applicability of a *substantive* philosophy–theology distinction (especially when it comes to ontology and epistemology) apart from the conventional distinction of academic disciplines, see Sotiris Mitralexis, "Ever-Moving Repose: The Notion of Time in Maximus the Confessor's Philosophy Through the Perspective of a Relational Ontology" (PhD diss., Freie Universität Berlin, 2014), 47–50.

[239] Yannaras, *Propositions for a Critical Ontology*; for a study thereof, see Mitralexis, "Relation, Activity and Otherness in Christos Yannaras' Propositions for a Critical Ontology."

Social Practice,[240] *The Real and the Imaginary in Political Economy*,[241] *The Inhumanity of Rights*,[242] *Cultural Diplomacy*[243] and his interpretation of Europe's history in *The Schism Gave Birth to Europe*.[244] The unavailability of translations for most of these texts (none of which has been translated in English as of yet, in spite of the vivid interest in translating Yannaras' books into English during recent years which has resulted in more than ten new English translations) should be counted as one of the reasons for some shortcomings that are to be observed in parts of the available secondary literature on this implicit political theology. Among the scholars having in one way or another engaged Yannaras' political theology by recognising it as such (e.g. Daniel P. Payne,[245] Nicolas Prevelakis,[246] Basilio Petrà,[247] Aristotle Papanikolaou,[248] Pantelis Kalaitzidis,[249] Vasilios Makrides,[250] Kristina Stöckl,[251] etc.), I would single out Jonathan Cole's essays for the purposes of this short introduction, "Personhood, Relational Ontology and the Trinitarian Politics of Eastern Orthodox Thinker Christos Yannaras"[252] and "The Communo-centric Political Theology of Christos Yannaras in Conversation with Oliver O'Donovan."[253] In these and particularly the latter, Yannaras is explicitly approached as the author of an original *political theology*, and all the distinctive elements of that contribution are present, recapitulating it as "communo-centric politics": (a)

[240] Christos Yannaras, *Ὀρθὸς Λόγος Καὶ Κοινωνικὴ Πρακτικὴ [Rationality and Social Practice]* (Athens: Domos, 1984).
[241] Yannaras, *The Real and the Imaginary in Political Economy*.
[242] Yannaras, *Inhumanity of Rights*.
[243] Yannaras, *Cultural Diplomacy*.
[244] Yannaras, *The Great Schism Engendered Europe*.
[245] Payne, *The Revival of Political Hesychasm in Contemporary Orthodox Thought*; deriving from Daniel P. Payne, "The Revival of Political Hesychasm in Greek Orthodox Thought: A Study of the Hesychast Basis of the Thought of John S. Romanides and Christos Yannaras." (PhD diss., Baylor University, 2006), https://www.academia.edu/603698/The_revival_of_political_hesychasm_in_Greek_Orthodox_thought_a_study_of_the_hesychast_basis_of_the_thought_of_John_S._Romanides_and_Christos_Yannaras.
[246] Nicholas Prevelakis, "Theologies as Alternative Histories: John Romanides and Christos Yannaras," *Classics@: An Online Journal, Center for Hellenic Studies, Harvard University* 10, accessed November 28, 2016, http://chs.harvard.edu/CHS/article/display/4889.
[247] George Demacopoulos, Aristotle Papanikolaou, and Basilio Petrá, eds., "Christos Yannaras and the Idea of 'Dysis,'" in *Orthodox Constructions of the West* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 161–80; Petrà, *Christos Yannaras: L'Orizzonte Apofatico Dell'Ontologia*.
[248] Aristotle Papanikolaou, *The Mystical as Political: Democracy and Non-Radical Orthodoxy* (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012).
[249] Kalaitzidis, "Ἑλληνικότητα Καὶ Ἀντι-Δυτικισμὸς Στὴ Θεολογία Τοῦ '60 [Greekness and Anti-Westernism in the Theology of the '60s]."
[250] Vasilios N. Makrides, "Byzantium in Contemporary Greece: The Neo-Orthodox Current of Ideas," in *Byzantium and the Modern Greek Identity*, ed. Paul Magdalino and David Ricks, Publications for the Centre for Hellenic Studies, King's College London 4 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 141–53.
[251] Kristina Stoeckl, *Community after Totalitarianism: The Russian Orthodox Intellectual Tradition and the Philosophical Discourse of Political Modernity*, Erfurter Studien Zur Kulturgeschichte Des Orthodoxen Christentums 4 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009).
[252] Cole, "Personhood, Relational Ontology and the Trinitarian Politics of Eastern Orthodox Thinker Christos Yannaras."
[253] Cole, "The Communo-Centric Political Theology of Christos Yannaras in Conversation with Oliver O'Donovan."

Yannaras' communal epistemology, (b) his relational ontology of the social, (c) his critique of rights due to (d) the conception of agency as personhood, (e) his dialectics of freedom and alienation, (f) his focus on direct democracy, as well as (g) the distinctly ontological nature that is ascribed to politics, i.e. politics as authentic existence rather than simply co-existence, and so on.

The emergence of Yannaras' political philosophy: socio-historical context

The theoretical treatises of Yannaras mentioned above are products of his maturity. The question remains: what did initially prompt his desire and need to formulate what can be described as a political theology, i.e. a theologically informed political philosophy? It is rather interesting that the answer can be traced back to a slim volume of "chronography," a collection of essays first published in newspapers, rather than to a theoretical treatise, i.e. to his aptly named *Chapters in Political Theology,*[254] first published in 1976 and with feuilletons written in 1974–75, i.e. directly before the fall of Greece's 1967–74 military regime (the 1967–73 Papadopoulos junta and the Ioannidis junta of 1973–74) and immediately thereafter. These texts constitute a reaction to this regime, and particularly to its usurpation of Christian identity for its political purposes and narrative: the colonels built upon the narrative of "Helleno-Christianity" (ἑλληνοχριστιανισμός), which Yannaras, while acknowledging by definition a synthesis of Hellenism and Christianity in the historical experience of the Greeks, considers as neither Christian nor Hellenic. Yannaras saw in this narrative, in the falsification of both "Greekness" and Christianity in the narrative of the colonels, a threat of historical proportions, bigger than the ephemeral regime changes themselves. Democracy was restored and no other military *coup d'état* took place in subsequent years, but Yannaras' subsequent theoretical political treatises, i.e. his need to articulate a political theology in stark contrast to the colonels' "Helleno-Christianity" and to the Greek state version of Christianity in general, is to be traced back to his reaction to Greece's military junta.

In order to understand the social and historical context of this antithesis between Greek Orthodoxy and identity and, according to Yannaras, its corruption and falsification into

[254] Yannaras, *Chapters in Political Theology*.

the ideology of "Helleno-Christianity," we must make here a necessary digression. As far as Christian life in Greece is concerned, the first half of the twentieth century was dominated by the activity of the aptly named "para-ecclesiastical" movement, the chief actor being the Zoë Brotherhood[255] and its affiliated organisations. These organisations did not derive from the ecclesial life of the Greeks or the institutional church and its structure, but were (and still are) parallel structures independent from the church's hierarchy and control. They proclaimed a "New Greece" reborn through Christian morality and were recognisably pietistic (and, as such, un-Orthodox) in nature and theology, in their priorities and activities. Bible study circles, Sunday schools independent from the institutional church, bulletins, magazines, and all kinds of *innere Mission* flooded Greece, achieving an unprecedented mobilisation and network of Christians and turning the para-ecclesiastical "Christian movement" into one of the pillars of Greek society at the time.

Christos Yannaras, born 1935 in Athens, became an active part of the "Christian movement" in his youth, eventually reaching its core and becoming a member of the Zoë Brotherhood of celibate theologians. Gradually discovering ecclesial Orthodoxy and its patristic and ascetic tradition in all its tangible materiality as something wholly contradistincted from the pietistic worldview of the "Movement," a journey documented in his autobiographical *A Refuge of Ideas,*[256] he clashed with the Movement, exiting the Zoë Brotherhood in 1964 and emigrating to Germany to study philosophy at the postgraduate level in Bonn. There he discovered in Martin Heidegger's take on Western metaphysics a critique of precisely what he discerned as the historico-philosophical foundations of his previous "un-Orthodox" experiences in Greece's "Christian Movement," arriving at the conclusion that what was at stake here was the fundamental difference between ecclesial community and being, between what he would later call the "ecclesial event" and the culture it engenders, and the deviation therefrom that took shape in the West's reception of Christianity.[257] Defining this "clash of civilisations" between the West, in which Greece, its inhabitants and Yannaras himself[258] culturally belong, and a now extinct civilizational mode, now surviving only in distant ecclesial echoes, and its implications for philosophy, theology, politics and society, would become his life's work.

[255] cf. Christoph Maczewski, *Die Zoi-Bewegung Griechenlands. Ein Beitrag zum Traditionsproblem der Ostkirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1970).
[256] Christos Yannaras, *Καταφύγιο Ἰδεών [A Refuge for Ideas]* (Athens: Ikaros, 1987).
[257] see Yannaras, *Against Religion*.
[258] Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West*, viii–ix.

Up to that decade, the '60s, virtually the only extrovert and active version of Christianity in Greece was the pietistic one represented by the "Christian Movement." However, the internal conflicts and divisions within the Zoë Brotherhood itself, figures within the movement that oriented themselves towards a rediscovery of the Fathers of the Church (particularly the Cappadocians, Maximus the Confessor and Gregory Palamas) and of monasticism, the influx of new ideas from the Russian diaspora, and a multitude of other causes effected a profound change, first ignited by Dimitrios Koutroumbis and his fellowship of Zoë theologians gradually discerning the dead end. "By 1960, academic theology and extra-ecclesiastical pietism were losing their authority. Theology was becoming reintegrated with ecclesiastical life. New themes were being discussed: the Eucharistic rather than the institutional constitution of the Church, an experiential or apophatic approach to dogma, an existential rather than a legalistic understanding of sin."[259] In rapid disintegration, a part of the Zoë Brotherhood broke away in 1959/60, founding the "Sotir Brotherhood" in order to pursue a militant pietism undiluted by these changes. Yannaras' exit from the Brotherhood and from pietism was both one of the first effects and one of the subsequent, further causes of this small revolution.

However, in a peculiar twist of history, the Movement's "strength was made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9): politically, its high time was yet to come. The colonels' successful *coup d'état* in 1967 and the military regime that followed displaced the Archbishop of Athens, Chrysostomos II (Hadjistavrou), and, in an extreme intervention in the affairs of the church, disassembled the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece creating a new one under its control, which then "elected" Hieronymos Kotsonis, a prominent member of the Zoë Brotherhood and archpriest at the King's palace, as the new Archbishop of Athens. This was followed by the "election" of certain clerical members of the Brotherhood and the Movement as Metropolitan bishops, effectively substituting vital parts of the institutional Orthodox Church of Greece with members of the pietistic and para-ecclesiastical "Christian Movement."[260]

Yannaras, who had violently clashed with the Movement and the Brotherhood in 1964, was in Bonn and would soon relocate to Paris for doctoral studies in philosophy. In *The*

[259] Yannaras, 273.
[260] Yannaras offers an account of ecclesiastical developments during, and caused by, the military regime in Yannaras, *Chapters in Political Theology*, 149–88.

Freedom of Morality, a much-debated[261] theological treatise first published during the military regime in 1970[262] attacking pietistic morality and counter-proposing what would be later described as the ethics of Eucharistic ecclesiology (and "the equivalent of the May 1968 revolution in Orthodox theology and ethics").[263] Yannaras proclaimed the Movement and the Brotherhood (which were now controlling the institutional church, granting their teachings with added authority) as heresies, in a chapter fittingly entitled "Pietism as an Ecclesiological Heresy."[264] It is at that time that he also started his journalistic activity with a weekly feuilleton in the left-leaning newspaper *To Vima* ("The Tribune"): he has defined his aim during the military regime as a delicate balance between undermining, if not outright ridiculing, the military junta and the worldview that the Christian Movement offered to it as its religious/spiritual branch[265] by attaching its very theological, philosophical and historical presuppositions, and eluding state censorship, "so that even the dictators themselves would discern your subversive activity as such, without it openly granting them the pretence"[266] for censorship and counter-attack. The first fruit of this journalistic activity is his collection of feuilletons entitled *The Privilege of Despair*, published during the junta, in 1973.[267] After the restoration of democracy in 1974, two tendencies concerning the interweaving of Greece and Christianity can be discerned: on the one hand, variations of the ideology of "Helleno-Christianity," now irreversibly stained by the junta, survived in certain aspects of right-wing politics and, of course, in the legacy of its proponents during the military regime, including the church figures associated with it. On the other hand, the forceful negation of such a narrative, which is recognised as neither Christian nor Greek—and the counter-proposal of radically different receptions of a *de facto* synthesis based on tradition rather than ideology, sometimes referred to as "Neo-Orthodox" due to its stark contrast with "Helleno-Christianity."[268]

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[261] For an overview of the reactions, see Yannaras, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 95–100.
[262] Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality*; first published as Christos Yannaras, *Ἡ Ἐλευθερία Τοῦ Ἤθους [The Freedom of Morality]*, Synoro (Athens: Athina, 1970).
[263] Stavros Zoumboulakis, *Χριστιανοὶ Στὸν Δημόσιο Χῶρο: Πίστη ἢ Πολιτιστικὴ Ταυτότητα; [Christians in the Public Square: Faith or Cultural Identity?]* (Athens: Vivliopoleion tis Estias, 2010), 64.
[264] Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality*, 119–36.
[265] "During the 1967-74 military dictatorship, the regime's official policy of pursuing the creation of a 'Greece of Christian Greeks' provided a spectacular example of applying the ideology of 'Hellenic Christian civilization' onto cultural matter"; Victor Roudometof, "Greek Orthodoxy, Territoriality, and Globality: Religious Responses and Institutional Disputes," *Sociology of Religion* 69, no. 1 (2008): 73, https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/69.1.67.
[266] Yannaras, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 70.
[267] Christos Yannaras, *Τὸ Προνόμιο Τῆς Ἀπελπισίας [The Privilege of Despair]* (Athens: Grigoris, 1973).
[268] For example, see Roudometof, "Greek Orthodoxy, Territoriality, and Globality," 73. However, while Roudometof proposes and accepts this dichotomy, his analysis is not devoid of problems. For example, he

"Neither politics nor theology"[269]

It is in this context, as a reaction to the military junta's (and the "Movement's") version of Christianity in Greece, that his *Chapters in Political Theology* is to be approached—this collection of feuilletons first published in 1976 by the then clearly left-wing publisher Papazisis. In the introduction,[270] an English variation of which has been published in *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* in 1983 and recently reprinted in a collection of essays,[271] Yannaras voices his views on political theology—and it is quite clear that what he has in mind in invoking the term is a modern discourse much more on the side of Latin American "Liberation Theology" than, say, of Carl Schmitt's legacy.

Yannaras claims that the very notion of "political theology" rests on the fragmentation of life, and more importantly collective life, in different and seemingly hermetically sealed domains thereof ("religion/theology," "politics," "economy"—or: "private sphere," "public sphere"), which it then tries to reconcile in an apologetic tone. "Behind each of the phases of this quest one can discern the classic problem of Western Christianity: the oscillation between the transcendent and the secular, between the abstract idealism of a conceptual metaphysics and the immediate affirmation and pursuit of material goods in life."[272] The emergence of secular political ideologies proclaiming justice, emancipation, and equality demonstrates (a) that one does not require Christianity in order to pursue such values and

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claims that the ascendancy of Archbishop Christodoulos to the Archbishopric of the Church of Greece in 1998 was aligned, in terms of worldview, with the Neo-Orthodox camp rather than the "Helleno-Christianity" camp—but this reading has been fiercely challenged by other scholars, e.g. Payne, *The Revival of Political Hesychasm in Contemporary Orthodox Thought*, 23. In that same page (73), Roudometof renders *Genos*, Γένος, as "Race" in the context of a hierarch's homily; however, while this would make etymological sense, precisely the opposite is the case! *Genos* here, as is the case with all Orthodox references to it, refers to Orthodox Christians in general, to the "race" that emerges from the baptismal font, and as such implies the *transcendence* of races (cf. Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus"). The only exception to this would be limited to the peculiar phrase "Γένος τῶν Ἑλλήνων," *Genos* of the Greeks, which however is not the case with the context Roudometof is referring to.

[269] Yannaras, *Chapters in Political Theology*, 109.

[270] Yannaras, 9–14.

[271] Christos Yannaras, "A Note on Political Theology," trans. Steven Peter Tsichlis, *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (1983): 53–56; Christos Yannaras, "A Note on Political Theology," in *The Meaning of Reality: Essays on Existence and Communion, Eros and History*, ed. Gregory Edwards and Herman A. Middleton (Los Angeles; Athens: Sebastian Press ; Indiktos, 2011), 149–52.

[272] Yannaras, "A Note on Political Theology," 1983, 53.

social goals, (b) that a society being Christian far from guarantees the eradication of injustice, and that (c) while Christianity expects the materialisation of its values and vision in a transcendental Eschaton, the question concerning the *immanent* realisation of these goals remains and persists. Thus, "one could, very naively, pose the question: why isn't it sufficient for me—purely and simply—to register myself with a political party or become a revolutionary? Why is it necessary that I be, in addition, also Christian?"[273]—and: "in a world where political action permits man to forge his historical destiny and future with his own hands, the Christian faith is useless and inefficient. Being a Christian, by the standards of Western Christianity, means transposing the immediate problems of social prosperity and social progress into an abstract 'transcendence,' or opposing these problems with the feeble passivity of in individual morality that, even if reasonably justified, is nonetheless totally unable to influence historical evolution in its entirety."[274] Consequently, according to Yannaras, the need for political theology emerges in Western societies in an attempt to demonstrate that all this is *not* the case—or, even more, that the prototype of secular ideologies proclaiming emancipation is to be found in the Bible: "political theology seeks the roots of revolutionary socio-political movements in the Bible itself. The Bible is seen as a text of political morality, a theory of revolution, which has as its goal a paradise-like society—a society without classes."[275] This, however, would be in essence an attempt at *apologetics,* rather than at a political theology *per se*.

Yannaras' portrayal of Western political theology and Liberation Theology in particular is, of course, an oversimplification, if not a caricature—but his goal is to juxtapose this to what would *actually* constitute a political theology. This would presuppose a "conception of politics radically different from the one that is found at the heart of Western European civilization. I mean by this a political theory and action that is not limited merely to social utility or to the conventional rules of human relations—even if these we more efficient—but that has as its goal the truth of man and the authenticity of his existence."[276] In a society where the fragmentation into "sacred" and "secular" or into "religious" and "political" would *not* be the case, seeing that it is (or, at least, *was*, in earlier societies) the same community of persons that engenders both its political community and its ecclesial body, a *political theology* would be the mode of the reflection of the ecclesial community's

[273] Yannaras, 54.
[274] Yannaras, 53.
[275] Yannaras, 53.
[276] Yannaras, 54.

truth—i.e. authentic existence as realised in the Trinity, disclosed in the person of Christ and iconised in the ecclesial Eucharistic event—in the community's political and societal organisation and function. *Discerning* how this could be the case is named *prophecy*: "the language of prophecy—'political theory' based on a trinitarian model— is in every way critical because it compares the fullness of personal communion to our social reality."[277]

In *Chapters in Political Theology*, one can discern the presuppositions for and the socio-historical context of his later thought: he delivers a comprehensive critique[278] of the military regime's "Helleno-Christianity," illustrating it as sharply antithetical to Orthodoxy's tradition and to the reality of the ecclesial event grounded on the community around the Eucharist—charging the regime with attempting to eradicate precisely this "pearl of great value." He likens the fall of that regime in July 1974 to the celebration of the Resurrection in Orthodox Easter;[279] he theorises on the incompatibility of the Eucharistic community's self-understanding and *Weltanschauung* with that provided by political ideologies;[280] and he claims that the military regime's legacy in ecclesiastical matters and ideology will linger on even in the post-authoritarian period: "ecclesiastical administration and state apparatus will continue to be ideologically synchronised in the falsification of being Greek that is embodied in Greek nationalism. Nationalism in general, the Greek state's recent version of it in particular [ἐθνικοφροσύνη] and the like, which have divided this land so deeply and tormented it so much, are typical products of the narrowness of the myopic parochialism of the state: they have nothing to do neither with the civilizational identity of Hellenism nor with the universality of Orthodoxy."[281] However, he does not fully articulate his theory of political theology in that early writing; it is in later and more theoretical treatises that he will deliver his promise.

The fulfilment of that promise will be later based on precisely this de-fragmentation of the political and the religious: Yannaras will note that *truth*, not *efficacy*, is the primary priority of a political community worth its name—and this is just another name for political theology.

[277] Yannaras, 55–56.
[278] Yannaras, *Chapters in Political Theology*, 58–61, further elaborated in 149–88.
[279] Yannaras, 63.
[280] Yannaras, 95–103.
[281] Yannaras, 201.

The Eucharistic community is our social programme

As far as early writings are concerned, we can find elements of a political theology in one chapter of the aforementioned *The Freedom of Morality*,[282] a treatise first published during the military regime in 1970 which can in many ways be read as a manifesto against the understanding of Christianity, morality, politics and Greece of this regime (and of the Christian "Movement" that supported it); the chapter is fittingly entitled "The Historical and Social Dimensions of the Church's Ethos."[283]

Again, Yannaras begins the exposition of his political theology by commenting on the *futility* of political theologies, since "the great movements for securing human rights and for the improvement of living conditions seem to have achieved in a few decades objective results far beyond anything that Christian ethics have achieved in twenty centuries; What can the Christians' ethic mean, then, when it lacks the capacity to change and transfigure historical reality?"[284] If such Christian-like achievements on the social level can be attained without any need for the Christian church, or even in opposition to it, then what *more* can a Christian political theology offer?[285]

The question is shown to be rhetorical on the part of Yannaras, since he concludes that today's civilisation is indeed inhuman, in spite of its many advances. He highlights as the criterion for the difference between civilisations that engender inhumanity and those that do not something rather unexpected: *epistemology*, the question of the validity of the criteria for knowledge and truth. According to this schema, an "objective" epistemology, identifying truth and knowledge as something external and objectifiable, cannot but engender totalitarianism. This is not juxtaposed to a subjective mysticism, but to a *participatory* epistemology: indeed, an ecclesial one. "*Totalitarianism* is another word we can use to express quite candidly the meaning and content of that 'objectivity' which is taken as a self-evident premise for the 'moral' concern of socio-political systems in the West—or at least of

[282] Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality*; first published as Yannaras, *Ἡ Ἐλευθερία Τοῦ Ἤθους [The Freedom of Morality]*.
[283] Christos Yannaras, "The Historical and Social Dimensions of the Church's Ethos," in *The Freedom of Morality*, trans. Elizabeth Briere (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), 195–229.
[284] Yannaras, 195–96.
[285] Yannaras, 198.

the extreme consequences of that objectivity."[286] This has primarily to do with the question of *who*, or perhaps *which institution*, is the guardian and guarantor of this objective truth. "When truth becomes 'objective,' this leads to the 'infallibility' of its representatives and interpreters, of the bureaucratic structures which ensure its 'objective; implementation. It is thus justifiable even to subjugate by force people who disagree with the visible authority of dogma."[287] Objective truth is then connected to the aim and priority of *efficacy*, which is seen as exclusive to the aim and priority of *communion*:

> The objectivity and efficacity of social ethics in the western world seems to begin by doing away with the very goal at which it aims: the possibility of communion or society, of the corporate functioning of life. Communion or society—personal relationships which go to make up a community of life—cannot possibly exist when truth is an objective datum, when there are no distinct personal approaches to the truth which permit the distinctiveness and freedom of persons—the potential for relationship—to become apparent. In an age when the rights and duties of the individual are rationalistically regulated there is no "society," despite the multiplicity of "social" systems.[288]

Yannaras proceeds to search for an alternative to this not to a social *teaching*, however theological, but to the very nature of the Trinity:

> The ethos of the Church is a communal or "social" ethos, and the communal ethos of the Church is identified with the ontological content of her truth, the truth of life as communion. Communion constitutes life; existence is an event of communion. The "cause" of existence and the "source" of life is not being-in-itself-being does not represent an absolute category per se but it is the divine, Trinitarian communion which hypostasizes being as a fact of life. For the Church, communion is an ontological fact: not the consequence of the ontological fact, but a fact essential to being. The historical fact that people live together in groups and the phenomenology of what is called "communal" or "social" life—the political, social, economic and governmental organization of human groups—is only one expression of this fact.[289]

The possibility of reflecting this mode of existence on the level of human co-existence is then identified in what *already* exists: the life of the Eucharistic community, the local life

[286] Yannaras, 201.
[287] Yannaras, 202.
[288] Yannaras, 203.
[289] Yannaras, 211.

of the church. Nicholas Fedorov has famously proclaimed that "the Trinity is our social programme"; in quite similar vein, we could paraphrase this dictum and say that according to Yannaras, "the Eucharistic community is our social programme." The co-existence of Christians in a community that seeks to trump death through love, and not merely to maximise efficacy, is an event that cannot but be simultaneously metaphysical and *political,* as in an everyday community of persons these domains cannot but practically overlap. Yannaras contends that a Christianity which tries to devise a "social ethic" or a political programme *distinct from* its ecclesial, Eucharistic, communal life (if this is to be taken as such, and not in a decaffeinated, utility-driven "religionised" version thereof) would be a *contradiction in terminis.*[290]

What seems paradoxical, however, is that this "really existing ideal" of the ecclesial communal life is meant to be *rooted in failure.* The dialectics of sin and repentance entail the very rejection of any proper "efficacy," of any "success" as this is understood in the secular sphere. As Yannaras will remark, "the ethical 'paradox' of the Church, which makes her radically different from any system of ethics or social organization, is the way she renounces any objective, evaluative precondition for the individual's participation in the community. Only the personal dynamics of love can save freedom and form a communion out of failure to attain communion."[291] Which means that *failure,* rather than success, is the counter-intuitive foundation of such a common Eucharistic life—a life of *transformation–in–communion.* In this 1970 text, the author sums his "the Eucharistic community is our social programme" doctrine as follows—and during a time, in which Greece's "official Christianity" embodied the exact opposite of such ideas:

> This is the stance and the action of the Orthodox tradition and of Orthodox life. It is the dynamics of social transformation embodied in the Eucharistic community, the diocese or parish. When the diocese and the parish form a true ecclesial communion, this leads dynamically and organically to the transformation of mass coexistence into a communion of persons. It provides a basis for social justice which is genuine and not merely rationalistic; it liberates work from slavery to need, transforming it into a personal relationship, and it brings out each human being's creative distinctiveness. Through the correct functioning of the Eucharistic community there is created a form of politics which serves the existential truth and authenticity of man, a form of science which gives reason and meaning to man's

[290] Yannaras, 213–14.
[291] Yannaras, 215.

> relationship with the world, and a form of economics which serves life rather than subjugating it.[292]

He does not trace historical precedents in the Christian history of the West and its medieval feudalism and class distinction, but in the fundamentally different historical trajectory of Byzantium, in which according to the author we witness

> a popular culture which reveals in its every expression and manifestation the absolute priority of the truth of the person, and a way of life which is articulated liturgically, becoming an event of personal communion. … Byzantine civilization, art, economics, politics and legislation all expressed the attitude of life and the communal ethos of the Church; [they] preserved the liturgical understanding of the world and history and the creative "word" or reason in man's relationship with things, a reason which follows from the subordination of individual arbitrariness to the harmony and wisdom in the world.[293]

Yannaras will proceed to expound the reconstruction of the parish *as a political programme*[294]—or rather, as the only *radical* political programme capable of effecting *actual*, civilisation-wide change, in which the ecclesial event engenders a bottom-up political theology simply by the fact that it is realised. "The truth of the Church, the reality of salvation, the abolition of sin and death, the contradiction of the absurdity in life and in history, the dynamic adaptation of the organizational structures of corporate life to personal distinctiveness and freedom—all these are the Eucharist incarnate in the body of the parish" [295]—and it is the faithful that *realise* this as a political programme: "the liturgical unity of the faithful, under whatever conditions and in whatever institutions, networks and structures, is the starting point for the transformation of mass coexistence into a communion of persons."[296]

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These early ideas from the '70s concerning the *political* dynamics of Eucharistic ecclesiology, without any need for an explicit politically theological "theory" in order for these dynamics to be engendered, are revisited in Yannaras' 2008 article "The Church in the

[292] Yannaras, 219.
[293] Yannaras, 220–21.
[294] Yannaras, 223–29.
[295] Yannaras, 225.
[296] Yannaras, 225.

Postcommunist World,"[297] which evolved out of a 1998 lecture.[298] In this essay, Yannaras will propose that, to the eyes of a member of the Eastern Orthodox Church, both the Marxist worldview of communist countries and the liberal capitalist ideology of Western countries and culture equally expound historical materialism as the model for organising society and understanding history—a model wholly foreign to the witness of the church. The point of difference is that the "free world" merely represents a *more successful* form of historical materialism, broadly understood as the view that history is driven by dynamics that only make sense in a materialistic context; quoting Georg Lukacz's dictum that "historical materialism is the self-consciousness of capitalism," Yannaras comments: "it wasn't a popular reaction against historical materialism that brought down Eastern Europe's communist regimes, but a desire for a *more consistent* historical materialism. This was not a triumph of non-materialist ideology, but an ingenious and more efficient system of historico-materialist management of human life prevailing over an inadequate and ineffective one."[299]

Instead of defending capitalism against what was seen as the atheist alternative that communism embodied, Yannaras proceeds to a scathing critique of capitalism as well, which "imposes the practical application of historical materialism on a global scale in its most crass form: consumerism made absolute, reducing whole cultures to a common level and depriving more and more peoples of their roots, detaching them from centuries-old spiritual traditions. It renders politics futile and obliterates any sense of community. The only object of international capitalism is material 'development' and 'progress', which subordinate the deeper needs of humanity to consumerism."[300] This is followed by a detailed exposition of how, according to Yannaras' view, both the communist and the capitalist systems in their "actually existing" forms exhaust the very humanity of human beings—from different starting points, but with a wholly comparable result.[301] To this, the nature of the church as a community of believers is juxtaposed—a counter-paradigm to this dual historical materialism; not, however, of the church as a system of social coexistence, but as a body having the explicit aim of victory over death.

[297] Christos Yannaras, "The Church in the Postcommunist World," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 3, no. 1 (2003): 29–46, https://doi.org/10.1080/14742250308574023.
[298] Later published as Christos Yannaras, *The Church in Post-Communist Europe*, Distinguished Lectures – Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute, 1998 (Berkeley, CA: Interorthodox Press, 2003).
[299] Yannaras, "The Church in the Postcommunist World," 29.
[300] Yannaras, 30.
[301] Yannaras, 30–31.

In spite of Yannaras' focus on the church as a community sharing and realizing a mode of existence, he also sees the church as an institutional body extending over time and the centuries as a necessary but not adequate *precondition* for such a community. "The visible institutional continuity functions as the defining boundary of ecclesiastical authenticity. It allows us to distinguish the historical presence of the Church in time from the occasional arbitrary religious groups that have claimed to be Christian."[302] This institution, however, is a *marker,* a *boundary*; a manifestation of continuity; it does not substitute or guarantee the ecclesial event, which "is not a system of ethics, or an ideology, or an enduring historical institution."[303]

We are left with the puzzle of counter-proposing to ideologies, institutions and systems of ethics something which is *not* any of these. Yannaras explains how this is the case by expounding the church's anthropology, which then shapes human co-existence (and, as such, politics as well). "The empirical reality of the Church's essential nature is summed up in the word *prosopon*, or 'person'," which the author proceeds to analyse, providing an introduction to his signature theory, the Orthodox ontology of the person; "the person exists only towards a second term of the relations it constitutes. The active referentiality of every person arises from relationship as a unique existential event, unlike any other and unrepeatable: the person is known as existential otherness through the 'rational' otherness of the relations it constitutes."[304] This personal, and thus referential, nature of humanity is not "of this world," as it emerges beyond createdness: it reflects the divine, uncreated mode of existence. "God is triadic; his existence constitutes the logos mode of being as a communion of love of three hypostases. No logical necessity precedes or determines God's 'essence' or 'nature'.[305] This, in turn, defines an ontology of love and self-transcendence, which is reflected in the very names of the divine persons: "[God the Father] freely self-defines the logos of his existence, which is love. He exists because he loves. He is the 'Father' of existence and of life, because 'in a timeless and loving manner' (PG4:221A), he generates the 'Son' and sends forth the 'Spirit', freely making his Being subsist as fulfilment of loving erotic communion. He is 'the true eros, the whole eros' (PG91:269CD). The divine trinity is the triumph of freedom from all necessity."[306] It is precisely this mode that is reflected in the

[302] Yannaras, 32.
[303] Yannaras, 32.
[304] Yannaras, 32–33.
[305] Yannaras, 40.
[306] Yannaras, 40.

church, in a community within which these intra-Trinitarian relationships are iconised: "the Church is a communion of persons trying to realise the mode of existence of freedom from the limitations of nature that belongs to the triadic Prototype. It is a communion of persons attempting to realise the freedom of love through the mode of relation."[307]

In this, the Logos' Incarnation is central, giving a literal meaning to the church as "the Body of Christ." Indirectly but decisively, *the Incarnation dictates politics*: it reveals "that the divine mode of existence, which is free from every necessity, can also be realised by created humanity—by the created, personal hypostasis of man—made in the image of God. That human beings may exist in the mode of love, not of nature. That they may exist not as natural individuals but as persons free from the necessities of their nature: temporality, corruption and death."[308] In this context, the notion that humanity comprises the church together with Christ, striving for the collective realisation of a very specific and divine, uncreated mode of existence *beyond* nature, *while* the domain of the Christians' organisation of collective life (society, politics) remains wholly unaffected, hermetically sealed and able to be in stark contrast to that truth, would seem absurd—as would seem the idea that religion is a "private" matter, while politics a "public" one: the church cannot, by its very definition, be "private."

However, Yannaras contends that this interrelation of ecclesial participation and politics/society is today not a given, but something to be strived for. It is something in which we have failed: "in Europe and in the world generally churches do not produce a distinctive culture with social dynamics or a universal understanding of human life which might produce creative, new relations of communion, or new political, social, and productive relations."[309] He locates the reason for this in three *inversions* that took place in the West, which in our postcommunist times encompasses traditionally Orthodox countries as well, thus giving rise to metaphysical nihilism and historical materialism: "first, the transition from *logos* to *ratio*, from the experience of relation to the priority of individual rationalism; second, the transition from person to individual, from a community-centred anthropology to a psychological individualism and a legalistic, rights-based view of the human subject; third, the transition from *aletheia* (truth) as logical disclosure evoking relation, to objective legal and functional

[307] Yannaras, 35.
[308] Yannaras, 40.
[309] Yannaras, 44.

certitude, organising a whole civilisation on the utility principle and the logic of rights."[310] According to Yannaras, these three inversions (one at the level of epistemology, one at the level of anthropology, and one at the level of politics) undermine the very *possibility* of a societal disclosure of the ecclesial community's mode.[311]

In revisiting these issues, Yannaras proposes yet again that, to paraphrase, "the Eucharistic community is our social programme": in our modern world, the only escape is "the reality of ecclesial life embodied in the Eucharistic community of the parish and the diocese. This may seem like a return to the past or a romantic nostalgia for a Utopian communalism. But authentic existence is realised by ancient practices surviving over the centuries which remain surprisingly new to personal experience"—exactly as is the case with love.[312] However, this presupposes a break with the (mis)understanding of the church as a system of ethics, an enduring historical institution or an ideology: "the Christian world needs a radical change in its ecclesiological understanding for the parish and the diocese to function today as the existential realisation of a communion of persons, rather than an association of people with religious convictions or an institutionalised ideology and morality."[313]

Insights into later developments: ecclesial event versus ideology

While these politically theological ideas have their roots in the author's early writings, it is of relevance to trace their further development in his mature period and, importantly, to see how he vehemently rejects the notion that such ideas form an "ideology" pertaining to what we could name political philosophy—or more precisely, how he argues that *when* these observations are turned into ideology, *then* these are annulled and cease to exist as such. To that end, he formulates an ecclesial critique of ideology.

Yannaras traces a trajectory of the meta-physical constitution of the political community (that is, its priority on *truth* and *meaning* rather than *efficacy*) from the classical

[310] Yannaras, 42.
[311] Interestingly, Yannaras holds that "the Islamic understanding of society and politics is closer to the historical practices of the West than the mind-set of the Orthodox (Yannaras, 43.)—a perhaps counter-intuitive but surely contra-Huntingtonian assertion.
[312] Yannaras, 45.
[313] Yannaras, 45.

Athenian *polis* to the, to a large extent, self-governing communities during the Christian phase of Roman empire with *Nova Roma*–Constantinople as its capital (what was later called "Byzantine empire") and even to the retaining of this partial self-governance during Ottoman times.[314]

The author sees *ideology* and collective attempts at socially iconising truth as mutually exclusive, for ideology conceives of a static definition of truth, while truth is dynamic, relational, and apophatic. He sees ideology as the falsification and alienation of any real collective search for meaning, of any real collective attempt at iconising truth in social relations, echoing the famous definition of ideology as "false consciousness" but elevated at the level of ontology, "false ontology."

Thus, he vehemently argues against an interweaving of politics and religion *as ideology*, but endorses an interweaving of politics with the ecclesial event as, virtually, *the only possible politics* that would not be "pre-political," i.e. not without an ontological aim at iconising truth in society's (political) functions and relations. This contradistinction of religion as metaphysics-falsified/transformed-into-an-ideology and the ecclesial event, i.e. metaphysically defined social and as such political relations aiming at the communion of life, is not merely a literary device, but a pillar of Yannaras' thought, on which he has expanded in a 2007 monograph fittingly entitled *Against Religion.*[315]

Politics can aim at creating and sustaining relations that serve the communion of life; "this can be the *meaning* of politics, to serve the existential truth and authenticity of man. This aim presupposes the interweaving of religion and politics, the meta-physical nature of the aim as one that is real and experientially assimilated by society as a body.[316] However, as noted, the contradistinction of this experiential reality from its alienation into an ideology is of utmost importance, as well as a task political theory, for "the ideologisation of religion in its interweaving with politics engendered only monstrous atrocities,"[317] i.e. numerous forms of totalitarianism. Europe's mediaeval experience, the ecclesial event's religionisation and its transformation into a dominant ideology, and varieties of theocracy in general (be it monarchy by divine right or contemporary religious fundamentalism) rightly led to the need for exiling religion from politics. Yannaras contends that precisely because political theory

[314] Yannaras, *Inhumanity of Rights*, 223–27.
[315] Yannaras, *Against Religion*.
[316] Yannaras, *Inhumanity of Rights*, 227–28.
[317] Yannaras, 28.

should ground politics on the enquiry for *meaning*, its task includes the juxtaposition of religion as experientially assimilated meta-physics (i.e., ontology) of the body politic (i.e. as *ecclesial event*) from ideology. The author asserts that politics abhors a vacuum of meaning, and thus this vacuum would be otherwise filled with "ideological hallucinogens," secular political ideologies as pretentions of meaning—or be abandoned in a mechanistic autonomy of its operations, the legalism of rights centred on the individual rather than on its capacity for communion and *constitution as communion*; that is, to politics' the self-negation as such, a regression to a pre-political stage. "Relations between state/power and human communities will remain the central axis of politics: the question is whether communities will have a priority over state power, turning it into a servant of their societal objectives, or if the community will be subordinated to its offspring, the state, granting it with the power to oppress."[318]

One can here discern one of the primary reasons for his critical stance towards a political culture centred on individual *rights*: simply put, these cannot deliver what they promise, i.e. effectively and effortlessly fill the gap left by the destitution of meaning in politics: "Politics rests on these prioritisations, and no guarantee of individual rights against the autonomy of the state suffices to rescue its functionality and nature, the realisation of civil/political society, the *polis*. Only the tangible and experientially assimilated ontological signification of politics can balance the relationship between community and state and grant communities their political self-governance."[319]

Yannaras' conception of "the West"

While one can easily notice the tension between "the West" and a culture engendered by the ecclesial event in the above analysis, we have not yet taken up the question of Yannaras' "West" in an explicit and systematic manner up to now. Jonathan Cole has masterfully summed up[320] the main points of Christos Yannaras' political thought: (a) Yannaras' communal epistemology, (b) his relational ontology of the social, (c) his critique

[318] Yannaras, 28.
[319] Yannaras, 228–29.
[320] Cole, "The Communo-Centric Political Theology of Christos Yannaras in Conversation with Oliver O'Donovan."

of rights due to (d) the conception of agency as personhood, (e) his dialectics of freedom and alienation, (f) his focus on direct democracy, as well as (g) the distinctly ontological nature that is ascribed to politics, i.e. politics as authentic existence rather than simply co-existence, and so on. Cole is right in recapitulating Yannaras' politically relevant thought as "communo-centric politics," a term that Yannaras himself uses (*κοινωνιοκεντρικὴ πολιτική*[321]). Here I will provide some further background for this notion that is so central to Yannaras' thought, that of the "West" and of its difference to the Graeco-Roman, ecclesial world of what would be later called "Byzantium."

"West" is a primarily geographical term; however, its semantic content is not geographical in character, but rather civilizational and political. And if the term retains some remnants of "geographicality" in its rendition as descriptive of the modern culture of (western) Europe, North America and perhaps Australia—but not Africa, which would be equally "Western" to Europe from a geographical point of view—it resists these remnants when defined in its full historical depth, whatever this may be. In spite of the polysemy attributed to the term "Western civilisation" and of the debates concerning its exact meaning, received wisdom has it that it refers to a historical and civilizational trajectory beginning with classical Greece (or even the earliest Mesopotamian cultures) and Rome i.e. the Roman empire, acquiring Christianity as one of its constitutional elements, evolving into the Renaissance and, later, the Enlightenment and concluding in (Western) Modernity—which may or may not include "the End of History."

Of course, this is not to mean that there is any substantive homogeneity in the various definitions of Western civilisation; disagreements, divergences, and contradictions abound. For example, R. R. Palmer in his *History of the Modern World* conceives of a Western World beginning with the Greeks and centred around the Mediterranean, but then breaking apart into three segments in the early Middle Ages—while Frank Roy Willis defines the West as "that civilization that developed in the continent of Europe and was carried to [...] areas in other

[321] Christos Yannaras, *Κοινωνιοκεντρικὴ Πολιτική: Κριτήρια [Communo-Centric Politics: Criteria]* (Athens: Estia, 2005); Christos Yannaras, "«Κοινωνιοκεντρικὴ» Πολιτική: Τί Σημαίνει; ["Communo-Centric" Politics: What Would This Mean?]," *Kathimerini*, June 16, 2002, sec. Feuilleton, http://www.kathimerini.gr/688373/opinion/epikairothta/arxeio-monimes-sthles/koinwniokentrikh-politikh-ti-shmainei.

parts of the globe that were colonised by people from Europe," which may or may not include the Greeks and the Romans. On the other hand, Edward Burns, Robert Lerner and Standish Meacham hold that "among all peoples of the ancient world, the one whose culture most clearly exemplified the spirit of Western society was the Greek or Hellenic," *but* "by about 700 AD, in place of a united Rome, there were three successor civilizations that stood as rivals [...] the Byzantine, the Islamic and the Western Christian."[322] However, we can safely say that the lowest common denominator of most, if not all, definitions of Western civilisation, popular and scholarly alike, revolve around the axes of classical Greece, Rome, Christianity, Renaissance, Enlightenment and Western Modernity.

Christos Yannaras sees the question of the "West" in a very different light, and discerns the basis and precondition for civilizational differences at the level of ontology and epistemology. A central aspect of Yannaras' vision is the enquiry into the differences between Western civilisation and the Greek-speaking civilisation in which the Church, undivided at first but Orthodox later on, initially blossomed. This is not mere *Kulturkritik*, as it evolves into a comprehensive contradistinction of *modes*: not of secondary differences, but on diverging *stances* towards being, knowledge, history, and the Church. It is of utmost importance, however, to clarify that this contradistinction is *internal* rather than *external*: it consists in the *self-criticism* of a Western thinker in a culturally wholly Western world, not in the comparison of today's West to today's Orthodox Church or, much less, to today's Greece. Yannaras laments a past, non-Western paradigm and approach to reality, the *criteria* of which are long gone in East and West alike. In his words:

> Let me therefore make one thing absolutely clear. The critique of western theology and tradition which I offer in this book does not contrast "Western" with something "right" which as an Orthodox I use to oppose something "wrong" outside myself. I am not attacking an external Western adversary. As a modern Greek, I myself somebody both the thirst for what is "right" and the reality of what is "wrong": a contradictory and alienated survival of ecclesiastical Orthodoxy in a society radically and unhappily Westernised. My critical stance towards the West is self-

[322] The views quoted in this paragraph are cited in Lawrence Birken, "What Is Western Civilization?," *The History Teacher* 25, no. 4 (1992): 451–52, https://doi.org/10.2307/494353.

> criticism; it refers to my own wholly Western mode of life. I am a Western person searching for answers to the problems tormenting Western people today.[323]

This is a hermeneutical key. Without this, Yannaras makes no sense; an approach of his stance as "Anti-Western" would make his texts woefully impenetrable and his contribution out of the reader's reach.

While Yannaras makes frequent references to his understanding of the "West" in his many writings, providing short definitions thereof, the most potent recapitulation of his understanding of the "West" (which, interestingly, is not juxtaposed to any "East") is to be found in his recent treatise *The Schism Engendered Europe*,[324] the title referring to the East–West Schism of 1054 AD, i.e. the break of communion between what are now the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. In spite of appearances, the book does not focus on the Great Schism, or on denominational differences between Orthodox Christianity and Western Christianity, i.e. Catholicism and Protestantism, or in religious matters *per se*; rather, the book focuses on what Yannaras reads as a fundamental difference in each culture's *approach* towards things—towards knowledge, reality, science, society, politics and human relationships—and historical development behind each approach respectively. And the cultures in question are, on the one hand, the Greek classical world and its Christian ecclesial continuation in the Eastern Roman Empire, a culture now extinct as a distinct civilizational entity; and, on the other hand, its historical deviation/inversion, resulting in a culture (the "West") bearing the potential and momentum of geographical universality, of civilizational globalisation.

Yannaras' narrative is in many ways precisely the polar opposite of that of Samuel P. Huntington, according to which "the legacies of the West from Classical civilization are many, including Greek philosophy and rationalism, Roman law, Latin, and Christianity. Islamic and Orthodox civilizations also inherited from Classical civilization but nowhere near

[323] *Orthodoxy and the West*, viii–ix.
[324] Yannaras, *The Great Schism Engendered Europe*.

to the same degree the West did."[325] For Yannaras, the differentiating mark of the "West" is precisely that it *does not* derive from classical civilisation, Greek philosophy or Christianity, but that it survives from their extinction as civilizational modes discernible as representative of what we would today term as state entities, a point to which we shall return. However, these differences do not pertain exclusively to the history, culture, politics or religion, but directly to *ontology*—the question concerning being *qua* being and its implications—and *epistemology*—the question concerning the criteria for the validity of knowledge, the nature of truth. As such, Yannaras' attempt at a comprehensive narrative on European history, leading to a political philosophy, can be categorised as *an ontology of the historico-social*.

A crucial *caveat:* it is important to understand that Yannaras does not claim that he does *history*: contrary to that, his claim is that, in a way which draws from but should not be conflated with the *data* the science of history brings into the discussion, a hermeneutical *synthesis* of those data is pending, a hermeneutical *approach* to their aggregation (i.e., precisely what in the social sciences would term as a *narrative*, a notion without any *per se* evaluative charge). He sets to propose such a hermeneutic *synthesis*, examining the societal and historical domain through the lens of ontological "traditions," of discernible patterns in each peoples' way of looking at the primary questions of being, meaning, and knowledge—and of the way their implicit answers influence and transform *civilisation*: politics, society, religion, art, architecture, scientific enquiry (a process that can run both ways).

Yannaras begins the book by articulating the need for a hermeneutic proposal that will connect the pieces of the historical puzzle that are the relations between "European West" and the "European East"—the relations of the "post-Roman" societies of Western Europe with *Hellenism*, which is the name he uses for the now extinct Eastern Roman civilisation that was a particular kind of classical Greece's Christianised continuation.[326] Focusing on

[325] Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 69–70.
[326] Yannaras, *The Great Schism Engendered Europe*, 13. Yannaras proposes a rather original schematisation of continuity–in–discontinuities (see, e.g., Yannaras, 76.): classical Greece and the Eastern Roman ("Byzantine") empire have a radically different *ontology*—in spite of the fact that the latter built upon the advances of the former—but share the same *epistemology*, the apophatic and communal epistemology of *participation*. We see in historical practice, he argues, that a discontinuity in *ontology* does not necessarily effect a cultural discontinuity (and vice versa, that possessing the same ontology does not guarantee cultural commonality); on the other hand, even cultures with different *ontologies*/metaphysical traditions/axes of meaning can demonstrate

Modern Greece, the author expresses his dissatisfaction with what he diagnoses as the current state of affairs: the European West sees itself as the heir to the legacy of classical Greece, Roman universality (οἰκουμενικότητα) and Christianity, while Greece—and post-Byzantine societies in general—out of a perceived inferiority to the advances of the West hastens to boast about its classical Greek predecessors engendering Western civilisation; Yannaras, however, declares that he will formulate a different approach to the relations between post-Roman West and Hellenism—and by extension, today's post-Byzantine and Westernised Greece.[327] As stated therein, the book intends to be in implicit conversation with Jacques Le Goff's *Europe est-elle née au Moyen Age?* [*Was Europe Born in the Middle Ages?*][328]—to provide both a supplement and an alternative to Le Goff's historical vision. Yannaras notes that in spite of the Le Goff's inquisitive title, what is taken for granted when one refers to "Europe" is that this actually commences with the birth of the "post-Roman West," i.e. of the new state of affairs in Europe as shaped by the core Migration Period (*Völkerwanderung*, mainly from the fourth to the sixth century AD),[329] the Barbarian Invasions which themselves mark the end of the Western part of the Roman world—and the fall of Rome itself. Agreeing with Le Goff, Yannaras asserts that it is indeed from these developments, from the overthrow of the Roman *ordo rerum* by new peoples, that the illustrious civilisation that is today a global and globalised paradigm emerged. However, it is precisely the peculiarity of these developments and of the civilizational evolutionary trajectory they entailed that radically differentiate this Western, European civilisation both from what preceded it in the European continent, i.e. the classical Greek and the Roman world, and from the continuation of this civilisation in the Eastern part of the Roman empire, which developed into a distinct civilizational entity[330]—a reality which Samuel P. Huntington emphatically asserts, as Yannaras is keen to remind us.

Following this introduction, the author proceeds to an exposition of what he picks out as the hallmarks of Graeco-Roman antiquity, its distinctive characteristics, i.e. the *unity* and

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continuity *if* their epistemology, their criteria for the validity of truth and knowledge, remain the same. This bold position of Yannaras' is elaborated and analysed in Dionysios Skliris, "Review Article: Christos Yannaras, The Great Schism Engendered Europe," *Theologia* 2015, no. 3 (2015): 379–90.

[327] Yannaras, *The Great Schism Engendered Europe*, 14–15.

[328] Jacques Le Goff, *Europe est-elle née au Moyen Age?* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2013); English edition, *The Birth of Europe*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006).

[329] Yannaras, *The Great Schism Engendered Europe*, 16.

[330] Yannaras, 16–17.

identity of this world. These comprise (i) the birth of critical enquiry in the Greek world, (ii) a peculiar *relational* empiricism (which will be later contrasted to intellectualism and the absolutisation of the Cartesian *cogito*), (iii) the communal (and apophatic) verification of knowledge, i.e. this civilisation's distinct yet implicit epistemological *stance* and general *tendency*[331] (iv) truth as a *mode of existence* rather than as a correct formulation, and (v) politics as a collective endeavour for iconising *truth*, and not merely usefulness, in a society.[332] For the "internationalisation" of these Greek hallmarks in the Graeco-Roman world comprising most of the then known *ecumene*, two factors played a decisive role: (vi) the implementation of Greek as a *lingua franca*, *de facto* at first—to the extent that the New Testament gospels *had* to be written in Greek—and much later *de jure* as well, which forms a linguistically defined mode of thinking, and (viii) the constitution of, firstly, Alexander the Great's empire—e.g., the Hellenic cities, with *agora* and *theatre*, that he founded and which by far outlived the empire itself—and, then, of the Roman world as a civilizational *ecumene* at first, an *ordo rerum* with a *religio imperii*: the internationalisation of a Hellenic cultural *mode.*[333]

From the dawn of critical enquiry in the Asia Minor's Ionian coast to the maturity of the Roman empire, it is not the *political* changes that disrupted the continuity of a civilizational *paradigm* that can be clearly discerned—a *paradigm* that had nothing to do with race as it expanded to a staggering number of races, Yannaras contends. However, the immense changes in the European continent effected by the Barbarian Invasions, the *Völkerwanderung*, particularly from the fourth to the sixth century with the Fall of Rome as its high point, had among other things the impact of gradually creating a second, parallel grand civilizational paradigm, which in time became antagonistic to the Graeco-Roman one. Yannaras bases his insights on a number of historical studies,[334] but centres on J.M. Wallace-Hadrill's *The Barbarian West—the Early Middle Ages, 400–1000 AD.*[335] "Barbarian" here

[331] Remarks made in Mitralexis, "Person, Eros, Critical Ontology: An Attempt to Recapitulate Christos Yannaras' Philosophy."on Yannaras' communal verification of knowledge, as well as in Sotiris Mitralexis, "Relation, Activity and Otherness in Christos Yannaras' Propositions for a Critical Ontology," in *Polis, Ontology, Ecclesial Event: Engaging with Christos Yannaras' Thought*, ed. Sotiris Mitralexis (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2018), 120–32, could prove helpful in elucidating this concept.
[332] Yannaras, *The Great Schism Engendered Europe*, 21–35.
[333] Yannaras, 36–46.
[334] expounded in Yannaras, 49–50 fn. 1.
[335] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Barbarian West 400-1000* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996).

stands for precisely non-Graeco-Roman, but Yannaras sees this difference as a predominantly cultural one.

Drawing on Wallace-Hadrill, the author notes how the new peoples of Europe, with the help of missionary activity, saw Christianisation as a *sine qua non* precondition for entering mainstream Graeco-Roman civilisation and its organised societies, i.e. for being considered as civilised. Christianity in the European space, however, had developed on a number of *preconditions* offered by Hellenic antiquity and its achievements in intellectual refinement. The Gospel had been articulated in the Greek language, with its vertiginous ability for discerning subtle nuances, while the Church's doctrine as it developed during the first Christian centuries was formulated on the basis and principles of the categories (though not of the philosophical content) of Greek philosophical thought (e.g., the full semantic content of the distinction between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις is not directly approachable even in Latin, where both *essentia* and *substantia* had been used for οὐσία, leading to profound confusion even today). Mass Christianisation rendered the proper reception of this philosophical and theological legacy, which was itself a prerequisite for a full adoption of Christianity, impossible for the newly baptised peoples. Yannaras sees this process as a *religionisation* of Christianity, as a gradual transformation of the *ecclesial event,* a reality fundamentally different from religion which itself presupposes a liberation from the preconditions of religion, into merely another *religion*,[336] with a God/"supreme being," faith as the acceptance of convictions, and morality as a law—all this constituting the polar opposite of the ecclesial event, in which God constitutes freedom from necessity and relational self-transcendence, calling humanity to reflect this divine mode of being.[337]

While the ecclesial event is fundamentally a communal event and constitutes/reflects a communo-centric paradigm (κοινωνιοκεντρικὸ παράδειγμα), a religionised Christianity marks an individualistic paradigm, the primacy of the natural subject. The fragmentation that this tendency engenders, the fragmentation effected in the Barbarian post-Roman world and the multitude of Barbarian races, paved the way for the emergence of what would be later

[336] This view and difference has been elaborated in Yannaras, *Against Religion*.
[337] Yannaras, *The Great Schism Engendered Europe*, 53–63.

called feudalism. A watershed moment for the developments in the European space was the emergence, after centuries of fragmentation, of a leader who could unite the races and kingdoms of this new, Barbarian post-Roman European reality around the Franks: Charles the Great, *Charlemagne* (742–814 AD).

As a political entity, the Roman Empire had fully survived in its Eastern part with New Rome–Constantinople as its capital; the political and administrative capital of the Empire had been transferred to Constantinople since Constantine the Great's time, and as tragic as the Fall of Rome was, it did not change that reality for the Romans, who would never identify themselves otherwise (the use of the name "Byzantium" for the empire and its subjects was introduced as late as the sixteenth century AD by Hieronymus Wolf and implemented precisely in order for it not to be referred to as "Roman," a name reserved for Charlemagne's empire). Yannaras portrays Charlemagne as a man who understood the need for creating an imperial political unity for the Franks and Europe's post-Roman peoples, united in peace (pax romana) and religion (religio imperii): an entity *distinct from* the Roman empire in the East, which would be its main adversary. This entity *could not* be Roman and Christian in the way that the Roman empire of Constantinople was, for it would thus lose the ability to maintain its distinctiveness. However, Yannaras contends, this entity *had to* be Christian, which was by then the "ticket to civilisation," and it *had* to be Roman, for this was the only known "imperial civilisation" in Europe and the only grand legacy to draw from. This gives birth to the need for a *second* Roman empire, with a *different* version of Christianity. Combined with the political interests of the papacy, the coronation of Charlemagne on 25 December 800 AD by Pope Leo III in St Peter's Basilica in Rome as the "Holy Roman Emperor" of another Roman empire, distinct from the active Roman empire in the East and the Roman Empress Irene of Athens, formed the symbolic epitome of the creation of this new, second, parallel Roman empire, with its own version of *ordo rerum,* a discernibly different Christian *religio imperii* and a *pax romana/christiana.*[338]

Yannaras is primarily interested in the civilizational *priorities* in collective outlook that emerge as the distillates of such historical processes: he sees *utilitarianism*

[338] Yannaras, 67–80. and further on.

(χρησιμοθηρία), the priority of being *useful* (rather than, for example, existentially true—and certainly in contrast to communo-centric criteria, to the priority of relationship and communion), as the primary differentiating mark of this *new* civilization that emerged out of Europe's Barbarian invasions. Yannaras considers this priority as a *pre-political* one, i.e. as one which presupposes a stage of political evolution *prior* to the one achieved by Athenian democracy and the *polis*.[339] "To seek for utility everywhere is entirely unsuited to men that are great-souled and free," as Aristotle would hasten to remind us.[340]

Subtle differences in language, religion, art, or architecture signify much greater and crucial civilizational differences. For Yannaras, the difference between approaching things as a dynamic "how," i.e. as a *mode,* a *mode of existence,* marks a fundamentally different outlook when compared to one that asserts *entities,* that enquires into a static "what" rather than a dynamic "how":

> In Greek, the word οὐσία derives from the feminine present participle of the verb to be [εἶναι], ὤν, οὖσα, ὄν; it signifies the event of participation in being, [...] the mode of participation. In the West, essence-nature (essentia-natura) signifies a quidditas (from quid: which, something); it does not refer to an active mode of existence but to a "something," to a definitive and stable given of an existent's existence, to something with permanent attributes allowing accidental differentiations. The West had and has an ontic understanding of essence: it accepts essence as a being, an entity, a "what"—not a "how."[341]

It should be noted that there is indeed a basis in Greek patristic tradition for an exorbitant focus on this modal "howness": again, Maximus the Confessor's corpus shall serve as a witness to that.[342] This *modal* difference in approach forms the focal point of Yannaras' ontologically-inspired hermeneutic proposal on "Greece" and "West," rather than on "East" and "West."

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[339] Yannaras, 85–87.
[340] Aristotle, Politics, Book 8, section 1338b: "τὸ δὲ ζητεῖν πανταχοῦ τὸ χρήσιμον ἥκιστα ἁρμόττει τοῖς μεγαλοψύχοις καὶ τοῖς ἐλευθέροις."
[341] Yannaras, *The Great Schism Engendered Europe*, 81.
[342] For an example of this Maximian *topos,* see Mitralexis, "Ever-Moving Repose," 172–83.

As soon as the West's claim (i.e., the claim of this *new* Western Europe as formed and transformed by Charlemagne's historical presence) to being Roman and to constituting a Roman empire materialised, "Greece" or rather "the Greeks" emerged as a negatively loaded term for the Roman East—a way to refer to the "other" Roman empire without granting it with the all-important name of "Roman." Yannaras names about ten different books under the common title *Contra Errores Graecorum*, "against the errors and fallacies of the Greeks" (or similar titles: *Adversus Graecos*, "against the Greeks," *Contra Graecos* etc.), which emerged and circulated from the ninth to the thirteenth century—with Thomas Aquinas' own *Contra Errores Graecorum* (1263 AD) being the most famous of them. During that crucial historical period, the author sees *religious* differences (which, for him, signify the deviation from the ecclesial event that is the gradual emergence of a new, distinct Western Christian *religion*) morphing into *political* differences—or rather the other way around: the Western European political need for civilizational differentiation from the Roman East as turning into religious divergence.[343] This climaxed in the addition to the Nicaean Creed of the *filioque*, "and the Son," concerning inter-Trinitarian relations, i.e. the procession of the Holy Spirit by the Son—a fundamental yet gradual change to which the Western Church itself protested, as is the case with Pope Leo III's silver plates on the walls of St' Peter's Basilica with the original Creed inscribed on them, before Benedict VIII's official inclusion of *filioque* in the Creed (1014 AD). Yannaras recognises the political value and, perhaps, rationale of such moves, but at the same time he ascribes ontological content to them; he considers them as signifying deep and very real differences in how each civilization, the post-Roman West and what would later be called the "Byzantine" East i.e. the late antique and mediaeval Graeco-Roman world, approached the fundamental questions of existence: the implications of, or behind, such historical events are read as ontological, theological, and epistemological.[344] Political changes, changes in church organisation, church life, and theology, as well as the new directions of mediaeval Western art and architecture, gradually create an immense rift, only a symbolic moment of which would be the Great Schism of 1054 AD. Yannaras contends that the core difference which these differences circumscribe is the introduction of an understanding of salvation as an *individual* event (pending, for example, on religious

[343] Yannaras, *The Great Schism Engendered Europe*, 85, 91–94.
[344] Yannaras, 95–97.

morality) rather than as an *ecclesial,* communal event.[345] The theological root for these developments is to be found *a posteriori* in Augustine,[346] the fourth/fifth century Latin Church Father who centuries later rose to become a foundational figure for Western Christianity, Roman Catholic and (much later) Protestant as well. Yannaras studies the teachings that derive from Augustine's thought, which he sees as conducive to the religionisation of the ecclesial event,[347] and points out the later impact of the distinctive characteristics of his thought in intellectual domains, even modern and contemporary ones, seemingly wholly unrelated to church, theology, and Christianity.[348] In doing this, the author highlights the particularity of post-Roman Western civilisation, of the civilizational trajectory that began with late antiquity's *Völkerwanderung* to end up being a culture with an unprecedented dynamics of universality, albeit a civilisation of utilitarianism instead of communion, in stark contrast to its great historical adversary, the Graeco-Roman, and later *ecclesial,* civilisation's otherness[349]—the capability for the historical survival of which was crucially, if not in essence definitively, undermined in 1204 AD, with the Sack of Constantinople that formed part of the Fourth Crusade. Yannaras' analysis of how this civilizational difference begins *from* ontology (from a difference in *modes* of approach, *modes* of existence) *through* history, i.e. historical realisation, *to* the organisation of the social (politics, society, institutions)[350] forms a particularly original contribution to the litany of readings of mediaeval history through an East-West perspective.

The latter part of the book deals with the further development of this dichotomy in modernity and its history, and particularly on how the Modern Greek state is far from being a continuation of the Graeco-Roman, *ecclesial*, "Byzantine" civilisation, being just another modern Western nation-state instead—a reality which reaffirms the extinct character of this other, communo-centric civilisation that materialised in the European East.[351] Of particular interest is Yannaras' analysis on how the Modern Greek state was founded precisely as a *pre*-Byzantine, neo-classical "Athenian-centred" state (while Athens played an extremely minor

[345] Yannaras, 98–117.
[346] It should be noted, however, that Augustine was always cited in the East as one of the most important Church Fathers; for example, Maximus the Confessor names him as one of the pillars of the church's doctrine.
[347] Yannaras, *The Great Schism Engendered Europe*, 21–156.
[348] Yannaras, 157–86.
[349] Yannaras, 189–213.
[350] Yannaras, 217–35.
[351] Yannaras, 239–330.

role in previous centuries, compared to other cities), with more care for restoring the names of classical antiquity's famous cities than for the restoration of the collective life of the newly liberated Greek people, echoing the romanticism of the Philhellenic movement and confirming a reading, according to which the legacy of classical antiquity was preserved in the *West*, and not in the Christianised Roman empire's Eastern continuation.[352] The official Modern Greek *intelligentsia* adopted this scheme, with Adamantios Korais' *metakenosis* doctrine being iconic of this development.[353] In a scathing critique of nationalism as guaranteeing the annihilation of true *catholicity* and civilizational universality, Yannaras also criticises the violent formation of a Greek state Church, later recognised as autocephalous (i.e. self-governing), by ecclesiastically cutting the Greeks away from the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople,[354] in a move of "ecclesiastical nationalism" that further estranged Modern Greece from its Hellenic legacy.[355] Thus, the most potent proof of the historical extinction of the "Hellenic *mode*" as a mode of a communo-centric organisation of collective life is Modern Greece itself.

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A digression would be useful here: while Yannaras' critique of the modern conception of human rights is perhaps one of the aspects of his thought that have already been dealt with most extensively by secondary literature and as such will not claim the epicentre of our attention, the framework within which he articulates this critique is worth mentioning. In spite of the fact that the main text on this, *The Inhumanity of Rights*,[356] has not been yet translated into English, it has drawn attention—and, as such, it would be of assistance to the present project to trace the formulation of the main argument of the book as far as a narrative on the West is concerned, especially in order to see whether Yannaras *rejects* the notion of human rights, as has been maintained by scholarship and been rehashed ever since, or rather whether he proposes a *corrective* to them, as is my view. Yannaras pinpoints the notion of individual rights as the identifying characteristic *par excellence* of modern Western culture.

[352] Yannaras, 239–45.
[353] Alexandros Papaderos, *Metakenosis: Griechenlands Kulturelle Herausforderung Durch Die Aufklärung in Der Sicht Des Korais Und Des Oikonomos* (Meisenheim am Glan: Verlag Anton Hain, 1970); and Sotiris Mitralexis, "Η Κοραϊκὴ «Μετακένωσις» Σύμφωνα Μὲ Τὴ Διδακτορικὴ Διατριβὴ Τοῦ Ἀλέξανδρου Παπαδεροῦ Στὸ Mainz Τὸ 1962 [Korais' 'Metakenosis' According to the Doctoral Thesis of Alexander Papaderos in Mainz, 1962]," in *Πολιτικὴ Ἀδολεσχία I [Political Contributions I]* (Athens: Manifesto, 2011), 103–20.
[354] on this, see Sotiris Mitralexis, "The Liberation of Church from State in Greece, and the Administrative Fragmentation of Ecclesial Jurisdictions," in *Ex Oriente Lux*, ed. Anna Zhyrkova and Martha Małecka-Kuzak (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Ignatianum, 2017), forthcoming.
[355] Yannaras, *The Great Schism Engendered Europe*, 246–49.
[356] Yannaras, *Inhumanity of Rights*.

His main concern here is not whether one should assume an affirmative or negative stance towards individual rights themselves, i.e. whether one "accepts" or "rejects" them, but rather the kind of cultural, anthropological, and political coordinates that are presupposed and that establish themselves through the current predominant understanding of human rights in all its complexity.

From the very first pages of his *The Inhumanity of Rights*, individual rights are not defined as merely a legal epiphenomenon but as the very substance, axis and constant of modernity. This manifests itself in the central, irreplaceable role that the language of rights acquires when dealing with crucial issues: for example, any debate on *euthanasia* inevitably, almost exclusively, rests on the circumscription of rights: defining where the rights of the patient, the doctor, and the relatives begin and end, as it is through their equilibrium that moral and legal best practice arises.[357] According to Yannaras, the understanding of crucial anthropological constants such as pain or death is stiflingly suppressed and self-evidently subordinated to this logic of reciprocal circumscription within the modernist paradigm, a stance that he opposes in self-criticism, from the perspective of a person who participates in the (Western) culture that engendered the modern notion of rights.

It is to be noted that a necessary precondition for this understanding of rights is a certain implicit philosophical anthropology, namely the view of humans as "in principle undifferentiated natural individuals,"[358] an argument that will form the basis of Yannaras' critique. Once more, this critique of pillars of modernity and Western civilization such as the notion of rights or a legalistic anthropology is introduced firstly as a contribution to political theory and secondly as a kind of *self-criticism*, i.e. not as a dismissal emerging from an external point of view but as the discovery *from within* modernity of a fundamental lack that leads to the crisis of modernity.[359] And this critique is articulated with the final aim of formulating a communo-centric counterproposal to the current understanding of rights,[360] an evolution thereof, one that is based on the spirit of the historical experience of the ecclesial tradition. For Yannaras, communo-centrism (κοινωνιοκεντρισμός) has a completely different meaning to *sociocentrism*, a difference made plain by the semantic distance between the polysemous Greek notion of *κοινωνία* and the Latin *societas*, a distance to which Christos Yannaras often refers and on which he elaborates in order to illuminate these interpretative

[357] Yannaras, 53.
[358] Yannaras, 7.
[359] Yannaras, 8.
[360] Yannaras, 9.

distinctions. "Society [κοινωνία], in Greek, can signify the unity resulting from the dynamics of coexistent relationships, the functionality of vital bonds formed through interaction, the shared communion in language, rationality and life experience, the erotic union and carnal fusion, the unity of soul and body."[361] In order to underscore the polysemy of the Greek word *κοινωνία* and its use within different contexts with multiple meanings, Yannaras provides numerous Aristotelian and Platonic passages. In contrast, as he shows through the deployment of an equal volume of bibliographical references, "Latin offers the word *societas* in order to merely signify the reality of collective coexistence, the objective sum of individuals that have entered into a contract for a particular purpose. *Societas* is the collective resulting from a corporate agreement-contract, the association of partners with common pursuits and joint responsibility of commitments and benefits for the contract."[362]

The Inhumanity of Rights has not yet been translated into English, although it would be of great interest to witness its reception and the response to it by Anglophone scholarship on the issue of rights—the volume of which seems to confirm the impression that the notion of human rights is of fundamental importance to Western civilization, both as regards its self-understanding and its crisis. Here I will present its basic outline, hoping that the text itself will be soon accessible to the Anglophone and international reader. It is important to understand that Yannaras works with subtle philosophical nuances rather than coarse patterns, and his work should be read with this *caveat* in mind. Thus, when analysing, e.g., the undifferentiated individual character of rights and its possible dead ends, this does not constitute a political thesis among the many possible (e.g. dismissal, acceptance, proposal for substitution), but rather an attempt to elaborate the concept of rights further. To regard Yannaras' critique as a "dismissal of human rights" would be a crude caricature, and it isn't mere coincidence that it is precisely this kind of caricature that has often been reproduced in the Greek public sphere.

For Yannaras, placing the notion of human rights at the epicentre of a civilizational paradigm implies their prioritisation over personal otherness, over actual (and not abstract/legal) social relations. At a theoretical level, human rights refer to undifferentiated individuals of a "species" and, as such, they are to be applied in a uniform, equal and undifferentiated way. Thus, the cultivation of a culture of human rights has as its presupposition a fundamental anthropology of the abstract natural, individual, and legal

[361] Yannaras, 108.
[362] Yannaras, 109.

subject.[363] However, isn't this the given and self-evident foundation of every system that pertains to law and rights? The author locates completely different understandings of justice and its consequent rights in a number of cultures, one of which is that of ancient, classical Greece. He considers the implicit protection that was given to free citizens of Athenian democracy much more complete than that of human rights in modernity, something that makes the current notion of human rights a *pre-political* attainment, which falls short of the corresponding *paradigm* that one finds in the ancient *polis*.[364]

Apart from other constitutive elements of citizenship and of the *ontological/metaphysical* —and not merely utilitarian—imperative that Yannaras locates in the Athenian *polis*, being an Athenian citizen entailed a reality without an official "protection of rights," but one which, according to the author, in fact recognised more extensive rights—as self-evident—than those that are guaranteed through the current state of affairs, if one were to approach this in contemporary and anachronistic terms *mutatis mutandis*—that is, by taking into account the objective of social relations "κατὰ λόγον," i.e. according to harmony, rationality and relationality[365] instead of the priority that is given during modernity to the utilitarian imperative.[366] Nevertheless, even in this multiplicity of understandings of justice and its attendant rights, one still sees marked variation. Based on the pre-Socratic philosopher Anaximander, Yannaras speaks about a justice mentality of *relationships*, according to which "since the detriment, corruption, decay that time brings about is itself a price to be paid for a given injustice, then we define as just the kind of relationship that does not lead to detriment, corruption, and decay and does not alienate the conditions and the agents of this relationship. Correspondingly, we define as unjust the relationship that violates existential integrity, that alienates and distorts one or both of the agents of the relationship"[367]—the notion of *relationship* bearing here the philosophical depth that Yannaras so distinctively applies to the term. Such approaches could be based on the priority of the "existential authenticity of man" rather than mere usefulness, efficacy or social utility.[368] Yannaras will detect this distinction and priority in key passages from Aristotle's *Politics*,[369] as well as in other texts of classical antiquity. Furthermore, he gives a comprehensive analysis of the rationale of *law* in Aristotle

[363] Yannaras, 17.
[364] Yannaras, 45–52.
[365] Yannaras, 69–70.
[366] Yannaras, 72.
[367] Yannaras, 29.
[368] Yannaras, 37.
[369] Yannaras, 38–40.

according to his reception thereof, as well as an analysis of what he regards as Aristotle's distorted reception in Western thought.[370] In contradistinction to this, he states that the primacy of efficacy and utility evolved on religious grounds, during the emergence of Western Christendom's theologico-cultural alterity to the Christian East,[371] as his general hermeneutic scheme would suggest.

This cultural difference will be analysed extensively as far as the domains that are of interest to the current project are concerned,[372] especially in terms of the different realities that ostensibly synonymous words signified in the European East and the European West during the classical period, which Yannaras takes as an indication of the very different *premises* on which Western and Eastern European civilisation, and thus language as well, stood: κοινωνία/societas, νόμος/lex, δίκαιο/ius, ἦθος/ἠθική-mos/moralitas[373] etc. will be analysed as examples of this diversity. According to Yannaras' reading, these differences are magnified over the centuries, especially through the different understanding of Christianity that we find in East and West, leading to the formation of a (rather reductively but clearly defined) *communo-centric* cultural paradigm on one hand and an *individual-centred* one on the other, as already noted. The historical emergence of Christianity generates a whole new set of circumstances: the evangelical conception of justice goes far beyond the logic of protecting the human subject (indicatively, Mt 5:39-41) and refers to a notion of justice embedded in love, self-transcendence, self-denial, thereby envisioning, at the same time, a new paradigm of perfection (Mt 5: 44–48). Every sense of justice is dislocated: according to Christian gospel, the last become first (Mk 10:31, Lk 13:20), the servant and not the ruler is considered greater (Lk 22: 25-7), the servant of other people is proclaimed as the "first" (Mt 20:27) etc.[374] A notion of justice that seeks to protect the individual is being derailed by the Christian witness, as is, for example, the case in the texts of St. Isaac the Syrian (fifth century), where charity, a notion that is by nature and intrinsically unjust, is considered preferable to righteous judgement, which is identified with evil on account of its opposition to charity, which is, in turn, now seen as the true justice. Isaac the Syrian will reach to the point of extracting the notion of justice from God, since we have no access to or knowledge

[370] Yannaras, 90–107.
[371] Yannaras, 75–89.
[372] Yannaras, 108–30.
[373] Yannaras, 108–12.
[374] Yannaras, 118.

of *His* justice, which is obviously different, even contradictory, to what we would recognise as just in our lives.[375]

In the rest of the book, the author continues his argument concerning the *premises* behind the historical and intellectual trajectory that eventually led to the formulation of modern human rights, and the alternative route that he identifies in the Graeco-Christian East, one leading not to protecting the individual over and against other bearers of rights, but one guarding the person's capacity to arrive to communion *with* other people. For Yannaras, "if freedom is not to be conceived of in terms of possessiveness; if it is to be disconnected from the possessive demand and to be correlated with the personal self-transcendence that is a precondition for the communion of life; if it is to be identified with personal otherness—namely, released from every imperative of impersonal equalisation—, the kind of otherness that is realized and manifests itself only in communion; then, the whole edifice of the jurisprudence of human rights will crumble. A new cultural paradigm emerges."[376] Seeing that this is the case, Yannaras' critical treatment of human rights is more of a *corrective*, a proposal about how rights could be developed in a direction that would free them from the dead ends of late modernity, rather than a *rejection*. While Yannaras supplies the reader with examples of how non-Western societies would guard a person's rights without imposing an anthropology of non-communal individuals, he does not develop a *concrete* plan on how his counterproposal to the current understanding of rights could materialise and what form it would take; as such, the proposal cannot but be open to the critique of it hanging in mid-air.

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In recapitulating Yannaras' hermeneutic proposal on European history and the West, we would say that, together with his other writings, Yannaras' reading of European history implies a political philosophy as its corollary which centres on the notion of *mode* (τρόπος). The semantic content of *mode* (τρόπος) is foundational for Yannaras' thought *mode* and signifies a fluid and dynamic tendency within history, neither a self-sufficient entity, a *res,* nor a finite category or an isolated quality; as such, Yannaras' approach resist a

[375] Yannaras, 113–20.
[376] Yannaras, 24.

categorisation thereof as *essentialist*, for it does not identify an objectifiable essence of what *is* and what *isn't* "Western."

Implicitly, Yannaras' notion of *mode*, a certain *howness*, draws heavily upon Maximus the Confessor's ontological triad of historicisation (λόγος–τρόπος–τέλος, i.e. *logos*, mode and end).[377] Dionysios Skliris, himself a Maximian scholar, notes in a review article that is perhaps the most serious engagement with Yannaras' *The Schism Engendered Europe* to date that this way of seeing a civilizational paradigm as a *mode* entailing a primarily ontological content can be traced back to Yannaras' early works, for example in his *Person and Eros* (1976)

> but gradually comes to the forefront of [Yannaras'] thought, completing as a third axis his ontology along with the notions of "person" [πρόσωπο] and "relation." In speaking of a *mode*, we are referring to "that" which is not an idea or ideology, but to what is transmitted independently of conceptual understanding from one generation to another, from the teacher to the pupil, from the master to apprentice, from the Elder to the younger monk, from a spiritual or biological parent to a child; we are referring to a gift by a person we love. One could say that the *mode* is what remains when one forgets the totality of the particular content of a teacher's teaching and we remain solely with the teacher's way, the teacher's *mode*, with a universal *ethos* or character transmitted imperceptibly and which is ultimately what is of essence, while we were thinking that we would simply learn a particular craft.[378]

Skliris notes how this "Hellenic mode" is not another name for nationalism, but the very annihilation of the possibility of nationalism, which would require a clearly deniable, reified "*ellinikotita*" and, above all, a historically tangible subsistence. Not only does Yannaras' "Greek mode" defy such subsistence, but it emerges *precisely when* this subsistence is nowhere to be found, in the utter absence of any historically distinct *Greek* state—or imperial—entity:

[377] cf. Skliris, "Le Concept de Tropos Chez Maxime Le Confesseur."
[378] Skliris, "Review Article: Christos Yannaras, The Great Schism Engendered Europe," 379–80.

> Insisting on the *mode*, the author wants to juxtapose the Hellenic *mode* to a nationalistic and ideological understanding of Hellenism that would shrink it either to an ethno-racial heritage enclosed within a modern national state or to a coherent ideology and the illusory attempt to hold on to it through force and power that would be its corollary. On the contrary, the Greek *mode* is considered by Yannaras as having survived, flourished and borne fruit precisely when it was non definable in state sovereignty or other varieties of sovereignty, as was the case during the Roman Empire, the Ottoman occupation or during other periods of Hellenism's creative indefinability.[379]

Yannaras notes how this Greek *mode* is decisively undermined by Greek nationalism, how it perishes historically precisely when, and to the extent that, Greek nationalism prevails. Both in his treatises as well as in his weekly newspaper articles, Yannaras condemns Greek nationalism as a grave danger to any valuable alterity discernible within Greek culture, as the primary threat even to *patriotism*: "Nationalism is a disaster, a false perversion of patriotism, which it alienates and turns into an ideology. [...] Nationalism substitutes life's experience with a narcissistic psychological stubbornness which it displays as convictions enforceable on everyone. Nationalism implements a propagandistic use of history towards an illusionary 'high.' Nationalism equals boasting and hollow conceit, it claims the feats of ancestors for one's ego, as well as the privileges that follow from them."[380] Consistently throughout his *corpus*, Yannaras identifies nationalism as the primary threat to any fecund civilizational otherness: "Hellenism [...] ended in 1922. Naturally, the mourning for the disaster and the pain for the definitive loss gave way to delusions. The novel historical prime matter for these delusions of survival was *nationalism.* Nationalism is patriotism, when it is turned into an ideology, the psychological overcompensation for the inferiority complex emerging from adopting a second-hand identity." [381] And he chooses to identify with those representatives of Modern Greek intellectual legacy that have first taken up the battle against nationalism as a ideologically formulated perversion of being a Greek: "A hundred years since the imposition of state nationalism [...] were needed before a current of fecund resistance to the

[379] Skliris, 380.
[380] Christos Yannaras, "Τὸ «ὅραμα» Νὰ Γίνει ἡ Ἑλλάδα Σιγκαπούρη... [The 'vision' of Turning Greece into Singapore...]," *Kathimerini*, November 28, 2010, http://www.kathimerini.gr/722944/opinion/epikairothta/arxeio-monimes-sthles/to-orama-na-ginei-h-ellada-sigkapoyrh.
[381] Yannaras, *The Great Schism Engendered Europe*, 284.

transformation of *ellinikotita*[382] into a state nationalist ideology could emerge within Greek society; a current by intellectuals and artists, the 'Generation of the '30s.'"[383]—Yorgos Seferis, Odysseas Elytis, Yannis Ritsos et al.

To return to the question of his *modal* understanding of Greek otherness, and apart from its fundamental juxtaposition to nationalism, *mode* also eludes reification as a *concept*—and as such escapes both the Scylla of essentialism and the Charybdis of nominalism. In the same way that Greek nationalism guarantees the eradication of the Greek *mode,* conceptualising this mode, i.e. turning it into an ideology or a belief system, annihilates it, robs it of its very modality (τροπικότητα); Skliris notes that

> by approaching the meaning of the "Greek *mode*," one can easily fall prey to contradiction, since from its very nature a *mode* is not a concept. We can say that a *mode* is precisely the opposite of a concept, and that by approaching it conceptually we are depriving it of its deeper dynamics. In contrast to any concept, a *mode* consists in acquiring an *ethos*, perhaps by granting it with a special personal modification, without an *a priori* intention to control what one acquires through concepts or to impose it as an ideology. What can be achieved, however, and what this book attempts, is to point out *a posteriori* certain moments/milestones of this transmitted *mode* and their significance. Certain formulations that signify the experience of the *mode*, without claiming to exhaust it, can be considered as such landmarks.[384]

This indefinability of the *mode*, which only emerges visibly as *points* in history, constitutes a peculiar kind of history as philosophical poetry, which in turn introduces fertile ground for a political philosophy aimed at reclaiming history's yet unattained *ecclesial* mode in the *Eschaton*, beyond nations, but *not* beyond the historically incarnated *mode* of civilizational particularity. For, while "in Christ Jesus neither Jew nor Gentile, for you are all one" (Gal. 3:28), *historicity* entails saving what has been loved; such a view resonates in a

[382] I will be retaining the Greek word "*ellinikotita*" instead of translating it, as a number of translations will not do: "Greekness" identifies a property or substance, which is precisely the opposite of Yannaras' *modal*, experiential understanding; "Hellenicity" has essentialist undertones as well, etc.
[383] Yannaras, *The Great Schism Engendered Europe*, 255.
[384] Skliris, "Review Article: Christos Yannaras, The Great Schism Engendered Europe," 380.

remark by Georges Florovsky, "What shall pass from history into eternity? The human person with all its relations, such as friendship and love. And in this sense also *culture*, since a person without a concrete cultural face would be a mere fragment of humanity".[385]

A Subversive Orthodoxy?

An assessment of Christos Yannaras' proposal, and particularly of his understanding of "the West," will take place later in this book — utilising perspectives drawn from critical geopolitics, postcolonialism and post-secularism. What must now be clarified is that Yannaras aspires to formulate a *comprehensive counterproposal* to today's politics and civilisation at large. This counter-proposal *draws from* the historical past and is informed by Orthodox Christianity, but it does not consist of a call to *return* to said past (which would be a classic conservative gesture). Rather than that, it is a call to create something *new* on the *basis* of collective historical experience, something *new* which would overthrow and replace the current order of things on every level, i.e. the political, religious, cultural, jurisprudential and philosophical level. What we are dealing with here is indeed a *subversive Orthodoxy*— and it is interesting to see how the same nucleus of ideas evolved into a substantially different subversive Orthodoxy in the case of Theodoros Ziakas' social ontology, as we will see in the following chapter.

[385] Cited by the late Florovsky scholar, Fr. Matthew Baker, in a sermon he would deliver on March 5, 2015. Fr Matthew Baker, "The City of Cain and the City of Jesus," Orthodox Christian Network, March 5, 2015, http://myocn.net/city-cain-city-jesus/.

Chapter 5

"A Luscious Anarchism in All of This": Interlude — A "Neo-Orthodox" Current?

Abstract

In this chapter I examine the "Neo-Orthodox movement" as the context in which our subversive Orthodoxies first emerged. I question whether "Neo-Orthodoxy" is a terminologically viable category and analyse its premises, I examine the social and historical context, and I provide an outline of important figures of the "movement" besides Christos Yannaras (treated in the previous chapter) and Theodoros I. Ziakas (treated in the next chapter), i.e. Stelios Ramfos' inversion of "Neo-Orthodoxy" and Kostas Zouraris' deviation from "Neo-Orthodoxy."

The convention has it that a current of thought, a movement, is introduced before delving deeper into the ideas of its protagonists. Here we are taking the reverse direction, first having introduced the reader to the cultural/political aspects of Christos Yannaras' thought (albeit noting that the ontological/theological aspects thereof are the most prevalent and central), subsequently addressing the question of the "Neo-Orthodox movement" (*Νεορθοδοξία* — centring primarily in the '80s) of which he is regarded a pre-eminent figure, and only then focusing on Theodoros I. Ziakas as another representative thereof. Thus, the reader is first familiarised with some core ideas of a protagonist before approaching the question of the "Neo-Orthodox movement," a question that is arguably not devoid of a certain ambiguity and opacity, given that the "Neo-Orthodox movement" is neither *neo*-Orthodox nor, properly speaking, a movement or an ideology.[386]

[386] Vassilis Xydias, "'New' or 'Old': Orthodoxy in the Limelight," *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 11, no. 2 (1984): 71–72. remarks as early as 1984 why "Neo-Orthodoxy" cannot be conceived of as an *ideology* or as a *movement*: "Apart from the wide publicity the debate [on 'Neo-Orthodoxy'] received, there was another important effect of its adoption by the mass media. This was its adulteration into a news item ... Thus 'Neo-Orthodoxy' was depicted as a movement of ideas, as an ideological current, as a system of ideas supported by a certain group. The result ... was the very name of 'Neo-Orthodoxy', given to the movement by those outside of it ... But this is quite unrepresentative of the multi-dimensional and shifting reality of a 'Neo-Orthodoxy' which lacks the qualifications of unity and consistency which ought to characterise a genuine ideological current. On the contrary, 'Neo-Orthodoxy' contains so many different living sides which are fundamental differences, and

The context: before and after

From the '60s up to the new millennium, times have been quite tumultuous for Greece — and for its search for identity. A military dictatorship, a post-authoritarian phase invested in rebuilding institutions and parliamentary democracy and in entering the European Community, the subsequent hegemony of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) and the prevailing figure of Andreas Papandreou, the transition to Costas Simitis' "Modernisation," the dismantling of the USSR and its "actually existing socialism"; all these events had profound effects on a shifting ideological landscape concerning national identity and the tug of war between modernisation and tradition. Perhaps the most important development, however, was the Greek people's ambivalence towards the European Community and, by extension, the European Union. June 1959 saw Greece applying for accession to the European Economic Community, to which it was admitted in June 1961. During Greece's military dictatorship (1967–1974), this agreement was effectively liquidated; it is with the subsequent *Metapolitefsi* ("polity change") that a trajectory of European integration was taken on anew, and Greek prime minister Constantinos Caramanlis filed the application for full accession to the European Community in July 1975, with Greece being accepted as a full member of the EU in June 1979, a decision effective on January 1, 1981. Andreas Papandreou's 1974–1981 campaign for PASOK's ascendancy to power, which eventually took place in October 1981, combined Euroscepticism with anti-Americanism, with political slogans against the EEC/EU and NATO abounding; PASOK's governmental stance would become increasingly pro-Europe, culminating in the prototypically Europhile governments of Costas Simitis (1996–2004). It is telling how the Greek state itself describes, through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greece's shifting stance on matters European — in spite of the fact that this account refers exclusively to the successive Greek governments and their actions:

> Greece's participation in the European Community/Union over the period 1981-2002 could be divided into three basic sub-periods: the

not simply an expression of pluralism in its outlook, that to insist on its formation as an ideology would be to misrepresent it. ... What can be said for the moment is that although it is impossible to imagine 'neo-Orthodoxy' articulated outside the debate around it, or rather outside its development in common and in opposition with intellectual inquiries of the left and of secular criticism in present-day culture, one can understand 'Neo-Orthodoxy' much better by concentrating on it as a reaction of certain Christians to the crisis being experienced by the Church in Greece."

first, from 1981 to 1985, the second, from 1985 to 1995, and the third, from 1996 to date. The first period was characterized by Greece's strong doubts concerning certain aspects of the European integration. One of the country's main goals was the re-determination of its position within the community by means of establishing a "special regime" of relations and regulations. ... During this period Greece was particularly reserved with regard to the model of European integration, especially in areas such as the role of institutions, politics and defence. During the second period of participation, the policy Greece maintained with regard to the EU was characterized by the gradual adoption of stronger pro-integration positions. Particularly from 1988 onwards, Greece began to support the "federal" integration model as well as the development of joint policy in new areas (education, health, and environment), the strengthening of supra-national institutions (Commission, Parliament) and the development of a joint foreign and security policy by the Union. On the other hand, however, inconsistencies remained in both the sector of economy, with the country diverging from the average "community" development level, and the political sector, with the issue of the FYROM name, which was defused when the Interim Accord was signed. ... The third period of Greece's participation in the Community/Union commenced in 1996 and was characterised by even further support for the idea and process of European integration, deepening integration in every sector, in line with the federal model. Greece was among the Member States supporting the adoption of a European Constitution. ... It was also characterized by an effort towards greater economic and social convergence with the fulfilment of the "convergence criteria" set by the Maastricht Treaty and Greece's participation as a full member in the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) as well as adoption of the single currency (euro) on January 1, 2002. In addition to the EU deepening, Greece has been a fervent supporter of the Union's enlargement. She worked with dedication to make possible the accession of the countries of Eastern Europe to the Union, despite a general hesitation. ... Today,

> Greece still strongly supports EU deepening and enlargement, and the next stop is the Western Balkans' full accession to the European Union.[387]

To return to the ideological aspect, upon emerging from the colonel's regime and entering a polity of parliamentary democracy, the people of Greece turned decisively left, leading to the victory of Papandreou's Panhellenic Socialist Movement and the theretofore prevailing national ideology of "Helleno-Christianity" suffered an immense retreat (having also been effectively identified with the colonels' regime and the ecclesiastical coup that came with it and illegally installed a hierarchy sympathetic to it at the head of the Church of Greece). This happened both as a reaction to the junta itself and to the earlier, pre-1967 right-wing-dominated political landscape of the country, coupled with a Christianity invested in various forms of anti-communist struggle and rhetoric — a Christianity heavily influenced, if not dictated, by the pietistic intellectual climate characteristic of the Zoë Brotherhood and its offshoots and its proximity to political life, particularly during the colonels' regime, if not by the state itself. A broad renegotiation of left-wing identities would take place during the '80s in view of the social, political and economic transfiguration of the country during PASOK's reign, leading to the brief interlude of a New Democracy conservative government (1990–93). During the '90s, along with the collapse of the Eastern Bloc in general and the effect this had on left-wing discourse, Greece would face more concrete challenges: the Macedonia naming dispute and the breakup of Yugoslavia, a full-fledged war in Greece's neighbourhood. The ideological itineraries and shifts during this long period, from the '60s up to the end of the '90s, would be the object of a dedicated study — or more; what concerns us here is the wider canvas on which the phenomenon under question emerged and flourished.

"Neo-Orthodoxy": a term without a viable definition

What is usually (i.e., journalistically) meant by the term "Neo-Orthodox movement," the core of the phenomenon pointed at, is the dialogue between Marxists and Christians that

[387] Hellenic Republic; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Greece's Course in the EU," January 28, 2016, http://www.mfa.gr/en/foreign-policy/greece-in-the-eu/greeces-course-in-the-eu.html.

took place in the '80s: people, books, articles (many of them in the magazine *Anti/Ἀντί*), and conferences attempting a previously unthinkable exchange of ideas in search for commonalities. This was made possible by the emergence of a number of public intellectuals that professed both a profound interest and/or faith in traditional Orthodox Christianity and left-wing political action or allegiance (e.g. Kostis Moskoff, Kostas Zouraris, Dionysis Savvopoulos, among others). However, to claim that the term is exhausted in this limited phenomenon, or indeed that there is (or that there could be) a definition accurately describing the phenomenon *at large*, would be problematic. For a number of figures central to what has been described as the "Neo-Orthodox movement" were never part of the Left and have never professed themselves as politically left-wing. Christos Yannaras would be an obvious example, but this creates insurmountable terminological difficulties: it is hardly possible for a definition of a "movement" to be tenable if the chief representatives of this movement elude that very definition. Defining "Neo-Orthodoxy" as a new public *theology* uttered by theologians and people of the Church banishes certain key figures from the definition (Kostis Moskoff, Kostas Zouraris, Stelios Ramfos); defining it as a group of (former or current) communists turned Orthodoxy enthusiasts exiles other key figures (Christos Yannaras); no viable definition includes both groups.

In order to approach the phenomenon dubbed "the Neo-Orthodox movement" in greater accuracy, some elucidations need to be formulated. Firstly, the term emerged as a pejorative and derogatory one, chiefly from within the Left in order to supress the then-unfolding tendency and dialogue among its ranks: it first appears in the magazines *Theseis* and *Scholiastis* (*Θέσεις, Σχολιαστής*) early in the '80s.[388] The privilege of hindsight discloses the extremity of this hostility (with escalating charges such as obscurantism, triumphalist

[388] Both Vassilis Xydias and Vasilios Makrides identify *Scholiastis* 5 (August 1983): 18-19 as having coined the term *Neo-Orthodox*, although in numerous interviews with protagonists of the movement I have been pointed to an earlier article by Yannis Milios in *Theseis*, which I have failed to locate: Makrides, "Byzantium in Contemporary Greece: The Neo-Orthodox Current of Ideas," 141n2.where Xydias notes that "the social and theological radicalism of the 'neo-Orthodox' led to their convergence with the Left, but this convergence has had its supporters and opponents on both sides. 'Neo-Orthodoxy' began being discussed in radical journals such as *Anti* and *Scholiastis* over the summer months of 1983, but it was swiftly mediated to the broader public through the daily press and the weekly glossy magazines." Angelis chiefly explores the non-polemical spectrum of references to the "Neo-Orthodox" in Greek magazines during the '80s in Dimitris Angelis, "Η Πρόσληψη Τῶν Νεοορθοδόξων Ἀπὸ Τὰ Περιοδικὰ Λόγου Καὶ Στοχασμοῦ [The Reception of Neo-Orthodox Thinkers by Discourse and Reflection Journals]," in *Συνέχειες, Ασυνέχειες, Ρήξεις Στον Ελληνικό Κόσμο (1204-2014): Οικονομία, Κοινωνία, Ιστορία, Λογοτεχνία [Continuities, Discontinuities, Ruptures in the Greek World (1204-2014): Economy, Society, History, Literature]*, ed. Konstandinos A. Dimadis, vol. 1 (Athens: European Society of Modern Greek Studies (ΕΕΝΣ), 2015), 197–208.

irrationalism, nationalism and even fascism abounding)[389] as the care to banish the "Neo-Orthodox" discourse outside the limits of what can be tolerated as left-wing by the institutional Left, at the time both the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) and that of the Interior (KKE ἐσ.),[390] rather than accepting it as part of the Left's internal discourse.[391]

In general, most representatives of what has been called "the Neo-Orthodox movement" not only reject this term[392] as devoid of a fitting semantic content, but have never proceeded to provide their own name for the "movement" — which by definition undermines the certainty that we are here indeed dealing with a *movement proper*, for movements tend to desire to be identified as such, asserting the need for a name that distinguishes what this movement *is* (and who it is comprised of) and what it *isn't.* It needs to be remarked that the term has no connection whatsoever to Protestant Neo-Orthodoxy and Karl Barth.

Secondly, given that the term was coined in the context of polemics and that today's temporal proximity to the events at hand exerts a considerable influence on the kind of (even scholarly) literature produced on the subject, much of current literature assumes this polemical stance in varying degrees of explicitness: to expect an absence of bias as early as now would not be a realistic hypothesis, at least by Greek standards. An authoritative

[389] Even as late as 2000, *Theseis* continued to publish condemnations of a phenomenon that scarcely existed any more: for example, a 2000 Editorial refers to the "extreme right and Neo-Orthodox obscurantism," to the "appalling national-communist face of KKE's alliances with the Neo-Orthodox and fascist-religious arc," etc.: "Editorial," *Theseis*, June 2000, http://www.theseis.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=707&Itemid=29. Later still, in 2009, Yorgos Koropoulis published in the official newspaper of SYRIZA, *I Avgi*, an article illustrating "Neo-Orthodoxy" as "the 'left-wing' and at the same time 'sublime' side of neo-nationalism," a "black blackness" (μαύρη μαυρίλα) rejuvenating elements of "good old fascism:" Yorgos Koropoulis, "Σκέψεις Ἑνὸς Σχολιαστῆ Ποὺ Αὐτολογοκρίθηκε (Πάλι) [Thoughts of a Once More Self-Censored Commentator]," *I Avgi*, April 14, 2009, http://archive.is/4Yth#selection-155.1-155.50. Almost all references to "Neo-Orthodoxy" originating from left-wing, later *Eksynchronismos*-leaning or, today, right-wing liberal media follow a similar rubric.

[390] Later becoming Συνασπισμός, the Coalition of the Left and of Progress/Coalition of the Left, of Movements and Ecology, 1991-2013, and eventually SYRIZA, the Coalition of the Radical Left.

[391] A limited yet impressive departure from this stance came much later, with KKE's inclusion of journalist Liana Kanelli (2000 onwards) and political scientist Kostas Zouraris (1999 and 2000) in its electoral candidates lists: while Liana Kanelli continues to be an MP for KKE up to the present day, having since downplayed her "Neo-Orthodox" discourse and assuming KKE-friendly one to an immense degree, the party's cooperation with Kostas Zouraris came to an end following his non-election. What is particularly noteworthy here is that KKE is usually credited as the ideologically and politically least flexible party of the Left, while the KKE ἐσ. whence Kostas Zouraris originally stemmed, albeit not sharing this reputation and taking pride in its professed openness, emerged as the protagonist of the condemnation of the "Neo-Orthodox."

[392] Cf. Xydias, "'New' or 'Old': Orthodoxy in the Limelight," 69. "By its presence, 'neo-Orthodoxy' has upset many accepted ideological forms through which Christianity is approached by both believers and non-believers. ... This is a theology which is the product of a belief in the continuing centrality of patristic teaching and the Orthodox ecclesiastical tradition. It should be pointed out that the supporters of 'Neo-Orthodoxy' in Greece do not accept this term as being accurate. They think of themselves simply as being Orthodox, and claim that 'Neo-Orthodoxy' is a term invented by their opponents." It should be noted that the critical stance against the "Neo-Orthodox" came not only from the Left, but from the church as well: "The suspicions of left-wing and orthodox hardliners were not allayed, however, and the debate floundered on external hostility" — Xydias, 70.

scholarly treatment of the subject has yet to appear. Attempts that are noteworthy, although not devoid of either a polemical stance or an adoption of the conclusions of polemical literature, include Vasilios N. Makrides' studies[393] and Hercules Moskoff's respective chapter of his LSE doctoral thesis,[394] apart from Vassilis Xydias' short 1984 paper.[395] Thus, depending on secondary literature in order to arrive at an overview of the phenomenon that successfully tackles the terminological problems inherent in it has proven to be challenging.

Thirdly, three substantively different sets of events and figures can be identified as "Neo-Orthodox," pointing to three different levels — three *different* yet intertwined developments: the theological, the (in varying degrees left-wing[396]) political and the level of public figures and public intellectuals. Like the unseen part of the iceberg, perhaps the most important element of the movement and the one that enabled the others was the theological element, considerably pre-dating the '80s.

A new wave in theology?

As explained in our chapter on the developments in Orthodox theology, a theological shift was gradually emerging as soon as during the '60s, along with the turbulences in the "Christian movements." During the decade of the '70s, some of the most formative theological works — fruits of that shift — appeared in Greek: Yannaras' *The Freedom of Morality*[397] and *Person and Eros*,[398] John Zizioulas' short but immensely influential essay "From the Mask to the Person,"[399] among many other specimens of that "theological spring."

[393] Including, but not limited to, Makrides, "Byzantium in Contemporary Greece: The Neo-Orthodox Current of Ideas."
[394] Chapter five, "The Neo-Orthodox Movement," in Hercules Moskoff, "Church, State, and Political Culture in Greece since 1974: Secularisation, Democratisation, Westernisation" (PhD diss., LSE, 2005), 199–245, http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/1769/. The following peculiarity is to be observed in this thesis: while Kostis Moskoff was undoubtedly one of the most prominent figures of the Neo-Orthodox Movement, in whichever way one is to define it, his son and author of the thesis does not mention Kostis Moskoff's name *at all* in his treatment of the movement.
[395] Xydias, "'New' or 'Old': Orthodoxy in the Limelight."
[396] This has to be underscored, as a "right-wing Neo-Orthodox" would be a contradiction in terms, at least in the eyes of the "Neo-Orthodox" themselves — in spite of such charges having appeared in the discourse of the Left for purposes more closely related to attempts at mutual exclusions than to a striving for a terminologically accurate political identification.
[397] Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality*.
[398] Yannaras, *Person and Eros*.
[399] Zizioulas, "Personhood and Being."

Furthermore, it is in 1970 that John Romanides started to teach at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. All this overlapped with a parallel and different development: up to the '60s, the monastic communities of Mount Athos, the Holy Mountain, were in sharp decline, their numbers being rapidly extinguished. The following decades saw a profound renaissance in Athonite monasticism, with young and educated Greek monks, often with experience abroad, along with several non-Greeks, assuming the monastic *schema* in centuries-old monastic communities. These would later prove to be valuable interlocutors for Greek youth with an interest in Orthodoxy kindled by the Marxist/Christian dialogue; Sorbonne-educated monks would be seen lecturing on "Christianity and Anarchism"[400] to student-filled auditoriums. These developments, however, were not the chief and primary target of the coinage of "Neo-Orthodoxy," this being the political dialogue that would ensue.

The Marxist-Christian dialogue and its context

The *second* and, as far as the attempt to define "Neo-Orthodox" is concerned, core development is the Marxist-Christian dialogue of the '80s, a development unthinkable in the preceding decades, and the emergence of Christian communists in the public square. This dialogue assumed a public nature, with conferences,[401] articles, responses and books emerging.[402] Building upon the new wave in Orthodox theology that was in the works since the '60s, a reassessment of tradition, of Orthodoxy, and of the patristic heritage took place, as well as an enquiry into the proximity of elements of this tradition to the values of the Left (vis-à-vis, in the eyes of the Left, the capitalist West and its religio-historical past). A convergence of a number of events around 1983 contributed to the impression that a "movement" is emerging:

[400] Christos Yannaras, "Επετειακὴ Ἀναδρομή [Anniversary Retrospective]," *Kathimerini*, November 18, 2007, http://www.kathimerini.gr/707225/opinion/epikairothta/arxeio-monimes-sthles/epeteiakh-anadromh.
[401] Examples would include the conference fittingly entitled "Dialogue between Orthodoxy and Marxism," 13-15 December 1983 at Athens' "Christian Theatre Association," with its proceedings published as Eleftheria Massali and Ilias Anagnostakis, eds., *Ὀρθοδοξία Καὶ Μαρξισμός [Orthodoxy and Marxism]* (Athens: Akritas, 1984).
[402] For example, Petros Makris, ed., *Μαρξιστὲς Καὶ Ὀρθοδοξία: Διάλογος ἢ Διαμάχη; [Marxists and Orthodoxy: Dialogue or Conflict?]* (Athens: Epikairotita, 1983), http://www.politeianet.gr/books/9789602051481-sullogiko-epikairotita-marxistes-kai-orthodoxia-181480.

(a) Intellectuals speaking enthusiastically about Orthodoxy's value and heritage and active in prominent political positions in both main parties of the Left acquired an unprecedented visibility in their public presence, spearheaded by Kostis Moskoff (1939–1998) from the Communist Party of Greece and Kostas Zouraris (1940–, a central committee member of ΚΚΕ ἐσ., to whom we will return later in this chapter. Kostis Moskoff, a historian, poet, essayist and journalist, came from a prominent upper-class family of Thessaloniki and soon joined the Communist Party of Greece. Moskoff was the director of the Centre for Marxist Studies; he briefly served as the mayor of Thessaloniki (1981) and, from 1989 onwards, as the educational advisor of the Greek embassy in Egypt. His passionate and poetic writings on Orthodoxy as well as the fact that he never severed his ties with the Communist Party of Greece, speaking from the position of a prominent party member in spite of his counter-intuitive teachings in a party founded upon historical materialism, exerted a profound influence on the Marxist/Christian dialogue. Most conferences/public debates on the "dialogue" took place either in or shortly before 1983, involving his presence.

(b) Dionysis Savvopoulos (1944–), a singer-songwriter of iconic status in Greece, then at the apogee of his career, released in 1983 his studio album *Τραπεζάκια Ἔξω* (*Outdoor Tables*). Tendencies that were latent in previous studio albums became much more pronounced here, with *Τραπεζάκια Ἔξω* becoming the soundtrack of Neo-Orthodoxy, as it were, full of both direct and indirect references to Orthodoxy, Byzantine and Ottoman communitarianism, Christian eschatology, and a host of other topics. A more explicit elaboration of his views at the time is to be found in his numerous interviews during and around 1983, while his "Neo-Orthodox" period continued with his subsequent albums and particularly his 1994 album entitled *Μὴν πετάξεις τίποτα!* (*Don't Throw Anything Away*). To cite an example of his references to Mount Athos, recounting one of his pilgrimages there:

> These monks are really something else. They are the most extreme people I have ever met. I like to talk to them, I like to hear their stories. There is a luscious anarchism in all of this. Yes, they are anarchists who have come so far that they no longer need to be aggressive .... I like their eyes, their bread, their wine.[403]

Savvopoulos was (and is) neither a theologian nor a functionary of left-wing parties. However, the influence of his enthusiastic public support for the core tenets of "Neo-

[403] Makris, 97.

Orthodoxy" — i.e., the importance of a lively tradition, the radical ideas that are to be found in Orthodoxy's patristic legacy, Greece's Byzantine and communitarian identity, Greece as a historical inheritor of a cultural counter-paradigm to that of the West, etc. — is difficult to estimate. Arguably, however, Dionysis Savvopoulos' "Neo-Orthodox turn" is responsible for expanding the influence of these ideas far beyond the reach of the political and theological dialogue among intellectuals, up to the popular level.

(c) Christos Yannaras' 1982 election to a philosophy chair at the Panteios School, what is today the Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences in Athens, sparked a two-year public debate that made it to the headlines (e.g. *I Kathimerini*, 14 July 1982) and articles of numerous newspapers. Turning Panteios into the first purely left-wing and Marxist university of Greece was the aspiration of many in the Left[404] and, in spite of holding a doctorate in philosophy from the Sorbonne and numerous publications and teaching posts in the field, Yannaras was considered "a theologian"[405] (and, by natural extension, a fanatic propagator of mediaeval obscurantism) due to his second doctorate in theology and, as such, unfit for the post.[406] Yannaras may not have been a member or supporter of left-wing parties (or right-wing parties, for that matter), thus this episode does not form part of any

[404] The newspaper *Kathimerini* identified as the motive behind the hindrances to the election and the installment of the elected professor "the wish that no non-Marxist candidate should be elected" to a professorship: *Kathimerini*, 11 July 1982.

[405] An embarrassing (in retrospect) instance would be, for example, Pantelis Bassakos' 1983 article entitled "Philosophy, Theology, Banality." The article begins with the following phrase: "The process of electing and installing a theologian in a philosophy position at Panteios ..." (Pantelis Bassakos, "Φιλοσοφία, Θεολογία, Κοινοτοπία [Philosophy, Theology, Banality]," *O Politis*, October 1983, 21.), continues to state the impossibility of equating theology with philosophy as if they were identical and, in its five pages, somehow fails to mention Yannaras' academic credentials in philosophy and his Sorbonne philosophy doctorate, which Bassakos —as philosophy professor at Panteios— should have personally seen given his access to the election's file, a privilege not afforded to the general public at the time (as Bassakos himself notes), which had to rely on testimonies such as Bassakos' (and their truthfulness) in order to understand this then public feud between numerous academics and form an opinion. This omission or forgetfulness concerning academic credentials in philosophy formed the very basis of the public discourse at the time, since the main argument was prima facie *not* that a theologian cannot be a philosopher *by definition*, even if possessing academic credentials, teaching positions and a doctorate in philosophy, but that what was the case here was the election of *a theologian without philosophy credentials* in a philosophy position — an impression still held by many middle-aged leftists who were students at Panteios at the time.

[406] Yannaras recounts these events in Yannaras, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 160–73. *A contrario*, an article attacking his election can be accessed here: Yannis Milios, "Η «φάρμα» Τῶν Ὀρθολογιστῶν Καὶ ἡ Κιβωτὸς Τῆς Ρωμιοσύνης [The Rationalist's 'Animal Farm' and the Ark of Romanity]," *Theseis*, June 1983, http://www.theseis.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=51. It should be noted that Milios' *Theseis* article makes no mention of Yannaras' academic credentials in philosophy, allowing the unsuspecting reader to presume that Yannaras would possess only theological ones: for example, the only information given on his theretofore professional positions is "religious teacher in one of Athens' private schools" rather than, for example, visiting professor in philosophy in various universities in Greece (Crete) and abroad (Lausanne, Paris). Such misguiding discourse gained considerable traction in the '80s. Yannaras did not achieve a majority: his election took place with a split vote, in which case and according to Greek law, the candidate recommended by the committee report is elected: Yannaras, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 167–68.

Marxist/Christian dialogue per se, but it sparked an intense public debate on Orthodoxy, the Left, and inquiries on identity: it propelled the discourse and its protagonists to the limelight, to centre stage.[407]

It is interesting that, in spite of the fact that the main definition of "Neo-Orthodoxy" is confined to the Marxist-Christian dialogue per se, the at least equal importance of Savvopoulos' "Neo-Orthodox turn" and of the Yannaras-Panteios case has been noted as early as 1984:

> The coverage given to the debate between the left and 'Neo-Orthodoxy' was occasioned by four separate events which 'heralded' the debate. The first was the appearance, in early 1983, of Dionisis Savvopoulos' latest record, *Ta Trapezakia Exo*, and the interviews Savvopoulos gave at the time. In both cases, it was obvious that Savvopoulos had a close relationship with the cultural and 70 intellectual heritage of 'Orthodoxy' and 'Hellenism'. This shocked a large number of people who had not yet noticed evidence of this in his earlier work. The second event was the election of Christos Yannaras as a professor at the Panteios School of Political Science with the responsibility of teaching a course entitled 'Introduction to Philosophy'. Yannaras, who holds doctorates in theology and philosophy, has made a major contribution to the theological articulation of 'Neo-Orthodoxy'. His election was opposed vigorously by a number of professors at the Panteios School and other academics. The controversy soon became a public issue.[408]

[407] A further reason for this can be discerned in light of the intricacies and idiosyncrasies of recent Greek political history and culture. Not belonging, openly or implicitly yet firmly, to a political party is surprisingly rare among public intellectuals in early post-authoritarian Greece, and Yannaras' case confused many in the political spectrum due to the difficulty in categorising him: Christianity usually went hand in hand with right-wing political leanings, but Yannaras defied this pattern and emerged as an important figure in the dialogue between communists and Christians in the '80s as a Christian participant; at the same time, one could not easily recognise him as a left-wing figure, particularly in view of his outlook on recent Greek history as this can be spotted in his feuilletons. His critique against literally all established political parties has been particularly harsh, winning enemies among the political executives rather than respect in Greece's highly polarised recent decades, and the election of a theologically-minded academic philosopher to a philosophy chair of a university recognised for its left- leaning pedigree alluded to here further complicated his reception.

[408] Xydias, "'New' or 'Old': Orthodoxy in the Limelight," 69–70. Xydias goes on to describe the differences between the Greek Christian-Marxist dialogue and other European developments at the time: "The third event was the public approach to Orthodoxy by two leading left-wing intellectuals, Kostis Moskoff of the Communist Party and Kostas Zouraris of the Communist Party of the Interior. They published a series of articles and meetings on the subject, which were dubbed the "Christian-Marxist Debate." The purpose of this catchy title adopted by the press was to make the connection with similar developments in Western Europe. But, in fact, the Greek version was quite different. What had taken place in Europe was a dialogue between two state institutions (the Party and the Church) which, without making any doctrinal or theoretical concessions, and for tactical reasons, attempted to arrive at an agreement for common action on practical matters (such as the peace movement or third world issues). In the Greek case, what occurred was a dialogue between persons who were guided by their personal choice and intellectual concerns. Accordingly, the debate created problems both for the left-wing intellectuals' relationship to the leadership of their respective parties and for the theologians, who found that the leadership of the Church was not enthusiastic about the debate."

(d) The theological journal *Synaxi* (*Gathering/Fellowship*), in many ways the "voice" of the new wave of theologians, published its first issue in 1982 under Panayiotis Nellas' (1936–1986) leadership. Its contributors and the theologians participating in the Marxist/Christian dialogue overlapped to a considerable extent, though not fully. The fact that pre-existing theological *tendencies*, i.e. the new theological wave originating in the '60s, and particular *persons* effectively crystallised in a *journal* just before 1983 certainly played a role in the emergence of the impression of a "Neo-Orthodox movement."

(e) The context in the early '80s is, as noted, of critical importance. The Left's search for identity during those years in particular, while being no cause of part of the "Neo-Orthodox" phenomenon per se, provided the context for its emergence and for its (problematic) identification as a "movement." With 1981 seeing the Panhellenic Socialist Movement's ascendance to power in the name of socialism, and backed by a considerable part of the Left's spectrum, pressing questions emerged. Seeing that Greece does neither desire to be an enthusiastic part of "the West" (since exiting NATO was a core, albeit never realised, aim in the rhetoric of PASOK's early years) nor to be in the Eastern Bloc, *where does it fit*, what is — or should be — its identity? Both being "Greek" and being "left-wing" emerged as open questions concerning their precise content in the new situation that was unfolding, and while the media reception and representation of the "Neo-Orthodox movement" was mostly critical and negative, the fact that this constituted a hermeneutic proposal involving elements of uniqueness and exceptionalism on the basis of Greece's own past and tradition, albeit in way compatible with left-wing ideas, as well as a cultural juxtaposition to "the West" without a corresponding alignment with the Eastern Bloc and the USSR should not be underestimated.

Apart from that, in attempting to understand the phenomenon is should be noted that the fact that "Neo-Orthodoxy" has been dubbed "the May '68 moment in Orthodox theology and ethics"[409] *from a critical rather than laudatory perspective* is no mere oddity. European movements, currents and trends do eventually reach Greece, although with a certain delay — and this applies even more emphatically in the case of May '68, which took place while Greece was under a military junta. The "Neo-Orthodox phenomenon" of the '80s can indeed be seen as one part of the non-linear translation of the spirit of May '68 in Greece (with many protagonists of the movement actually being in Paris during May '68, such as Yannaras,

[409] Zoumboulakis, *Χριστιανοὶ Στὸν Δημόσιο Χῶρο: Πίστη ἢ Πολιτιστικὴ Ταυτότητα; [Christians in the Public Square: Faith or Cultural Identity?]*, 64.

Ramfos, or Zouraris). It is not insignificant that Greece had undergone a rapid and, in many ways, violent mass urbanisation during the preceding decades, with the pietistic Christian organisations such as those affiliated to the Zoë Brotherhood stepping in to provide a substitute of the village's sense of community in the new context of the city. The "Neo-Orthodox movement" would later attack this substitute with the charge of Westernisation in order to voice a penetrating nostalgia for the actual communities of Greece's immediate (and less immediate) past and their traditions — including their *political* traditions, i.e. their communitarianism, and their Orthodox popular piety.

(f) An often overlooked element[410] is the 1983 publication, for the first time, of General Yannis Makriyannis' (1797–1864) *Ὁράματα καὶ Θάματα* (*Visions and Wonders*) and its considerable impact. Makriyannis was an iconic general of the Greek War of Independence, whose memoirs *Ἀπομνημονεύματα*, published in 1907 — apart from having received the praise of many, including Nobel laureate, diplomat and poet Yorgos Seferis and poet Kostis Palamas, as a master of Greek prose despite his lack of formal education — exerted a considerable influence on the Left as the figure of a popular hero of humble origin. *Visions and Wonders* brought to the surface his deeply religious nature and the definitive intertwining of his popular Orthodox religiosity with all the other aspects of his personality as portrayed in his memoirs — which, of course, was celebrated by the protagonists of the "Neo-Orthodox" current. A public debate erupted, particularly among the Left, as this religiosity was deemed incompatible with his status as a hero for the Left and was even attributed to a purported "madness" during his last years. Xydias is one of the few to note this correlation of *Visions and Wonders'* 1983 publication with the notoriety of the "Neo-Orthodox movement" at the time:

> The fourth and least well-known event of the on-going debate on "Neo-Orthodoxy" was the publication of a manuscript belonging to General Makriyannis. The manuscript, published under the title *Ὁράματα καὶ Θάματα* (*Visions and Wonders*) in late 1983, reveals a not unknown but certainly ignored side of Makriyannis. Through the descriptions of the "meetings" and "discussions" between the general and the Virgin Mary and Saints of the Church there is a confirmation of Makriyannis' religiousness, not as a secondary side of his personality (which could be ignored and in fact has been in most readings of [his memoirs, the] *Ἀπομνημονεύματα*), but as the kernel of an Orthodox ethos which determined

[410] However, Makrides does make note of it as well: Makrides, "Byzantium in Contemporary Greece: The Neo-Orthodox Current of Ideas," 143.

> Makriyannis' political life and, by extension, can be said to have been shared by the great part of the Greek people during the 1821 revolution. The publication of this manuscript puts an end to the misrepresentations of the Makriyannis of the *Ἀπομνημονεύματα*, which conveniently disregarded his religiousness and held him up as the popular version of the Greek Enlightenment. Now, Makriyannis, along with Orthodoxy, emerges as the awesome alternative to the Enlightenment. The result is that academics who view the prospect of Orthodox criticism of the Enlightenment as a form of new obscurantism have reacted by reintroducing an old theory, namely, that Makriyannis was insane and suffered from psychosomatic problems and traumatic experiences in his childhood.[411]

More often than not, varying litanies of names are offered in attempts to identify the protagonists of the "movement"; a common mistake is to include names that indeed reflect an intertwining of a left-wing (or, at the very least, not right-wing) political activity with a public Christian identity, which however would not properly resonate with certain core ideas of what has been named "Neo-Orthodoxy" and cannot be properly characterised as "Neo-Orthodox."[412] Terminological considerations aside, it would be quite safe to name the following figures as protagonists of "Neo-Orthodoxy": Christos Yannaras as spearheading the new wave in theology while also contributing to the Marxist-Christian dialogue from the Christian side, Kostis Moskoff and Kostas Zouraris as prominent members of communist parties professing the importance of Orthodoxy for Greece and for the Left itself, Panayiotis Nellas as the publisher of *Synaxi*, Dionysis Savvopoulos as the chief agent of the wider popularisation of Neo-Orthodoxy's core ideas, and monk Vasileios Gondikakis (1936–), abbot of the Athonite monasteries of Stavronikita and Iviron, a key figure in Mount Athos' renaissance and in the newly ignited popular interest in Athonite monasticism. Other figures such as fr Georgios Metallinos (1940–) and Theodoros I. Ziakas are certainly to be included in the Neo-Orthodox milieu, although not possessing a degree of influence comparable to the above. While many have been tempted to include any public figure participating at the time in an Orthodox revival, such as Mikis Theodorakis and his then interest in Orthodoxy or the novelist Nikos-Gabriel Pentzikis, "Neo-Orthodoxy cannot be reduced to some sort of an

[411] Xydias, "'New' or 'Old': Orthodoxy in the Limelight," 71.
[412] An example of this would be Stelios Papathemelis, who after joining PASOK was appointed Deputy Education Minister in 1982–1985, Minister for Macedonia and Thrace in 1987–1989 and Minister for Public Order in 1993–1995. The fact that Papathemelis would publicly profess his Orthodox faith while being politically active in PASOK caused his categorisation under the label "Neo-Orthodox" in certain publications (such as Makris, *Μαρξιστὲς Καὶ Ὀρθοδοξία: Διάλογος ἢ Διαμάχη; [Marxists and Orthodoxy: Dialogue or Conflict?]*.) in spite of the fact that Papathemelis' public footprint is not characteristic of certain core ideas of what has been dubbed "Neo-Orthodoxy" and, as such, cannot be labelled "Neo-Orthodox."

Orthodox revival alone, for the latter is a much wider phenomenon represented by such thinkers as John Romanides, Panagiotis Christou, Nikos Nisiotis, Savvas Agourides, John Zizioulas, Nikos Matsoukas, hagiographers Georgios Kordis and fr Stamatis Skliris, and several others."[413] Stelios Ramfos (1939–) is frequently cited as one of the figureheads of "Neo-Orthodoxy" or listed along with Christos Yannaras as the movement's two most important thinkers; however, later in this chapter I hope to argue against the accuracy of this label. Alongside Ramfos I will introduce the reader to the basic tenets of Kostas Zouraris' thought and career, so that the reader may have an overview of a number of figures and thinkers central to what has been named "Neo-Orthodoxy." This will allow me to proceed to a presentation and analysis of Theodoros I. Ziakas' thought in the next chapter, who, alongside Yannaras, has arguably provided us with the most coherent contribution to political theory among the Neo-Orthodox milieu.

After the '80s: A movement dissolved?

A *third* development that is to be included in an attempt at defining the "Neo-Orthodox movement" would consist in the trajectory of the protagonists ever since — for "Neo-Orthodoxy" primarily consists of the actual persons comprising it, of the "Neo-Orthodox." Given that there is no *stricto sensu* "Neo-Orthodox movement," merely individual trajectories are to be traced after the '80s "Neo-Orthodox" eruption and up to the present day — something that is telling as to whether we can indeed speak of a "movement," with all the coherence that this claim would entail.

By definition, the dissolution of the USSR radically changed the context of the "Neo-Orthodox movement" as, primarily, an Orthodox Christian-Marxist dialogue in Greece. As such, this is a phenomenon of the '80s: after that decade, it is very difficult to speak of a coherent whole that could be named "Neo-Orthodoxy" *under the same criteria* that made the term usable in the press and public discourse of the '80s. After the '80s — if not during them as well — the protagonists of "Neo-Orthodoxy" are only to be encountered as individual

[413] Makrides, "Byzantium in Contemporary Greece: The Neo-Orthodox Current of Ideas," 142.

public figures and intellectuals: university professors, journalists, songwriters, theologians, and monks with distinct trajectories — and theories/teachings, were applicable.

Precisely due to the dissolution of the USSR and the USA's "monopolar moment," as well as the engendering of the European Union through the 1992 Maastricht treaty, the '90s found Greece in yet another enquiry concerning its identity in a globalised world. Other developments such as the Macedonia naming dispute played a significant role as well, and the question of "Hellenicity" (ἑλληνικότητα) and "Hellenocentrism" (ἑλληνοκεντρισμός) acquired a renewed importance. Identity crises both within PASOK and the Left led to the formation of a now more distinctive pole of the "patriotic Left" (πατριωτικὴ Ἀριστερά) dispersed among a number of parties, i.e. political personalities with an added sensitivity concerning "national issues" (ἐθνικὰ θέματα) such as Greece's relationship with Turkey of the Macedonia naming dispute, which however did not derive from right-wing parties, as was usually the case when such sensitivities were underscored. While many "Neo-Orthodox" found themselves in the "anti-globalisation" camp, it would be erroneous to consider that camp as an evolution of "Neo-Orthodoxy" and to trace such a trajectory, as the ideological shifts and regroupings during the '90s reshaped and redefined the totality of the political spectrum, with new camps being syncretically formed out of the fragments of earlier categorisations. I.e., the commonalities of the protagonists of "Neo-Orthodoxy" to one another are not especially significant and noteworthy vis-à-vis the commonalities of all the diverse tendencies and protagonists of the "anti-globalisation" camp to one another: the "Neo-Orthodox" cannot be said to constitute a distinct "group" anymore.

Thus, one additional problem of "Neo-Orthodoxy" as a terminology is that the purported movement does not extend in time: one might speak of a "Neo-Orthodox moment" in the '80s, but its protagonists are not to be encountered as a "group" or "movement" in later decades. Given the heterogeneity of the protagonists and of their ideas even during the '80s, this subsequent non-extension in time retrospectively raises additional questions as to the very validity of the term for the '80s as well.

From anti-Westernism to neo-Orientalism: the peculiar case of Stelios Ramfos

A further example of terminological dead ends may be traced in the case of Stelios Ramfos, who is often credited as a leader (if not *the* leader) of the "Neo-Orthodox," a title whose frequency intensifies after his 1996 turn against them, with Ramfos now being presented as their *former* leader who has denounced them.[414] Stelios Ramfos was born in 1939 in Athens,[415] where he studied law and became an avid Marxist. After moving to Paris, studying philosophy and coming in contact with Cornelius Castoriadis and his thought, he abandoned Marxism and became a fierce critic thereof. He taught philosophy at the University of Paris VIII – Vincennes from 1969 up to 1974, at which point he returned to Greece following the fall of the military junta. It is during his Paris years that, after the completion of a period of study immersed in the Platonic *corpus*, he became enchanted by the writings of the patristic era and the tradition of Eastern Christianity, which he approached through the lens of a Neoplatonic hermeneutic. During the peak of the "Neo-Orthodox movement" in the '80s, he could be described as the most fierce hardliner of an anti-Western stance and, as far as the Marxist-Orthodox dialogue was concerned, the one refuting the possibility of that dialogue's basis; essentially, an opponent to Marxism — his interventions at a December 1983 conference provide a quite lucid testimony to this.[416] A number of books authored during that period, including his commentary on the *Gerondikon*, the sayings of the desert fathers,[417] entitled *Πελεκάνοι Ἐρημικοί,*[418] gifted him with a following and inscribed his presence into the "Neo-Orthodox current."

During the '90s, Ramfos experiences a new abrupt and significant turn, dividing his trajectory as a thinker into the "old" ("Neo-Orthodox," "Hellenocentric") Ramfos and the

[414] For example, in a 2005 interview: "The 'Neo-Orthodox' current is attributed to him — he rejects its fatherhood" and the accompanying comments; Mitropoulos, "Homo Cogitus: An Interview with Stelios Ramfos [in Greek]."
[415] A brief prosopography of Ramfos, with a biographical sketch and an analysis of the main tenets of his thought, can be found in Louth, *Modern Orthodox Thinkers*, 259–62., where he is curiously listed as a "lay theologian" in spite of the absence of any theological credentials, academic, ecclesiastical, or otherwise.
[416] Massali and Anagnostakis, *Ὀρθοδοξία Καὶ Μαρξισμός [Orthodoxy and Marxism]*, 31–50, 73–78, 144–64.
[417] Benedicta Ward, trans., *The Desert Fathers: Sayings of the Early Christian Monks*, Penguin Classics (London & New York: Penguin Books, 2003).
[418] Ramfos, *Like a Pelican in the Wilderness*.

"new" ("Moderniser") Ramfos — the year 1996 and a brief stint in the United States[419] is often cited as the decisive turning point. Eurocentricism and "Modernisation" (*Ἐκσυγχρονισμός*) form Ramfos' new central axes, to which Ramfos ascribes philosophical depth. Now, the patristic/Byzantine legacy and the Orthodox tradition are precisely what hinders Greece from completing a process of individualisation that would make it modern, that would allow it to progress: it is Orthodoxy that is inhibiting the westernization of Greece, a staple idea that begins to circulate in the public sphere with reference to Ramfos as far as its claims at philosophical coherence is concerned.[420] Hesychasm, the theological controversy of the 14th century, is cited and analysed as the very reason Greece eludes the progress of history; the *Philokalia*, an 18th-century collection of patristic and hesychast writings spanning from the 4th to the 14th century, is charged with producing this effect in Greek society[421] — in spite of the fact that these texts were hardly broadly available at the time, acquiring such a status later in the 20th century. The "Greek sense of time"[422] serves to prove that Greeks are profoundly regressive, that the deeper cause of their failure and discontent is ontological and anthropological[423] rather than fiscal or political.[424]

Ramfos' turn is often celebrated in press references to him: prominent Greek Neo-Orientalist Nikos Dimou hails Ramfos' purported departure from the "Neo-Orthodox" (for Dimou, the "Hellenocentrists") as "a bold, brave and confident" move emerging from his "progress and research."[425] A particularly opportune period for his public presence was the first phase (2010–2015) of the Greek crisis following the 2010 Memorandum of Understanding between Greece and its creditors: during those years, Ramfos would frequent Greek television panels as a staunch philosophical defender of the Memorandum's terms, as a public intellectual shedding light on the Memorandum as a means for Greeks to finally end

[419] Princeton University, Stanley J. Seeger '52 Center for Hellenic Studies, "Visiting Fellows 1996-1997," accessed November 15, 2017, https://www.princeton.edu/hellenic/people/visiting-fellows/visiting-fellows-1996-199-1/.
[420] For example, Dimitris Doulgeridis, "Φιλόσοφος Τὸν Καιρὸ Τῆς Κρίσης [A Philosopher during Times of Crisis]," *Ta Nea*, June 9, 2012, http://www.tanea.gr/news/greece/article/4728238/?iid=2.
[421] Stelios Ramfos, *Τὸ Ἀδιανόητο Τίποτα: Φιλοκαλικὰ Ριζώματα Τοῦ Νεοελληνικοῦ Μηδενισμοῦ - Δοκίμιο Φιλοσοφικῆς Ἀνθρωπολογίας [The Inconceivable Nothing: The Philokalic Roots of Modern Greek Nihilism. An Essay in Philosophical Anthropology]* (Athens: Armos, 2010).
[422] Stelios Ramfos, *Time Out: Ἡ Ἑλληνικὴ Αἴσθησι Τοῦ Χρόνου [Time Out: The Greek Sense of Time]* (Athens: Armos, 2012).
[423] As elaborated in Ramfos, *Yearning for the One*.
[424] Ramfos will continue to take on subjects and text from *classical* Greece after his turn, partly inscribing those, however, in his new individualisation versus "hesychast" Hellenocentricism hermeneutics: Ramfos, *Fate and Ambiguity in Oedipus the King*.
[425] Nikos Dimou, "Review of Τὸ Ἀδιανόητο Τίποτα," *LiFO*, December 23, 2010, http://www.lifo.gr/mag/features/2462.

their historical immaturity. In lieu of an example, one may highlight the fact that after the imposition of a new property tax (ENFIA) essentially leading, as it has been described by the press, "Greece's property owners to pay 'rent' for living in their own homes,"[426] Stelios Ramfos would analyse the correlation between the Greek's desire to own property[427] with a lamentable fixation on family and on regressive tribal tendencies that need to be abolished — whereas the mature European predominantly rents rather than buy property, thus exhibiting his more mature relationship with time:

> Whence does property draw the allure it exerts on the post-Byzantine Greek [Ρωμηό]? First of all, I would say, from the symbolism of family. Because in our country family is a kind of small tribe, a patriarchy with the house as its centre. The *locus* of the family is the cohesive roof over it: it has no time other than its reproductive duration. It therefore needs a privately owned home, both for stable habitation as for dowry. On the contrary, the average European — and more so in the North — does not buy a house but mainly rents, i.e. he incorporates his space in time. The Greek problem, as experienced since the very foundation of our state, will reach its solution only when the closed Greek family opens itself up to society and to its public sphere.[428]

In such a context, one would be excused to surmise that the new property tax is an emancipating measure aiding Greeks in exiting their historical, existential, ontological and anthropological dead ends. During Greece's Memorandum years, newspaper articles will often portray Ramfos as a precious and wise convert from "Neo-Orthodoxy" to, essentially, reality. An article hailing and celebrating his public role during the Greek crisis will describe him as follows: "how many images of the same person can fit into our televised democracy? There is the old Ramfos, the one once associated with the infamous Neo-Orthodoxy, [the intellectual who frequently appears on Greek television and] the interventionist pro-Memorandum thinker,"[429] who is "flexible," particularly after his "180 degree turn" in order

[426] "New Tax-Shock: Greece's Property Owners to Pay 'Rent' for Living in Their Own Homes," *Keep Talking Greece*, September 5, 2012, http://www.keeptalkinggreece.com/2012/09/05/new-tax-shock-greeces-property-owners-to-pay-rent-for-living-in-their-own-homes/.

[427] The problem with such analyses is not limited in their philosophical accuracy, if any, but extended to their *factual* one as well. Thus, Eurostat informs us that "7 out of every 10 (69.4 %) persons in the EU-28 lived in owner-occupied dwellings," with Greece scoring 75%: Eurostat, "Housing Statistics," February 2017, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Housing_statistics. Arguably, the difference between 7/10 and 7.5/10 does not easily lend itself as a basis for analyses of deep cultural divergences.

[428] From Ramfos, *Time Out: Ἡ Ἑλληνικὴ Αἴσθησι Τοῦ Χρόνου [Time Out: The Greek Sense of Time]*. excerpted in Stelios Ramfos, "Τὸ Ἀκίνητο Ὡς Ἐμβληματικὴ Ἐπιβεβαίωσι Κατακτήσεως Τοῦ Ἐγγυημένα Ἀμεταβλήτου [Property as the Emblematic Confirmation of the Conquest of What Is Certainly Immutable]," October 18, 2012, http://www.bibliotheque.gr/article/5243.

[429] Doulgeridis, "Φιλόσοφος Τὸν Καιρὸ Τῆς Κρίσης [A Philosopher during Times of Crisis]."

to avoid the dead ends of his past comrades' ideological obsessions.[430] His public defence of the governmental handling of the Greek crisis and of the Memorandum as a whole is the fruit of his philosophical wisdom. Thus, Ramfos is projected on the public sphere as "a philosopher for our times of crisis" who boldly exclaims concerning the handling of the Greek crisis: "the dilemma is: Europe or Africa."[431] Ramfos has risen to prominence as the philosophical voice of Neo-Orientalism not only due to the content of his ideas itself, but also since his turn can be projected as a correlation of *maturity*: i.e., Neo-Orientalists will often point to him as a thinker that has *matured* and, as such, has abandoned his obsessive earlier ideology for a pure and modernising Neo-Orientalism[432] — in contrast to his lamentable ex-comrades, who remain in a state of childish immaturity and ignorance, as the narrative would have it, de-politicising an essentially political dispute and redressing it as a quantitative difference in *maturity*, which cannot but lead one to the Neo-Orientalist milieu.

I mentioned earlier that the categorisation of (the early) Stelios Ramfos under the "Neo-Orthodox" label is problematic: it must be stressed that this would have nothing to do with his later turn itself. I elaborated previously on a problematic yet viable definition of "Neo-Orthodoxy" as the product of the encounter between a pre-existing new wave of Orthodox theology informed by the new theological language inaugurated by Europe's (and, later, the United States') Russian diaspora and political figures of the Left interested in a rediscovery of Byzantine and Orthodox tradition. Thus, in order to partake in the "movement," one would have to either be a new wave theologian (e.g. Yannaras) or an active figure of the Left enchanted by Orthodox tradition (Moskoff, Zouraris, Savvopoulos).

Stelios Ramfos, however, would not fit in either camp. He was not a theologian, much less one already having received the formative influence (or even articulated) the Greek new wave theology of the '60s, which in turn had been impregnated by the theological *stance* of the Russian diaspora. And he certainly wasn't a figure, active or otherwise, of the Left during the '80s, as he had severed his ties to the political Left well before that and had now adopted

[430] Doulgeridis.
[431] Doulgeridis.
[432] It is again to Nikos Dimou that the most lucid phrasing concerning this is attributed, in the context of an interview on liberalism/libertarianism (*φιλελευθερισμός* can refer to both ideologies in Greek according to the context, with a certain opacity accompanying the term's use): "We started from diametrically opposed positions with Ramfos (both during his leftist phase as well as during his Hellenocentric phase), but we are tracing parallel trajectories during the last 20 years. I deeply appreciate him for his bravery in doing a 180 degrees turn and in revisiting the basic premises of his thought. This is a rare combination of absolute honesty and originality of thought"; Nikos Dimou, "19 Ἐρωτήματα Στὸν Νίκο Δήμου [19 Questions to Nikos Dimou]," *Neo Planodion*, Summer-Fall 2015, 177–78.

an acutely critical stance. Ramfos may have contributed to the *atmosphere*, the *spiritual climate* of the time, but not in having advanced this current of ideas in a *primary* manner. Were one to accurately pinpoint Stelios Ramfos' precise relationship to "Neo-Orthodoxy," one could say that he was essentially a passenger in the bus of "Neo-Orthodoxy" achieving a certain prominence along the way — with him being proclaimed a former leader of "Neo-Orthodoxy" by the media only after he had completed his turn and denounced the "Neo-Orthodox."

To sum up and recapitulate in a paragraph, there are practically two Ramfoi: one before 1996, and another one since then, expressing diametrically opposed positions and ideas. Before 1996, Ramfos had discovered the Church and was fascinated with the Fathers and the Orthodox tradition, visiting Mount Athos, authoring books on the subject while adopting a fierce anti-Westernism etc. (not the critical stance of other "Neo-Orthodox thinkers," but a kind of hostile partisanship). However, even at this stage, Greece/Greekness/Hellenicity was a much bigger concern for Ramfos than the Orthodox Church was, and what he saw as brilliance of the Church Fathers functioned as a "supporting act" to the wisdom of the Ancients, together glorifying "Greekness," of which the Church and its tradition is but an interesting part. Enchanted by how far today's technical civilization can go and what splendour it can materialise, 1996 saw Ramfos changing his views on everything except ancient Greece, becoming fiercely dismissive of his earlier views. According to the new Ramfos, it is due to Orthodoxy that Greeks' individualisation — a prerequisite for progress and attainment — as a society could not take place, throwing Greeks into spiritual and historical insignificance. Orthodoxy and the Fathers are a hindrance to progress: due to them, Greeks cannot excel historically any more, they cannot be individualised as societies but remain in a primitive collectivistic state. Thus, in a prototypically Neo-Orientalist manner, Orthodoxy and the parts of collective identity that are associated with it must be rejected in order for Greeks and generally the Orthodox to move forward. The problems in labelling Stelios Ramfos a "Neo-Orthodox" are to be encountered even if one solely focuses on his pre-1996 period, as neither of the already problematic possible definitions of the term are wide enough to incorporate him, much less so as a leading figure.

Kostas Zouraris: entering politics by ceasing to be "Neo-Orthodox"

Our survey of the "Neo-Orthodox" as a phenomenon will conclude with Kostas Zouraris, who holds the unique privilege of being the only "Neo-Orthodox" after the '80s to hold public office as an elected politician: at the time of this writing, Zouraris serves as a Junior Minister of Education, Research and Religions at the cabinet of the second Alexis Tsipras government (formed following the September 2015 national elections), having been elected as an MP for Thessaloniki with the junior coalition partner *Ἀνεξάρτητοι Ἕλληνες* (Independent Greeks). Arguably, however, Zouraris successfully embarked on this career after a number of unsuccessful attempt at being elected with various parties *only to the extent that he ceased to be (visibly) "Neo-Orthodox,"* stressing the political tradition of the Left and his family's political past instead. Indeed, one would be hard pressed to find traces of what could be described as "Neo-Orthodox rhetoric" in Zouraris' current public presence.

Zouraris was born 1940 in Thessaloniki, son of Greece's first sexologist, doctor Georgios Zouraris. He studied Law at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and political science at the University of Paris VII – Vincennes, where he would later teach political theory (1969–2005).[433] For a brief time (2006-2008) he served as the editor of the historic Thessaloniki-based newspaper *Macedonia* (Μακεδονία). For most of his youth he was affiliated with the Greek Communist Party of the Interior (ΚΚΕ ἐσ.), but he ran for office on the ticket of the Communist Party of Greece in 1999 and 2000. A dense volume appeared in 2013 constituting the *first* part (spanning from 1940 to 1990) of a projected two-part biography of Kostas Zouraris,[434] where many more details about his life, political and otherwise, may be located. His lively presence in Greece's public sphere earned him with a following, during the '80s ("Neo-Orthodoxy") and particularly during the '90s

[433] Apart from Georgios Kaleadis' biography of Zouraris, I am relying for this information on information provided by the Greek Ministry of Education during Zouraris' ministerial tenure: Hellenic Republic, Ministry of Education, Research and Religions, "Υφυπουργός Παιδείας, Έρευνας Και Θρησκευμάτων Κωνσταντίνος Ζουράρις [Junior Minister of Education, Research and Religions Konstantinos Zouraris]," accessed November 15, 2017, https://www.minedu.gov.gr/yfypoyrgoi-hgesia/yfypourgos-paideias-erevnas-kai-thrsikevmaton-konstantinos-zouraris. The website is archived here: https://web.archive.org/web/20171014180122/https://www.minedu.gov.gr/yfypoyrgoi-hgesia/yfypourgos-paideias-erevnas-kai-thrsikevmaton-konstantinos-zouraris (13 October 20017).

[434] Georgios Kaleadis, *Ἄξιον Καὶ Δίκαιον: Κώστας Γ. Ζουράρις, Ἔργο Καὶ Βίος (1940-1990) [Worthy and Just: Kostas Γ. Zouraris' Life and Work, 1940-1990]* (Kavala: Ksyrafi, 2013).

("Hellenocentricity" and the "patriotic Left"), even hosting, for a brief time, a TV programme on state television ET3, entitled *Πατριδογνωσία* (Getting to know the homeland).

Zouraris certainly rejoices in employing an arcane vocabulary. He writes in a purposefully convoluted manner, frequently employing words from classical text that do not appear in the vernacular of the last many centuries, and his work is by no means systematic; seeing that this is the case, summarising the basic tenets of his thought is a particularly daunting task. Vasilios N. Makrides has bravely attempted to do so:

> For Kostas Zouraris ... the diachronic meaning of Greek Orthodoxy is to be located in the apophatic way of reasoning in all domains, from theology to politics. Zouraris has applied his hermeneutic scheme to all periods of Greek history, as portrayed in ancient Greek, Patristic, Byzantine, and modern texts (for example, of Homer, Thucydides, John Chrysostom, Maximus the Confessor, Gregory Palamas, Theodore Kolokotronis, General Makriyiannis, Papadiamantis and Kostas Varnalis) and forms of life (including folk songs and customs). What, for Zouraris, characterizes the Greek Orthodox way of thought in general? In the first place, truth is never objectified in rigid, fixed and unchanged definitions within large systems of thought and programmes, as in the West, but is always defined approximately. Second, the avoidance of definitions has enabled Greeks to develop a special understanding of all possible situations as bipolarities. Third, there is no linear progress of humanity in the real meaning of the word, but a circular motion in which forward movement and immobility coexist. In other words, each new situation is not the absolute solution and overcoming of previous problems, but consists once more of positive and negative aspects. In Zouraris' view, these presuppositions of Greek Orthodox thought helped Greeks to avoid the impasses created by the serious discrepancy between arrogant Western ideas of progress, and their tragic failure in practice. Greek apophaticism, complemented by the virtues of discretion, responsibility, and measure in all domains of life, has promoted forbearance and indulgence both in theory and in practice. Instead of crusting in the human potential to create the *civitas Dei* on earth, the Greek Orthodox people have approached differently the salvation of the fallen and moribund human beings and the world.[435]

In spite of the convoluted and non-systematic character of Zouraris' idiosyncratic and voluminous *corpus*, I shall here attempt to provide an overview of the main points of his

[435] Makrides, "Byzantium in Contemporary Greece: The Neo-Orthodox Current of Ideas," 150.

thought.[436] Drawing from classical and Byzantine sources, Zouraris strives to explore and explain the cultural and political tradition of Greece, in what he claims is a continuity-through-raptures starting from the Homeric age via the Byzantine Empire and up to today's nation-state, the ιλιαδορωμέηκο, (non-)translatable as "Iliad-Byzantine [Greekness]." His work comprises a detection and explication of what he sees as Greek cultural otherness and of the way in which this otherness is reflected on political theory and practice as found in a three-thousand-year litany of Greek-speaking *texts*. According to Zouraris, the first differentiating feature of "Greek political theory" is that it does not merely constitute a proposal for the utilitarian management of common and social affairs, nor is it a detached scientific area, an autonomous discipline, but results naturally and spontaneously from the very metaphysical pillar around which Greeks' society revolves, its communal axis of ontological meaning — given that in pre-modern societies that axis is collective. Thus, one encounters in Zouraris' works a political theory which claims to derive from ontology and metaphysics as their practical, as it were, emanation. While this is in many ways a common trait of "Neo-Orthodox" thinkers, Zouraris' uniqueness lies in his persistence to locate this otherness as a tendency and differentiating feature in a host of Greek original texts: from Homer and Thucydides to folk songs, to the poets Odysseas Elytis and Yorgos Seferis, to General Makrygiannis' *Memoirs* and to Greek patristic texts or the life (συναξάρι) of the "new martyr" Iordanis.[437] Zouraris thus describes politics, with the help of those texts, as an ontological communal exercise *par excellence*, as a collective *ascesis*, he defines the political arena, as well as human nature, as an "inferior godlikeness,"[438] a perpetual projection of the higher (ontology/metaphysics) to the lower (political coexistence).

For Zouraris, this distinction is not merely academic, but sweeps along with it every possible viewpoint on politics, as well as their analysis and theory: if the political event does not merely constitute a form of management of collective conditions — at best with an "ethical" prefix, though never with an existential one — but the *locus* of an applied metaphysics, then what changes is not just the *content* of the corresponding political theory, but along with that its very context, its values and its tools. Thus, for Zouraris, in what he

[436] Precisely due to his work's nature, as he frequently returns to his main ideas, enriching them with more content with every repetition without having systematically expounded them somewhere first, it would be quite pointless to pinpoint particular page numbers in his works where a certain idea fleetingly appears. Rather than that, I have opted for presenting his ideas with wide brushes, citing some of his books where these ideas are expounded in more detail.

[437] For the latter see: Zouraris, *Εἰσαγωγὴ Στὴν Ἀπογείωση Τῆς Πολιτικῆς [Introduction to the Ascension of Politics]*.

[438] Zouraris, *Inferior Godlikeness*.

sees as Greek political theory one can never speak of a detached discipline of "politics" but of a facet, interpretation, and perspective of a holistic and single quest of the collective political body. Zouraris applies this principle not only when composing a grand narrative, but also when commenting on particular events of recent Greek history, like the Greek civil war (1946–1949).[439]

Inevitably, such an interpretation of politics as a communal exercise with a particular content, as an "inferior godlikeness," is precisely the opposite of modern liberalism where, of one were to oversimplify, the objective is to preserve an almost unlimited capacity of the individual to distance itself from any communal definition thereof, from any normative ascription of meaning *from* the community *to* the individual: the individual is free to the extent that it can define itself and act accordingly. According to Zouraris' reading, society-community defines a space (e.g. the *polis*, the community/κοινότητα, "Greece" or, as far as ecclesiastical monastic coexistence is concerned which is also taken as sublimely political, the monastery[440]) reserved for the implementation and operation of a particular and ontologically determined political system — not an ideology, but a communal mode of realising society and politics, either explicitly or implicitly — in which and for which the decisions are made by the the collective (τὸ Κοινόν), provided that the necessary institutions and customs exist to render this possible. According to Zouraris, the reason for modern Greece's discontent lies, then, in the absence of the preconditions allowing for such a polity to exist, as Greeks do not collectively and directly participate in decision-making, as would have been the case with pre-1821 Greek communities, but are limited by a representative system which they implicitly recognise as oligarchic. Thus, Greeks refuse to oblige and fail to function, with their modern political system and country ending up deeply dysfunctional due to a borrowed polity.

Two terms enjoy particular prominence in Zouraris' thought in constructing his continuity theory: *synamfoteron* and *peripou* (συναμφότερον and περίπου, meaning "both together/both at the same time" and "approximately" respectively). By *synamfoteron*, a word we can find in both classical Greek and Christian patristic literature (a word employed by Theognis, Demosthenes, Plato, Origen, Gregory Palamas,[441] to name a few), Zouraris refers

[439] Zouraris, *Elements and Sprites*.
[440] Zouraris, *Φιλοκαλοῦμεν Μετ' Ἀνταρσίας: Προπονητικὴ Γιὰ Τὸ Πολίτευμα Τῆς Ὑπεραναρχίας [Cultivating Refinement Through Rebellion: Coaching towards a Hyperanarchist Polity]*.
[441] Gregory Palamas employs the word in order to underscore the indivisible whole of soul and body: *Patrologia Graeca* 150:1361.

to a union in which the constituent parts retain their otherness, while the parts united remain unconfused, undivided, and inseparable (following the Chalcedonian Christological formula), i.e., a union that does not constitute a *synthesis,* in which the parts' otherness is lost and dissolved; *synamfoteron* signals that even contradictory realities may coexist, in spite of the paradoxical aspect of the claim. According to Zouraris, Greek political thought is open to this reality, while "Western" political thought insists in rationally systematising reality in such a way that a vital aspect thereof, the predominance of the *synamfoteron*, is often overlooked, opting for an either/or type of logic. Zouraris asserts that understanding the inherent awkwardness of the *synamfoteron* is a fundamental prerequisite for understanding Greek culture in its *longue durée*. He takes the *synamfoteron* as the conclusive refutation of any essentialism, since the very notion of pure essences of any kind would be thus untenable. Everything is *mixed*, the complicated nature of reality (and social/political reality in particular) is to be affirmed as eluding the claims raised by abstract systematisation, and Zouraris likes to cite Homer's *Iliad* 24.529 to that end, where the word ἀμμίξας ("having mingled") denotes that things are "mingled" *from the very beginning* and from their divine source: "For two urns are set upon the floor of Zeus of gifts that he giveth, the one of ills, the other of blessings. To whomsoever Zeus, that hurleth the thunderbolt, giveth a mingled lot, that man meeteth now with evil, now with good."[442] In the same breath, Zouraris will recall Maximus the Confessor, the 7th-century saint: "You must know that what is simply called 'evil' is not wholly evil, but partly evil and partly non-evil; in the same way, what is simply called 'good' is not wholly good, but partly good and partly non-good."[443]

Implications abound: dualistic formulations are to be tossed out in the face of the understanding that "actually existing reality" is a vast grey area (a περίπου, i.e. not quite so and approximately): of distinctively different shades, yet still gray, beyond the mere contradistinction of black and white. At first glance, this might seem obvious, but Zouraris insists that the very notion of political theory as we encounter it in "the West" presupposes the antithetical contradistinction of concepts, every systematisation (i.e. "scientification") involving a violently arbitrary formulation, which is subsequently confused with reality itself. Asserting the *synamfoteron*, says Zouraris, does not result in relativism, but in the recognition of the difference and distance that exists between interpretative schemata and actual reality.

[442] Homer, *The Iliad, with an English Translation by A.T. Murray* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press & London, William Heinemann, 1924), XXIV.526-530; accessed on 22 November 2017 via http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Hom.+Il.+24.529&fromdoc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0134.
[443] Maximus the Confessor, *Ad Thalassium,* Question 43, Patrologia Graeca 90:413B.

Ultimately, when applied in political theory, *synamfoteron* leads to the awareness that apophatism is also valid on the level of political coexistence, that apophaticism becomes a precondition for political theory. Further, the convergence of συναμφότερον and περίπου leads Zouraris to assert *multicausality* (πολυαιτιοκρατία) as the dominant type of causality and to reject a linear cause-effect correlation demanding the reduction of the cause down to *one* cause. Of all the three-millennia-worth of texts he employs to compose his grand narrative, Thucydides stands apart as Zouraris' most oft-quoted thinker,[444] in whose writings Zouraris locates the basic premises of his reading: συναμφότερον, περίπου, multicausality, and a host of other key terms comprising the political theory of Zouraris' Iliad-Byzantine culture. His "system" is one of resisting systematisations: eventually, the resistance to schematisations — or, at the very least, the lack of overconfidence in schematisations — is what makes possible a more *realistic* schematisation and, along with it, a viable political science, Zouraris claims. It should be noted, however, that none of the above ideas is represented in any way in his public presence after his entry in politics and the assumption of office, where the legacy of the Left, the Resistance during Greece's Nazi occupation and Greece's civil war figure much more prominently than any other ideas, in spite of the fact that he was elected as a candidate of the right-wing party *Independent Greeks* rather than the left-wing *Syriza*: one could claim that it was proven possible for him to enter politics *to the extent that* Zouraris ceased being Zouraris — or, for that matter, "Neo-Orthodox."

In this chapter, an overview of the social, historical, and ideological context necessary for our enquiry is provided. I have questioned whether "Neo-Orthodoxy," with its elusive definition, is indeed a valid term and an actual movement or ideology, showing among other things the fundamental divergences between the thinkers usually listed as "Neo-Orthodox" in spite of their common traits, these being a positive re-evaluation of Byzantine and Orthodox tradition, a left-leaning conceptualisation of this tradition as a counter-paradigm to that of the "capitalist West," and a glorification of Greek pre-1821 communitarianism. If "Neo-Orthodoxy" as a whole was anything, then it constituted in a re-interpretation of tradition and a hermeneutic proposal of Greek identity over and against that of "the West." "Neo-Orthodoxy" had no institutional subsistence; it was mainly a network of friendships — and of the ruptures therein. Perhaps the testimony of one of the current's protagonists concerning the

[444] Kostas Zouraris, *Νῦν Αἰωροῦμαι: Θουκυδίδης Ἀρχέτυπος [An Archetypical Thucydides]* (Athens: Armos, 2003).

climate of the time serves to underscore the novelty of the actual events during the '80s more than our accompanying theoretical analyses:

> Among the students of Thessaloniki and Athens, news like the following ones were heard in a causal way, without surprise, as nothing truly extraordinary: "Do you remember the guy from the Greek Communist Party of the Interior's youth? He is now at the Athonite Simonometra monastery as a monk — our other friend, the anarchist, after a long phase into Buddhist Zen teachings, is now a novice monk at the Athonite monastery of Koutloumousiou." Crowds visiting Mount Athos, friends would go there to meet friends, a restless youth filled the boats from Ouranoupoli.[445]

The overview provided here follows an analysis of Christos Yannaras' thought and precedes an analysis of Theodoros I. Ziakas' work, to be expounded in the next chapter; these two are arguably the only ones from the current of thought in question who have articulated a systematic and coherent theory that would be of substantial interest in the context of political theory, particularly as far as the ideological shifts within modern Greece are concerned. While Christos Yannaras' intervention was a public and influential one, Theodoros I. Ziakas may claim a kind of indirect, "stealth" impact, as we shall examine.

[445] Yannaras, "Επετειακὴ Ἀναδρομή [Anniversary Retrospective]." with some revisions for clarity in English.

Chapter 6

Theodoros Ziakas' Synthesis in Social Ontology: A Primer

Abstract

In this chapter I examine the theoretical system of one of the lesser known thinkers of the "Neo-Orthodox movement," Theodoros I. Ziakas, focusing on his second, mature trilogy of treatises (2001–2005). Ziakas begins his itinerary in the Marxist Left and, in his attempt to find the theoretical key to social change, gradually gravitates towards a deeper inquiry on the nature of nationhood as a civilisational/cultural phenomenon, a reassessment of Hellenic identity through its discontinuities and a conjunction of the social/political and the theologico-philosophically anthropological. He theorizes that there is a direct correlation in any given society's implicit philosophical anthropology, its social theory and its metaphysical stance. I.e., that there is a direct correlation between the semantic content projected on three different levels: the human person (individual subject), society (collective subject), God or meaning (divine subject). Three possible models are then identified: the collectivist one, the individualist one, and the prosopocentric one, i.e. the one reflecting the Eastern Orthodox theological anthropology of the person (πρόσωπο) as elaborated by Christos Yannaras and John D. Zizioulas. Ziakas holds that our current predicament consists in a nihilism/annulment on all three levels (the individual, the collective, and the divine) that, so far as the Hellenic historical experience is concerned, is reminiscent of a comparable nihilism during the late classical and Hellenistic period. He contends that as soon as this nihilism, the peak of an individualist cycle of civilisational development, reaches its natural limits, it is plausible that the globalised world as a whole will enter a *prosopocentric* phase similar to the anthropological transition that took place from late antiquity to Byzantium — or perish in intranscendable nihilism, in the voiding of all signifiers. Ziakas' elaboration on all this brings about a theoretical system in political theory, since the main concern of his analyses, in spite of a seeming focus on the philosophically anthropological question on the institution of the individual, lies in the types and development of societies and their political systems.

> National identity is primarily a *cultural/civilisational*[446] notion.
> It is an otherness of participation in the universalist historical forms (civilisations) of the day.[447]

[446] It should be noted that Greek uses "πολιτισμός" for both "culture" and "civilisation"; since, however, Ziakas indeed refers to both in his use of πολιτισμός, I will here employ both words interchangeably.

> Today's crisis could be described
> as the inability of the subject of modernity
> to control the conflict between the system of its needs
> and the consequences thereof, which engender
> the social, national and ecological problem.
> This inability is related to the prerequisite
> of every alternative solution: the subject's
> capacity to distance itself from its socially defined needs.
> In this respect, it is a crisis *of the subject itself.*[448]

As noted in the previous chapter, in looking at the "Neo-Orthodox current" for a theory that would be of interest to political theory —for a systematic *subversive orthodoxy*— one's gaze is directed not only at that current's defining figure, Christos Yannaras, but also at the lesser-known Theodoros I. Ziakas. There is a reason why Neo-Orthodoxy's better-known figures are indeed better-known, as they emerged as public and distinctive bearers of ideas in their respective contexts during the defining decade of the '80s: Christos Yannaras was the philosophico-theological catalyst, Kostas Zouraris and Kostis Moskoff were the leftist intellectuals reassessing Byzantium and Orthodoxy *from within* their respective political parties, Dionysis Savvopoulos can be identified as the exceedingly popular songwriter effecting, at some point, the permeation of Neo-Orthodox ideas in surprisingly wider social strata than their initial intellectual and political habitat, and so on.

However, this intellectual osmosis engendered a variety of thinkers and personalities active in different domains, and in many ways it continues to do so. While Theodoros I. Ziakas may not be a household name in Greece, it is not only due to the distinctiveness, coherence and fecundity of his work and thought *itself* —both when contemplated within the Neo-Orthodox current and when treated independently— that this work and thought would be relevant to scholarship. For there is also the question of "*stealth*" *impact,* of types of impact that would only indirectly, yet decisively lead to "household discussions," next to the obvious and measurable impact directly observable in the public square. Theodoros I. Ziakas can be credited with such an ongoing "stealth" impact, his work influencing —in a not necessarily credited manner— circles of intellectuals without itself being directly grounded in the public

[447] Ziakas, *Beyond the Individual*, 24.
[448] Ziakas, *Eclipse of the Subject*, 309.

square at large — in spite of a number of television appearances.[449] These intellectuals will, in turn, ground *themselves* in the public square either through political activity or through intellectual pursuits, engendering a curious afterlife of Ziakas' ideas.

An example of this would be the web portal *Antifono.gr*,[450] its full title being "Antifono: Sciences, Philosophy, Arts, Theology," founded in 2008 by secondary education IT teacher Konstantinos Vergis. *Mutatis mutandis*, given that the target audience of the web portal consists of intellectuals,[451] *Antifono* can arguably be described as considerably influential in Greek intellectual life — a reality that is also attested by the frequency in which *Antifono* volunteers will video-record and subsequently upload on *Antifono* via *YouTube* public lectures on theoretical matters taking place mainly, though not exclusively, in Greece's capital Athens, thus betraying *Antifono's* visibility and, by now, rather irreplaceable function in Greece's intellectual whereabouts, given that such *Antifono* video-recordings are now largely *expected* and relied upon by organisers of respective public intellectual events.

In spite of the breadth of the interests in covers, *Antifono* sports a quite discernible Neo-Orthodox hue, something that attests the discernible afterlife of this intellectual current in the hands of the next generation today. The website hosts texts and videos by a much larger number of authors and public lecturers, but it showcases only thirteen thinkers, more than half of them more or less falling within the Neo-Orthodox label, however problematic that labelling might be.[452] Ziakas is particularly prominent on *Antifono.gr*, and his lectures and texts on theoretical matters have been read and watched by several thousand people each.[453] Apart from *Antifono* itself, there are several hundred lectures by Ziakas on *YouTube*,

[449] Among which one in Kostas Zouraris' short-lived TV programme: Antifono.gr, "Πατριδογνωσία Μὲ Τὸν Κώστα Ζουράρι: Θεόδωρος Ζιάκας [Getting to Know the Homeland with Kostas Zouraris: Theodoros Ziakas]" (ET3, 1994), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QCI6Mz9W1Ms.

[450] "Ἀντίφωνο: Ἐπιστῆμες – Φιλοσοφία – Τέχνες – Θεολογία [Antifono: Sciences, Philosophy, Arts, Theology]," accessed March 27, 2018, http://antifono.gr/portal/. In an interview with the author on 30 December 2017 in Vrilissia, Athens, Konstantinos Vergis had conveyed that *Antifono.gr* is a painfully no-budget affair, entailing no income out of its activities whatsoever, with the totality of its workload being volunteered by usually two to three persons including himself. Given that *Antifono.gr* is updated on a daily basis, usually with a lecture or book launch video-recorded by *Antifono*, this total absence of funds is quite surprising when compared to the project's output.

[451] *Alexa.com* citing the web portal as being primarily visited by users with postgraduate education: "Alexa Web Statistics for Antifono.Gr," accessed March 27, 2018, https://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/antifono.gr.

[452] 'Ἀντίφωνο: Πρόσωπα [Antifono: Persons]', accessed 27 March 2018, http://antifono.gr/portal/πρόσωπα.html, showcasing Christos Yannaras, Sotiris Gounelas, Theodoros I. Ziakas, Vasileios Karapostolis, Pavlos Klimatsakis, George Contogeorgis, Alexandros Kosmatopoulos,, fr. Nikolaos Loudovikos, Basil Markesinis, Christos Bokoros, Vasilis Xydias, Georgios Pavlos and, last and indeed least, Stelios Ramfos.

[453] "Hits" in the three categories (video, sound, texts) under http://antifono.gr/portal/πρόσωπα/ζιάκας.html, accessed on 27 March 2018: on this date, the lectures most listened to are about "contemporary nihilism" and number more than 12.000 hits. In interpreting these numbers, one should bear in mind that any article or video

recorded and uploaded by third parties.[454] Given all this, the fact that Theodoros I. Ziakas has not been officially incorporated in the contemporary Greek canon, as it were, should by no means be mistaken with a lack of considerable impact.

In spite of both the originality, pertinence, and sophistication of Theodoros I. Ziakas' work and his "stealth" yet considerable impact, however, there is currently literally zero scholarly secondary literature on Ziakas, either in Greece or abroad.[455] His only text translated into English has appeared in a volume on modern Greek identity co-edited by Steiris et al.,[456] and I have not been able to locate either any Anglophone scholarly engagement with his thought or any Greek engagement that would qualify as academic literature. It seems that Ziakas' lack of either an academic position and capacity or a celebrity-status public prominence has rendered him heretofore unreachable to scholarship. This being the case, the present (and thus far only) introduction to Theodoros I. Ziakas' thought cannot but be by necessity primarily *descriptive* in character: for a start, I will attempt to *describe* and *present* the basic tenets of this thought, leaving a critical engagement with it for a later stage. In essence, this chapter is but a paraphrase of *some* of Ziakas' ideas. His on-going *corpus* is swelling with ideas, thus the present introductory sketch will provide an account of only some of them, in the conviction that these would be the central ones: a dedicated monograph or doctoral dissertation on Ziakas' multi-faceted thought would be one

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in Greek, and much more so when the topic is of an intellectual bent, addresses a by definition rather small potential audience within a pool of Greek speakers that is either way limited in population and not to be compared to the numbers of any Anglophone audience. Given that 330 to 360 million people speak English as their first language, with second language speakers being estimated anywhere from 470 million to more than one billion, comparable Anglophone audiences would amount from about half a billion (native speakers of English) up to one and a half billion (total of English speakers). To put this in a certain perspective: at the time of writing this (March–April 2018), an immense hype and controversy has erupted over Canadian clinical psychologist and cultural critic Jordan Peterson, with significant media coverage and social media presence and titles such as "the most influential public intellectual today" being casually employed. Peterson initially rose to fame through his interventions on *YouTube* and *Quora.com*. Today, the most viewed videos in his own YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/user/JordanPetersonVideos/videos?flow=grid&view=0&sort=p, accessed April 2, 2018) have 1.9, 1.2, and 1.1 million views respectively, addressing a potential audience of native and non-native speakers of English ranging anywhere from 830 to 1400 million (wrongly assuming, of course, that every speaker of English has access to YouTube for the economy of this discussion). Thus, an Anglophone reader should bear in mind in reading about 12.000 hits in Theodoros Ziakas' videos and judging his potential direct and indirect impact that the population of Greek speakers has a ratio to Anglophone speakers of about 10/830 to 10/1.360 respectively.

[454] Results on https://www.youtube.com for the exact phrases "Theodoros Ziakas" and "Θεόδωρος Ζιάκας," accessed on 27 March 2018 and excluding any irrelevant results.

[455] Searches in English generally return results on a chieftain of the same name (1798–1882) active in Macedonia during the Greek War of Independence in 1821.

[456] Theodoros I. Ziakas, "The Eclipse of the Subject," in *The Problem of Modern Greek Identity: From the Ecumene to the Nation-State*, ed. Georgios Steiris, Sotiris Mitralexis, and Georgios Arabatzis (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 81–91; this is an abbreviated version of the Afterword in; Ziakas, *Eclipse of the Subject*, 309–21.

among future *desiderata.* A particular dilemma here, given that this presentation of Ziakas forms merely one part of a larger project with the brevity requirements that this entails, consists in where to put this introduction's stress among two distinct parts of Ziakas' *oeuvre*: on Ziakas' conceptual toolbox and general theory, or on Ziakas' application of this theory to the case of Greek/Hellenic identity? Normally, the nature of the present study would dictate the latter; however, Ziakas' application of his own theory to the Greek case would not be intelligible to the reader without an introduction to the theory itself. Thus, the present introduction is primarily preoccupied with Ziakas' *general theory* rather than the *application of this theory to the Greek case*, in spite of the fact that the latter's general lines can easily be surmised from the presentation of the former.

Ziakas' main work heretofore consists of eight books: two trilogies, an "early" and a "mature" one, as well as two comparably minor works. The first three books, published between 1988 and 1993, begin from a negotiation of the relationship between the political Left and the question of national identity and develop in a theoretical framework on the concepts of tradition, nationhood as a civilisational/cultural phenomenon, and the institution of the "collective subject." Ziakas' early trilogy begins with a book co-authored with Vangelis Korovinis, *Towards a Theory of the Nation*.[457] It is telling that the book that would follow, *Nationhood and the Left*,[458] is dedicated "to the left-wing internationalist who does not feel guilty for his patriotism"[459] and is rather obviously intended for an audience invested in the theoretical discourse within the Marxist Left, authored by an intellectual from within that audience and being published at the very twilight of "actually existing socialism" (1988/89). It starts by exploring the relation between the First, Second, and Third International on the one hand and national movements on the other; it continues with an examination of post-war Marxism (Eurocommunism, Maoism, the Soviet experiment, the Frankfurt School, and so on) and nationhood, and concludes with "the Chinese failure," the "crisis of Marxism" and a more general *cultural, civilisational* crisis which calls for a re-evaluation of the tension between "cosmopolitanism and cultural otherness." The yet partial seeds for the ideas in Ziakas' mature period can be discerned here. Completing this early trilogy, this will be followed in 1993 with *Nation and Tradition*,[460] a treatise now focusing on

[457] Theodoros I. Ziakas and Vangelis Korovinis, *Ἀναζητώντας Μιὰ Θεωρία Γιὰ Τὸ Ἔθνος [Towards a Theory of the Nation]* (Athens: Ekati, 1988).
[458] Theodoros I. Ziakas, *Ἐθνισμὸς Καὶ Ἀριστερά [Nationhood and the Left]* (Athens: Pelekanos, 1990).
[459] Ziakas, 7.
[460] Ziakas, *Nation and Tradition*.

an inquiry on the nature of nationhood — a theory of nationalism: it begins with an overview of "Roman," "Graeco-Turkish," and "European" identities as examples of national and transnational "collective subjects" and proceeds to elaborate on the titular subject, the balance and tension between "nation" and "tradition." The book concludes with a theoretical analysis of "alienation" and "Westernization" that does not hide its debt to Christos Yannaras' thought at the time.

In this chapter I will be focusing on his second, mature "trilogy" (2001–2005), in which his thought is both further systematised and further developed: three volumes that Ziakas describes as work in "social ontology" [κοινωνικὴ ὀντολογία]. This carries a dual meaning, including not only the standard meaning of the tem, i.e. the study of the nature and properties of the social world, but also the grounding of (explicit or, more importantly, implicit) ontological presuppositions on the social plane. The first book, *The Eclipse of the Subject: The Crisis of Modernity and Hellenic Tradition*,[461] focuses almost exclusively on the institution of the *individual* subject as the basis of the "collective subject"—an idea to which we shall return. The second book, *Beyond the Individual: The Enigma of Greek Identity, A General Introduction*[462] continues Ziakas' discussion on the historical developments in the collective identity of the Greeks as being representative of general patterns of global relevance. *Becoming a Reflection of the Self. The Enigma of Hellenic Identity – a Focused Introduction*[463] concludes this cycle. Since the publication of the latter, Ziakas has published a revised version of lectures on what he terms contemporary nihilism, i.e. the annihilation (or rather *nullification*, in order to retain an etymological connection to *zero* rather than simply *nothing*) of the subject in its, according to Ziakas, tripartite institution (divine, collective, and individual) as *Contemporary Nihilism: Narrating the Fate of Freedom*[464] — which was followed with an indirect comment on Greece's economic, if not existential, crisis, puzzlingly entitled *Homeland-Self-Eater: A Disease of the City.*[465] What is meant here by *nihilism* is, essentially, relativism, i.e. the refusal to ascribe real, mind-independent meaning and value to anything.

[461] Ziakas, *Eclipse of the Subject*.
[462] Ziakas, *Beyond the Individual*.
[463] Ziakas, *Becoming a Reflection of the Self*.
[464] Ziakas, *Contemporary Nihilism*.
[465] Ziakas, *Homeland-Self-Eater*.

Theodoros Ziakas' backstory: An appetite for wonder

Before turning to Ziakas' ideas as formulated in his mature trilogy, it would make sense to briefly trace his development as a thinker and personality; not only due to such an overview's relevance for the matter at hand, but also due to Ziakas' uncommon itinerary — from atheism, esotericism, and participation in leftist revolutionary organisations to the ecclesial faith of the Orthodox church and a re-appreciation of Byzantium and tradition articulated in a nuanced theoretical body of work in a *straight* line of development rather than in radical changes and conversions, consisting in further refinement and theoretical development rather than ruptures and schisms. The basic facts are that Ziakas was born in 1945 in the village of Kourenda in Ioannina, Greece, and spent most of his adult life in Athens. After studying mathematics at the University of Athens, he entered Greece's public sector in IT and eventually worked at Greece's State General Accounting Office. A closer look at his development as a person and thinker —and the sole source of publicly available information on more details concerning Ziakas' life— has been granted to us through a short text of his amounting to less than 4.000 words: a chapter entitled "An Experience of Absence" published in a Greek anthology on the two millennia anniversary of Christianity, in which he is called to describe his "opinion" on Christ and his church but in actuality describes "existential and social quest," conjoining the two in an undivided whole.[466]

Ziakas described his village childhood as quite a troubled one, him being an unruly child. In reaching adulthood, he decided to "give his life for communism" and in this context rejected the Christian faith of his upbringing in 1965/66, since this was "the opium of the people." Ziakas saw in communism a heroic global movement for changing the world, for the emancipation of the peoples and classless society. The emergence of Greece's military dictatorship in 1967, the "Hellas of Greek Christians," further cemented Ziakas' rejection of Christianity, as the dominant and hegemonic "Christianity" of the official regime did not leave much space for sympathy: it was everyone's obligation to struggle for the abolition of such a "Christianity," the only one that was in sight.

[466] Theodoros I. Ziakas, "Εμπειρία Ἀπουσίας [An Experience of Absence]," in *2000 Χρόνια Μετά [2000 Years after Christ]*, ed. Savvas Fytas (Athens: Akritas, 2000), 118–30, http://antifono.gr/portal/πρόσωπα/ζιάκας/αθρογραφία/2783-εμπειρία-απουσίας.html. The following section derives from this chapter, paraphrasing its key parts, and has been accessed via *Antifono.gr*, which has no pagination.

In an attempt to build the imminent revolution's political party in an anti-revisionist spirit, Ziakas would soon enter the Maoist organisation "Proletariat Struggle" [Προλεταριακὸς Ἀγώνας], which was illegal at the time. He notes in "An Experience of Absence" that expectations were starting to be rebutted quite early on. The very same symptoms that had kept him and his comrades away from revisionism were being replicated within the revolutionary organisation: "hypocrisy, a lust for power, opportunism, factionalism, etc.": everybody was becoming a "miniature Stalin," and this spelled failure for young Ziakas' expectations, as he was gradually discerning that this was symptomatic of wider and seemingly unavoidable tendencies, not merely the deficiencies of any given organisation or person. His gradual disillusionment engendered utter desperation, as he had invested all his soul to the project of social emancipation; accepting certain defeat was now a total *existential* failure, together with the impossibility of returning to his prior life, since in going underground he had destroyed all his official documents by burning them.

Ziakas' conclusion was threefold:

> (a) One cannot change anything for the better if one does not change oneself first. (b) Changing oneself is far from easy. (c) Marxism had no theory or practice for the question of the subject of [social] change changing itself first — and such a theory or practice could not be traced within Western culture in general. Thus, one cannot change the world without changing oneself. My aim: to find a theory and practice for the subject's change of itself, by itself.[467]

It is Ziakas' striving for the preconditions of *social* change that led him to inquire into the institution of the *subject* and for a method for its *change*. He started studying psychology and psychoanalysis, particularly Carl Jung and Wilhelm Reich who were fashionable at the time, in order to find the *existential* solution that is presupposed for the *social* solution of emancipation. According to his narration, he soon understood that psychology cannot provide the answers he was looking for, as psychology concerns the, as it were, *sick* patients, neurotics and psychotics; it does not strive to perfect a *healthy* subject. This objective gradually led Ziakas to inquire into Eastern esotericism — also fashionable at the time. He would soon single out George Gurdjieff's esoteric system[468] which proclaimed to offer such a theory and practice. After further study, however, Ziakas understood that the opposite

[467] Ziakas.
[468] George Ivanovich Gurdjieff (~1866–1949), mystic and spiritual teacher of Greek and Armenian descent, born in Gyumri in today's Armenia.

problem was to be encountered here; this orientation had no eventual connection to any *social* change, but mystical as it was, it concerned the "inner individual," dislocated from social reality and relations. No luck here.

Further studies on the *collective* aspect of the problem at hand led Ziakas to the Frankfurt School. In its critique of the Enlightenment and its insights on the decline of the modern individual due to its assimilation by rationally ordered mechanical systems robbing it of its humanity proved to be particularly revealing to Ziakas, yet still partial and incomplete. It is utterly coincidentally that Ziakas found the thread for a way out, in the unlikely context of his study of Gurdjieff: in a footnote by Peter Ouspensky, the *Philokalia*, the 18th-century collection of Greek patristic and hesychast writings spanning from the 4th to the 14th century and initially compiled as spiritual guidance for Eastern Orthodox monks, was mentioned as an interesting Christian curiosity. In studying the *Philokalia* following this cue, Ziakas confesses to being scandalized: the solution to his lifelong theoretical riddle was there to see — he was searching for this thread in East and West, and it was right there at his doorstep, in the tradition of his forefathers. The seed of that solution, according to Ziakas, is that only radical self-transcendence (dubbed *love* in the Christian church) can effect change in the individual — and that this self-transcendence, this *love*, can only be an event of communion between persons: it presupposes the type of subject systematized and codified by Christos Yannaras in the notion of the person, "the theological ontology of the πρόσωπο," to which Ziakas was led by "the progressive professors at Panteion University." What is meant here is that Ziakas was guided to Yannaras' *Person and Eros* due to the latter's notoriety in the press of the day, owing to the protest of other Panteion professors against his election to a chair in philosophy at the university (which is a hint that this development in Ziakas' intellectual trajectory should have taken place around 1982). Ziakas was led to realise that the problem occupying him for all these years, and the solution to that problem, was *the incarnation of the anthropology of the person (πρόσωπο) in the social level, in the level of social relations.* The question remained, of course, on how this could take place — or, of how this *has taken place* in history.

An entanglement of the social, the individual, and the sacred

Ziakas' position is one that *responds* to questions that are quite pre-eminent in Greece's public sphere and search for identity: for example, the narrative that modern Greeks have not undergone proper individualisation (ἐξατομίκευση) as a people and hence cannot function properly vis-à-vis Western countries and societies is a common one, forming one of the nuclei of the dominant "underdog culture versus reformist culture" dichotomy. Ziakas responds to this discourse by maintaining that Greeks are *neither* collectivist in spirit and tendency *nor* individualist and individualised, but carry the seeds of a now dormant anthropological perspective that transcends this juxtaposition.[469] Ziakas discerns overarching patterns in seemingly trivial dispositions:

> [A priority of modernity is the avoidance of the directness of relations, which are mediated through systems, as is aptly articulated] in Sartre's insight, "hell is other people," more concretely "when three persons share the same cell." It is "hell," because relations there are direct and the modern Subject's face cannot be concealed behind an impersonal, individualised social *persona*. Proximity sabotages the impersonal social function. The opposite is the case in Greek social function. Hell here is the persons' inability to be in communion and interpenetration with one another. Hell, according to the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, is where one *cannot see the face* [πρόσωπο] *of the other*, in spite of their proximity, as they stand back to back. [...] Hell is the artificial non-visibility of the other's face [πρόσωπο]: the *impersonal neighbour*. That is to say, for a Greek as the tradition describes him, modernity is hell.[470]

The question on the institution of the subject forms the basis of Ziakas' *The Eclipse of the Subject*. This, however, is directly correlated by the author with political theory, since Ziakas asserts a strong (if not causal) correlation between three different levels: the human person (individual subject), society (collective subject), God/meaning (divine subject). His contention that societies and their political manifestations and systems may be best understood as *collective subjects* leads him to a consideration of the "subject" *in toto.*

Ziakas begins by explaining how his earlier inquiries on nationhood led him to the question of the subject's institution. By understanding in his early analytical endeavours that the nation as a category is but a form of instituting the collective subject, the question that

[469] Ziakas, *Beyond the Individual*, 7–10.
[470] Ziakas, *Becoming a Reflection of the Self*, 308n3.

emerged as a precondition for a close examination of models for collective subjects concerned the possible typologies of subjects in general.[471] This question concerns not only the construing of the subject in any given society, but more importantly the semantic content projected on the subject and its nature. Thus, the question on what content is projected by different societies, either implicitly or explicitly, on the human subject can be approached, according to Ziakas, as a veritable key on political, cultural, and civilisational questions. "The projection of semantic content on the individual (νοηματοδότηση τοῦ ὑποκειμένου) froms the foundation, the axis, the 'DNA' of a culture."[472]

This project, and particularly our author's conclusions in faring inside it, is dubbed by Ziakas as an "alternative social ontology"[473] — not only because it provides an alternative ontology of the social, i.e. an alternative response to what it is that institutes the very basis of the social phenomenon, but also because it *brings ontology in the social*. It is in this latter element that its alternative nature primarily lies, as the fragmentation of reality in modernity's thinking effects the exile of ontology from the question on the social: Ziakas sets out to rehabilitate this.[474] The defining question now concerns being *qua* being, the nature of existence itself, which then dictates the nature of the divine subject (or the proverbial meaning of life), the nature of the individual subject (which in Christianity is fashioned *in the image* of the divine subject) and, eventually, the nature of the *collective* subject — society and political reality. Ziakas contends that any such inquiry into "social ontology" would under normal circumstances be of concern to only a very limited crowd of intellectuals, were it not to be pressingly relevant in view of the "anthropological crisis" of contemporary culture — meaning the disintegration and fragmentation of the individual as the agent of culture and

[471] Ziakas, *Eclipse of the Subject*, 9.
[472] Ziakas, 12.
[473] Ziakas, 10. "Social ontology" is indeed a term to be encountered in scholarly literature — see, for example, the entry in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Brian Epstein, "Social Ontology," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2018 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2018), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/social-ontology/, or a number of book-length works on the matter, providing quite different perspectives: Raimo Tuomela, *Social Ontology: Collective Intentionality and Group Agents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); David Weissman, *A Social Ontology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Carol C. Gould, *Marx's Social Ontology: Individuality and Community in Marx's Theory of Social Reality* (Cambridge: MIT Pr, 1980); Stephen Pratten, ed., *Social Ontology and Modern Economics*, Economics as Social Theory 37 (London ; New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015); Christoph Suntrup and Werner Gephart, eds., *The Normative Structure of Human Civilization: Readings in John Searle's Social Ontology*, Schriftenreihe Des Käte Hamburger Kollegs "Recht Als Kultur" 15 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2017). However, it does not seem to be the case that Ziakas explicitly converses with the field of social ontology as it is to be witnessed in the Anglophone world and to negotiate his particular proposal's position within it. This being the case, a detailed juxtaposition of Ziakas' theory to existing theories in social ontology would not seem to be a particularly fruitful inquiry in the context of this introductory presentation of Ziakas' thought: his theory is to be judged on its own.
[474] Ziakas, *Eclipse of the Subject*, 49.

civilisation, the "eclipse of the subject," what Ziakas elsewhere terms contemporary nihilism. According to Ziakas, the danger to unfold concerns the development of radical individualism into "technological messianism,"[475] in which science and technology essentially function as religions, with a new class of "clergy" in control of truth and the ultimate promise of perfect knowledge and unlimited prosperity.

The book proper begins with the assertion that, after the fall of "actually existing socialism," three seemingly unsolvable problems dominate the limits of global capitalism: national inequality, social inequality, and the ecological crisis — all of which decisively engender the system's viability,[476] a system being that which can replicate itself, "the organisation and ordering of relations on the basis of their impersonal character and replaceability: the autonomy of the system from the 'human factor' is its constitutive principle."[477] Ziakas proceeds to provide his interpretation for the reasons of socialism's failure, of globalisation's natural limits, of fundamentalism's emergence, of the impossibility of *social* change without a change in the change's *subject* and agent — the human person — and of the current "anthropological" crisis[478] as modernity's *terminal* crisis, testing the limits of modernity itself precisely by completing it.[479] "Nihilism" is diagnosed as the heart of the problem, as the convergence of all its symptoms, and what is meant by this word is "the elevation of the existential *zero* to an *ontological principle*",[480] i.e. answering "nothing" to questions on the meaning of reality, on the cause and purpose of existence, on the intrinsic meaning of history, on the role of humanity. Ziakas sees this as entrenched in the historical self-understanding of modernity, during which roughly three historical ages are identified: the pagan age of a pantheistic nature, the theocratic age and the anthropocentric age, in which modernity recognises her own self. Deviations are thus shunned as reactionary fundamentalisms: religious fundamentalism is a regression to the *theocratic* age, while radical forms of the green movement are identified as regressions to the *pagan* age of nature's sanctity.

The implicit implication is that *there will be no fourth age* (a claim reminiscent, in a sense, of Francis Fukuyama's "end of history," i.e. the completion of individualisation

[475] Ziakas, 12–13; Ziakas, *Beyond the Individual*, 223–29.
[476] Ziakas, *Eclipse of the Subject*, 22.
[477] Ziakas, *Beyond the Individual*, 353.
[478] The book was, of course, authored before the 2008 global financial crisis.
[479] Ziakas, *Eclipse of the Subject*, 22–32.
[480] Ziakas, 33.

processes in free-market capitalism and liberal democracy), as the anthropocentric age form the summit and apogee of human development: every and any development cannot but be *internal* to that age. Ziakas identifies in this implicit historicist narrative of modernity its own historical annihilation, since modernity, refusing to acknowledge the possibility of any *fourth* age, may only expect subtraction, a *zero*, as its own historical transcendence as an age.[481] Ziakas' alternative social ontology consists in that he holds that a global alternative, a way out, is indeed possible, and the seeds of it may be found in the solutions that emerged in the Greek people's history when encountering similar "existential" crises — to which we shall return. Our author proceeds then to respond to two objections: one claiming that the Western, globalised world is *already* built on a Hellenic legacy, and another questioning any form of *continuity* in Greek history, so that one could theorise on the different phases and changes that this history has undergone. He hastens to add, however, that *contemporary* Greece and its Greeks are part of the problem rather than part of the solution, and in no way heirs to the "ontological way out" he describes, i.e. a *prosopocentric* culture.[482]

The very possibility of *prosopocentrism* has been rendered dormant after the Ottoman conquest and, following that, modernity, and the Christian πρόσωπο is now like "a smoked fresco in an old abandoned church: full of scratches and with the eyes in the saints' faces plucked out";[483] the Greeks may only offer the service of being able to *remember* it (so that, eventually, it could be re-membered out of the, according to Ziakas, imminent ashes of today's civilisation). It is important to note that Ziakas does not conceive of himself as "proposing" something that could be subsequently "adopted," as it were, he is not a Plato in search for his Dionysius. He understands his work as a *descriptive* one, and so far as the future is concerned, descriptive of shifts (to a prosopocentric civilisation) that may or may not take place. The author contends that the process of individualisation, when taken to its extremes, saturated and completed, can lead to two possible outcomes: either to a transition to the Trinitarian *prosopocentric* type or to a regression to collectivism[484] (when not to an *an-*

[481] Ziakas, 35–36.
[482] Ziakas, 38–41.It is to be clarified once again that πρόσωπο will remain untranslated (and thus "prosopocentrism" and so on), since its etymological root of "being in relation to" (=having one's face directed at, literally) has to be retained, together with its distinction from currents of personalism. Πρόσωπο here is a *technical* term.
[483] Ziakas, *Beyond the Individual*, 364.
[484] Ziakas, 324.

nihil-ation through nihilism, here to be realised as a merging of the *individual* with technology in transhumanism, the very anthropology of technomessianism).[485]

Building on Yannaras, Ziakas proceeds then to sketch three possible ways for conceptualising a causal principle of reality: (i) Essence/substance as impersonal unicity — today this brings to mind Islam's *Tawhid*, the indivisible oneness and unicity of God, or any ontology elevating one *principle* to the causal principle of reality. (ii) *Zero* — any ontology declaring that there is no causal principle *per se* and elevating randomness to the cause of existence. (iii) And the πρόσωπο, i.e. the Christian assertion that the cause of reality is not a self-contained being (or, of course, randomness), but freedom and love, in the sense of locating the cause in a person that exists relationally rather than merely ontically: a *Father* that can only be conceived, for example, in relation to the *Son*, a being that subsists as communion. Thus, by extension and reflection, the subject has *value* insofar as it transcends itself, insofar as it realizes *love* (i.e. a mode of existence centred in self-transcendence). Ziakas claims that roughly three different polities may be engendered by their respective conceptualisation of a causal principle (or vice versa). (i) Various forms of *collectivism* (κολλεκτιβισμός), as everyone is subjugated to the One and all subjects are equal vis-a-vis their unfathomable *in*equality to the One. (ii) Various forms of *individualism* (ἀτομικισμός) since the annihilation of any superior principle prompts the individual to consider itself as the sole superior principle, engendering the moral code, being constituted by inalienable rights, etc. (iii) *Communitarianism* (κοινοτισμός), which transcends both collectivism and individualism, and is to be found according to Ziakas only in the Greek communities of the Eastern Roman/Byzantine empire, living on under the Ottoman rule: other forms of communitarianism are considered as merely collectivist, and this Ziakas does not engage them intellectually.[486]

Ziakas denies that such a schema is abstract or merely ideological and proceeds to sketch the way in which a *theology* reflects into a *polity*. "In the Trinitarian tradition for example, God is a historical person that lived in community with human beings within history. His life was a disclosure of the mode of existence that makes man free of every

[485] Ziakas, 342–43; and Ziakas, *Becoming a Reflection of the Self*, 318–21.
[486] Ziakas, *Eclipse of the Subject*, 41–46. Indeed, for Ziakas communitarianism is a possibility in all three "types" (collectivist, individualist, prosopocentric), but in a radically different mode in its type. His main concern is *prosopocentric* communitarianism, the one he recognises in the Byzantine period but also under Ottoman rule and always in tension with overarching authorities (of either imperial Constantinople, or the Phanar, or the Ottomans), explaining the differences of this form of communarianism with collectivist or individualist versions thereof. Ziakas, *Becoming a Reflection of the Self*, 299–302.

limitation, of the mode to which God Himself owes his divinity. The access to that God's truth is made possible by realising the particular kind of community He brought within History. The theoretical or applied discourse on divinity is thus subjugated to the critical scrutiny of the communitarian experience."[487] What would be important in order to understand in Ziakas' schema is that he does not attempt to bring God in a discussion where God is not already present. Ziakas does not propose a polity "with God," and the Christian Trinitarian one at that, over and against a polity "without God," a "nihilistic" one (and it would be indeed difficult to avoid the temptation to characterise his ideas as theocratic on that basis). Rather than that, Ziakas contends that every society, even a pluralistic one,[488] *either way* implicitly asserts an ontological axis — the seeming absence of such an axis would be precisely the assertion of *zero,* of *nihil*, as that axis. Thus, in Ziakas' thinking there is no question of a certain society *not* being ruled by what is dictated in the nature of a "God"; it is just that this God may be the non-God of nihilism, the non-God of ontological and cosmological randomness. (The Trinitarian God is *also* a non-God albeit of a different kind, since its apophaticism excludes it from the beings in the context of the created-uncreated,[489] thus resolving the temptation of ontotheology[490] in a negative, apophatic way.) Ziakas sets out to analyse the ontological presupposition already present within social and

[487] Ziakas, *Eclipse of the Subject*, 44.

[488] A pluralistic society may be possible only on the basis that none of its constitutive "truths" is, indeed, true; that all of them are partial at best, and that none possesses the normative effects that truth itself would possess. Strictly speaking, this remark is tautological. Thus, "zero" may be the only ontological axis of a pluralistic society. In a certain sense, at the other side of the spectrum lies Islam's *Ummah*: precisely because a *particular* truth is asserted as indeed being the case, indeed being capital-T true, the world cannot but be divided into two groups: the truth-bearing one and the rest, the *Dar al-Harb*, the "House of War," which has in its best interest to be incorporated in the former: its very existence is a blasphemy to the community-in-Truth.

[489] Cf. Maximus the Confessor's *Mystagogia*, proem.110-115, accessed via TLG: "Δεῖ γάρ, εἴπερ ὡς ἀληθῶς τὸ γνῶναι διαφορὰν Θεοῦ καὶ κτισμάτων ἐστὶν ἀναγκαῖον ἡμῖν, θέσιν εἶναι τοῦ ὑπερόντος τὴν τῶν ὄντων ἀφαίρεσιν, καὶ τὴν τῶν ὄντων θέσιν εἶναι τοῦ ὑπερόντος ἀφαίρεσιν, καὶ ἄμφω περὶ τὸν αὐτὸν κυρίως θεωρεῖσθαι τὰς προσηγορίας, καὶ μηδεμίαν κυρίως δύνασθαι· τὸ εἶναι, φημί, καὶ <τὸ> μὴ εἶναι." — "For since it is necessary that we understand correctly the difference between God and creatures, then the affirmation of being beyond being [ὑπερεῖναι, ὑπερούσιος] must be the negation of beings and the affirmation of beings must be the negation of being beyond being. In fact both names, being and nonbeing, are to be reverently applied to [God] although not at all properly," trans. George Berthold.

[490] In essence, ontotheology means considering God as *a being*, i.e., as one of the beings, even though a very exalted one (and not, for example, as residing beyond the category of beings altogether). This term has suffered much; it originated with Immanuel Kant and became widely known through its use (with a different content) by Martin Heidegger, who charged Western metaphysics as a whole with having succumbed to the ontotheological temptation. Today it is usually used in a much wider sense, denoting the hardly avoidable inclusion of philosophical theology in philosophy through metaphysics (Aristotle's "first philosophy"), where a sharp distinction between the philosophical and theological aspects of it is extremely difficult. The problem is that by including God in the ontological enquiry, God is *reified*, he is made an object within existence—albeit the highest, the most perfect, etc., but nonetheless one object within being. So far as modern philosophy is concerned, the philosopher Jean-Luc Marion successfully attempts in his now-classic monograph *God without Being* to radically transcend ontotheology when philosophically engaging with the subject of God, thereby achieving a truly crucial contribution to philosophy.

political reality — and since the precise nature of God is society's vocabulary to respond to the ontological question, the nature of (any given) God, together with the nature of the *absence* of God in the case of nihilism, *is* the content of the answer to that ontological question, which then dictates its respective responses to *anthropological* and *social/political* questions. Essentially, the assertion of what is ontologically *true* leads to the assertion of what is anthropologically and politically *fitting.*

Ziakas continues with a theoretical grounding of social ontology and its relation to ontology proper (i.e., the question of *what makes beings be*, or according to Heidegger *what is the difference between Being and beings* and, according to Greek patristics as codified by Yannaras in *Person and Eros*, *how do beings participate in being, what —or rather how— is their mode of existence*), culminating in an argument on how a *prosopocentric social ontology* —i.e., that institution of the causal principle as a πρόσωπο which could transform ordinary individuals (ἄτομα) into πρόσωπα and political agents *in its likeness*— could provide a way out from modernity's triple crisis (national inequality, social inequality, and the ecological catastrophe).[491]

The (individual and, by extension, social) *subject* is then dissected through an analysis of the role of power, education, division of labour, and ideology — an analysis heavily influenced by Max Horkheimer and the Frankfurt School in general, as well as Yannaras and, partly *a contrario*, Cornelius Castoriadis.[492] This is followed by a multi-faceted analysis of the notion of *relation* and *relationship* (and, indirectly, freedom) through its many different possible significations — classical Greek significations, modern ones, communist ones, Christian Orthodox ones.[493]

The collective subject: overly tangible communities

The next chapter is devoted to an overview of the possible significations of the *collective*, the *collective subject*, and its relation to the *individual* subject. Ziakas ascribes agency and a certain self-sufficiency to the collective subject and begins with a position:

[491] Ziakas, *Eclipse of the Subject*, 55–96.
[492] Ziakas, 99–116.
[493] Ziakas, 116–49.

"The collective contains elements that cannot be reduced to the individuals that comprise it. These elements provide it with a certain autonomy that is both mechanical and volitional. The distinction between the individual and the collective is of an ontological nature and cannot be 'abolished'. It is due to its autonomy that the collective is able to act as a subject; it subsists as an autonomous source of social activity."[494] Ziakas reverses the common-sense order and defines the individual subject as acquiring its identity from the collective subject rather than the other way around. However, this signification is not of the collectivist persuasion, according to which identity would be construed in *similarity, homogeneity and "homonomy"* to other subjects in a group, since the individual subject acquires its identity from the collective one through its *difference* from other individuals within the collective subject. *Otherness* emerges *in comparison to* other subjects, or else it would not be able to be recognised as such. *Otherness* can only emerge in the horizon of one's *difference* to a subject one has entered a relation to, or else there is no term of comparison.

The collective subject is not merely the sum of its parts — and it is this that makes *continuity* possible, for example, the continuity of Greek people in spite of the finitude of each individual subject's historical presence. Ziakas formulates five criteria for recognising subject-ness in any kind of subject: these had been previously asserted by him as delineating the otherness of the individual subject, and are now being applied to the collective subject. There are: (a) uncompromised otherness, (b) a social nature, (c) creative activity, (d) an ecstatic nature, i.e. being able to exit one's self-sufficiency, and (e) the ability to choose one's mode of existence as being either a subject of *necessity* or a subject of *freedom.*[495] Examples of collective subjects bearing these marks include national collective subjects and political movements, among others. However, the problem of *evil* is a corollary of this freedom that even collective subjects have.[496] Maximus the Confessor's insights are utilized in underscoring potential *prosopocentric* premises of collective subjects and their relation to individual ones.[497]

Ziakas sums up both the distinctiveness and the balance between the three poles of his analysis (individual subject–*relations*–collective subject) in the institution of the social as follows:

[494] Ziakas, 150.
[495] Ziakas, 150.
[496] Ziakas, 161–70.
[497] Ziakas, 176–78; 185–86.

> We have seen in the preceding chapters how the individual subject actualises its triadic institution. It remains to be seen how social collectivity enters into this. It follows from our earlier treatment that:
>
> (a) The distinction between subject and relations is an ontological. Relations cannot be entirely reduced to their hypostatic carrier (since personality is a convergence both of individual and social activity). Neither can the subject be reduced to its relations, which it dynamically transcends. Besides, relations that do not relate something to something else are by definition devoid of meaning.
>
> (b) The distinction between collective and individual subject is also ontological. Both the reducibility of the collective to the individual and the reducibility of the individual to the collective are excluded, since the group is more than the sum of its parts and since the collective has a certain autonomy, whereas, conversely, the πρόσωπο transcends collective nature.
>
> These positions lead to a proposal according to which the individual, the collective, and their relations are manifested as the ultimate categories for instituting being in communion/forming a society (γιὰ τὴ θεμελίωση τοῦ κοινωνεῖν). They lead, that is, to a social ontology that is typically triadic, in the sense that the semantic institution of the subject cannot but have such a character, so that the relative autonomy of the three poles (individual–collective–relations) does not fall apart.[498]

This triad, however, is soon compared by Ziakas to another triad, that of Byzantine Patristic ontology: *substance–hypostasis–activities* (οὐσία–ὑπόστασις–ἐνέργειαι).[499] In Patristic and Byzantine vocabulary, particularly after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE, this triad forms the basic conceptual "tools" for ontology, in a way substantially different to the later nominalist–realist distinction in Western Europe. *Substance* (οὐσία) or *nature* (φύσις) denotes the homogeneity of the particulars: "catness," what all particular cats are and have in common, for example. *Hypostasis* (ὑπόστασις) or, in the case of human beings and God, *person* (πρόσωπον) denotes the particular instance of the substance: for example, *this* cat, Garfield, or that human being. The *activities* (ἐνέργειαι) are that which is common in the substance but unique in the hypostasis, i.e. the mode in which the substance is translated into hypostases: e.g., every human being walks, laughs, and speaks (i.e. *walking, laughing,* and *speaking* are activities of the substance "humanity"), but the mode in which walking, laughing, and speaking is uniquely realized by each particular human hypostasis makes this

[498] Ziakas, 261–62.
[499] Ziakas, 273–78.

hypostasis known as such (as we have cognitive access only to a hypostasis' *activities* and *manifestations*, not to its ineffable "nucleus").

Ziakas uses this terminology in his social ontology in order to define the individual subject as the *hypostasis*, the collective subject as the *substance*, and the *activities* as the umbilical cord between the two, the mode in which the one presupposes the other, forms the other and is formed by it.[500] Apart from transferring an *ontological* vocabulary to the *social* level, this allows Ziakas to better illustrate the balance between the collective and the individual subject in a way that, in a prosopocentric context, asserts the reality of both. In Western medieval metaphysics, the nominalism–realism distinction looms large — i.e., the question whether universals possess *real* being or are mere abstractions, and vice versa. Eastern metaphysical vocabulary was constructed in a way, however, that granted it with a certain balance between universal and particular through the *activities* (ἐνέργειαι) that lead from the one to the other. Thus, the reality of *both* the universal *and* the particular is asserted *in a unitary way* that transcends the realism–nominalism distinction.[501] Ziakas draws on this in order to propose a social ontology in which the reality of *both* the collective *and* the individual subject is asserted, something that is explained by focusing on the relation between the two.

Ziakas clarifies that the classical Greek subject was an individualist[502] one, not a prosopocentric one. In contrast with modernity's individualist subject, this was still a subject in reference to a group, thus the feasibility of classical democracy — insofar, that is, as it did not start to collapse in a way reminiscent of today's in the late Hellenistic period and late antiquity. Collectivism, however, forms a truly different kind of collective subject, in which

[500] Ziakas, 274–75. Also revisited in Ziakas, *Homeland-Self-Eater*, 25–40. *Activities* (ἐνέργειαι) are that which is common in the substance (e.g. the activity of *walking* or *speaking* or *laughing* in the case of humans) but realised uniquely in the hypostasis/particular (we come to *know* a person via the distinctive way that person walks, speaks, and laughs — the distinctive way that person uniquely realises what is common in the human substance).

[501] For example: for most of Greek patristics (and surely for Maximus the Confessor), were all particulars to die, the universal would perish as well, e.g. were all cats to die, "cat-ness" as a created substance would cease to exist — a position that would be inconceivable for a realist. However, substances have real, mind-independent existence, they are not mere mental abstractions — a position that would be inconceivable for a nominalist.

[502] Ziakas clarifies that, under normal circumstances, "individualism" as the type of the collective subject is not, as moralising discourses would have it, an individual *without* a group. Rather than that, "individualism" is *the group*, the collective subject, that is instituted with the individualist subject as its focus (for example, revolving around the idea of individual rights) rather than on the basis of a collectivist understanding. Thus, "individualism" as a term for the collective subject refers to a *group*. The group may decompose into unrelated, chaotic subjects in a *crisis* of individualisation after its completion and peak, in a transition from individualism to nihilism/relativism: that, however, would be a different stage. Ziakas, *Becoming a Reflection of the Self*, 130n20.

individual subjectivity is swallowed up, with only the collective subject —and/or its head and overlord— being considered a *veritable* subject. Individualism and collectivism emerge as fundamentally irreconcilable modes for the institution of the individual and collective subject: prosopocentrism transcends this polarisation without abolishing it, since its warring pair continues to comprise the basic elements for the institution of the subject.[503]

Ziakas then turns his attention to the question of *truth* and of *living in truth* (τὸ κατ' ἀλήθειαν ζῆν) as the implicit nucleus of every polity: thus, the response a collective subject provides to the question of *truth* dictates the implications for its political and social strife, for its political constitution and collective aims. Of course, societies and polities are not monolithic entities in Ziakas' thought. Rather than that, they are always constellations of traditions, a matter he had examined more fully in *Nation and Tradition.* In this constellation of traditions,[504] a *central* tradition is discernible, a dominant *tendency* in the people's majority, as well as *peripheral* traditions around this, but also a *hegemonic* and *dominant* tradition, which is not always identified with the *central* tradition but is rather the one dictating the content of state education, for example. Civilisation is seen as a structure of traditions, and traditions are comprised of the "social craftsmanship" implicit in the social ideals that act as attractors to the tendencies of individuals.[505]

The author dives into classical, patristic and modern philosophical anthropology in order to approach the question of truth, and focuses on the different significations of the notion of the *soul* in those traditions. Drawing from Christos Yannaras' ideas and further developing his insights on the subject of radical relational otherness defined as the πρόσωπο, Ziakas elaborates on prosopocentric anthropology and its *ecstatic* character in particular, as it is this latter element which proves crucial in the constitution of *prosopocentric* cultures and polities. A critique of ideology (and a dialogue with Louis Althusser's thought) follows, according to which it is ideology that institutes the individual as a subject, engendering social correlations. Ideology is portrayed as a constructed symbolic order into which the subject acquires its identity.[506]

[503] Ziakas, *Eclipse of the Subject*, 191–94.
[504] A *tradition,* in the sense Ziakas ascribes to the term, is the *carrier* of anthropological types, thus collective identity emerges as a constellation of traditions. Ziakas, *Beyond the Individual*, 324–25.
[505] Ziakas, 40–41.
[506] Ziakas, *Eclipse of the Subject*, 195–238.

Drawing from René Girard's theory of the *sacrificial mechanism*,[507] of its correlation to violence, and of Christ as being the sacrifice that ends all sacrifices, Ziakas sees the πρόσωπο as the anthropological type that has this sacrifice as its model —an anthropology of the Cross— and thus transcends the juxtaposition of the collectivist and the individualist anthropological type: the πρόσωπο's sacrificial polity is thus the sacrifice that ends all *political* sacrifices.[508] The notion of power is inverted, as "power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9), the powerful one is called to become a servant (Matthew 20:26), "he last shall be first, and the first last" (Matthew 20:16).

One of Ziakas' interesting insights is that a culture's ideal subject is made apparent in the traits of its model subject-types (for example, today's model subject-types would be "celebrity/rock star" and "hedge fund manager/jet-setter"; that is what most people would ideally yet implicitly wish to be — or rather, that is an incarnation of the *qualities* and *successes* the anthropological type of late modernity strives at). In prosopocentrism, four model subject-types are discernible: "hero" and "the wise" as inherited from previous traditions, but more concretely "saint," and "martyr."[509] The "gravitational power," as it were, of a culture's model subject-types exerts a profound influence on the institution of individual subjects themselves. Ziakas considers the "intellectual" (philosopher, scientist, etc.) and the "entrepreneur" as the dominant model subject-types of modernity, the alliance of which, conjoining knowledge with capital, made its success possible. These two model subject-types are heirs to Western medieval (and collectivist) social leadership: the "monk" or cleric and the "knight."[510] The "monk" or cleric, however, acts in the name of the Catholic Church and by extension the person of the Pope, whereas the "knight" acts in the name of the king. The "intellectual" and the "entrepreneur" of modernity, on the other hand, act in the name of themselves: they are *individuals*. Which, in turn, elevates *individual* liberty into the highest value, engendering the notion of *rights* and modern liberal democracy.

Late modernity —and it is precisely this that designates it as *late* modernity, i.e. in its final stages prior to a purported paradigm change, as seems to be attested by parts of a purely Western intelligentsia as well,[511] particularly after the end of the "End of History"— finds both model subject-types in perverse decay. The integral alliance between "intellectual" and

[507] Ziakas, *Beyond the Individual*, 46–51.
[508] Ziakas, 53.
[509] Ziakas, *Eclipse of the Subject*, 239–43.
[510] Ziakas, *Beyond the Individual*, 333–34.
[511] Ziakas, 23.

"entrepreneur" has ceased to be. The "intellectual" started from Enlightenment, passed on to romanticism and then to modernism and postmodernism, after which relativism and nihilism (*sophistry*, to invoke the connection to the post-classical crisis of the individual) prevail. And the "entrepreneur" has become archetypically predatory; in the paradigm he embodies after faring beyond Fordism and the initial accumulation of capital, capital itself has been fetishized, commodified irrespectively of its actual purchasing power, and de-materialised, entering the nominalist world of the stock-market and, lately, the derivatives market-jungle. Thus, we have arrived at a condition in which the two *ideal, model* subject-types are also *self-undermining* ones, whereas their alliance has been substituted with mutual scorn.[512]

On Ziakas' fourfold anthropological typology

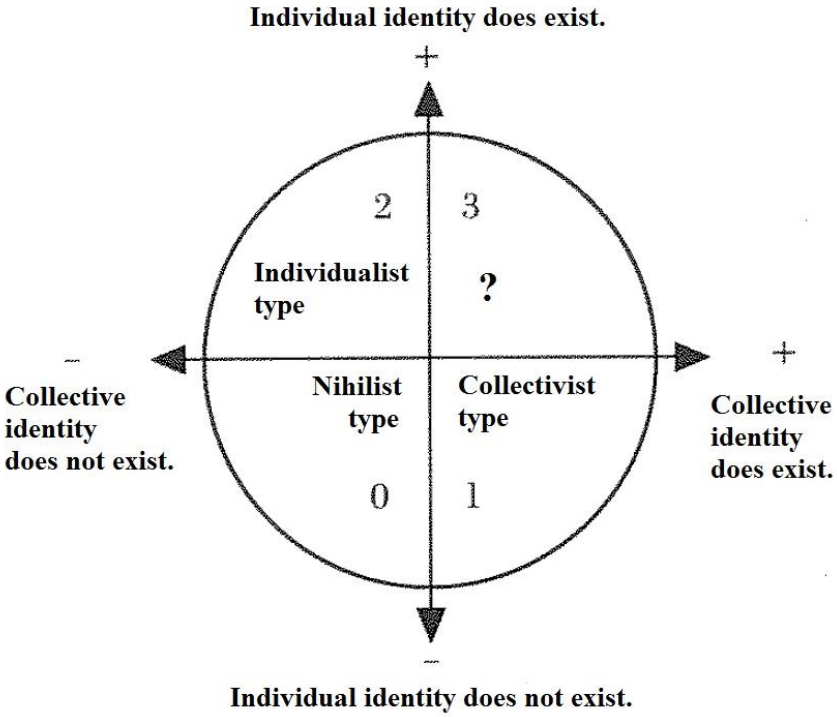
As has been mentioned, Ziakas recognises three main "anthropological types" that correspond to their respective polities and cultures/civilisations (in which each of those anthropological types is dominant and dictates its ideal subject-types as attractors): *collectivist, individualist, prosopocentric*. He also recognises their "ground zero," each type's decay and eventual annihilation, as a *fourth* and liminal type, *nihilist* (which is usually subsequently "reborn" in a collectivist guise).[513]

According to the taxonomy he is proposing, *identity* is dictated by the balance between the individual and the collective. The first axis concerns the opinions on the actual reality, and not merely imagined or imaginary nature, of *collective* identity: whether it indeed exists, or whether it is simply an abstraction created by bundling together the sole actual agent, the individual. The second axis concerns *individual* identity: apart from the position that there is indeed such a thing such as an autonomous individual identity, there is no historical shortage of collectivist cultures in which individual identity, when compared to the group, does not really possess autonomous subsistence.

[512] Ziakas, 339.
[513] Ziakas, 83-104; a comprehensive analysis of this taxonomy so far as the anthropological types are concerned may be found in 245-82.

Figure 6.1.

Ziakas, *Beyond the Individual*, 84: The "circle-of-all-possible-stances-on-identity."



Ziakas begins with the collectivist type of individuals and cultures: this type of individual and collective subject rests on the premise that collective identity *does* exist, whereas by comparison individual identity *does not*. The dissolution of the group is here an unthinkable catastrophe: discipline and hierarchy form indispensable values. The next stage is the individualist type, the collectivist type's polar opposite, according to which *individual* identity certainly exists and forms the cornerstone, while *collective* identity is but a nominalist abstraction, a bundling together of individuals which does not hold autonomous existence and agency. The compromise of the individual and its autonomy is here an unthinkable catastrophe: being a *citizen* and having autonomy form indispensable values. Relativistically denying the *actual* existence of both collective identities and individual identities circumscribes *nihilism*, the temptation and "zero point" of all "types": Ziakas considers this as the predicament and dominant tendency of post-classical Hellenism prior to

Byzantium proper, as well as the pathway that we are treading today in the globalised paradigm.

"Types" have a dynamic relation to each other and presuppose each other, as each requires the conceptualisation of its opposite one, etc. Ziakas clarifies that a collectivist or individualist polity and culture/civilisation does not require that *all* its members conform to the respective anthropological type, but rather that said type would be the dominant one, the self-evident and given one, the "factory settings," as it were.[514]

The question concerning the anthropological and civilisational type asserting *both* the reality of collective identity *and* that of the individual one, in mutual and dynamic defining relationship, emerges from the above graph. This *third* position is an inconceivable one from the vantage point of the other two, as there any divergence may only be understood in terms of their juxtaposition: thus, the *third* type will be recognised as a collectivist one in an individualist context, and as an individualist one in a collectivist context: *tertium non datur*.[515]

This *third* type (3), which may grow out of individualism (2) but not straight out of collectivism (1), may only be defined *apophatically*, as the absolute negation of "type zero" and the partial negation of the first and second type. From the vantage point of our current predicament, it is close to impossible to understand this *third* possibility: we may only circumscribe it as *prosopocentric*, with the πρόσωπο as its anthropological type, and recognise tendencies towards it in the communitarian Greek political tradition. In the *prosopocentric* type, collective identity is perceived as drawing its actual reality from its grounding in the perceived source and cause of reality itself, since the societal body coincides with the ecclesial body of the faithful, the church having the person of Christ as its head in accordance with its ecclesiology. And individual identity is again perceived as drawing its actual reality from its grounding in the perceived source and cause of reality itself, since the human person is made *in the image of God*, i.e. in the image of a being that is *radically relational*, actualising Trinitarian reality in the perpetual interpenetration of the divine hypostases: *love*.[516] It should be noted that the grounding of the particular conceptualisation

[514] Ziakas, 83–104.
[515] Ziakas, 83–104.
[516] Ziakas, 98–101. Can *love* be a concept of any use in political science? The fact is that *hate* already is such a concept in today's societies, to the point that it may be regulated by legislature ("*hate* speech," "*hate* crimes"). Given that this is the case, if *hate* can be employed as a concept in political science, then so can *love* without

of individual and collective identity within a "type" *on God* (or the negation thereof), i.e. on what/who is perceived as the nature of the source of reality and by extension as the nature of reality itself, this grounding on the primary response to the ontological question, is typical of *all* types and not only of the *prosopocentric* one. All possible anthropological and civilisational types derive the assertion of their reality from their assertion on the precise nature of reality — and the nihilistic "type" emerges from the voiding of this signifier, being in a sense *equally* "theocratic," although implicitly so.[517]

On numerous instances throughout his work,[518] Ziakas draws on a passage by the 7th-century Church Father Maximus the Confessor in order to underscore the three different types of subjects, "the three classes of the saved." In St Maximus this is simply a passing reference (which, however, reflects a threefold division commonly employed in late antiquity[519]), but Ziakas seems to find it supremely characteristic of the distinction he is sketching:

> [He] used to call faithful, virtuous, and knowing the beginners, the proficient, and the perfect, that is, slaves, mercenaries, and sons, the three classes of the saved. The slaves are the faithful who execute the Lord's commandments out of fear of threats and who willingly work for those who are obeyed. Mercenaries are those who out of a desire for promised benefits bear with patience "the burden and heat of the day," [Mt 20:12] that is, the affliction innate in and yoked to the present life from the condemnation of our first parents, and the temptations from it on behalf of virtue, and who by free choice of will wisely exchange life for life, the present one for the future. Finally, sons are the ones who out of neither fear of threats nor desire of promised things but rather out of character and habit of the voluntary inclination and disposition of the soul toward the good never become separated from God, as that son to whom it was said, "Son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours."[Lk 15:31] They have become as much as possible by deification in grace what God is and is believed by nature and by cause.[520]

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any further need to prove this point. It should be clarified, however, that when Ziakas applies such categories to civilisations and polities, he describes them as "attractors," as ideals aimed at — with the difference *among ideals* being of primary importance in the difference *among civilisations or polities.* For example, a society projecting the *ideal* of "sainthood" (or, to employ a different example, perfect autonomy) is not, and does not claim to be, comprised of saints (or, in our second example, perfectly autonomous individuals); however, "sainthood" acts as an *attractor* in the formation of individual and collective identities.

[517] Ziakas, 105–12.

[518] e.g., Ziakas, 53–54; 221–22.

[519] Maximus the Confessor, *Maximus Confessor: Selected Writings*, ed. and trans. George C. Berthold (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 222n137.

[520] Translation by George Berthold, Maximus the Confessor, 210–11. Original Greek: Maximus the Confessor, "Mystagogia," in *Massimo Confessore. La Mistagogia Ed Altri Scritti*, ed. Raffaele Cantarella (Florence: Testi Cristiani, 1931), chapter 24: lines 177–195.: «Πιστοὺς δὲ καὶ ἐναρέτους καὶ γνωστικοὺς ἐκάλει τοὺς

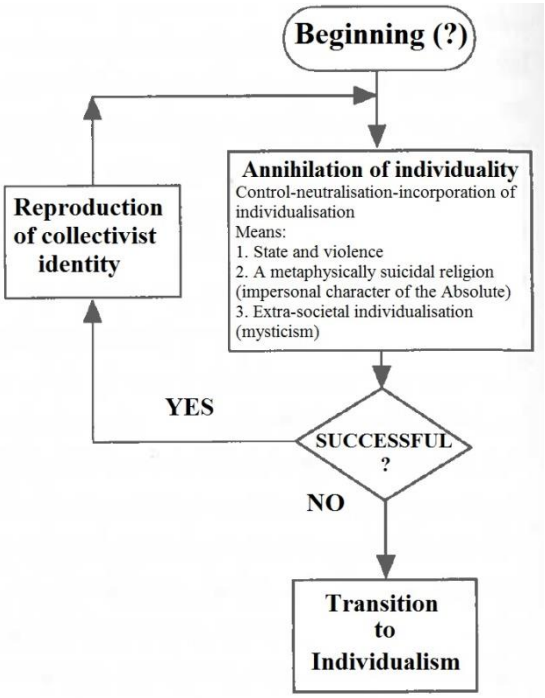
The reader should note that today the word μίσθιος would be translated as wage labour worker, which would assumedly be Ziakas' preferred translation. In this Maximian passage, "three classes of the saved" are identified: *slaves* (δοῦλοι), *mercenaries* or *wage labour workers* (μίσθιοι), and *sons* (υἱοί). The first are those that align themselves with God's will *out of fear, in order to avoid punishment*. The *mercenaries* work towards God's will *in expectation of compensation*, with benefits in views. And lastly the *sons* or *friends of God* align themselves with God's will freely, out of love, without either avoiding punishment or expecting payment. They have cultivated a "voluntary inclination of disposition" conducive to deification, they have aligned their very mode of existence to God's own mode of existence, i.e. radical referentiality and self-transcendence, *love* (1 John 4:8).

Ziakas takes this schema and applies it to the institution of the individual and the collective subject. The respective polities are collectivist ("slaves"), individualist ("mercenaries/wage labour workers"), and prosopocentric ("sons" or "friends"). The respective individual subject-types consist in the group-individual of collectivism, acting primarily out of *fear of punishment,* being subject to a self-evident *domination* ("slaves"); in the individualist subject, whose main motive is *gains*, *benefit*, which is the primary criterion guiding its actions ("mercenaries"); and in the πρόσωπο, which acts "for free," for the sake of communion, without avoiding punishment or expecting gains, merely for the sake of the utter fullness of embodying truth and completion, out of freedom as being the mode in which God Himself exists ("sons"; "friends").

εἰσαγομένους καὶ τοὺς προκόπτοντας καὶ τοὺς τελείους, ἤγουν δούλους καὶ μισθίους καὶ υἱούς, τὰς τρεῖς τάξεις τῶν σωζομένων. Δοῦλοι γάρ εἰσι πιστοί, οἱ φόβῳ τῶν ἠπειλημένων ἐκπληροῦντες τοῦ δεσπότου τὰς ἐντολὰς καὶ τοῖς πιστευθεῖσιν εὐνοικῶς ἐπεργαζόμενοι· μίσθιοι δὲ οἱ πόθῳ τῶν ἐπηγγελμένων ἀγαθῶν βαστάζοντες μεθ' ὑπομονῆς τὸ βάρος τῆς ἡμέρας καὶ τὸν καύσωνα, τουτέστι τὴν ἔμφυτον καὶ συνεζευγμένην τῇ παρούσῃ ζωῇ ἐκ τῆς προπατορικῆς καταδίκης θλίψιν καὶ τοὺς ἐπ' αὐτῇ ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀρετῆς πειρασμούς, καὶ ζωῆς ζωὴν σοφῶς κατ' αὐθαίρετον γνώμην ἀνταλλάσσοντες, τῆς παρούσης τὴν μέλλουσαν· υἱοὶ δὲ οἱ μήτε φόβῳ τῶν ἠπειλημένων, μήτε πόθῳ τῶν ἐπηγγελμένων, ἀλλὰ τρόπῳ καὶ ἕξει τῆς πρὸς τὸ καλὸν κατὰ γνώμην τῆς ψυχῆς ῥοπῆς τε καὶ διαθέσεως μηδέποτε τοῦ Θεοῦ χωριζόμενοι κατ' ἐκεῖνον τὸν υἱόν, πρὸς ὃν εἴρηται "τέκνον, σὺ πάντοτε μετ' ἐμοῦ εἶ, καὶ τὰ ἐμὰ πάντα σά ἐστι," τοῦτο κατὰ τὴν ἐν χάριτι θέσιν ἐνδεχομένως ὑπάρχοντες, ὅπερ ὁ Θεὸς κατὰ τὴν φύσιν καὶ αἰτίαν καὶ ἔστι καὶ πιστεύεται».

Figure 6.2.

Ziakas, *Beyond the Individual*, 286: Example of inter-civilisational development



Inter-civilisational development is, of course, possible: a collective subject may transition from an individualist polity and civilisation to a prosopocentric one without ceasing to be what it is — and it is thus, for example, that Ziakas asserts a continuity in the collective subject of the Greek people, in spite of their transition from classical individualism to post-classical nihilism and, then, Byzantium's partial prosopocentrism[521] (partial due to its subsistence in largely self-governed communities *in spite of* the central despotic authority of the emperor).[522] All three polities/civilisations, however, may regress to their zero point, nihilism, chaos: the starting point of this is the transition from a conception of the collective as grounded on the *sacred* whatever that might be in each polity (thus defining the polity itself) to a conception of *convention* (or contract) as the sole basis for the order of organised coexistence.

[521] Ziakas, *Beyond the Individual*, 54.

[522] Ziakas adopts here what was later shown to be a somewhat outdated understanding of central political power in Byzantium: Anthony Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in New Rome* (Cambridge, Massuchetts: Harvard University Press, 2015) goes a long way in providing a much more nuanced picture. In later books, Ziakas takes developments in scholarship into account and stands corrected: see *Ὁ Σύγχρονος Μηδενισμός* (Athens: Armos, 2008), 185–215.

Ziakas sees such as transition gradually taking place in post-classical Greece, this time from Greek individualism into nihilism. *After* nihilism, *after* the completion of a cycle in which there is nothing but convention or contract to ground the order of collective coexistence, *carnage* emerges — seemingly ignited by, for example, class struggle, or major clashes of interests, or political strife and war, but essentially being unavoidable due to the eclipse of a grounding ontological basis on what is perceived as *true* and *real*, on a basis that goes beyond mere utility and common sense. Following this carnage, it is usually the case that civilisations regress to harshly collectivist and despotic regimes, something which, according to Ziakas, is attested by the history of the 20th century.[523]

Of course, these designate inherent *tendencies*, as formed by the constellation of traditions one is nurtured into, as well as the ideal, model subject-types to which one strives. They are not to be encountered in pure form, with any society being comprised *only of* gains-and-power-hungry individuals or *only of* mindless group-dictated subjects or *only of* selfless loving creatures acting solely for the sake of the other — Ziakas does certainly not engage in such a facile argument, but speaks of dominant *tendencies* and *aims* instead. A society in which the *model*, the *ideal subject* to which one aspires is the "saint" or the "martyr" cannot but be substantially different to one in which the "rock star" or the "hedge fund manager" form the wished-for goal — but this does not mean that said societies are *mainly* populated by saints and martyrs or by rock stars and hedge fund managers respectively. This three-fold schema, transferred from Maximus the Confessor's ecclesial world to an anthropological and political-societal typology, is a recurring theme in Ziakas' writing.

[523] Ziakas, *Beyond the Individual*, 52–54.

Figure 6.3.

Ziakas, *Beyond the Individual*, 262

relationship to God (σχέση μὲ τὸν Θεό)	Subject (ὑποκείμενο)			cultures/civilisations (πολιτισμοί)
	INDIVIDUAL	COLLECTIVE	RELATION	
friend (φίλος)	*prosopon* (πρόσωπο)	community of friends (κοινότητα φίλων)	love (ἀγάπη)	*prosopocentric* (προσωποκεντρικοί)
mercenary/wage labour worker – merchant (μισθωτός-ἔμπορος)	individual (ἄτομο)	democracy city-state nation-state (δημοκρατία πόλις-κράτος ἔθνος-κράτος)	commodity relations, trading relations, selfishness (ἐμπορευματικὲς σχέσεις ἰδιοτέλεια)	individualist (ἀτομοκεντρικοί) atomistic
slave (δοῦλος)	collectivist human being (κολλεκτιβιστικὸς ἄνθρωπος)	despotism (δεσποτισμός)	fear servility (φόβος δουλοφροσύνη)	collectivist (κολλεκτιβιστικοί)

The *prosopocentric* polity of communitarianism as it is to be encountered in the Hellenic tradition is elaborated by Ziakas at length in *The Eclipse of the Subject*.[524] Ziakas clarifies:

> Communitarianism here is considered as the mode of social existence that eminently corresponds to the πρόσωπο, in the same way that wage labour is the social system that eminently corresponds the to the individual subject (ἄτομο). It is to be encountered as an ideal mode of coexistence in the visions and aspirations of many peoples. Marxism named the ideal community

[524] Ziakas, *Eclipse of the Subject*, 255–308.

> *communism*, and (prior to seizing power) saw in it a society without classes and state. ... The French revolutionaries named it a society of freedom, equality, fraternity, and so on. The Greeks achieved in giving communitarianism a clear outline.[525] They elaborated on its political form, but also on its ontological foundation. The basis of Hellenic communitarianism is the small, ideologically autonomous and politically self-governed community that is not exclusively linked to one mode of production. Such communities have existed in an agrarian context, a commercial one, with [in classical Greece] or without slaves, in the craft industry. Such communities have never manage to exist under capitalism: there is no capitalist community.[526]

However, he is quick to also clarify that the *prosopocentric* polity is more of a historical *desideratum* than something that can be found in a *prêt-à-porter* way in Byzantine Greek history. This Trinitarian polity as a unity of prosopocentric ontology and political communitarianism "has been realised in a merely fragmentary manner in Greek history: classical Hellenism developed a certain polity of the community, without however any prosopocentric ontology. And Byzantine Hellenism approached prosopocentric ontology, within however the constrains of [central] political despotism." And today its dominant, hegemonic tradition is, intellectually, one that refutes both prosopocentric ontology and the polity of the community.[527]

Modern Greek identity today is declared as bankrupt, as lacking the preconditions to survive. The state identity fashioned by 18th-century romanticism and the Greek War of Independence has reached its limits, but what is currently disintegrating is precisely the *modern* Greek identity. The question that remains is which, if any, identity will emerge in the *post-modern* period, in the sense of the period *after* (out current Late) modernity. Will it be *post*-modern in the sense of transcending both modernity's individualism and collectivism and achieving a *prosopocentric* collective self-understanding? Such questions are inconceivable from a vantage point *within* modernity and individualism, as the very notion of a period *after* modernity is inconceivable, the individual being considered as the summit of anthropological development (the *anthropological* "End of History"). No other institution of

[525] Ziakas refers the reader here to the works of Konstantinos Karavidas (1890–1973) and Nikolaos I. Pandazopoulos (1912–2001) on Greek communitarianism.
[526] Ziakas, *Eclipse of the Subject*, 256n3.
[527] Ziakas, 307–8.

the subject is conceivable, save as a lamentable regression: *development* is not deemed possible, as the last stage has been allegedly reached already. The *annihilation of the subject* (or its "eclipse") makes, however, such a question on *what comes next* more timely than ever.[528]

A facile approach to Ziakas' thought, seeing that he speaks of a "Greek/Hellenic identity" that can be stretched back to even Mycenaean and Minoan times, would categorise him as an identity essentialist, if not merely as an intellectual unaware of the modern construction of nationhood: in such an approach, Ziakas would be diagnosed with constructing a Greek historical continuity in spite of Greek history's numerous *dis*continuities, the adoption of Christianity being but merely one of them. However, Ziakas does in actuality *precisely the opposite*: instead of writing about an uninterrupted Greek continuity of two, three, or four millennia, he dissects the very *discontinuities* and ruptures. In this, he does nothing less than ascribe all four possible irreconcilable societal types (collectivist, individualist, prosopocentric, and their negation/fragmentation in nihilism) to different phases of Greek history: that is, the very scheme he is proposing in order to *differentiate* and *distinguish* between societies and cultures is applied *as a whole* to Greek history, fragmenting it into irreconcilable modes, *discontinuities.* Thus, Ziakas' question is not whether there is an unassailably united and historically uninterrupted perennial Greek identity, since his very work consists in showing radical changes in the Greek itinerary — it consists of the elaboration of a negative answer to this question. Rather than that, the question of identity is addressed in the context of the nature of continuity that may exist *in spite of*, or more accurately *precisely because of,* these discontinuities. Ziakas is thus interested in the question of what it is in collective subjects that survives in spite of radical and often violent changes — changes as violent as the transitions through all four conceivable civilisational, societal, political, and anthropological models.

"East" and "West"

[528] Ziakas, *Beyond the Individual*, 24–25.

While the distinction between "East" and "West" does not play a central role in Ziakas' vocabulary —in spite, that is, of today's civilisation being understood as *the* "Western" one—, he does clarify that there is a *self-understanding* of the "West" and the "East" as such, which is claimed as a *civilisational/cultural* rather than as a *geographical* difference.[529] Thus, what understands itself as "the West" sees "the East" as a bundle of collectivist cultures in contrast to "the West's" own individualist culture, thus reifying a geographical distinction as a civilisational one by projecting on it the prime distinction of anthropological and civilisational "types" between collectivist and individualist one (and, inside this conundrum, it should be reminded that *tertium non datur*).[530] This analysis forms part of Ziakas' treatment of *contemporary* civilisational othernesses, which, he claims, have a tendency to create oppositional pairs by expelling a *third* term — once again reminiscent of René Girard's ideas concerning the *sacrificial mechanism.*

Ziakas notes that "the West" understands itself as encompassing the "Atlantic West": Western Europe and North America. Within its dominant narrative, the subject-type of the *individual* "was engendered in classical Greece, was passed on to Rome, receded somewhat during the Middle Ages but was *reborn* in the Renaissance and, most importantly, the Enlightenment, becoming dominant at first in the "Atlantic West" and subsequently on a global scale." [531] The individualist subject (and its civilisation, claimed by "the West") forms the peak of the subject's historical development: the future belongs to it.

Ziakas contends that in the mind of "the West," the essence of its difference to "the East," the criterion of whether something is "Eastern" of "Western," is a fivefold one: it concerns (a) whether there is a (mainly) free-market economy based on a middle class of property owners, (b) whether there is constitutional (liberal) democracy, (c) whether there is a citizen-centred ideal of justice, (d) whether there is a strong tradition of liberal public disagreement and civilisational self-critique, and (e) whether there is a clear distinction between politics, religion, and science. According to the "Western" narrative, the seeds for these are to be found in classical Greece, growing out of collectivist societies in a process of individualisation, inaugurating a *higher* civilisational phase that would eventually blossom into individual liberty and individual, human rights.[532]

[529] Ziakas, 139.
[530] Ziakas, 139.
[531] Ziakas, 139.
[532] Ziakas, 139–40.

Of course, "the East" was not equally happy to define itself *a contrario* as a *collectivist* civilisation, and it has often been the case during the 20th century that Buddhist, Muslim, or Hinduist intellectuals would distinguish "the East" from both "Western individualism" and "Soviet collectivism." However, it remains the case that, according to Ziakas, we can easily see the "West"–"East" dichotomy morph into a *civilisational* dichotomy between an *individualist* "West" and at least what this West sees as a *collectivist* "East."[533]

As has been attested by not merely a few thinkers, from the reputable yet refutable Samuel Huntington and his "Orthodox civilisation" to the less-reputable Dimitri Kitsikis and his "intermediate region" (ἐνδιάμεση περιοχή),[534] there is, however, a *third* civilisational entity that is neither "Western" nor "Eastern," one which spans from Southeast Europe up to Vladivostok and, as it happens, roughly coincides with Orthodox Christian peoples — Ziakas uses the term "our own East" (ἡ καθ' ἡμᾶς Ἀνατολή). Characteristic thereof is the Cyrillic alphabet, along with Greeks, Rumanians, and Georgians. Being the "third term" in this civilisational "sacrificial mechanism," it is not easily recognised as an entity of its own. Thus, this umbrella-civilisational entity is recognised as one further hue of "the West" when contemplated from China, Turkestan or India, and as not-quite-Western when seen from the United States or Western Europe (as Samuel Huntington so famously asserted). At best, it is approached as a quasi-collectivist field which, however, has accepted to take on a certain veneer of individualisation (to fake individualisation)[535] and to act as a zone of "Western" influence in the vicinity of "the East." The scandalous claim would lie precisely in naming such an entity neither "Western" nor "Eastern," neither individualist nor collectivist, but in seeing in it the sacrificed third term that has been expelled in order for the juxtaposition of the other two to emerge: i.e., a politically and culturally defeated and thus merely dormant *prosopocentrism*, the assertion of prosopocentrism as this fragmented entity's *central*, yet *not* dominant and hegemonic tradition. The genealogy of such an entity would include not only Byzantium and Eastern Orthodox Christianity, but also a *different* reception of the Greek classical heritage.[536] It naturally follows that an assertion of the existence and value of the

[533] Ziakas, 140.
[534] Ziakas voices his strong objections to Kitsikis' theory, particularly to his "Graeco-Turkism," in his Ziakas, *Nation and Tradition*, 22–34.
[535] The extent of the internalisation of this narrative by Greek Neo-Orientalism is indeed startling — and I am not only referring to the "Greece has not undergone an Enlightenment" narrative, but also to narratives more explicit in their focus on *individualisation* such as Stelios Ramfos'.
[536] Ziakas, *Beyond the Individual*, 139–41.

third, expelled term entails the subversion of the imaginary polarity that expelled it and of its terms. In the case of "our own East," this entails the *subversiveness* of prosopocentrism — eventually, the *subversiveness* inherent in Orthodoxy as a cultural and civilisational environment.

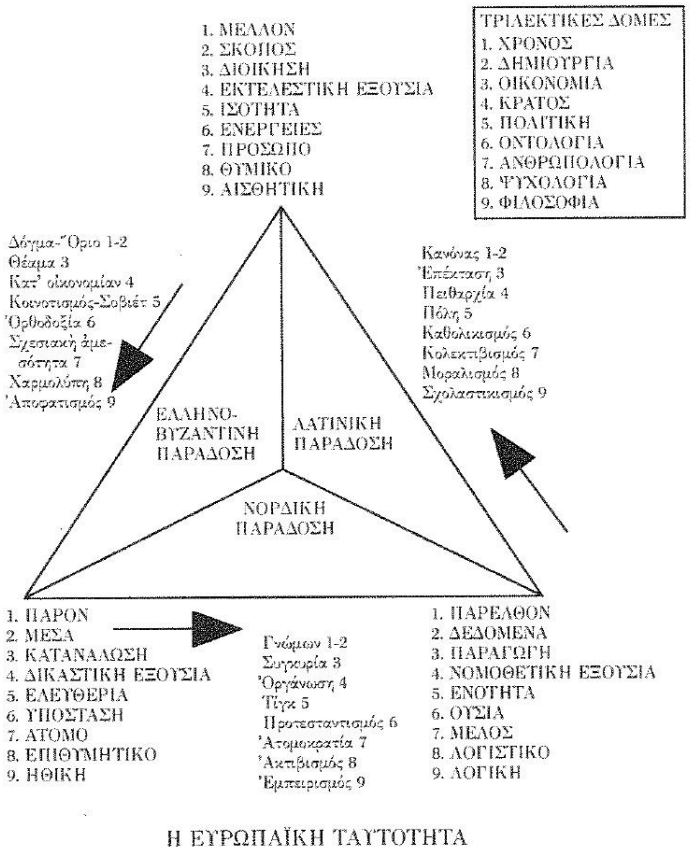
The author also notes a distinction and division *internal* to "the West," manifesting as numerous tensions —for example, "old" Europe and the USA, or North America and (collectivist?) South/Latin America— whose genealogy can be traced back to the schism between the Roman Catholic Church and the churches emerging out of the Reformation, and even further back to the clash between the Latin-Roman "south" and the barbaric "north" in Europe's first millennium. Ziakas notes that these tensions put to question the external view of "the West" as a monolithic entity, however defined or understood.[537]

Concerning European civilisational identity in particular, this is construed in Ziakas' thought as a tripartite one, consisting of Latin (now Roman Catholic), Helleno-Byzantine (now Orthodox), and Nordic (now Protestant/secular) elements.[538] In this, however, the Latin and the Nordic constitutive parts understand themselves as a polarity in tension —a tension having erupted in nothing less than two world wars— within a coherent whole that is constituted as such by expelling in a Girardian sacrificial mechanism the *third* term, the Helleno-Byzantine and Orthodox aspect. This forms a historical irony, since initially, in the post-Graeco-Roman world during the first centuries of the first millennium, Europe's balance largely consisted of an alliance(-in-tension) between the Latin and the Hellenic element based on the expulsion of the third term, the barbaric tribes of the North. We see, however, that all geographical terms in Ziakas' work are of a *civilisational* (and often historical or religious) nature rather than of a primarily *spatial* nature — a point to which we shall return in the next chapter.

[537] Ziakas, 141–42.
[538] Ziakas, 144–86.

Figure 6.4.

Ziakas, *Beyond the Individual*, 187: "European Identity" — a tensioned convergence of the Latin, Helleno-Byzantine, and Nordic constellations of constitutive traditions (187–197).



Η ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΗ ΤΑΥΤΟΤΗΤΑ

It is of importance to stress that this "Helleno-Byzantine" tradition is in stark clash with the "Helleno-Christianity" of Modern Greece's first half of the 20th century. In this, Ziakas is in line with the Neo-Orthodox conception of Greek identity as Christian, yet in a way radically different from the state's "Helleno-Christianity,"[539] or more precisely as its polar opposite.[540] In essence, according to Ziakas, state-sponsored "Helleno-Christianity" promotes precisely the opposite continuity model to that of the Eastern Roman empire. According to the former, particularly as first reflected upon by Spyridon Zambelios, classical Greece is the starting point; Byzantium is a *transitory* phase in which classical Greece *is*

[539] Ziakas, *Becoming a Reflection of the Self*, 25–26.
[540] Although this nuance is of foundational importance in understanding the "Neo-Orthodox current," as has been shown, the Neo-Orientalist gaze usually fails to make this distinction, thus being effectively banned from construing the "Neo-Orthodox" phenomenon in its natural dimensions.

undergoing Christianisation/is being Christianised, and it is *Modern* Greece that may aspire to be and may succeed in becoming a "Christian Hellenism," a completion of the synthesis between classical Greece and Christianity. Thus, the ideology of "Helleno-Christianity" and of "Christian Hellenism" consist precisely in the *negation* of Byzantium, of the Eastern Roman empire and its model, as this was but a *transition* to what is real and proper, i.e. Modern Greece[541] (in the same way that charging a smartphone is not the smartphone's primary function, but merely the *precondition* for that function). Understanding state-sponsored "Helleno-Christianity" as the polar opposite of Ziakas' Byzantium and Ziakas' analysis of Byzantium as a violent deconstruction of "Helleno-Christianity" would be elementary in approaching Ziakas' view within the general "Neo-Orthodox" current.

Ziakas' *Becoming a Reflection of the Self* consists in the application of his general theory to the particular case of Greece and its identity in discontinuity — to the question of how such a non-reified identity may survive civilisational mutations such as the ones it has indeed undergone: from classical Greece to the Christian era,[542] from classical Greece to becoming "Latin" and Roman,[543] from Eastern Roman Christianity to modernity and a European identity[544] (the state doctrine of "belonging to the West"). He begins by demonstrating what he perceives as the problematic character of all identities that have been proposed as Greece's identity — the "Helleno-Christian" one,[545] the "European/Modernist" one, the neo-classical one, and the need to transcend those. In analysing the three Greek civilisational mutations/developments mentioned above (Classical to Christian, ancient to Latin/Roman, Roman/Byzantine to Modern/European), Ziakas elaborates on the causes and effects of particular transitions at the individual and, primarily, the collective level — for example, the transition from the city-state to the Ecumene,[546] and the communities as this Ecumene's cells, or the understanding of the question of *truth* as the main dividing line in history's development in Byzantium through placing of the Orthodoxy/heresies struggle in the centre of Byzantine historical understanding.[547] It has already been noted that, in attempting to solve a thorny dilemma on how to present Ziakas' thought in proper brevity, the spotlight will be directed on his theory rather than mainly on the *application* of this theory in

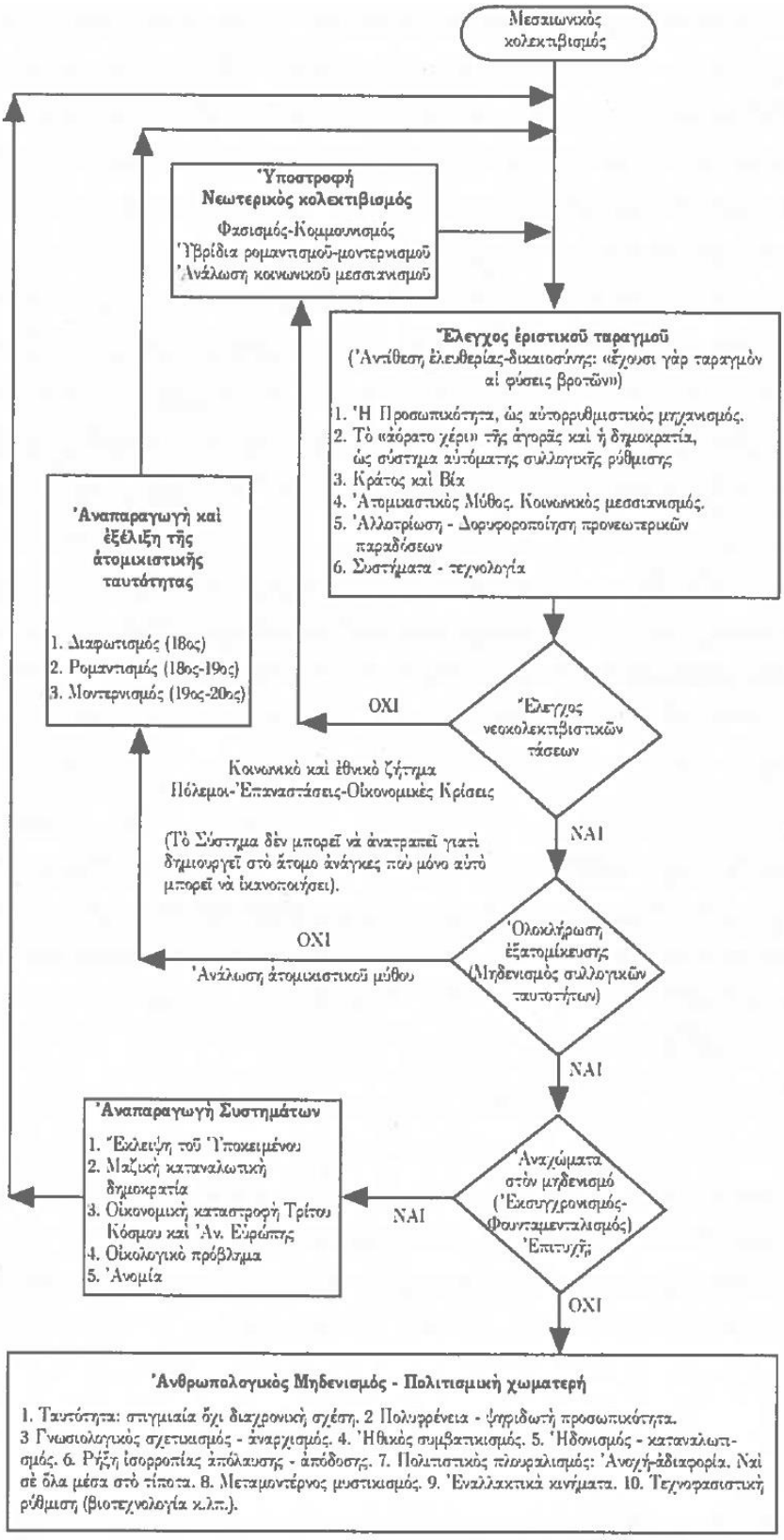
[541] Ziakas, *Becoming a Reflection of the Self*, 88–90.
[542] Ziakas, 115–220.
[543] Ziakas, 222–303.
[544] Ziakas, 305–75.
[545] Ziakas, 25–26.
[546] Ziakas, 222–41.
[547] Ziakas, 266–68.

the Greek case, as is the case in *Becoming a Reflection of the Self*. However, some points on this culmination of Ziakas' mature trilogy will be engaged with in the next and reflective chapter.

I have tried here to provide, in very broad brush strikes, a brief overview of *some* of Theodoros Ziakas' ideas. I focused on (a) his social ontology as conjoining the questions on the individual subject, the collective subject (i.e. the *social* and *political*) and society's institution of meaning (the divine/ontology); (b) his tripartite distinction of those three levels in a *collectivist* mode, an *individualist* mode and a *prosopocentric* mode; (c) the timely observation that all three modes, either as anthropological types or as social phenomena, may decompose into *nihilism*, i.e. a relativism that, after completing its cycle, usually regresses into a collectivist era — or evolve into *prosopocentrism*, and (d) the roots for an answer to the "Greek question" as hiding in the prosopocentric "flashes" it has exhibited in the past. The first collateral damage in this selective presentation is the depth, analytical rigour and nuances that accompany Ziakas' analyses. Thus, some of his counter-intuitive ideas may strike the reader either as too general or lofty (since that reader would not have access to Ziakas' elaborations in his voluminous *corpus*) or merely as a further development of Ziakas' own intellectual influences. This shortcoming, however, is to be billed to the present chapter and not to Ziakas himself, due to the difficulties inherent in the task of summarising a thinker who is available neither in English translations nor in secondary literature's take on his thought. It needs to be re-iterated that a comprehensive and critical dissertation on Ziakas' thought, and particularly on the originality within it however reappraised, certainly remains a *desideratum*. My own critical engagement with Ziakas' thought shall form part of the next chapter of this study.

Figure 6.5.

Ziakas, *Beyond the Individual*, 298: Historical inter-civilisational developments (in Greek)



Chapter 7

Subversive Orthodoxies?

Abstract

It has been consolidated in previous chapters that Greece's theory "underdogs" can indeed speak, if engaged with directly and not through neo-Orientalist narratives; their utterance has been heard, albeit coarsely summarised, yet the question of what is to be made of this utterance is still pending. In this final chapter, the "Neo-Orthodoxy" of Christos Yannaras and Theodoros I. Ziakas is observed through *critical geopolitics*, building mainly on the work of Gerard Toal/Gearóid Ó Tuathail, and post-secularism. Since these thinkers afford centre stage to what is usually referred to as "religion" in their social insights, a dilemma and crossroad, or rather spectrum, emerges: at its one side lies the invocation of religion as a pre-modern, reactionary or fundamentalist element; at its other side lies that invocation of religion as a *post-sec*ular element, as a glimpse of what may arrive *after* this late modernity of ours. It is a gaze mediated through post-secular thought that may allow us to decide what is here the case. Given that it is theory rather than societal changes that is approached here, post-secularism is employed in an indirect way, with the aid of three digressions: (i) on the constructed nature of the compartmentalised category of "religion" as demonstrated in Peter Harrison's work, (ii) on the conflation of theology and social theory in John Milbank's Radical Orthodoxy, and (iii) on the atheist political theology of Slavoj Žižek. The fact that such an inquiry constitutes an postcolonial gaze on the matter at hand shall be the thread implicitly connecting these approaches.

Slavoj Žižek famously invoked G. K. Chesterton in *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* in order to speak of "the thrilling romance of orthodoxy": the potential of small-o orthodoxy to be wholly revolutionary rather than merely reactionary.[548] In this, Žižek contends that "the search for true orthodoxy, far from being boring, humdrum, and safe, is the most daring and perilous adventure"; together with Chesterton, the Slovenian

[548] Slavoj Zizek, "The Thrilling Romance of Orthodoxy," in *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003), 35–57.

philosopher takes delight in asserting "the truly subversive, even revolutionary, character of orthodoxy."[549]

In examining the social and political insights of the "Neo-Orthodox current" and its main theorists, Christos Yannaras and Theodoros I. Ziakas, beyond neo-Orientalist spectacles, the question arises as to whether this can indeed be approached as a subversive Orthodoxy rather than reactionary one. Is it possible to speak, correspondingly, of the thrilling romance of a revolutionary Christian Orthodoxy, a "most daring and perilous adventure"?[550] Since these thinkers afford centre stage to what is usually referred to as "religion" in their social insights, a dilemma and crossroad, or rather spectrum, emerges: at its one side lies the invocation of religion as a pre-modern, reactionary or fundamentalist element; at its other side lies that invocation of religion as a *post-secular* element, as a glimpse of what may arrive *after* this late modernity of ours. It is a gaze mediated through post-secular thought that may allow us to decide what is here actually the case. Given that it is theory rather than societal changes that is approached here, post-secularism is employed in an indirect way, with the aid of three digressions: (i) on the constructed nature of the compartmentalised category of "religion" as demonstrated in Peter Harrison's work, (ii) on the conflation of theology and social theory in John Milbank's Radical Orthodoxy, and (iii) on the atheist political theology of Slavoj Žižek. Prior to posing the question of "religion" and of its post-secular possibilities in relation to the political, we will first turn to the thrilling romance of geography and to critical geopolitics in particular, given that categories such as "the West" play such a prominent role in "Neo-Orthodoxy."

Postcolonial considerations: beyond Greek neo-Orientalism

The reiteration of an elucidation would be needed at this point, as the preceding paragraph includes the *caveat*: "beyond neo-Orientalist spectacles." Is the insistence on "Neo-Orientalism" as something to be avoided merely part of a polemical approach? Is the

[549] Zizek, 35.
[550] A particularly noteworthy affirmative response to this question coming from anarchist quarters of political theory is to be found in Emma Brown Dewhurst, "Revolution in the Microcosm: Love and Virtue in the Cosmological Ethics of St Maximus the Confessor" (Durham University, 2017)., particularly chapters 5 ("The Means of the State Conflict with Maximian Virtues and Telos," 165–214) and 6 (215–72).

use of the very term "Neo-Orientalism," in spite of its quite detailed demonstration and introduction in the first chapter of the present study, evidence of an odious methodology through the use of a term implying value assessment (in a way that, for example, the popular polemical and *a contrario* label of "Neo-Orthodoxy" is not)? It needs to be said here that the point of departure for this study, i.e. the realisation of a need to look into what is shunned as an "underdog" tradition in contemporary Greece *in its own terms*, does not emerge out of a need to be *fair* vis-à-vis any given thinker or current of thought, or anything along the general lines of "fairness," "objectivity," and so on. Rather than that, the fact is that the scholar looking into the phenomena at hand comes across a very real problem. The terminology used by what presents itself as the "reformist culture," i.e. the grave charges veiled as descriptive terms employed in the scholarly treatment of the "underdogs," naturally leads to conclusions that have the disadvantage of being fundamentally at odds with reality. Like an American driver advised to drive in the right lane of the road while in Great Britain would have a rather limited capacity of arriving safe at home, in quite the same way the scholar advised to approach either generally "underdog" thinkers or more specifically "Neo-Orthodox" currents with a terminological apparatus assuring her of their more or less nationalist, conservative, reactionary, fundamentalist, and backward-looking nature has limited chances of arriving at an accurate scholarly account and conclusions. Thus, the scholar is surprised to find out that nationalist thinkers are fundamentally opposed to the Greek nation-state,[551] that religious thinkers of fundamentalist tendencies turn out to reject religion both as an analytical category and as a reality,[552] that anti-Western intellectuals call for European integration[553] or conceive of their identity as that of a Westerner, and so on. Albeit these thinkers may be laden with shortcomings or problems of both a theoretical and a political nature, such a short-circuit of analytical tools inflicted upon both the public and the scholarly discourse makes *even these problems* impenetrable to the gaze of the thus misguided scholar.[554] Of course, these

[551] Ziakas, *Homeland-Self-Eater*.
[552] Yannaras, *Against Religion*.
[553] Christos Yannaras, *Ἑλληνικὴ Ἑτοιμότητα Γιὰ Τὴν Εὐρωπαϊκὴ Ἑνοποίηση [Greek Preparedness for the European Integration]* (Athens: Livanis, 2000).
[554] It is not uncommon for this confusion to end up in rather comical results at times, amusing any reader more well-versed in the nuances of the object of study. For example, in an attempt to locate "progressive" theological voices in Greece and to shun "conservative" ones in a section tellingly entitled "Neo-Orthodox Revival and Anti-Westernism," Trine Stauning Willert dismisses neopatristic theology —a different and global theological current initiated by Georges Florovsky and the Russian diaspora and perhaps the most progressive Orthodox theological current of the 20th century— by conflating it with "Neo-Orthodoxy" and collapsing the former into the latter: Trine Stauning Willert, *New Voices in Greek Orthodox Thought: Untying the Bond between Nation and Religion*, Ashgate New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology, and Biblical Studies (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 49–50. This is but one of the many confusing moments of this book, including for example a conflation of the opposite currents of Neo-Orthodoxy and Helleno-Christianity (94–95), a

phenomena are much more nuanced that *any* labels, positive and negative alike, may reflect. However, we are not dealing here with a nuanced situation that is merely oversimplified, but with a distortion of reality that acts as an obstacle rather than as an aid to the scholar. Thus, a remedy is needed so that any scholarly analysis may become possible at all. Acknowledging the presence of neo-Orientalist spectacles emerges as a prerequisite for being able to approach matters such as the one at hand from a scholarly vantage point.

As has been underscored in chapter two of the present study, all this leads to a project that is in its entirety, at times implicitly and indirectly yet decisively and substantially, a *postcolonial* exploration, understood here as a conscious resistance to Greece-related discourses looking "from the outside in," as it were. The *colonial* aspect does not apply, of course, in the same way that it applies in former colonies from the *stricto sensu* colonial period. This is not to say, however, that the term *postcolonial* would here imply an exaggeration — and research on this matter is quite more than two decades old[555] (having initially commenced with approaches as diverse as Elli Skopetea's[556] or Stathis Gourgouris'[557]). Sometimes it takes an anthropologist to point out such a dimension, as is the case with Harvard's Michael Herzfeld and his analysis of *crypto-colonialism* as a prominent feature of modern Greek reality[558] and, no less, public discourse — for example, during the

portrayal of Archbishop Christodoulos as Neo-Orthodox (2), or the startling claim of presenting the patently Neo-Orthodox journal *Synaxi* —one of the most prominent staples of Neo-Orthodoxy— as an endeavour *against* Neo-Orthodoxy and a "progressive" *a contrario* response to it (*passim*, in spite of an even more puzzling elucidation to the contrary on page 55). In general, the glaring inaccuracies of this study make it a prime example of how *not* to approach such issues, if basic scholarly accuracy is to be positively evaluated as an objective.

[555] A critical review of these developments up to the turn of the millennium, particularly concerning the viability and accuracy of the term *Orientalism* in application to the Balkans, is to be found in K. E. Fleming, "Orientalism, the Balkans, and Balkan Historiography," *The American Historical Review* 105, no. 4 (October 2000): 1218, https://doi.org/10.2307/2651410. — *critical* (yet affirmative: "to view the relationship between Western Europe and the Balkans as homologous to colonialism is an approach that, if used with reason (and if historicized), has validity and can be fruitful," 1221), since it underscores the non-literal though not less *real* nature of colonialism when applied to the Greek and Balkan case, i.e. the lack of literal colonial domination. Interestingly, Fleming notes how "metaphoric colonialism [is] more applicable to Greece than to the rest of the Balkans" and finds in Milica Bakić-Hayden and Robert M. Hayden, "Orientalist Variations on the Theme 'Balkans': Symbolic Geography in Recent Yugoslav Cultural Politics," *Slavic Review* 51, no. 01 (1992): 1–15, https://doi.org/10.2307/2500258. traces of a peculiar form of Orientalism which "is now deployed not just by outsiders but by the very people whom they are meant to describe," precisely as is characteristically the case in our Greek Neo-Orientalism; Fleming, "Orientalism, the Balkans, and Balkan Historiography," 1224.

[556] Elli Skopetea, *Ἡ Δύση Τῆς Ἀνατολῆς: Εἰκόνες Ἀπὸ Τὸ Τέλος Τῆς Ὀθωμανικῆς Αὐτοκρατορίας [The Twilight of the East: Images from the End of the Ottoman Empire]* (Athens: Gnosi, 1992).

[557] Stathis Gourgouris, *Dream Nation: Enlightenment, Colonization, and the Institution of Modern Greece* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

[558] Michael Herzfeld, "The Absent Presence: Discourses of Crypto-Colonialism," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, no. 4 (2002): 899–926.

ongoing Greek crisis.[559] In his reading, "anthropology displays two major, closely intertwined absences—one conspicuous, the other furtive—from its theoretical canon. The conspicuous absence is that of modern Greece, the reasons rooted in the special kind of political marginality that has marked Greece's relations with the West throughout most of its history as a nominally independent though practically tributary nation-state."[560] Thus, according to Herzfeld's definition of crypto-colonialism having, in this particular case, Greece and Thailand in mind,

> I shall call it *crypto-colonialism* and define it as the curious alchemy whereby certain countries, buffer zones between the colonized lands and those as yet untamed, were compelled to acquire their political independence at the expense of massive economic dependence, this relationship being articulated in the iconic guise of aggressively national culture fashioned to suit foreign models. Such countries were and are living paradoxes: they are nominally independent, but that independence comes at the price of a sometimes humiliating form of effective dependence.[561]

We have seen how neo-Orientalist discourses portray a Greece in constant and perpetual danger of sliding off from civilisation itself by falling prey to conservative and reactionary backwards-oriented (or Eastern-oriented, or at times Russian-oriented) "underdogs" without the vital resistance offered by Western-oriented reformists. Herzfeld identifies this impulse as an integral aspect of crypto-colonialism as a whole, certainly characterising Greece, yet not *exclusively* Greece, as this portrays a wider phenomenon: "Greece is certainly not the only country in which elites cultivated among the citizenry a deep fear of becoming too closely identified with some vague category of barbarians."[562] Rather ironically and in spite of the rhetorical pinpointing by the neo-Orientalists of nationalism and uninterrupted continuity narratives as problems characteristic of the "underdogs" (even when this is not the case, e.g. in Ziakas where the *dis*continuities form the focus of attention), a different and subtle form of both nationalism and *other* uninterrupted continuity narratives (of the "cradle of the West" type) are of foundational importance to the neo-Orientalist (or crypto-colonialist) gaze: "the model of seamless continuity between ancient and modern Greece, as articulated in the

[559] Michael Herzfeld, "The Hypocrisy of European Moralism: Greece and the Politics of Cultural Aggression - Part 1," *Anthropology Today* 32, no. 1 (February 2016): 10–13, https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8322.12224; Michael Herzfeld, "The Hypocrisy of European Moralism: Greece and the Politics of Cultural Aggression - Part 2," *Anthropology Today* 32, no. 2 (April 2016): 10–13, https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8322.12238.
[560] Herzfeld, "The Absent Presence: Discourses of Crypto-Colonialism," 900.
[561] Herzfeld, 900–901.
[562] Herzfeld, 902.

crypto-colonial and nationalist discourses, cannot now be allowed to disappear, because it would apparently take awareness of the living population away with it as well."[563] Thus, both the mode of conduct and the aim of this neo-Orientalist crypto-colonialism consists in an *orientation towards Western modernity by excluding oneself from it* — and it is this exclusion that makes such an orientation, rather than merely self-evident identification, possible. Greece may aspire to "become modern" precisely if *it is not modern yet*, the country may aspire to become "Western" (and thus support the "reformist camp" political and cultural agenda) precisely *to the extent that it is not "Western" yet*: "crypto-colonialism is thus about the exclusion of certain countries from access to the globally dominant advantages of modernity."[564] The explicitness of the popular dictum among the reformist camp, i.e. the "Greece has not gone through the Enlightenment" («Ἡ Ἑλλάδα δὲν πέρασε Διαφωτισμό») dogma, forms the most violent form of this otherwise implicit crypto-colonialist balance. Thus, the geographical and *as such* political state doctrine as famously articulated by Constantine Karamanlis, i.e. "Greece belongs to the West," is not descriptive: rather than that, is aspires to be *performative.* This *performative* rather than *descriptive* political usage of essentially geographical terms brings us from crypto-colonialism to a discussion of critical geopolitics.

On the lack of innocence in describing space: critical geopolitics

Critical geopolitics begun crystallising as an approach to political geography in the '90s, but has later flourished into a distinct subfield with considerable prominence.[565] One may even locate scholarly contributions that may not label themselves as critical geopolitics while being, in their own ways, precisely that — for example one may find such books as that bearing the quite explicit title *The Threat of Geopolitics to International Relations*, dedicated "to the victims of geopolitics,"[566] without a declared allegiance to the approach in question.

[563] Herzfeld, 919.
[564] Herzfeld, 921.
[565] As indicated in chapter two, the main "household names" in the mansion of critical geopolitics would be John A. Agnew, Simon Dalby, Gerard Toal/Geároid Ó Tuathail, Klaus Dodds, Paul Routledge, and Joanne Sharp.
[566] William Mallinson and Zoran Ristić, *The Threat of Geopolitics to International Relations: Obsession with the Heartland* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), v.

Continuing the introduction to and overview of critical geopolitics offered in chapter two, we may focus on Gearóid Ó Tuathail's apt summation of this approach at the conclusion of his homonymous 1996 book: "critical geopolitics is one of many cultures of resistance to Geography as imperial truth, state-capitalized knowledge, and military weapon. It is a small part of a much larger rainbow struggle to decolonize our inherited geographical imagination so that other geo-graphings and other worlds might be possible."[567] The need to "decolonialize" naturally emerges out of the very mode geopolitics is structured, which is a mode of performatively dictating reality: "[Geopolitics'] dominant modes of narration are declarative ('this is how the world is') and then imperative ('this is what we must do'). 'Is' and 'we' mark its commitment to, on the one hand, a transparent and objectified world and, on the other hand, to a particular geographically bounded community and its cultural/political version of the truth of that world. Its enduring 'plot' is the global balance of power and the future of strategic advantage in an anarchic world."[568] In contrast to this, critical geopolitics " is a problematizing theoretical enterprise that places the existing structures of power and knowledge in question."[569] However, as Ó Tuathail himself will later note, "critical geopolitics is not something radically new in the world. It is an intervention into the pre-existing world of geopolitical practices, is parasitic on those practices and is inevitably a form of geopolitics itself."[570] Thus, critical geopolitics can be seen simultaneously as (a) a critical intervention and undermining of the very foundations of geopolitics, i.e. of the political significance of geographical space *itself* as a constructed reality projected by statecraft processes; (b) as a parasitic *parhypostasis* (παρυπόστασις) on geopolitics, deriving its partial existence from the actual existence of the very field it negates and undermines, in a way reminiscent of Proclus' definition of evil as a *parhypostasis*; and (c) as *de facto* another form of geopolitics.

[567] Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space*, 256.
[568] Gearóid Ó Tuathail, "Understanding Critical Geopolitics: Geopolitics and Risk Society," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 22, no. 2–3 (June 1999): 107, https://doi.org/10.1080/01402399908437756.
[569] Ó Tuathail, 107.
[570] From Gearóid Ó Tuathail's Foreword to Klaus Dodds, Merje Kuus, and Joanne P. Sharp, eds., *The Ashgate Research Companion to Critical Geopolitics* (Farnham, Surrey, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), xx.

Figure 7.1.

Ó Tuathail, *Discourses of Geopolitics*[571]

Discourse	*Key intellectuals*	*Dominant lexicon*
Imperialist geopolitics	Alfred Mahan	Seapower
	Friedrich Ratzel	*Lebensraum*
	Halford Mackinder	Landpower/Heartland
	Karl Haushofer	Landpower/Heartland
	Nicholas Spykman	Rimlands
Cold War geopolitics	George Kennan	Containment
	Soviet and Western political and military leaders	First/Second/Third World countries as satellites and dominos
		Western vs. Eastern bloc
New world order geopolitics	Mikhail Gorbachev	New political thinking
	Francis Fukuyama	The end of history
	Edward Luttwak	Statist geo-economics
	George Bush	US led new world order
	Leaders of G7, IMF, WTO	Transnational liberalism/neoliberalism
	Strategic planners in the Pentagon and NATO	Rogue states, nuclear outlaws and terrorists
	Samuel Huntington	Clash of civilizations
Environmental geopolitics	World Commission on Environment and Development	Sustainable development
	Al Gore	Strategic environmental initiative
	Robert Kaplan	Coming anarchy
	Thomas Homer-Dixon	Environmental scarcity
	Michael Renner	Environmental security

The *parhypostatic* nature of critical geopolitics leads us to inquire on the reason geopolitics prompted such a dialectical negation thereof. Dodds, Kuus, and Sharp define the dominant strands of classical geopolitics as "on the one hand, social Darwinism and environmental determinism and, on the other hand, imperial rivalries and great-power projection. In the case of the former, the earliest geopolitical writers were overwhelmingly informed by racial and environmental determinism."[572] The authors note that "most contributors were eager to warn their political masters and the wider public about the challenges facing their societies from competitor races and states, both past and present";[573] thus, "geopolitics was, and for many authors still is, the study of statecraft and the divination of patterns of global politics. If geopolitics has an intellectual value, it lies in a capacity to uncover the challenges facing the state and empire and display a willingness to use force if

[571] From Ó Tuathail's introduction in Dalby, Routledge, and Ó Tuathail, *The Geopolitics Reader*, 5.
[572] Introduction, Dodds, Kuus, and Sharp, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Critical Geopolitics*, 3.
[573] Introduction, Dodds, Kuus, and Sharp, 3.

necessary to protect vital interests."[574] The correlation of classical geopolitics[575] with fascist and authoritarian Germany, Italy and Japan in the first half of the twentieth century did not help its subsequent reputation. However, it had a comeback, which in many ways goes on today:

> Henry Kissinger is famously credited with making geopolitics respectable again in US policy-making and academic circles (1979). In the early 1970s geopolitics became a short hand for highlighting great power rivalries and associated regional dimensions, especially in the Middle East and South-East Asia. As National Security Advisor and Secretary of State in the Nixon and Ford administrations, Kissinger was well placed to survey the global political scene and ruminate on the geopolitical consequences and implications, more often than not involving military force and assertion. ... Other contemporaries such as President Carter's National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, also used geopolitical language to promote his view that control of the "heartland" (a point of view articulated by Mackinder some 70 years earlier) was critical to the future patterns of global politics.[576]

Critical geopolitics emerges after the end of the Cold War as a critique of the very *premises* (and aims) of geopolitics.[577] The *scientific* premises of geopolitics will be assaulted, with it being described as "pseudo-science."[578] "In counterpoint to the conventional state-centred and often state-sponsored 'strategic analysis', this critical work approaches geopolitics not as a neutral consideration of pre-given 'geographical' facts, but as a deeply ideological and politicized form of analysis. It shows that geographical claims are necessarily geopolitical, as they inscribe places as particular types of places to be dealt with in a particular manner." [579] Thus, designations that at a superficial level sound merely geographical and descriptive are anything but descriptive, dictating political content and implications through a performative act of naming: examples include "the Middle East"[580] or "the Balkans" (recently renamed "South-East Europe" in a counter-act of politically performative geography narration).[581]

[574] Introduction, Dodds, Kuus, and Sharp, 3.
[575] On which see Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space*, 75–140.
[576] Dodds, Kuus, and Sharp, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Critical Geopolitics*, 4–5.
[577] Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space*, 141–86.
[578] Ó Tuathail, 151–60.
[579] Dodds, Kuus, and Sharp, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Critical Geopolitics*, 6.
[580] Michael E. Bonine, Abbas Amanat, and Michael Ezekiel Gasper, eds., *Is There a Middle East? The Evolution of a Geopolitical Concept* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2012).
[581] Huliaras and Tsardanidis, "(Mis)Understanding the Balkans."

This does not mean that by bringing to light and shunning away the political content implicitly projected upon spatiality, this political content vanishes. Rather than that, this critical inquiry entails the realisation that the grounding of politics on geography forms an inevitable aspect of international politics: "conversely, all international politics is also geopolitics as it necessarily involves geographical and spatial assumptions about people and places. These assumptions are not abstract images floating above political interest but form an integral part of how interests and identities come into being."[582] The kaleidoscopic forms this function may assume are manifold: to cite but one example, in the post-9/11 world the intertwining of geography and *fear* as an at once political and almost metaphysical impulse decisively acquiring a territorial reflection in particular geographies is an area of inquiry of its own.[583] "The aim of critical geopolitics is not to describe the geography of politics within pre-given, common-sense places, but to examine the politics of the geographical specification of politics. In so doing, the field seeks to offer richer accounts of space and power than those allowed within mainstream geopolitical analysis."[584] It should be noted that critical geopolitics pinpoints, addresses and confronts a reality that has been picked up by other streams of research as well, i.e. the fluidity and constructed nature of geopolitics' "geography" or, literally, geo-graphy. Consider the following passage from Fleming's aforementioned paper on Orientalism and the Balkans, a paper that makes no explicit claim to critical geopolitics yet inescapably stumbles upon its basic premises:

> It is unclear whether the Balkans are the East or the West, but unclear, too, is just what counts as Balkan. On the eve of World War I, Turkey was decidedly "Balkan" (it no longer is), as was Greece (it is now trying hard not to be); Hungary sometimes was (now it never is). "Balkan," clearly, is as much a conceptual designator as a geographic one, and just as its contours have changed over history, so, too, has the entire category shifted between East and West. The Balkans now are, albeit grudgingly, unanimously agreed to be in the West (that is, in Europe), whereas they used to be relegated to the East (the "Orient"). The eastern and south-eastern reaches of Europe, in fact, were Western Europe's first Orient, and seventeenth and eighteenth-century continental attitudes toward them provided a template for how Western Europe would ultimately perceive the entire non-Western world.[585] ... A map of the "Near East" published in 1911 has as its westernmost point Banjaluka,

[582] Dodds, Kuus, and Sharp, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Critical Geopolitics*, 6.
[583] Rachel Pain and Susan Smith, eds., *Fear: Critical Geopolitics and Everyday Life*, Re-Materialising Cultural Geography (Aldershot, Hants, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008).
[584] Dodds, Kuus, and Sharp, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Critical Geopolitics*, 6.
[585] Fleming, "Orientalism, the Balkans, and Balkan Historiography," 1230.

> in Bosnia, and as its easternmost Konya, in Turkey. The Near East now has disappeared, or become a chronological (as in "the ancient Near East") rather than locational marker. We have a West and a Middle East, even a Far East, but the Near East-or what it used to be-has become so near that it is no longer the East but the West.[586]

Geopolitics' proper object of study is not, then, an objective spatiality/geography bearing intrinsic political value, as the fluidity that is to be witnessed *within* geopolitics precludes such a reading. Rather than that, geopolitics' object is to become the study of that very ascription of political meaning to spaces that are devoid thereof. Ó Tuathail and Agnew were led by this to claim that geopolitics "should be critically re-conceptualized as a discursive practice by which intellectuals of statecraft 'spatialize' international politics in such a way as to represent a 'world' characterized by particular types of places, peoples and dramas"; according to the new definition, "the study of geopolitics is the study of the spatialization of international politics by core powers and hegemonic states."[587] Ó Tuathail would later clarify that "the critical reading of geopolitics is more than simply a reading of an already existent object or immanent social phenomenon. Critical readings of geopolitics are ways in which geopolitics as a conceptual object is written, ideological inscriptions that assign a certain identity and coherence to it as part of an argument about its nature and relationship to state and society." [588] Of course, the student of critical geopolitics is not to assume that she stands *above* and *beyond* power and ideology, that the very privilege she denies to geopolitics —i.e. the possibility of "God's view"— actually belongs to her: "critiques of geopolitics do not transcend the operation of networks of power/knowledge."[589]

Of course, critical geopolitics does not simply study *any* geopolitical discourse with equal diligence: its main interest lies in the discourses created and maintained by intellectuals of statecraft, since it is these that have both the motive/incentive and the power/ability to dictate political content for geographical spaces, i.e. to dictate the (political) moral of the (geographical) story of the day. This is central to critical geopolitics, as otherwise the approach could be utilised with precisely the opposite goals from those it was conceived to serve: it could be used to shun all other political claims to geography *save* the ones dictated

[586] Fleming, 1228.
[587] Gearóid Ó Tuathail and John Agnew, "Geopolitics and Discourse: Practical Geopolitical Reasoning in American Foreign Policy," *Political Geography* 11, no. 2 (March 1992): 192, https://doi.org/10.1016/0962-6298(92)90048-X.
[588] Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space*, 142.
[589] Ó Tuathail, 142.

by the state through intellectuals of statecraft, to deconstruct all other approaches *except* the state-dictated one which would then remain firmly in place, virtually uncontested. "The notion of 'intellectuals of statecraft' refers to a whole community of state bureaucrats, leaders, foreign-policy experts and advisors throughout the world who comment upon, influence and conduct the activities of statecraft,"[590] note Ó Tuathail and Agnew. Of course, such a body of intellectuals of statecraft has increasingly become considerably more nuanced and diverse: "ever since the development of the modern state system in the sixteenth century there has been a community of intellectuals of statecraft. Up until the twentieth century this community was rather small and restricted, with most intellectuals also being practitioners of statecraft. In the twentieth century, however, this community has become quite extensive and internally specialised."[591] This fragmentation, specialisation and diversity calls for sub-fields within the study of statecraft's discourses; it calls for different focal points within critical geopolitics. Critical geopolitics is thus the study of three different kinds of discourse: formal, practical, and popular[592] (to this Ó Tuathail later adds a fourth category, *structural*).[593] Given that the discourse we are concerned with in this study is articulated by public intellectuals of a quasi-dissident status who, in stark contrast to the neo-Orientalist camp, in no way participate in the formal processes of statecraft, our inquiry mainly falls under *popular geopolitics* — to the extent, that is, that the public presence of the intellectuals under scrutiny manage to influence popular conceptions of national identity and identity in general through the media or popular culture.

[590] Ó Tuathail and Agnew, "Geopolitics and Discourse," 193.
[591] Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 193.
[592] Ó Tuathail and Agnew, "Geopolitics and Discourse."
[593] Ó Tuathail, "Understanding Critical Geopolitics," 109.

Figure 7.2.

The Types of Geopolitics Studied by Critical Geopolitics[594]

Type of Geopolitics	*Object of Investigation*	*Problematic*	*Research Example*
Formal Geopolitics	Geopolitical thought and the geopolitical tradition	Intellectuals, institutions and their political and cultural context	Halford Mackinder, his geopolitical theories and imperialist context
Practical Geopolitics	The everyday practice of statecraft	Practical geopolitical reasoning in foreign policy conceptualization	"Balkanism" and its influence over US foreign policy towards Bosnia
Popular Geopolitics	Popular culture, mass media, and geographical understandings	National identity and the construction of images of other peoples and places	The role of mass media in projecting images of Bosnia into Western living rooms
Structural Geopolitics	The contemporary geopolitical condition	Global processes, tendencies and contradictions	How globalization, informationalization and risk society condition/transform geopolitical practices

At least in Greece's current landscape of political discourse, two words seem to wholly enchant their respective right-wing and left-wing audiences: "geopolitics" and "biopolitics"[595] — one could even go so far as to conceive of this as a political compass test:

[594] Taken from Ó Tuathail, 111.

[595] Biopolitics, a term derived from Michel Foucault's works (and later reassessed and developed in a different direction by Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998)., describes politics and power as power *over life*, it describes the sovereign's (and, subsequently, the state's) power to foster life or disallow it, the right of death and power over

if it is the notion of "geopolitics" that engenders Pavlovian reflexes in a Greek subject, then that subject can be safely ascribed to the political Right; if "biopolitics" is the word of choice, to the political Left. Bringing up the respective word (as a far-too-wide umbrella term) in a discussion seems to imbue it with authority and a sense of scholarship, as if "geopolitics" (for the Right) and "biopolitics" (for the Left) are simply politics writ large, or politics *sub specie scientiae*, politics when correctly understood in its proper dimensions. The flipside of the right-wing implicit assertion that *all politics is essentially geopolitics* and the left-wing one that *all politics is essentially biopolitics* is that each camp sees the *opposite* word with suspicion, if not puzzlement.

Critical geopolitics, bringing critical theory and Foucault- and poststructuralism-derived considerations into political geography, can be seen both as a synthesis and a transcendence of this polarisation — Ó Tuathail's employment of the word *geo-power*[596] indirectly attests to this. Critical geopolitics as an approach and subfield has not focused on Greece as of yet.[597] However, Greece could rather benefit from such an approach, since the country is all too often on the receiving end of too much *un*critical geopolitics. For example, in a 2011 Stratfor analysis on "the geopolitics of Greece," an elaborate projection of political meaning on geographical facts ends with the following conclusion: "ultimately, Greece needs to find a way to become useful again to one or more great powers —unlikely, unless a great-power conflict returns to the Balkans— or to sue for lasting peace with Turkey and begin learning how to live within its geopolitical means."[598] Thus, the argument more or less takes the form of "geography, geography, geography, *ergo* Greece has no other option but to 'become useful to' (sic) either an unidentified great power or Turkey" — a rather thinly veiled attempt at creating precisely the kind of political impact critical geopolitics points the finger at.

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life; Catherine Mills, *Biopolitics*, First edition (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), 3; 14. "Biopower exposes the structures, relations, and practices by which political subjects are constituted and deployed, along with the forces that have shaped and continue to shape modernity." Vernon W. Cisney and Nicolae Morar, eds., *Biopower: Foucault and Beyond* (Chicago ; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 1. Implicit (and, at times, explicit) in a sizable part of the discussions on biopolitics/biopower is the assertion that *all (Western) politics is biopolitics*, Mills, *Biopolitics*, 55. and that biopolitics spells totalitarianism (an element which, however, is reconsidered by Agamben).

[596] Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space*, 1; 1–20.

[597] With the virtually sole exception of Huliaras and Tsardanidis, "(Mis)Understanding the Balkans."

[598] "The Geopolitics of Greece: A Sea at Its Heart," Stratfor, accessed April 30, 2018, https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/geopolitics-greece-sea-its-heart.

Post-Secularism: Three Digressions

In chapter two, an overview of developments in what has been dubbed "post-secularism" has been provided: this comprises the realisation that the prophecy of secularisation, i.e. of the global gradual disappearance of religion, has been refuted by reality (with the prophet himself, Peter L. Berger, refuting the prophecy) and the analysis of how secularism came to be and of what may come after it.

The Greek thinkers under scrutiny here do not invoke post-secularism by name. They self-evidently treat what would today be categorised as "religion" as being at the very centre of humanity's conduct, explicitly or, more importantly, implicitly, yet they do not feel the need to theoretically justify this dissonance with our secular age's theoretical and immanent frame to great lengths — other than their assertion that this concerns *ontology*, the response to the question of being *qua* being, rather than simply "religion" as one part of a compartmentalised human conduct. Such a stance, i.e. one that asserts "religion's" absolute centrality to human affairs public and private alike, can be one of two things and two things only: *tertium non datur*. I.e., either a regression into a pre-modern *fundamentalism*, a rejection of modernity in favour of a return to what preceded it, or a *post-secularism* that is primarily occupied with what may come *after* (our late) modernity reaches its limits and hands over the baton to the next age (and not merely to what we call *postmodernism*, which is treated here as *late modernity*).

In typical psychoanalytic fashion, the response to this dilemma will not be provided by arguing in favour or against any given position; rather than that, some facts and events in the global advanced discussion on "religion" will be laid forth, with the reader being asked to make up her own mind on whether the utterance of the underdogs is *reactionary* or *subversive.* Thus, it is a gaze mediated through post-secular thought that may allow us to decide what is here the case. Given that it is *theory* rather than societal changes that is approached here, post-secularism is employed in an indirect way, with the aid of three digressions: (i) on the constructed nature of the compartmentalised category of "religion" as

demonstrated in Peter Harrison's work, (ii) on the conflation of theology and social theory in John Milbank's *Radical Orthodoxy*, and (iii) on the atheist political theology of Slavoj Žižek.

First digression:

Does religion exist? — or, "science" and "religion," an odious Möbius strip

Secularism and post-secularism relate to the disappearance or the re-emergence of religion. But what is this thing called "religion," i.e. the basis for *any* talk of secularism and post-secularism alike? Is our conceptual basis real or imaginary?

Once, there was no "religion." "Religion" as a domain had to be instituted or imagined in modernity, both in theory and in practice.[599] Of course, the *word* religion ("religio" in Latin, θρησκεία in Greek) *did* exist — with a meaning radically different than the one it bears now, however. As did the word science, *scientia* or ἐπιστήμη — both words denoting, essentially, moral virtues. In their modern re-invention, these words go hand in hand, as distinct and competing bodies of knowledge — something wholly *new*, or more accurately, *modern*. Any close examination of the development of the concept of "religion" must take into account its interdependence with the development of the concept of "science" (both in the abstract and in the case of particular sciences, e.g. the itinerary from "natural philosophy" to "physics" or from "natural history" to "biology"), since "religion" is a signifier that has been developed partly in order to make the coherence of the modern sciences into one "science" in the abstract possible, vis-à-vis an imaginary competing body of convictions with the claim to knowledge. Thus, in order to inquire on "religion," we must *first* inquire on "science." The work of historian Peter Harrison has been invaluable in tracing these developments, and this is indirectly yet most pertinently of great relevance to our present inquiry concerning post-secularism.

Peter Harrison, formerly Andreas Idreos Professor of Science and Religion at the University of Oxford and currently Director of the Institute for Advanced Studies in the

[599] This is a reference to John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 9; we will return to that.

Humanities at the University of Queensland, has masterfully demonstrated in his 2010–11 Gifford Lectures, *The Territories of Science and Religion*,[600] how our modern and contemporary understanding of "science" and "religion," usually thought of as primordial bodies of knowledge explaining the world, is surprisingly modern, a three-hundred-years affair. Scholars familiar with the study of the human past cannot but agree with this conclusion; in spite of this, this would be startling news to many, if we are to judge by how, in almost the totality of the religion and science debate, these two notions are violently projected to the past as reified substances. In Harrison's own words, his work focuses on

> a consideration of the fortunes of the Latin terms *scientia* and *religio*. These two notions both begin as inner qualities of the individual —"virtues," if you will— before becoming concrete and abstract entities that are understood primarily in terms of doctrines and practices. This process of objectification is the precondition for a relationship between science and religion. In addition to a consideration of the Latin terms from which our modern English words "science" and "religion" derive, [this work also traces] changing constellations of other conceptions that are genealogically related to our modern ideas of science and religion. They include "philosophy," "natural philosophy," "theology," "belief," and "doctrine," all of which had meanings for past historical actors that are quite unfamiliar to us today. One of my suggestions will be that there is a danger of systematically misconstruing past activities if we mistakenly assume the stability of meaning of these expressions.[601]

Implicit in any current discussion on "science and religion" are usually three core premises: (a) that there is a (social) phenomenon called "religion," within which all the different "religions" are to be contemplated; (b) that (natural) science is to be perceived as a wide area of inquiry that is mercilessly objective and utterly devoid of unproven axioms (i.e., devoid of anything resembling "knowledge by revelation"); (c) that the natural state of affairs entails the illegitimate claim of religion to answer some of the questions situated within science's domain, with the best case scenario entailing religion's self-restraint (and thus peaceful co-existence). The thorn behind these discussions is precisely the fact that "science" and "religion" are rather modern inventions — at least in the way we understand them today. The real problem, however, lies in the fact that those two *modern* notions —in stark contrast to the realities they strive to point at— are *by definition antithetical and mutually exclusive*, when examined closely. In the modern conceptualisation of "religion" and "science," two

[600] Peter Harrison, *The Territories of Science and Religion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015).
[601] Harrison, x.

competing narratives for the explanation of the world around us are offered, one evidence-driven and one mythology-driven. Given that the religious narrative is seen as frozen in time, as it were, while science is further developing every day with newer evidence and proof, these two cannot but clash and collide. The problem is that by accepting to enter into the sphere of meanings offered by the modern notions of "science" and "religion," one has already inescapably accepted the only logical conclusion that this can lead two. By accepting to employ this *language*, one by definition accepts the *conclusions* that are *inherent in that language.*

> So familiar are the concepts "science" and "religion," and so central to Western culture have been the activities and achievements that are usually labelled "religious" and "scientific," that it is natural to assume that they have been enduring features of the cultural landscape of the West. But this view is mistaken. To be sure, it is true that in the West from the sixth century BC attempts were made to describe the world systematically, to understand the fundamental principles behind natural phenomena, and to provide naturalistic accounts of the causes operating in the cosmos. Yet, as we shall see, these past practices bear only a remote resemblance to modern science. It is also true that almost from the beginning of recorded history many societies have engaged in acts of worship, set aside sacred spaces and times, and entertained beliefs about transcendental realities and proper conduct. But it is only in recent times that these beliefs and activities have been bounded by a common notion "religion," and have been set apart from the "nonreligious" or secular domains of human existence.[602]

According to the narrative inherent in the very concepts as we encounter them today, these two explanatory "systems" might not have *seemed* that competing at an age when science was not mature or powerful enough to challenge religion (and was being trumped by it), but perhaps a new age has dawned, and so forth. To cite just one example, Ian Barbour's schema[603] of four possible science-religion relations (conflict - independence - dialogue – integration) testifies to this, as it asserts the mutually exclusive nature of "religion" and "science," with the latter two options signalling attempts at *accommodating* this mutual exclusivity. Even in the case of the "friendlier" options, the setting is still one of "taming the lion" —in the case of *dialogue*— or of subjugating it —in the case of *integration.*

[602] Harrison, 3.
[603] In Ian G. Barbour, *Religion and Science: Historical and Contemporary Issues* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997).

One would expect that insights such as those by Peter Harrison on the subject, demonstrating the problem with the *very terms used* and the fact that, in a sense, "this game is rigged," would have acted as a game-changer, changing the debate *itself* by inescapably changing its very *frame*. However, it is not difficult to see that this is not the case. Applauded as they are by scholarship, insights such as these have not resulted in a change of this magnitude. They have set off debates that run *parallel* to the "religion and science" one, while the not-always-scholarly arena of the "religion and science" debate goes on with its peaceful life of mutual character assassinations and vigorous argument recycling (and what is vigorous here is the *recycling*, not the arguments). And it is to be noted that it in in this "conceptual universe" that the very notion of *secularism* emerges. Why is this the case?

I believe that this is because our cultural context effectively precludes any capacity to conceptualise science and religion differently on any level other than the purely scholarly one. "Science" and "religion" are not just two concepts. In their modern and current reincarnation, they are *foundational concepts* for the constitution of our globalised Western worldview, the *given* worldview in which we all exist (in which other worldviews are integrated via commodification, effectively annihilating them). Starting with modernity, the popular semantic contents of "science" and "religion" form a sizable part of the very fabric of our shared worldview, of our cultural presuppositions — most explicitly articulated in the Enlightenment juxtaposition of a "grant age of science, or rationality" to a "grand age of religion/superstition." Trapped within this narrative as we are as a culture, secularism seems the only conceivable future, since the world *progresses*. This renders the current global resurgence of religion, with the United Kingdom leading the few exceptions, utterly incomprehensible — and confines the discussion on *post-secularism* within the walls of academia. The struggle of a liberating science with an obscurantist religion is one of the most important and prevalent foundational myths of modernity, culminating in our current predicament. Even entertaining the possibility of approaching reality with different notional tools is unimaginable, as this presupposes being able to think outside the box of our culture writ large — and it is to be debated whether this is possible at all at a scale grander than that of academia.

"I believe in Science"

If the public conceptualisation of science, religion and the debate on the two is indeed a building block of the way we, as a culture, acquire access to reality and assess it, and if the definition of those terms is integrally intertwined in ways unseen, then a change in this conceptualisation would require nothing less than the advent of the next cultural *Weltanschauung*. But cultural *Weltanschauungen* do not change on order, or as a result of texts and discussions. The emergence of texts and discussions signalling previously inconceivable ideas might reflect the gradual advent of a new cultural *Weltanschauung*, but the opposite is not the case. The intelligentsia does not and cannot *cause* changes of that magnitude, it is rather these cultural changes that engender their respective debates even in the very early stages of such a transition.

However, even the developments *within* the science and religion debate, *within* the discussion delineated by the *modern* understanding of these terms and not necessarily questioning them, causes a certain awkwardness in the observer. One would think that, in the presence of certain rather unassailable arguments that have been contributed on particular aspects of the debate, at least those aspects would be considered settled today. Conor Cunningham has fascinatingly demonstrated in his *Darwin's Pious Idea* that a Christian protesting against the theory of evolution (or anybody believing that evolution refutes Christianity) has either not understood evolution, or Christianity, or both.[604] And, as a matter of fact, this is not *only* a scholarly position: the Roman Catholic church, the Eastern Orthodox church, the Anglican church, and many other churches have in many different ways declared the compatibility of their witness with evolutionary theory, yet the debate on evolution between science and religion rages on, taking the extremist positions of certain US evangelical groups and their "God of the gaps" as the mainstream of Christian faith.

On a more popular level, the paroxysmal publicity of the New Atheism movement has prompted a number of remarkable responses (examples include Alister McGrath, who apart from the polemical *Dawkins Delusion* has offered a number of monographs on the science

[604] Conor Cunningham, *Darwin's Pious Idea: Why the Ultra-Darwinists and Creationists Both Get It Wrong* (Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans, 2010).

and religion debate), which one would expect to effect the eclipse of the recycling of a number of ever-present substandard arguments.[605] But this does not take place!

Literal readings: an unorthodox projection?

It seems that, on the popular level, the debate is almost immune to intelligent conversation. For example, one assumes that any serious take on the matter should take into account the claim that a wholly *literal* reading of the Bible is a fairly recent phenomenon and occurrence and in no way to be projected back to Christianity's historical presence as a whole: As David Bentley Hart argues,

> The ancient and mediaeval church had always acknowledged that the Bible ought to be read allegorically in many instances, according to the spiritual doctrines of the church, and that the principal truths of scripture are not confined to its literal level, which often reflects only the minds of its human authors. Origen, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine—all denied that, for instance, the creation story in Genesis was an actual historical record of how the world was made (Augustine did write what he called a "literal" interpretation of Genesis, but it was not literal in any sense a modern fundamentalist would recognize). And figures as distant from one another in time as Augustine and Aquinas cautioned against exposing scripture to ridicule by mistaking the Bible for a scientific treatise.[606]

Rather than that, it is almost always taken as a given that Christianity is an obstacle to scientific progress *because* it sports a *literal* understanding of the Bible. One could go as far

[605] A short digression: nobody, I think, came to believe in the personal, ecclesial God by being convinced through arguments read from books —one might thus acquire a certain *worldview* or accept certain *propositions* or acquire certain *convictions*, but not *faith*—, and nobody abandoned a veritable relationship with the ecclesial God due to particularly well-structured arguments on God's inexistence. The fact that such profound changes may have roughly coincided with such readings does not imply proper causal relation. (Of course, any explicit or implicit reference to "God" here points to the uncreated Creator of creation, of a fully functioning universe with its own internal rules of coherence, *who is not one of the beings*. I.e., I am referring to a God who is explicitly *not* the ontotheological God, the supreme being, a higher or the highest power, etc. — and more concretely, I am referring to the Triune God of the Christian church. Allow me to point out here that if we are to refer to what could be perceived as *threatening* to the faith in the ecclesial God, this would be precisely the assertion of an impersonal "higher power/supreme being" and not, for example, agnosticism or atheism. Since the former, self-confident in having the issue settled, *precludes* the encounter with the personal, Triune God of the church, while the latter, purportedly the result and current conclusion of a hopefully *continuing* inquiry, sets such an inquiry at centre stage. Thus, the firm conviction concerning the existence of a vague "higher power," that intellectual idol, is an enemy of the community of believers far more atrocious than the most divisively militant atheism.)

[606] David Bentley Hart, *Atheist Delusions. the Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 63.

as to claim that, within Christianity, mercilessly literal readings of the Bible challenging natural science is a phenomenon to be encountered *only within modernity* (particularly if one includes post-Reformation developments as early modern ones), as instances where "religion" gladly assumes the role modernity has prepared for it, in contrast and departure from its tradition.

Another foundational myth of modernity concerns the "age of Darkness" prior to the Enlightenment, with us now treading the secular path of Light.[607] This is of importance for our inquiry, as the *historical* myths on science and religion play a crucial role in the current public debate. But the debate goes on, virtually uninterrupted by powerful arguments. And this, I contend, is because that particular debate is one of the default functions of our societies.

An unfortunate communicatio idiomatum — *and the discreet charm of scientism*

This, however, has hardly anything to do with the *realities signified* with the words "science" and "religion" today. Granted, these notions are modern, but they still strive to *signify* certain realities. Which would these be, examining the terms in their current usage and insofar as the debate at hand is concerned?

Let it be reminded that we cannot properly approach the notion of "religion" by itself without seeing it vis-à-vis "science," due to the notions' conceptual history and development. Harrison underscores this reality:

> Modern religion's relation to these developments has been threefold. First, the reification of religion is related to the demise of the Aristotelian virtues, as is the reification of *scientia*. That process means that "religion," too, is incoherent, again not in the sense that the activities that it purports to represent are incoherent, but in the sense that "religion" problematically claims to stand for some universal feature of human existence. Second, when experimental natural philosophy and early modern natural history are finding their feet, it is a reified religion that offers them

[607] Even widely-read books have challenged this myth, such as David Bentley Hart's spectacular yet unfittingly titled *Atheist Delusions* (for the book is not an attack at Dawkins and a refutation of his arguments, but a re-evaluation of the Christian centuries prior to modernity).

> support, and a degree of unity, in the form of a new natural theological project. Third, and somewhat paradoxically, "religion" has now become a contrast case for modern science. Religion is what science is not: a kind of negative image of science, and this contrast has become important for the integrity of the boundaries of science. It follows, to a degree, that the legitimacy of modern science depends on its capacity to compensate for what once was offered by religion, or if not, in demonstrating that we can dispense with it.[608]

Thus, it is to be reiterated that properly approaching these notions entails approaching them *together*, as they form a Möbius strip of a definition, as it were. Then, what is *science* today?

Science as a whole and *per se*, i.e. the sum of the fields of natural sciences (including the formal sciences as well) and their practical application, cannot by definition participate in such a debate. Science does what it does: it describes natural reality in an ever-more accurate way (often making earlier yet *not less scientific* models obsolete) and sometimes it facilitates the practical application of this knowledge. Thus, the debate is *on* science: it is not, of course, science itself that enters any such debate. We refer to "a dialogue of science and religion," but there are important implications in understanding that this is never a dialogue *between* these two, i.e. between the sums of persons or institutions representing them, but rather a dialogue *on* science and religion. At the precise moment a scientist will go into the length of using the conclusions of any scientific field *against* religion (or *in favour of* religion, for that matter), at the precise moment the conclusions of science will be employed to respond to questions of a wholly different kind and nature than scientific ones, we find ourselves outside the walls of science proper — and within the cult of scientism.

We witness, however, how often it is the case that people are eager to effect a *communicatio idiomatum*, a "communication of properties," between "science" and "religion." Thus, scientific conclusions are employed to construct what is in essence a *religion* as it is understood today: i.e., a set of individual convictions providing answers to questions of meaning, sense, and purpose — to *metaphysical* questions. To anything but "scientific" questions.

I find it truly fascinating that this perversion of science and its morphing into a religion —the religion of scientism— is to be seen very clearly in the texts themselves, and not simply to be encountered as a vague *caveat* of the form "when science attempts to

[608] Harrison, *The Territories of Science and Religion*, 187.

respond to metaphysical questions, it ceases to be science." Allow me to borrow an example from Alistair McGrath's *The Dawkins Delusion*,[609] which portrays how the very same scientific conclusions easily morph into metaphysical convictions while still raising the claim of being *simply science,* mere and descriptive scientific discourse. In this example, Richard Dawkins' first work, the 1976 *Selfish Gene* is cited:

> [Genes] swarm in huge colonies, safe inside gigantic lumbering robots, sealed off from the outside world, communicating with it by tortuous indirect routes, manipulating it by remote control. They are in you and me; they created us, body and mind; and their preservation is the ultimate rationale for our existence.[610]

We see here, McGrath notes, "a powerful and influential interpretation of a basic scientific concept. But are these strongly interpretative statements themselves actually scientific?" Or does their very *narration* constitute their morphing into a metaphysical doctrine, or in any case an interpretation with strong yet subtle (or, more precisely, strong *because* of their implicit nature) metaphysical implications and presuppositions? "To appreciate the issue, consider the following rewriting of this paragraph by the celebrated Oxford physiologist and systems biologist Denis Noble. What is proven empirical fact is retained; what is interpretative has been changed, this time offering a somewhat different reading of things."[611] Denis Noble rewrites the passage in his *The Music of Life: Biology beyond the Genome* as follows:

> [Genes] are trapped in huge colonies, locked inside highly intelligent beings, moulded by the outside world, communicating with it by complex processes, through which, blindly as if by magic, function emerges. They are in you and me; we are the system that allows their code to be read; and their preservation is totally dependent on the joy that we experience in reproducing ourselves. We are the ultimate rationale for their existence.[612]

In quite the same way a scientist who is also a Christian might employ the conclusions of science to theorise on the validity of his or her metaphysical convictions, a number of scientists take the liberty to interpret findings in a way that turns said findings into metaphysical teachings — teachings on the meaning, cause and purpose of life. The

[609] Alister McGrath and Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion? Atheist Fundamentalism and the Denial of the Divine.* (London: SPCK, 2007), 15–16.
[610] Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 21.
[611] McGrath and Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?*, 15–16.
[612] Denis Noble, *The Music of Life: Biology beyond the Genome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 11–15.

difference lies in the fact that the former is aware of the fact that he or she is referring to *religion*, while the latter think that their metaphysical convictions are *simply science.*

Thus, the science and religion debate becomes the very arena where science turns into a religion, purporting to provide answers to questions that have not much to do with the methods and goals of science. Propositions such as "the universe is utterly random and devoid of meaning," "the only meaning in life consists in the genes' reproduction" and the like are pure religion — and quite facile religion at that.

Agents from both "science" and "religion," if we are to judge e.g. by the American intelligent design controversy on school education, seem to be immune to the realisation that "science" and "religion," even in their current, modern, recent conceptualisation, respond to wholly different sets of questions. The fact that we are culturally conditioned to think otherwise and to construct *meaning* on the science/religion wars seems to entail that even logical coherence is, from a certain point onwards, out of the question in the public sphere.

There is no such a thing as religion

Now we come to *religion*. While in the current conceptualisation of science there is indeed such a thing as "science" writ large, i.e. the sum of the fields within natural sciences (perhaps including formal sciences) and the scientists working in those fields, the same cannot be accurately said of religion. There is no such a thing as religion. And, while this may seem counterintuitive, it is indeed surprising how the subject eludes a minimal definition that actually works, that actually applies to *all* religious groups but not to extra-religious realities.

Granted, the claim will be made that *religion*, in its modern and current conceptualization, entails a set of asserted *convictions* — which may or may not be based on a "holy book," which may or may not be accompanied by ritual practices, may or may not entail moral imperatives, may or may not be organized in one or more groups with discernible and normative hierarchies, and so on. *Any* religious group with pre-modern roots and at least minimal self-confidence would strongly protest against a reductive definition

thereof, seeing it as a sum of certain *convictions* and certain *practices*, and would face grave difficulties in recognizing itself in such a definition. What is meant in current discourse by "religion," i.e. an abstract "phenomenon of religion," is precisely what particular communities (such as the Christian Church) *are not*.

Granted, it is easier to identify religion*s* in the plural, what we would today call "religious communities." However, a summation of all possible religious communities in one abstract, capital-R *Religion* would be disastrous (in contrast to science, which as observed *can* be thought of as a sum of all natural sciences). In spite of our given reflexes, this hypothetical sum of "religion" would not possess the internal characteristics and the coherence necessary to construct a viable term. To illustrate this by example, the notion that Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, ancient Greek paganism, Australian aboriginal religious traditions, Pentecostalism, Mormonism, and New Age new religious movements can be validly and intelligently described as parts of the abstract phenomenon of "religion" is a hardly tenable notion, particularly when one needs to incorporate in this the myriad other religious communities. The same cannot be said of categories such as "science," "politics," or "art."

Thus, it is true that belief in "religion" is a superstition, an irrational and unfounded conviction — and I am here referring not to religion*s*, but to believing that there is such a thing as the abstract category of "religion," apart from and beyond the actual communities addressed, that can be meaningfully used in sentences in a way that is not both directed by and obscured by the given mythologies of our epoch.

Pluralism as the imposition of a dogma

What is important to note here is that, once more, the way in which the debate is set predetermines its sole possible outcome. "Religion" in the abstract predetermines the *invalidity* of any *particular* religion, however defined. Speaking about "religion" in the abstract requires at least the guise of the "external, unbiased observer," one that by definition cannot assert the truth claims of one over the truth claims of another. The sole basis on which "religion" in the abstract can be truly conceptualised (*truly*, i.e. with full semantic coherence,

not merely for the convenience of the discussion) is one in which the possibility of a very real chasm between one *true* "religion" and other *false* "religions" would be inconceivable — and note that I am here accepting to play along with the definition of any given religion as primarily a set of convictions held by the individual as true.

Thus, to discuss about "religion" is to become an atheist. Agnosticism would not suffice: in order for a valid and tenable neutral ground to be established, on which one may conceptualize "religion" or (all) "religions," it is not enough to adopt a stance in which any given religion, in the current sense of the term, may or may not be true, yet an agnostic stance on the matter may be assumed until further notice. The establishment of such a neutral terrain presupposes the programmatic eradication of the very possibility that religions, or one of them, might possess precisely what they claim to possess, according to the current definition: i.e., nothing less than capital-T Truth.[613]

And precisely therein lies the fundamental illiberalism that *pluralism* entails —and this, of course, is by no means an argument for intolerance, but part of a critical inquiry on this nexus of interrelated issues. Pluralism not merely tolerates, but *accepts* all religions and doctrines — but only insofar as these are false. Pluralism *annihilates* truth in the most literal, etymological sense of the word "annihilation": it requires that the very possibility of truth is turned into *nihil*, zero — a gap that is immediately filled by the "truth" of scientism (in stark contrast to science itself). Thus, pluralism imposes a doctrine on the meaning of things, a doctrine in which the possibility of truth itself equals zero and is substituted by the doctrine of scientism — and you can bring your own "truth" into this circle of peaceful coexistence, provided that you accept in advance that this truth is, essentially, false, a lie.

Violently bundling disparate phenomena under the big-tent term of "religion" and then defining it as "convictions plus paraphernalia" is but one of the fundamental problems such as the ones described above. It is to be noted, however, that this is not a vocabulary inquiry, devised for the purists of language: without the notion of "religion" in the abstract, the very idea of a *dialogue/debate between religion and science* collapses. The question, for example, on the relationship between science and the Eastern Orthodox church as a particular

[613] It should be noted that the mighty rage in public debates on God and atheism, a more particular yet immensely telling subfield of the relevant public debate at large, consists precisely in the danger identified in religion to this asserted zero-truth, in spite of the religion's neutralisation as a private, mystical/spiritual matter within pluralism.

community is a question of a *substantially different kind* to the *dialogue/debate between religion and science*, not merely one of its purported constitutive parts.

And if it is not atheism that is presupposed here (atheism being, again, a set of convictions borne by the individual) then at the very least, *secularity* forms the most basic and inescapable presupposition. Which in turn forms a gap that is immediately filled by scientism. Again, by entering the debate, one has already accepted its spurious premises.

Problems addressed in the debate

Much of what has been discussed here concerns the public debate on religion and science. However, what about certain practical and wholly tangible aspects thereof, such as the stem cell controversy? (Another example would be transhumanism, albeit a quite hypothetical one at the moment.) Don't we find there an example of religion allegedly striving to inhibit the march of science due to religion's convictions, a march that could improve or even save lives, and so on?

I think that even in such most practical of aspects, thinking that this can be discussed in terms of "religion" can be misleading. Areas of inquiry such as this set the stage for the most foundational of moral questions: what constitutes a human person? What constitutes life? What is and what isn't a murder? The emergence of divergent responses reflects a critical mass of those responses within our societies. Such responses may or may not be prompted by what we superficially call "religious convictions": one does not necessarily need to be religious in order to have second thoughts about aspects of stem cell research or transhumanism. What we encounter are core moral questions about which society, which includes the scientists themselves, argues, coming from a variety of starting points. Thus, the alleged "enemy of science" here is not the scarecrow of religion, but rather *society itself*, actual human beings objecting to changes addressing the very core of what it is to be human — and it is only by reframing this discussion that its proper dimensions may be disclosed. Trying to isolate "religion" as something separate from society in this context, as if the eradication of that particular element would solve the equation in the direction wished for by scientism (as these moral questions are not *scientific* questions per se, irrespective of the

insights science's conclusions could offer), seems to me to require a conceptual leap of faith — or faithlessness.

The notion that society is a moral *tabula rasa* possessing no framework that could prohibit certain experiments, and that the claim to such prohibitions only comes from an external agent called religion rather than from the very persons in a society, is absurd. One might call the values of a society "religion" in the conviction that were one to extract this "religion" from society, then *any* set of values would be dismantled leaving a nihilist *tabula rasa* at place — but this is simply not how reality works. In short, these are mightily important subject — which, however, do not have much to do with the "science" and "religion" debate per se.

Digression revisited

With this digression, I intend to underscore four points. (a) That "religion" is, from a *historical* point of view, an extremely problematic concept for the social sciences — a point developed in its fullness in Harrison's masterful study. To theorise from within the social sciences on "religion" without taking this into account, thinking that today's construct of "religion" as a private conviction system of a compartmentalised social reality can be projected back to history and other societies, is to set a trap for oneself —and for others. (b) That "religion" is not only *historically* a problematic concept, but it is also problematic *today*: the current conceptualisation of "religion" (and, hand in hand, "science") *is* a conceptual trap, leading to a disjunction of the social sciences from reality. (c) That Yannaras' and Ziakas' understanding of "religion" in a way that escapes the modern conundrum —irrespective of whether the *ecclesia* is reconceived as ontology in social motion or otherwise— is a point that deserves our attention — and to which we shall return. And (d) that all the above points, historical or otherwise, are made possible, or rather *conceivable*, precisely because of the advent of *post*-secularism; they represent a crack in the immanent frame, an ever so slight escape from it, or else they would simply not be conceivable and communicable: they would be almost immune to entering the symbolic order, given that the modern (and, in late modernity, secular) understanding of the conceptual tools would make such a crack beyond reach.

And as far as cracks to the immanent frame are concerned, we may turn our attention to the Anglo-Catholic *Radical Orthodoxy* movement and its critique of social theory — a movement surprisingly close to our modern Greek protagonists, unbeknownst to them.

Second (and short) digression:

Radical Orthodoxy, a post-secular social theory

> Once, there was no "secular." And the secular was not latent, waiting to fill more space with the steam of the "purely human," when the pressure of the sacred was relaxed. Instead there was the single community of Christendom, with its dual aspects of *sacerdotium* and *regnum.* The *saeculum*, in the medieval era, was not a space, a domain, but a time – the interval between fall and eschaton where coercive justice, private property and impaired natural reason must make shift to cope with the unredeemed effects of sinful humanity.
>
> The secular as a domain had to be instituted or *imagined*, both in theory and in practice. This institution is not correctly grasped in merely negative terms as a desacralization. It belongs to the received wisdom of sociology to interpret Christianity as itself an agent of secularization, yet this thesis is totally bound up with the one-sided negativity of the notion of desacralizing; a metaphor of the removal of the superfluous and additional to leave a residue of the human, the natural and the self-sufficient.[614]

Thus begins the first chapter of John Milbank's 1990 book *Theology and Social Theory*, a book that essentially forms the theoretical basis of the (initially Anglo-Catholic, later quite ecumenical) polemical Radical Orthodoxy movement within Anglophone theology and beyond, founded by Milbank, Catherine Pickstock and Graham Ward — a movement with unparalleled impact in modern theology, particularly in the USA and the UK.[615] A very substantial literature now exists, including special journal issues (and a dedicated journal), the proceedings of ecumenical conferences, introductions,[616] a reader,[617] critical responses[618] —

[614] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 9.
[615] Steven Shakespeare, *Radical Orthodoxy: A Critical Introduction* (London: SPCK, 2007), 3.
[616] Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*.
[617] Simon Oliver and John Milbank, eds., *The Radical Orthodoxy Reader*, Radical Orthodoxy (London ; New York: Routledge, 2009).

with the 1999 book *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology* being usually cited as the starting point of the movement *as such*, a book described by its editors as follows:

> The endeavours of Radical Orthodoxy are characterised by four crucial claims:
>
> • secular modernity is the creation of a perverse theology;
>
> • the opposition of reason to revelation is a modern corruption;
>
> • all thought which brackets out God is ultimately nihilistic;
>
> • the material and temporal realms of bodies, sex, art and sociality, which modernity claims to value, can truly be upheld only by acknowledgement of their participation in the transcendent.[619]

Responding to theological liberalism and the so-called radical theology of highly liberal theologian such as bishop John Shelby Spong, according to whom Christian doctrines such as the Trinity and the Incarnation have to be dropped in order for the Christian church to be compatible with the modern world, the thinkers of Radical Orthodoxy call for a return to theological (Anglo-Catholic) orthodoxy, albeit *by taking a postmodern route*.[620] Thus, their "toolbox" is postmodern thought, studying the texts of Augustine or Aquinas together with those of Jacques Derrida or Michel Foucault. Thus, Radical Orthodoxy attempts to demonstrate how orthodox interpretations of Christianity (as found in the ecumenical creeds and the Church Fathers) is a more radical response to contemporary issues, a more rigorous and intellectually sustainable one, as well as a route to what lies *after* late modernity — initially, Milbank intended to name the movement "postmodern critical Augustinianism." In

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[618] An indicative example: W. J. Hankey and Douglas Hedley, eds., *Deconstructing Radical Orthodoxy: Postmodern Theology, Rhetoric, and Truth* (Aldershot, Hants, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub. Ltd, 2005).

[619] John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward, eds., *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1999), i.

[620] "Radical Orthodoxy is influenced by Postmodern thought, but at the same time contests it. Postmodernity tends to conclude that since we cannot ground truth in an absolutely certain intuitive presence, nor in discursivity, (which is either tautologous or else goes on for ever and never vanquishes uncertainty), that in consequence there is no such thing as truth at all. Often this lack of truth is seen as the only truth, and so as disclosing a nullity at the heart of things. Radical Orthodoxy accepts that there are no foundations and that there can be no finite certainty, but concludes that this situation can be read as the need to refer time to eternity. Only in the infinite Godhead can there be an entire intuition which is also an infinitely concluded exposition. Truth is possible for us because we participate by an act of faith in this infinite truth. At the Fall, humans tried to erect truth for themselves :this is why rationalism is evil. But God himself descended to us and became the truth for us in time. Echoes of this resound through everything ever since, but are concentrated in the Church." John Milbank, "What is Radical Orthodoxy?," Université *de Fribourg*, n.d., www.unifr.ch/theo/assets/files/SA2015/Theses_EN.pdf, accessed 22 April 2018.

the words of Catherine Pickstock, Radical Orthodoxy consists in "a critical consideration of postmodern philosophy in relation to the re-interpretation of pre-modern theology."[621]

Tracing the careers of merely some of that initial 1999 volume's twelve contributors should attest to the impact the movement had and has, at least in British academia. After academic posts at the University of Cambridge, the University of Virginia and the University of Lancaster, John Milbank is now Professor Emeritus in Religion, Politics and Ethics at the University of Nottingham (where Conor Cunningham is currently an associate professor) and president of its Centre of Theology and Philosophy; Catherine Pickstock is Norris–Hulse Professor of Divinity at the University of Cambridge;[622] Graham Ward[623] is Regius Professor of Divinity at the University of Oxford; Simon Oliver is Van Mildert Professor of Divinity at the University of Durham; Philip Blond is founder and director of the influential British political think tank *ResPublica* — and so on.

Much has been contested in Radical Orthodoxy, but that its concern is the *future* rather than a pre-modern nostalgia has not been one of those — in contrast, that is, to Greek accusations by "reformists" against "underdogs." It is a curious fact that, in spite of the movement's immense impact in global academic theology and beyond and its ability to incite either love or hatred to a surprising degree, no Radical Orthodoxy book has been translated and published in Greek — in contrast, for example, to Stanley Hauerwas, or Gustavo Gutiérrez, Oscar Cullmann, Jürgen Moltmann, and of course Karl Barth. With the sole exception of Nicholas Loudovikos, no Greek engages in the discussion published as the edited volume *Encounter Between Eastern Orthodoxy and Radical Orthodoxy: Transfiguring the World Through the Word.*[624] In fact, John Milbank's name hardly returns any results when typed in Greek in internet searches. Embarrassing as this might be, it also underscores that a substantial influence of the movement on Greece and its intellectuals can be safely precluded; thus, any substantial similarity between the movement's ideas and those of Greek "underdog" intellectuals is to be engaged in sheer surprise and studious curiosity.

[621] From Pickstock's Cambridge faculty page, https://www.divinity.cam.ac.uk/directory/catherine-pickstock, accessed 24 April 2018.
[622] As an indication of Radical Orthodoxy's affinity to postmodern thought, let it be remarked that Pickstock's doctoral thesis was on Derrida's reading of the *Phaedrus*.
[623] His notable works include: Graham Ward, *Cities of God*, Radical Orthodoxy (London: Routledge, 2000).
[624] Adrian Pabst and Christoph Schneider, eds., *Encounter between Eastern Orthodoxy and Radical Orthodoxy: Transfiguring the World through the Word* (Farnham, Surrey, England ; Burlington, Vt: Ashgate, 2009).

The present digression shall be the shortest one of the three, as it relates to an essentially *theological* movement, whereas our other two digressions are more historical, sociological and politically philosophical in nature; after all, the fact that theologians are not content with secularism should not come as a surprise. And content they are not:

> For several centuries now, secularism has been defining and constructing the world. It is a world in which the theological is either discredited or turned into a harmless leisure-time activity of private commitment. And yet in its early manifestations secular modernity exhibited anxiety concerning its own lack of ultimate ground—the scepticism of Descartes, the cynicism of Hobbes, the circularities of Spinoza all testify to this. And today the logic of secularism is imploding. Speaking with a microphoned and digitally simulated voice, it proclaims—uneasily, or else increasingly unashamedly— its own lack of values and lack of meaning. In its cyberspaces and theme parks it promotes a materialism which is soulless, aggressive, nonchalant and nihilistic. The present collection of essays attempts to reclaim the world by situating its concerns and activities within a theological framework. Not simply returning in nostalgia to the pre-modern, it visits sites in which secularism has invested heavily —aesthetics, politics, sex, the body, personhood, visibility, space— and resituates them from a Christian standpoint; that is, in terms of the Trinity, Christology, the Church and the Eucharist. What emerges is a contemporary theological project made possible by the self-conscious superficiality of today's secularism.[625]

What is of essence here, and the reason this digression belongs to our present inquiry, is that this *theological* movement does not merely *write and speak* about the social sciences, political science and politics: it *does* politics. The ResPublica think tank mentioned above, directed by the editor of *Post-Secular Philosophy: Between Philosophy and Theology*[626] Philip Blond and having John Milbank as chairman of its trustees, has a surprising amount of influence and impact for, essentially, an off-shoot of an academic theological movement; to cite but one example, ResPublica and Blond have been closely associated with Conservative prime minister David Cameron during the latter's tenure and are largely responsible for the content and ideas of his main political platform from 2010 onwards, i.e. "Big Society," the flagship policy of the 2010 UK Conservative Party general election manifesto. Political

[625] John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward, "Introduction — Suspending the Material: The Turn of Radical Orthodoxy," in *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1999), 1.
[626] Blond, *Post-Secular Philosophy*.

entanglement with the Conservative Party under the label of *Red Toryism*[627] is, however, rather a minority tendency within Radical Orthodoxy's political impact, which is more concentrated along Blue Labour[628] lines and John Milbank's "Blue Socialism." Milbank has elaborated on his political philosophy and theology in *The Future of Love*[629] and, recently, in *The Politics of Virtue: Post-Liberalism and the Human Future*,[630] co-authored with Adrian Pabst. It would not be inaccurate —yet it would certainly be quite over-simplistic— to describe the political aspects of Radical Orthodoxy as, largely, a post-secular Christian socialist project.

Cursory as the present digression might be, it would be woefully inadequate without a reference to the starting points in the gesture of John Milbank's by now classic 1990 work, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, a book that "is addressed both to social theorists and to theologians."[631] Describing how the notion of the "secular" has been constructed in modernity, Milbank describes theology as having internalised this modernist construction of the secular as its own self-image, thus essentially losing the ability to utter its comprehensive testimony to an understanding of reality. But he also describes social theory as, essentially, a theological project gone wrong: he sets to demonstrate "that all the most important governing assumptions of such theory are bound up with the modification or the rejection of orthodox Christian positions. These fundamental intellectual shifts are ... no more rationally 'justifiable' than the Christian positions themselves."[632] Sociology, "the new science of the political" and Marxism are analysed as resting on questionable assumptions, in spite of their self-description as objective sciences. The second part of the book traces positivism as a theological stance and apriorism, ultimately designating all sociology (including Weberian sociology) as fundamentally positivist. Thus, theology encounters in sociology a "religion" dedicated to promoting a secular consensus. The third part of the book finds seeds to deconstructing the secular in the most radical and critical elements of the Hegelian-Marxist tradition (which, however, is not truly embraced). In the concluding part of

[627] Phillip Blond, *Red Tory: How the Left and Right Have Broken Britain and How We Can Fix It* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010).
[628] Adrian Pabst and Ian Geary, eds., *Blue Labour - Forging a New Politics* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015).
[629] John Milbank, *The Future of Love: Essays in Political Theology* (Eugene, Or: Cascade Books, 2009).
[630] John Milbank and Adrian Pabst, *The Politics of Virtue: Post-Liberalism and the Human Future*, Future Perfect: Images of the Time to Come in Philosophy, Politics and Cultural Studies (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2016).
[631] Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 1. Other notable books by Milbank include *Being Reconciled: Ontology and Pardon* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2003)., as well as the "sequel" of *Theology and Social Theory*: *Beyond Secular Order: The Representation of Being and the Representation of the People* (Hoboken, NY: Wiley/Blackwell, 2013).
[632] Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 1.

the book, Milbank sets to ground and describe an understanding of both social science and theology "beyond secular reason."

Milbank's analysis of the theological construction of the social sciences and secular politics[633] is particularly interesting and revealing: according to this analysis, the presuppositions for modern social science's explicit and implicit premises are made possible by late mediaeval offshoots of Christian theology and John Duns Scotus in particular. Milbank recognises in the secular worldview two religious/theological sources asserting the world as being founded on ontological conflict, violence, and chaos: one heretical and the other pagan in nature, the latter consisting in a glorification of power and strength. Later in the development of social theory, the key notion of "society" emerges as the simulacrum of an almost mystical term, irreducible to a non-assumptive definition. Thus we encounter the *substitution* of certain theological terms with *other*, "secular" theological terms, in spite of the claim to the contrary, i.e. to the clearing up of the territory so that a "natural," secular human and social state may emerge. I will abstain from elaborating on the multi-faceted analyses in *Theology and Social Theory* and on the thematic areas it covers: suffice it to say that in this text, upon which Radical Orthodoxy is arguably based, the very *secular* foundation of secularism and modernity is being refuted, with the counter-proposal entailing an affirmation of a worldview *beyond secular reason*. The visible and invisible impact of this *theological* movement on British *politics* is not to be underestimated.

In many ways, this profound disbelief in modernity's, the social science's and secularism's self-description and *carte de visite* (and in their description of pre-modern "religion") is common, though with different starting points and differing conclusions, to posterior works such as Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*[634] or Peter Harrison's *The Territories of Science and Religion*[635] and to all post-secular works in general — but also to Yannaras' intuitions in *Against Religion, Rationality and Social Practice, The Real and the Imaginary in Political Economy,*[636] in spite of certain marked differences.[637]

[633] Milbank, 13–22 and, of course, the book as a whole.
[634] Taylor, *A Secular Age*.
[635] Harrison, *The Territories of Science and Religion*.
[636] Yannaras, *Against Religion*; Yannaras, *Rationality and Social Practice*; Yannaras, *The Real and the Imaginary in Political Economy*.
[637] To cite an example, where Yannaras sees the departure points for future errors in Augustine of Hippo, Milbank sees them in Duns Scotus and counter-proposes a return to Augustine: what could be superficially diagnosed as an irreconcilable difference between the two is, at the very end, a profound sameness in approach.

This affinity does not elude Milbank himself, who recently described Yannaras as "one of the most important and insufficiently attended-to thinkers of our times,"[638] citing him as being essentially invested in a project common to both: in Milbank's words, "with [Yannaras], we must keep faith that a shattered Church still contains within these fragments the primordial seeds of restoration and renewal. With [Yannaras], and inspired by his lead and example, we must take up once more this truly philosophical and political cosmic project."[639] Thus, our designation of Yannaras' and Ziakas' theories as "subversive Orthodoxies" (in the plural, since we are here dealing with two *different* system) cannot but also be a reference to the Anglo-Saxon Radical Orthodoxy movement. Radical Orthodoxy designates itself as *radical*, because it had to break with the prevailing at the time radical liberal theology, counter-proposing to the latter's self-emptying of Christianity as a radical response to modern times its own *orthodox* response to the challenges of the times as a response more radical still. Given that our Greek Orthodox subject matter did not have to respond to any such theology, the reason why Radical Orthodoxy designates itself as radical does not apply to it. Contrariwise, however, our subject matter *is* subversive, as it runs counter to dominant tendencies in the Greek public discourse, as we shall see. Thus, its designation as *subversive Orthodoxies* in the plural is in dialectical relation and tension to the movement examined in this present digression.

The post-secular claim to a re-institution of the *Christian* in the *political* in a decisively *post*-modern manner is not, however, the privilege of Christian theologians. Bafflingly for many, but certainly testifying to the advent of the post-secular, it is also an area of considerable activity for materialist atheist radical political thinkers like Alain Badiou, Giorgio Agamben, or Slavoj Žižek — with whom, as it happens, the Radical Orthodoxy movement is in fecund dialogue.[640]

Third (and long) digression:

Atheist (political) theology — the case of Slavoj Žižek

[638] John Milbank, "Hellenism in Motion," in *Polis, Ontology, Ecclesial Event: Engaging with Christos Yannaras' Thought*, ed. Sotiris Mitralexis (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2018), ix.
[639] Milbank, xvii.
[640] To cite but one example (yet we shall return to the issue), John Milbank, Slavoj Žižek, and Creston Davis, *Paul's New Moment: Continental Philosophy and the Future of Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Brazos, 2010).

One of the most noticeable post-secular theoretical developments of the last decades is the spectacle of a whole array of atheist materialist philosophers —Slavoj Žižek, Giorgio Agamben, Alain Badiou, to name but a few— fervently engaging with the early church and its writings, particularly Apostle Paul (almost to an extend uncommon to Christian theologians, to use a hyperbole). To provide an overview of Slavoj Žižek's atheist (political) theology as a case study here would make sense, as it is a testimony to the way in which a certain centrality of what problematic analyses would term "religion" emerges today in ways unexpected, not as a matter of private faith, but as a matter directly pertaining to the social and the political. If an atheist materialist critical theorist such as Slavoj Žižek engages at length in political theology *today* as a subversive practice, then considering similar discourses that underscore the social and political centrality of Christianity exclusively as pre-modern or even fundamentalist or theocratic regressions becomes challenging, if not outright impossible.

In pre-post-secular times, one might assume that an atheist, materialist, Marxist communist thinker cannot but be dismissive of Christianity — however, this would be gravely erroneous in a case as distinctive as Žižek's, who may indeed offer valid insights through treading the seemingly paradoxical territory of *atheist theology*. His reading of Christianity as expounded in his voluminous and on-going *oeuvre*, uniting elements of Lacanian psychoanalysis and Hegelian philosophy as well as modern and contemporary philosophical currents, has a rightful claim to originality. Far from being an outright rejection of Christian thought and intellectual heritage, Žižek's work can be seen as involving its perverse (or "decaffeinated") affirmation, arguably including elements of interest to Christian theology itself.

Žižek's interest in Christianity begins mainly with *The Ticklish Subject* (1999), in which he engages with the theology of Saint Paul. After that he writes three books which have Christianity as their main subject, namely *The Fragile Absolute, or why is the Christian legacy worth fighting for?*,[641] *On Belief*[642] and *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core*

[641] Slavoj Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute: Or, Why Is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For?* (London: Verso, 2008).
[642] Slavoj Žižek, *On Belief*, Thinking in Action (London: Routledge, 2001).

of Christianity.[643] Christianity is also one of the important subjects in *The Parallax View*[644] which recapitulates many of his main interests. Žižek is also the co-author of books on theology in which he has collaborated with noted theologians such as John Milbank of the Radical Orthodoxy movement —in *The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic*[645] and *Paul's New Moment: Continental Philosophy and the Future of Christian Theology*,[646] both edited by Creston Davis— as well as with Boris Gunjević (*God in Pain: Inversions of Apocalypse*).[647]

Žižek's idiosyncratic approach to Christianity is such that he could be described as an "atheist Christian," in the sense that he does not believe in the existence of God, nor in the literal bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, yet he regards the "Christian experience" as extremely important. He further links Christianity with psychoanalysis and the communist idea as the three great traditions of emancipatory importance, which are more timely and relevant than ever precisely in their interconnection within our postmodern world. In order to understand Žižek's philosophy, we have to realize that in it there is a continuous passage from religion to psychoanalysis and to politics and back, with continuous correspondences between the three levels. His implicit claim is that everything that applies to religion applies in a certain similar way to psychology and to politics. To take a most important example, what Žižek perceives as the community of the Holy Spirit after the Resurrection of Christ can be illuminatingly likened to certain psychoanalytic communities as Jacques Lacan conceived them, as well as to the political subject of communism, as Žižek himself perceives the true meaning of the term. Correspondingly, historical and institutional Christianity is perceived as a perverse form of Christianity (taking account of the psychoanalytic content of the term "perversion") in a similar sense in which Stalinism is a perverse form of communism, with psychoanalysis showing similar tendencies.

Slavoj Žižek was born in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in 1949, where he studied philosophy and sociology, completing his PhD thesis on *The Theoretical and Practical Relevance of French Structuralism*. During his youth he participated in intellectual circles critical of the

[643] Slavoj Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003).
[644] Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View*, Short Circuits (MIT Press, 2006).
[645] Slavoj Žižek and John Milbank, *The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic?*, ed. Creston Davis (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011).
[646] Milbank, Žižek, and Davis, *Paul's New Moment*.
[647] Slavoj Žižek and Boris Gunjević, *God in Pain: Inversions of Apocalypse* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2012).

establishment and in magazines such as *Praxis*, *Tribuna* and *Problemi*, known for an alternative version of Marxism to the official one of the Yugoslav regime. In 1985 Žižek received a second PhD, in psychoanalysis, from *Université Paris VIII* under the supervision of the well-known psychoanalyst Jacques Allain-Miller. His international reputation began with the publication of *The Sublime Object of Ideology*[648] in 1989, in which he analyzed the use of ideology, drawing on his experience of the establishment ideology in Tito's Yugoslavia. In the late 1980s, Slavoj Žižek took part in the struggle for Slovenia's democratization and even ran as the Liberal Democratic Party's candidate for the Slovenian presidency.

This first phase of Žižek's itinerary is characterized by the critique of "actually existing socialism's" totalitarian ideology and a certain proximity to liberalism, from which he has since distanced himself. Gradually, his critique became directed more against nationalism and, ultimately, its association with liberalism, despite the widespread common impression to the contrary. An early critique of the connection between nationalism and liberalism is already to be found in *Tarrying with the Negative*.[649] A turning point for Žižek was his philosophical encounter with Alain Badiou, with whom he came to share many philosophical themes, particularly on the theology of Paul the Apostle and Christianity in general, as well as on the need to conceive of the communist hypothesis anew, although in a way different from that encountered in "actually existing socialism," on the need for a re-interpretation of Lacan, and so on. The encounter with Badiou is located mainly in *The Ticklish Subject*,[650] where Žižek is in dialogue with Badiou's work *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*.[651] In many ways Žižek can be considered as a disciple of Badiou, since on these important issues the older Badiou will set an agenda and a terminology with Žižek following and adding to the debate in a distinctive manner. Žižek's dialogue with his French colleague and comrade is, however, a critical one. Their great difference lies in the fact that Žižek insists on a dialectical perspective, following Hegel in a progress through contradictions where negativity plays the main role. Badiou, on the other hand, focuses on the notion of the *event*, i.e. of an occurrence that takes place in spite of the absence of its apparent preconditions, something which has a certain positivity. I could say,

[648] Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Phronesis (Verso, 1989).
[649] Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative : Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology*, Post-Contemporary Interventions (Duke University Press, 1993).
[650] Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject : The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, Wo Es War (Verso, 2000).
[651] Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, Cultural Memory in the Present (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2003).

then, that in his interpretation of Christianity Badiou articulates a "theology of the Resurrection" or a "theology of Glory," while Žižek formulates a "theology of the Crucifixion." Badiou sees in the Apostle Paul the great visionary who began his journey through the vision of the resurrected Christ, "meeting" Him on the road to Damascus. The rest of Paul's life consisted in a faithfulness to this event, and in this sense "crucifixion" paradoxically follows the resurrection as a "testimony" to the event. In Žižek's interpretation, on the contrary, "salvation" comes from the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, which is not understood literally, and is identical to the Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Slavoj Žižek positions himself in the interpenetration of the multiple traditions to which he belongs. The two main ones are dialectical Marxist thinking and psychoanalysis. Dialectical Marxist thought, however, originates from German idealism, which in turn is connected to modernity's general program, the latter having roots in a certain Christian tradition which also sometimes presents dialectical elements. In contemplating Žižek's intellectual lineage and heritage in a chronological sequence from the earliest to the most current, I would say that the thinkers who have defined him and constitute recurring reference points are the Apostle Paul from the period of the Christian *Urkirche*, Augustine of Hippo from the patristic period, and German religious thinkers such as Meister Eckhart and Martin Luther, while he draws on John Calvin's understanding of absolute predestination. Beyond this, Descartes as the founder of the program of modernity, Kant, Schelling and Hegel from German Idealism, but also at the same time Kierkegaard, Feuerbach, Marx, Lenin and Althusser from the communist tradition, Freud and Lacan from psychoanalysis, Walter Benjamin, Hans Jonas, and Theodor W. Adorno from the great Jewish thinkers of the 20th century, as well as Alain Badiou and Jacques Rancière from his contemporaries. Arguably, each of those thinkers has contributed a certain building block to the dialectical thinking of Slavoj Žižek, which, being dialectical, also constitutes a kind of recapitulation of the history of philosophy through an acutely original interpretative perspective. In this process, each previous element is interpreted by a later one. For example, the Apostle Paul's theology of the universality of love that goes beyond the Jewish Law is considered in the light of Martin Luther's Protestant emphasis on absolute individuality. Augustine's thought is contemplated in the light of its evolution in René Descartes' program of modernity, while in Meister Eckhart we can see a great German thinker, a precursor of German Idealism. Immanuel Kant, of course, is considered to be the philosopher of the Thing, from a viewpoint that is not only Hegelian, but also Lacanian, as we encounter in Lacan the distinction between the Real and

the Symbolic somewhat as we encounter in Kant the distinction between the Thing(in-itself) and phenomena. German idealism is considered in the light of its materialist interpretation. And Žižek's perhaps most crucial gesture is his reading of Hegel *through* Lacan, and vice versa, of Lacan *through* Hegel. It should also be noted that Žižek is strongly opposed to Levinas and to the interpretation of the Jewish tradition he represents, while he distances himself from Jacques Derrida and Judith Butler as far as their own combination of Judaism with elements of postmodern poststructuralist thought is concerned.

Let us consider an example of how Žižek is inspired by such sources. Žižek inherits from the theological tradition of German idealism the question of what was God doing before the creation of the world. And he responds by resorting to Schelling in particular.[652] His answer is that, before the creation of the world, God *was becoming God*. I could thus say that before the creation of the world there was an abyss of primordial freedom, i.e., of an absolute freedom as an undifferentiated potentiality for everything and anything. The differentiation came about when God changed from not wanting anything, in the sense of anything *particular*, to wanting *nothing itself*. This latter object of volition signifies a kind of contraction in the triple sense of reduction, condensation, and contracting a disease. The fact that God desires *a* nothing, *the* nothing entails that, suddenly, a zero is set next to God. This entails an emptying of God, a *kenosis*, a reduction of Him, so as to "fit" this zero, this nothing, next to Him. This emptying, however, is also a condensation of God in the sense that God is "transformed" into Being, or, as I could say, in the double meaning of the word contraction, God "contracts" Being as a disease, as Being can be considered to be a disease or even a reduction compared to the previous condition of absolute free will. From now on we will have a tug-of-war between the contraction and the expansion of Being, to which Žižek will give a name derived from Freudian psychoanalysis (as Lacan interprets Freud but even more as Žižek interprets Freud building on Lacan's intuitions): *drive*. The next stage is that in which God as Word, as *Logos*, creates the world. According to Žižek, this moment of creation *represses* the drive, which turns into the repressed past of the world. In this psychoanalytic reading, what the *Logos* represses is in essence the very founding act of creation. The *Logos* thus constitutes temporality, as the distinction between past and present

[652] On a comparison between Žižek and Schelling on this matter, see Adam Kotsko, *Žižek and Theology* (London ; New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 51–55. Given Žižek's writing style and the archipelago of books that his hitherto *oeuvre* is, I have opted for approaching and commenting on Žižek's work as a whole rather than focusing on particular passages of relevance to our inquiry here.

emerges for the first time, with the past being the repressed drive and the present being the Logical creation.

However, in order to better understand this aspect of Žižek's thought, which draws from Lacan and Schelling, we have to also take into account a distinction between male and female that Lacan makes and which Žižek employs to its utmost potential.[653] What Žižek refers to as the male model is what he calls a "constitutive exception." This means that any symbolic system is based on the fact that the very moment of the symbolic system's creation violates the rules that govern it. This founding moment of the symbolic system is repressed as a kind of repressed exception that dictates the norm. We do possess, however, a dialectic concerning a totalizable symbolic system and its exception that constitutes it without belonging to it. In contrast to this, the female model signifies a "whole" that is *a priori* non-totalizable. Cosmogony, as Žižek describes it drawing from Schelling and Lacan, signifies a passage and transition from the female model to the male one. Prior to the advent of the Logos we have a female model, that is, a non-totalizable All. This female model "vanishes" in order for a world of the male model to emerge and thus becomes a "vanishing mediator." When we find ourselves in the ratiocentric world, we bear a repression of the founding moment of the symbolic system, which is categorized by Žižek as a *drive*. I could describe the same in Schelling's terms by claiming that God is trying to escape either from hell or from madness. This theogony–cosmogony resembles Neoplatonic theogonies-cosmogonies or even certain traditional Christian cosmogonies — but it has some key differences. Firstly, we encounter here a process of God's own generation, a becoming within God himself, i.e. a process theology, which finds itself at a certain distance from traditional, orthodox theology. Secondly, temporality is not seen here as a reduction and degradation, as in Neoplatonism, but as a mode in which God Himself is becoming complete.

This leads us to a radical reconfiguration of temporality and history which is consistent with modernity's program of configuring modern subjectivity and history as the *locus* of self-realization — not only of man, but of God Himself as well. Moreover, in contrast to Neoplatonism where the main and primary division is between the One and Being–Nous, here the primary division is between Will–Freedom and Being. We have here, therefore, a voluntarist philosophy which accords to the importance of the will in the program of modernity in German idealism. This process is also perceived as an emptying, a *kenosis* of

[653] Kotsko, 46–51.

God, in order for zero/nothing to emerge, out of which Being will arise. This is in contrast to traditional and orthodox Christian theology, where we do encounter the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, yet the eternally Triune God remains an eternally absolute presence and the creation of the world from nothing means that the world is contingent and that God exists independently of the world, which could have never existed. In the theogony-cosmogony, however, which Žižek refers to, God is initially an abyss of free will, followed by an emptying, a *kenosis* towards the emergence of nothing/zero and then the emergence of Being in opposition to nothing/zero, with God Himself being then self-realized through the creation of the world and within history, which emerges together with temporality.

Žižek develops this theogony–cosmogony connecting it to the emergence of the subject and culture. The subject is constituted by the symbolic system. And here we may remember Louis Althusser seeking to demonstrate how the subject is constituted precisely by the dominant symbolic discourse that, in a Godlike gesture, calls it forth to existence. The establishment of the Symbolic entails the repression of the Real in the Lacanian sense. The Real is at the same time what lies beyond the Symbolic, i.e. what cannot enter the symbolic order, something which the Symbolic cannot reach. The Real is also an inner core of the Symbolic that makes its appearance as a crack, a hole, an internal failure and subversion. What remains from the Real is the so-called "objet petit a," according to the Lacanian terminology, which is an object, since it is external to the Symbolic and the subject that has been constituted as a subject by that Symbolic. And it is *small*, because it is that which is left from the repressed big Real. And it is "*a*" from "*autre*," as opposed to the Big Other. The *objet petit a* mobilizes the desire of the subject, which attempts to reach a Real that is simultaneously beyond the Symbolic but also in its inwardly subversive inner core. Since, however, the Real is perpetually beyond reach, desire operates permanently through substitutes. When a subject's desire is fulfilled, the subject understands that this is not what it wanted but a mere substitute. Thus it has to desire something else, and this cycle takes place perpetually. Žižek juxtaposes the notion of desire operating through substitutions to the *drive*, which concerns the founding moment of the symbolic system and is repressed. The drive is more associated with the subject's fundamental fantasy. The fundamental fantasy defines the subject by being itself repressed and unconscious. It is a kind of founding act that constitutes the symbolic system by being itself its repressed exception. Žižek names this fundamental fantasy the "ultimate predestination" of the subject, reminding us of the term used by John Calvin and inspired by Augustine of Hippo. The paradox is that the fundamental fantasy may

be a pre-conscious "absolute predestination" of the subject, but it is also the precondition for the exercise of the subject's freedom. It is, of course, distinguished from the primordial, abysmal freedom of the theogony before the subject's genesis. As a contributing factor to the constitution of the subject, however, the fundamental fantasy constitutes a freedom that is interwoven with what Žižek calls "absolute predestination" as it directs the subject to a horizon that has been chosen by it on a pre-conscious level while subsequently the subject's freedom is being exercised in view of this horizon rather than in a vacuum.

It is worth examining how Žižek analyzes a variety of cultural traditions in relation to this process that constitutes the subject. He sees the Jewish tradition in relation to the Law. The Law forbids and thus, according to Žižek, creates the illusion that it is because of the Law that the Thing is inaccessible, while the Thing is inaccessible anyway. In this way, the Law mobilizes the desire, which is intensified by the prohibition dictated by the Law. This interconnection of Law and desire that Žižek formulates in Lacanian terms is also the psychoanalytic truth of the connection that the Apostle Paul makes between the Law and sin. The difference between the Jewish Law and law in general as we encounter it in other cultures, including pagan cultures like the Graeco-Roman one, is that Jewish Law excepts the Jews from the other nations and makes them special. It is a law that is neither utilitarian nor a social contract, but a law that constitutes an exceptional community. By extension, it does not have some features that law has in other systems as constitutive of a certain ideology, such as the obscene superego supplement, i.e. the categorical command to enjoy according to Lacan. The Jews are fully identified with their Law without the obscene superego supplement and without the false ideology we encounter in other ideological systems; their Law, however, exists in a dialectical relationship with the desire that it intensifies, hence Judaism is in a sense a religion of desire.

When Žižek analyzes Judaism, the primary figure he focuses on is not Moses —as was the case with Freud— or David, but Job. Correspondingly, Christ is not so much a new Moses or a new David but rather a new Job. As we have seen, the relationship between Law and Thing is that the Law creates through its prohibitions the impression that it is the Law that makes the Thing prohibited and thus inaccessible, while the Thing is inaccessible anyway. Thus the Law intensifies the desire and leaves it unfulfilled, in spite of the fact the desire would not be able to conquer the Thing regardless of the Law's prohibitions. In Žižek's theology, which is influenced here by Hans Jonas, God is weak. This would be the

difference between Žižek and a properly Schellingian theogony. While the world of the Symbolic is created by the Word/Logos, and it is with this that we are incorporated in temporality, the Thing of religion that is repressed is rather the weakness of God or the absence of the divine Thing. This is what the story of Job implies. The story of Job comprises, according to Žižek, the first critique of ideology, since the theological reasons that the theologians invoke to account for the pain of Job are denounced by God Himself as false. Job is not, as in the cliché, the one who endures his misfortunes; on the contrary, he protests at any opportunity against these misfortunes and God's answer, according to Žižek, is a void boasting that ultimately confirms his weakness. The crucial element for Žižek is that while Job perceives the Divine weakness, he is silent. Since then, according to Žižek, the attitude of the Jews consists in silence concerning the weakness of God. This is their secret and their apophaticism, which has made them into a community that has endured through the ages. And Christ is the new Job because He reveals the weakness of God where Job remained silent.

The truly important element for Žižek in this context is Christ's cry on the Cross: "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" (Mark 15:34; Matthew 27:46). For Žižek, the silence of God in the face of this question is the disclosure of God's absence. Therefore, according to Žižek, Christianity is the religion of revelation and disclosure, primarily in the sense that it reveals and discloses the non-existence of the divine Thing. And if in Job we had a relationship of man with God, where man honors the weakness of God in his silence, in Christ we have an internal dialectical evolution of God where the Son of God is in pain and is dying, and God is weak and incapable of saving Him. In this sense, Christianity is for Žižek the religion of exiting religion, it is the last religion, and Crucifixion, likewise, is not exactly a sacrifice, but it is the sacrifice of exiting all sacrifices, the sacrifice which abolishes the sacrificial logic in its very depth, the last sacrifice. Žižek is a theologian of the Cross, thus for him salvation is identified with the Crucifixion. We could say that the Crucifixion is equated in Žižek with the Revelation, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the Pentecost. Salvation is the revelation of God's non-existence, and the resurrection is the coming of the Spirit, which is the interiorization of the sacrificed, which constitutes the community of the ones left behind, so that the Crucifixion coincides with the foundation of the Church at the Pentecost.

The community of the Holy Spirit, to which I shall return in greater detail shortly, is for Žižek a very special community. It is the community of those who are absolutely unique

and special in the sense that it is the community of those who cannot belong to any community. This is because in this atheist theology the revelation of the absence of the divine Thing on the Cross allows all those who desire ultimate freedom and responsibility to create each one's life for herself. The salvation offered on the Cross is defined by Žižek as "traversing the fantasy." With the revelation of the void in the place of the divine Thing, the Law is abolished because it can no longer render the Thing inaccessible to desire. Desire then no longer strives for the unattainable but can be invested in the wholly specific and particular. Desire turns into love. If desire in the pre-Christian world is an endless and perpetual hunt, Christian love denies this futile hunt and constitutes an insistence on the very specific and particular, an investment on the particular with an absolute value. This is the meaning of love for one's neighbour or even for one's enemy. The object of our desire is not the *perfect* or the *ideal*, so that we would constantly pursue substitutes of the Thing, abandoning the one for the other. When desire becomes love, the neighbour is the wholly contingent, any random person, whom we invest with the value of the divine Thing.

The moment of the Crucifixion, where the absence of the divine Thing is revealed, is a moment of vertiginous freedom. Žižek reformulates traditional theological visions in an arresting way via psychoanalysis. He considers the Crucifixion as the revelation of the absence of the divine Thing as a "traversing" of the fundamental fantasy, which "predestines" the subject. This means that the subject may be "re-pre-destined."[654] That is, if we consider the traditional doctrine of absolute predestination as it has been formulated e.g. from Calvin with St. Augustine as its precursor, then we could say in an original modification of their insights that this predestination is not final, but that thanks to the Crucifixion there is the possibility of a new "predestination." Thus the theological notion of predestination is adopted by Žižek in the sense that freedom is not freedom of choice in the void, but comes together with a pre-conscious fundamental fantasy. At the same time, Žižek thinks that this is a predestination that can be re-pre-destined *but not at will*, through a conscious choice. What is required for this is a "crucifixion" in the theological idiom, which, psychoanalytically, we may term deconstruction of the subject. For Žižek, the experience of "crucifixion" is not a velvety one, it is a symbolic death. "Resurrection" after "crucifixion" is for our atheist theologian not a literal physical resurrection, as in the traditional Christian faith. It is, however, a "rebirth" with the possibility of a new predestination in terms of our fundamental fantasy, which only arises when we have recovered our primordial and abysmal freedom at

[654] Kotsko, 65–69.

the crucifixion, i.e. at becoming aware of the absence of the divine Thing. Rebirth is then identified with love, which is built on desire and orients it towards the absolutely specific, unique and particular object irrespective of its value — hence the love for the humble, the sinner or even the enemy.

The authentic community of love, which has emerged after the traversing of the fundamental fantasy and the vertiginous freedom of the crucifixion as a community of the utterly unique ones that cannot belong to any community, can be likened to a particular community of psychoanalysts in the Lacanian sense or with an authentic communist collectivity. The important aspect in the community of psychoanalysts is that they themselves have passed through the stage of analysis, transfer and counter-transfer, and that is why they can be the *objet petit a* for their own analysands. We could say in a Christian idiom that this is a community where everyone is the "treasure" for his or her neighbour. The community among psychoanalysts is, according to Žižek's interpretation of Lacan, a community beyond the desire and towards the assumption of the drive. This satisfies Žižek's criteria for naming it a community of the Holy Spirit, that is, a community of the wholly unique, as it is a community based on unique relationships. Likewise, the communist community can be considered to have a similar relationship to capitalism as that of authentic Christianity to Judaism. Just as authentic Christianity is thought to be taking the momentum of the Jewish desire that is intensified by the Law and to be directing it towards love for the absolutely particular neighbour, so does the communist community assume the canalizing of desire that is a primary element of capitalism which works by substitution (i.e. by utilizing the desire of subjects and setting unattainable and constantly changing consumerist goals for them) and channels this momentum to real relationships with an emphasis on political particularity. And in the same way that we say that Christianity could not have existed if Judaism had not prepared its advent and preceded it, in a similar Marxist sense we could say that communism cannot exist unless capitalism prepares it in a dialectical manner. In both cases love is built on a dialectical modification of desire. In certain cases Žižek speaks of this communist community as if it is comprised by the ones that have been rejected by the capitalist world, by the ones who have no place in it. As a general observation, in Žižek the criterion of *exclusion* is an important criterion for asserting that we have here a real communist subject.

In all three cases the emancipatory subject is by no means historical institutional Christianity or communism or, perhaps, any institutional community of psychoanalysts. On

the contrary, historical institutional Christianity is analysed by Žižek in terms of "perversion," and we could say that Stalinism and "actually existing socialism" (including non-Stalinist forms such as Titoism, to which young Žižek was opposed) follows institutional Christianity as a perverted version of communism. Historical institutional Christianity restores the Big Other of the Symbolic. This means that not only does historical Christianity fail to capture what Žižek considers to be the great message of emancipatory atheism in Christ's cry on the Cross, but it also builds a faith in a personal God, Who is indeed articulated with the wisdom of the Graeco-Roman world. We must, of course, observe that it would be too far from Žižek's logic to point out a certain particular moment after which the alienation of Christianity began, e.g. Pauline theology, or the Hellenization of Christianity, or Constantine the Great, or the Vatican, or the Crusades, or the Holy Inquisition and so on. On the contrary, according to Žižek's logic alienation exists from the very beginning together with what is assumed as authenticity, and it is probably authenticity itself that is the exception or subtraction of an ever-existing alienation. On the other hand, I may also point out some elements that constitute the perverted core of historical institutional Christianity according to our atheist theologian. One of these is the coexistence of Christianity with the Graeco-Roman world: Christianity may have conquered the Graeco-Roman world, but ultimately it became united with it in a hybrid that retains the characteristics of the latter, such as cosmic order. Medieval Christian thinkers compose a Christianity with a certain particular cosmology where the position of man prevails in the cosmic and natural order, which constitutes a regression of Christianity to paganism. Here Žižek's critique of the Middle Ages (East and West) has certain Protestant elements, as does his theological thought in general. It is worth noting that while Žižek considers Christianity as a transcendence of Judaism, which necessarily leaves Judaism behind, at the same time he would assert that in order for a Christian to become an *authentic* Christian he or she has to be Judaized or re-Judaized, i.e. to abandon the cohabitation with paganism that was the historical fate of Christianity and to return to the Jewish roots, as some Protestant communities to some extent actually did.

The main core of historical Christianity's perversion is its sacrificial logic, which took the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross as another sacrifice among many sacrifices, repeating in its interpretation elements characteristic of paganism. Theories such as that Christ is offered as ransom to the devil for the redemption of a captive human race, or, on the contrary, to God the Father in order to satisfy His divine justice according to the teaching of Anselm of Canterbury, constitute a regression in a logic of sacrificial exchange, which is a symbolic

system with a powerful divine Big Other and with all the features that such a system has, such as false ideology and the obscene superego supplement. One could even say that Christianity became the archetype of ideology with an obscene superego supplement, followed later by Stalinism as a perverted modification of communism with the same characteristics of sacrificial logic, and so on.

It is important to understand how a "perverse" core is to be defined. Certain fundamental psychoanalytic terms are interpreted by Žižek in relation to ideology and its Big Other. In this context, the "perverse" is the one who is identified with the (presumed) desire of the Big Other.[655] The "pervert" obeys the obscene superego supplement which is defined after Žižek's interpretation of Lacan with the categorical imperative "Enjoy!" The "pervert" draws an excessive pleasure from obedience to the orders of ideology as well as a certain shame, which is but the proof of having previously experienced an excessive enjoyment. Besides, what is characteristic of ideology is its "inherent transgressions," namely the fact that ideology leads to the psychological need for transgressions which are somehow tolerated by those who participate in it. In Christianity the "pervert" is the one who follows the sadomasochism of the sacrificial interpretation of Christianity which is turned into an ideological religion hiding its subjacent emancipatory content. In a similar way, a Stalinist ideologist is identified with the symbolic Big Other and draws excessive enjoyment from the obscene superego supplement by participating in the inherent transgressions of Stalinism.

Žižek belongs to a tradition of thinking which distinguishes emphatically between the institutional religion on the one hand and a deeper emancipatory meaning or ontological reality of Christianity on the other. The service that Žižek's view offers to Christians and atheists alike is in this context multiple. Firstly, Žižek offers psychoanalytical intuitions on the "pervert" character of institutional Christianity and its evolution. It is then possible to develop an analysis of both Christianity and the cultures that have resulted from it. This is valuable for a Christian because it offers the possibility to distinguish between on the one hand some authentic elements and, on the other, its regression into paganism, the sacrificial logic, ideology and perversion. (Even though I would be more precise if I were to say that this is actually not a regression, but a novel hybrid reality).

Secondly, Žižek enables us to see how Christianity is a symptom of wider cultural evolutions, both material and psychological. In this perspective, the atheist can witness in

[655] Kotsko, 62.

Christianity the archetype of ideological alienation, which mirrors evolutions in the material and psychological conditions. Thirdly, and perhaps most distinctively, Žižek proposes Christ as an exit from ideological alienation. The event of Christ is thus more actual than ever in our ideological era. The theologian can find in Žižek's thought a version of Christ who is part of the solution and not of the problems of our post-modern world. Žižek thus offers a very distinctive Christological and theological vision. And fourthly, this vision is linked to psycho-analytical and communist collectivities in a version of contemporary soteriology which combines both communitarianism and absolute individualism in a fascinating *coincidentia oppositorum*.

In Žižek's thought, Christ is placed in the very avant-garde of modernity's program. It is true that there have been in the past thinkers who have linked modern emancipatory currents of thought to Christianity, such as Christian existentialists, thinkers following Liberation theology, etc. However, what makes Slavoj Žižek unique is the fact that he links the particularly atheist emancipatory avant-garde of modernity with Christ, for example he links atheist existentialism or communism, as well as the anti-ideological elements in psychoanalysis, with Christ. One could say that it is Slavoj Žižek who truly realizes the famous diction of Fyodor Dostoevsky "If someone proved to me that Christ is outside the truth and that in reality the truth were outside of Christ, then I should prefer to remain with Christ rather than with the truth." What in Dostoevsky is only a hypothesis aiming to prove his love for Christ through a *regressio ad absurdum* becomes something meant quite literally by Žižek, even though the latter's version would rather be "if someone proved to me that Christ is outside the existent God of theism and that in reality the existent God of theism were outside of Christ, then I should prefer to remain with Christ rather than with the existent God of theism." Or even better: "if Christ proved to me that the God of theism is outside truth and that in reality the truth were outside of the God of theism, then I should prefer to remain with Christ rather than with the God of theism." Žižek thus puts Christ at the avant-garde of emancipatory atheism and shows in a very original way how one can be an atheist together with Christ. Žižek's version of the famous diction by Saint Paul, "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22) would be "to the atheists I have become an atheist, to win the atheists."

Christ thus becomes a liberator not only from every system of oppression, as is the case in Liberation theology, but from every system *as such*, from every ideology and from

every quest for positivist knowledge, including the sort of positivist knowledge promoted by Christian theistic systems, such as for example certain forms of dogmatics or scholasticism. Thus, Christ is presented as the liberator from every dogmatism, including the dogmas about His own nature.

One could add that what Žižek realizes is a combination of the figure of Christ not only with existentialism —this was already performed by Christian existentialists— but with *properly atheist* existentialism. Žižek's Christ guarantees the absolute freedom of an absolutely singular individual —or of some version of subjectivity which would be even more singular than the individual— the absolute uniqueness and non-repeatability of such singularities, or even a sort of rebellion against the "heavens" and against any kind of metaphysical certainty. In a sense, Žižek's Christ also realizes the Nietzschean *Übermensch* not as a Superman, but as an "Overman" who has gone past man.[656] It could be said that such a Nietzschean "Overman" is in Žižek a complement of the Chalcedonian formula "fully God and fully man." In Žižek's interpretation, the divine element of Christ is the fact that he overcame man. What is more, Christ is an ally of man in his struggle against religious alienation as denounced by Ludwig Feuerbach, as well as against religion as an "opium of the people" criticized by Karl Marx. Žižek's Christ is thus present in all the emancipatory programs of modernity, especially in those which take place against religion or against the traditional God of theism. Žižek's Christ is the perpetual ally of man in his endeavour to be liberated from oppression, including the oppression he imposes upon himself in the guise of ideology and totalizing knowledge. Žižek links Christ with what is particularly human, namely the death-drive as a quest for vertiginous freedom. The fact that Christ is the universal man means that he represents the drive as such, or the human excess that this drive entails. Chalcedonian Christology is reformulated in a radical way by Žižek. The faith in the full divine and human nature of Christ is seen by Žižek in relation to the Crucifixion. The Crucifixion entails a removal of the gap between God and man (human nature), which is an internal gap inside God. God is thus reconciled with Himself and His catholicity (divine nature) is applied to humanity. Furthermore, the "community of the Spirit" constitutes a Christological combination of the two most important programs of modernity, namely communitarianism and individualism, i.e. the emphasis on the liberation of the individual in its singularity or even solitude.

[656] See Frederiek Depoortere, *Christ in Postmodern Philosophy: Gianni Vattimo, René Girard and Slavoj Žižek* (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 121.

Okay — but can Slavoj Žižek be counted among the theologians?

No (i.e. not in the *strict* sense) — and it is precisely this that renders him exceedingly interesting from a theological point of view. One may assert that a theologian is, for all intents and purposes, someone who speaks and theorizes about God and religion, but arguably one of the truly *defining* characteristics of the theologian is that she *actually believes*, that she *has faith in God*. Žižek's engagement with theological topics presents us with all the characteristics of a theologian —a theoretical discussion about God, God's nature, the Christian religion, the Christian church, even a Christology and a Pneumatology[657]— yet he explicitly lacks the very defining characteristic of a theologian: *faith*. The totality of Žižek's engagement with Christianity rests on the premise that *God does not exist*. Fortunately, it is Žižek himself who has provided us through his writings with a terminology in order to describe someone that bears all the *external* characteristics of something, but certainly without having the *defining* characteristic thereof, the one characteristic that makes it what it is: *decaf.*[658] Slavoj Žižek is a decaffeinated theologian.

To respond to our titular question anew: *yes*, Slavoj Žižek can be counted among the theologians — as an *inverted* or, more accurately, *decaffeinated* version of a theologian. And one whose insights are in many ways acutely interesting to full-caffeine theology — to a theology that, well, would assert the existence of the Christian God. For it may be the case that, so far as theology is concerned, Slavoj Žižek is, as it were, *on the outside looking in*; what he sees, however, might at times be more discerning and rich than what the intellectuals who are already "inside" are able to make out.

It is certainly the case that not everybody is convinced that such a dialogue would indeed make sense, i.e. that there is anything of actual theological significance in the dialogue between Christians and atheist theology such as Žižek's. To cite an example, one might recall

[657] The reader wishing to take a closer look at Žižek's views on the Holy Spirit beyond this analysis of Žižek's core idea of the role of the Holy Spirit as the community of those that have interiorized Christ's sacrifice, could consult Žižek's *The Parallax View* (2006), 80, 99, *The Puppet and the Dwarf* (2003), 9–10, 130, pages 28–29, 32, 61, 148, 281–83, 291–95 from Žižek's chapters in *The Monstrosity of Christ* (2009), as well as pages 55, 104, 172 from Žižek's chapters in *God in Pain: Inversions of Apocalypse* (2012).
[658] See, for example, Slavoj Žižek, "Passion in the Era of Decaffeinated Belief," in *Religion and Political Thought*, ed. Michael Hoelzl and Graham Ward (London ; New York: Continuum, 2006), 237–42.

John D. Caputo's review of the Milbank-Žižek dialogue as encapsulated in *The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic*, where Žižek is portrayed as trying to create a Trojan horse in order to sack Christianity from the inside:

> Furthermore, we all know that Žižek can very well make his main case with no mention of Christ at all, that he can use the seminars of Lacan, the films of Alfred Hitchcock or the novels of Stephen King just as well. His whole point, as he says elsewhere, is subversive: to build a Trojan-horse theology, to slip the nose of a more radical materialism under the Pauline tent of theology in order to announce the death of God. … For truth to tell, Žižek doesn't think there is a God himself who dies. Never was. The treatment is over when we realize that.[659]

My concern with this critique lies in Caputo presenting the fact that Žižek does in no way whatsoever assert the existence of God or the divinity of Christ more or less as a concealed *secret* — a secret which at the precise moment it becomes revealed renders the whole treatment and discussion redundant. This, however, could not be farther from the truth: the explicit *starting point* of Žižek's engagement with Christian theology is that the vantage point of such an engagement consists in a conscientious atheism — something, of course, which is primarily declared *to the Christians*. In our understanding, no Christian theologian would look to Žižek on Christianity with precisely the same expectations of insights *from within* the faith with which she would approach a celebrated theological thinker: *one is never served decaf by mistake*. Of course, Caputo's position is much more nuanced than what I present here — but it remains the case that the thesis that Žižek attempts to "trick the Christian out" of her Christianity is indeed its core:

> "Christ" for [Žižek] is a nickname for a way to contract the void, and the Passion story is an allegory or Vorstellung of a philosophical point he can make in any number of ways. [Žižek] discusses Christian doctrines like the Trinity, the Incarnation and the Crucifixion the way an analyst talks with a patient who thinks there is a snake under his bed, trying patiently to heal the patient by going along with the patient's illusions until the patient is led to see the illusion. Žižek agrees with Chesterton the way the analyst agrees with the patient, where the whole question is, how do we deal with this snake, as he is obviously quite large and growing larger with every day.

[659] John D. Caputo, "Review of The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic?, By Slavoj Žižek and John Milbank, Edited by Creston Davis," *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* 2009.09.33 (September 30, 2009), https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/the-monstrosity-of-christ-paradox-or-dialectic/.

> Then at some precisely timed and strategic point, the analyst softly asks, "Do you think perhaps it is something else disturbing your sleep?"[660]

Rather than the treatment coming to a conclusion, it is in our opinion precisely when Žižek sets the frame of his *atheist* theology that the discussion with caffeinated theologians may take off. The question, then, is precisely *what* a dialogue *on this basis* may bring. In an indirect response to the question concerning the possible fruits of such a "Trojan-horse" theology, allow me to digress and, adding Triadological insult to the theological injury, briefly present Slavoj Žižek's Christological and Pneumatological insights, along with taking a closer look at the influence of Alain Badiou on Žižek and at their creative engagement with the Apostle Paul as a symbol of *political* universalism.

Paul, Žižek, Badiou, the Holy Spirit, and the Cross

If Alain Badiou can be described as an "atheist theologian," Slavoj Žižek self-identifies as an "atheist Christian" in an attempt to exhaust Hegelian dialectics. His rationale is that History in the Common Era progresses through contradictions and extensions, which according (not exclusively) to Žižek have been inaugurated by Christianity as a religion constituting an exit from religion. Painting with a broad brush, I would say that a (Western rather than Orthodox) Christian Triadology, in which the Son is juxtaposed to the Father and is sacrificed on the Cross while the Spirit is the loving link between them, is the archetype of the Hegelian dialectical position of thesis, antithesis and synthesis — or, more precisely, the *Aufhebung* of the *Aufhebung*.

But it would also be an archetype of Marxist dialectics, where the position of the sacrifice of the Son can be assumed by the revolution and the position of the community of the Holy Spirit can be assumed by the classless society.

In this Triadology, the Son and Christ is not the "Right Hand of the Most High," as many Christians like to remember it, but is instead as it were the "Left of the Most High," the "Revolutionary of God," and it is up to the Spirit to constitute universality.

[660] Caputo.

Žižek's purpose is to demonstrate that the true dialectical materialist cannot but be the heir of Christian civilization, but also that the true Christian is one who through Christianity has transcended religion itself in the direction of dialectical materialism. In this reasoning, Žižek vigorously defends the Christian heritage and Paul in particular within a postmodern world of late capitalism that is turning to spirituality, alternative religions such as Zen and Buddhism, and New Age syncretism — or regresses into an apophatic (deconstructionist) Judaism without the Incarnation of the Messiah.

In referring to dialectics, I refer to an understanding in which concepts are not static and self-defined but rather opposed to one another in a dynamic motion, in which a third sublates both of them at once and transforms them into a continuum at a higher level. Being, for example, cannot be defined *by itself*, but only in contrast to non-being, while both are sublated but also made complete in the *becoming*. In this, Žižek follows dialectical thinking to its most extreme paradoxes. What is particularly striking is that he contemplates the history of Judaism and Christianity, and Paul par excellence, with an acutely piercing and discerning psychoanalytic gaze and connects them to the modern realities of capitalism and communism as well as psychoanalysis itself — all these seen as generated from the Christian heritage through a historical dialectical itinerary.

It is Žižek's insistence on dialectics that opposes him, as noted earlier, to (his otherwise comrade, philosophically and otherwise) Alain Badiou, who paints an anti-dialectical portrait of Paul.[661] In theological terms, Badiou is a "theologian of the Resurrection," while Žižek a "theologian of the Crucifixion" — since dialectics emphasizes the inherent need for the Crucificial sacrifice for the advent of the Resurrection and the Pentecost of the Spirit. Despite his "heretical" interpretation of Christianity as a religion with a perverse core, Žižek is a valuable interlocutor for theologians, as he focuses on how Paul's Christianity is a way out of the "Judaism" of globalized capitalism in towards a new "communism" of love (one that would be different, of course, from "actually existing socialism").

In his analysis of Paul, Žižek follows a number of insights by Badiou and especially Agamben, who is more dialectical, and incorporates them into a kind of Hegelian dialectical process.[662] In Badiou we encounter the wholeness ("Greek"), the part and exception ("Jew"),

[661] See Badiou, *Saint Paul*.
[662] Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf*, 108–112; 129–133.

and the subtraction (*soustraction*) of the universal from them both (the Christian fidelity to the *event*). In Agamben we encounter the triad of *whole*, *part*, and *residue* as a non-non (the Christian: non-non-Greek and non-non-Jewish). Žižek reformulates this with the help of the Hegelian paradox of a *genus* that has only one species, whereas the residue that remains is the very universality of the *genus*. In a way, Žižek intends to maintain both a concept of universality along the lines of Badiou and a concept of residue along the lines of Agamben. Thus we encounter a triad of *genus*, *species* and *residue* in which the latter ultimately assumes the nature of a universal genus.

This takes place within a dialectical movement. An initial universality is introduced. Its species may act as "the disgraceful," "the abhorrent." Žižek observes playfully that usually, when we refer to something as "special," this is because of its abhorrent nature — for example when we refer to "special measures" in state repression, or to "special conditions," and so on.

Ultimately, the residue forms an excess which helps the *genus* to reflectively find its own self within its species, in accordance with Hegelian dialectic. Following the (by now familiar) switch from Paul's time to ours, Žižek employs the conclusions of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri who analyzed the new order of globalized capitalism in terms of "empire" — precisely such as, as it happens, the Roman empire.[663] However, he also links those conclusions and tools to the thought of Ernesto Laclau and Jacques Rancière, according to whom the only truly democratic subject is the *residue*, i.e. that element of the Whole that does not have the particular characteristics that would grant it a place within the Whole, thus being temporary excluded.

By not being able to assume a certain ontic position, this residue becomes an ontological embodiment of universality. In other words, when each particular group asserts its particular interests, only the excluded are those who may embody universality. We may recall here the term *égaliberté* (liberty/liberté and equality/égalité together) of Etienne Balibar, which can only be embodied by the "non-existents," the "nobodies" such as the *liumang* (tramps) of modern feudal-capitalist China, who, by not participating in any existing class, "are displaced, and float freely, lacking work-and-residence, but also cultural or sexual, identity and registration."[664] It is with such a notion of reflective dialectical incarnation of

[663] See Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).
[664] Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf*, 64–65.

universality within the residue that we can understand Paul's dictum: "God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are" (1 Cor 1:28).

Žižek adds a dimension that is not stressed adequately in the two thinkers at hand, namely that this community of the non-existents is the community of the Holy Spirit. I will need to develop here Žižek's dialectical Triadology in its relevance to the capitalist context and psychoanalysis. If, according to Sigmund Freud, God the Father is the slain archaic father, for Žižek He is the absent Father who resembles the Thing of Lacanian psychoanalysis — that is, as we have said, that which remains unsymbolized and ineffable. We are here in the terrain of Judaism, which, with the terminology of Lacanian psychoanalysis, is based on the contrast of the Real and the Symbolic.

In referring to the "Symbolic" I am primarily referring to the Judaic Law, which, with the great detail of its provisions, is always lifting up obstacles and curtains in order to hide an unsymbolizable and uniconizable God such as the iconoclastic God of Judaism. St. Paul, however, in a spectacular psychoanalytic (*avant la lettre*) insight reveals that desire is caused by the Law (just like sin). Judaism is, therefore, the religion of desire, where the Symbolic, which in the form of the Law conceals an uniconizable God "behind a curtain," as it were, intensifies our desire indefinitely and establishes the subject itself as the desiring subject.

Thus we arrive at the Žižekian interpretation of Pauline Christology,[665] a Christology that can be extended beyond Paul as well.[666] In Christian soteriology there are two primary ways of contemplating salvation. The first and more Eastern one consists in seeing it as divinization, as *theosis*. The second and more Western one is to see salvation as a path towards the perfect man. Žižek conjoins the two, however in a rather "downward" direction. That is, according to Žižek Christ is God *precisely in the sense that He embodies what is particularly human*: the excess in nature, that which is rejected from the natural world. We are situated here within a Hegelian Triadology, where everything that is the case in the relationship between God and man applies to the *interior* of God. The fact that Christ embodies the chasm between man and nature is identified with the chasm between God and man, but also between Father and Son. In contrast, however, with every individual human person, Christ fully embodies the rejected excess from nature that is humanity. It is for this

[665] Žižek, 80–82.
[666] See also Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute*. and Žižek, *On Belief*.

reason that he is the human person *par excellence* (the *ecce homo* of Pontius Pilate), but also the "man without qualities" (the latter Christological title is derived from Robert Musil's homonymous novel, which reminds us of the dogmatic position —of a pending status within theology— that the human nature assumed by Christ is universal and "without properties"). This is why Christ is also the *Übermensch* in the Nietzschean sense of the term. Ultimately, Christianity is for Žižek the religion of revelation because Christ reveals the death of the divine Thing. This is particularly the case in the cry of God's abandonment on the Cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

The result is that Judaism is left behind as a religion based on desire seen as the dialectical contrast between Real (the uniconizable God the Father) and Symbolic (the Law) because, according to Žižek, of the revelation of the divine Thing's absence, which is defined by Žižek as the traversing of the fantasy. In Hegelian terms, Christ is the second part of a dialectical triad, a part that disappears (through the Crucifixion, but I would add to this the Ascension as well), so that the Spirit may enter the equation as the third term of the dialectical triad.

The Spirit is the constitution of the community of the "non-existents," the "non-beings" who have interiorized the sacrifice of Christ and have made the transition from the the religion of the Law and desire to the religion of love.

What exactly does this mean? Alain Badiou underscores an absolute (non-dialectical) contrast between Law and love, as does Christos Yannaras,[667] among others. Žižek, on the contrary, seems to contemplate love dialectically as opposed, of course, to the Law, yet in the sense that it results from an extreme absolutization and radicalization of the Law. For example, if the Law encourages you not to commit adultery, Christianity urges you not to commit adultery *even "in the heart."* Love is, as it were, a subversion of the Law by extending the Law to its most extreme consequences.

To this, however, the following should be added. The fading away of Judaism as a religion of the Law and desire (which are mutually supported by their antitheses) means that love has arrived as a focus on the absolutely particular that is the neighbour. In psychoanalytic terms, Judaism is based on the omnipotent desire which is metonymic, i.e. it

[667]Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality*.

flows infinitely from one object to another. Christianity, on the contrary, is founded on love as a drive (*Trieb*) that is addressed in a perpetually circular motion to a particular object.

Why Paul, then? Because today's globalized capitalism relies on a planetary predominance of desire as metonymy, according to which we are called to turn our attention to an endless hunt for shifting objects–commodities where this desire is invested. For capitalism, in a sense, sprang out of the quasi-neo-Judaizing roots of Protestantism. Today, Žižek is sceptical of neo-Judaizing theologies such as, for example, the deconstructionist philosophy of the (early) Jacques Derrida, which are compatible with capitalism rather than subversive of it. Against these, Pauline Christianity offers love as a non-negotiable focus on the absolutely particular neighbour. A love that is by definition violent, not so much because of its unwanted potential side effects, but in its very act of giving absolute value to the neighbour. In this sense, Žižek approaches Christian love as a kind of communism or socialism which, however, is not to be identified with "actually existing socialism." Rather than that it is the community of the excluded who interiorize the sacrifice of Christ: the community of the Holy Spirit.

The world's most interesting heretic

To say that an atheist theologian such as Slavoj Žižek is, when considered from the perspective of historical orthodox Christianity, a "heretic" would be a redundant tautology which of itself brings little to the discussion. Such a proclamation, taken by itself, would be liable to give the impression that the one proclaiming it has not quite understood the context of the discussion and is at a certain dissonance with it, "not getting it," as one might say.

However, in Slavoj Žižek's case there are more, and more interesting, sides to considering him as a "heretic" — as a number of his intuitions and insights (from an external point of view as these might be) on the Christian God are based on premises that are readily identified in certain heresies of early Christianity, articulated at the time by people who did

not, of course, consider themselves as atheist theologians, but whose confessions ended in their clash with the ecclesial community of the faithful and their exile from it. The fact that those same theological premises, particularly so far as the intra-Trinitarian relationships are concerned, appear in the 21st century in the work of atheist theologian Slavoj Žižek is, in our opinion, a particularly delicious coincidence or conjunction.

Anyone well-versed in the study of heresy (heresiology), which is also a favorite pastime of the Orthodox, can recognize in Žižek's thought a series of heresies of the early Church, which may be applied to Hegel as well. Sabellianism, theopassianism or patripassianism, supersessionism, epochalism, the heresy of the Son's Fatherhood (υἱοπατορία), are only some of the names of interrelated Christian historical heresies with which one could compare this extreme form of dialectical thought.[668] (It is certainly the case, however, that other non- Žižekian forms of dialectical theology may be both orthodox and Orthodox).

Our main point is that Žižekian thought is indirectly derived from forms of theology and Triadology in which it is not only the case that the divine Persons are contrasted (rather than just being related, as is the case with the Cappadocians), but also that the One disappears for the Other to come forth — as would be the case in the heresy of epochalism, in which history is divided into the ages and epochs of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit. And also in the heretical doctrine of the Fatherhood of the Son (υἱοπατορία), where the sacrifice of the Son is inherently related to the death or disappearance of the Father (with the Žižekian addendum of the Son's death which is interiorized thanks to the Spirit).

To blame Žižek as a heretic is, of course, a futile enterprise, as one would be essentially preaching to the already converted, if not to the choir — no one is contesting Žižek's *un*orthodoxy. After all, it is he himself who has led dialectical thought to such a paradoxical form as to contend that only the heretic or even more so the *atheist* may embody today the truth of Christianity as a "Pauline materialism." In fact, he asserts that Paul himself is not only a new Moses, but also a "new Judas the Iscariot," namely a persecutor of the apostolic community who instead of committing suicide, repented and took the vacant position of Judas in order to "betray" the historical Jesus (of the micro-historical narrative) once more, so that through the interpretational "betrayal" the Christ of faith may emerge.

[668] See the acutely accurate critique of Frederiek Depoortere in *Christ in Postmodern Philosophy,* 139–41.

Furthermore, the fact that Žižek's conceptualization of the Trinity is readily recognized in a number of the heresies of the early Church should not, of course, render a Christian theologian unwilling to engage with the Lacanian heretic's thought, thinking that there is nothing of value therein — quite the contrary: the Christian should never forget that it is precisely in engagement with and contrast to "heresy," however defined, that the church's doctrinal formulations are actually articulated, that the church's testimony takes shape.

It is perhaps the case that a cultural relevance greater than that of heresiology, which Žižek himself would celebrate, lies in the observation that Žižek is born out of a Western Cross-centric mode of thinking, according to which the Incarnation of God the *Logos* is more or less identical to an "Indeathening," in which salvation emerges almost automatically as a result of the Crucifixion so that we do not have to wait for the Resurrection — and in which our salvation does not consist in being deified (*theosis*) but in becoming "perfect" human beings (either in the sense of a moral superhuman or in the sense of a Nietzschean *Übermensch*, as is the case in Žižek). The question, then, of Paul's timeliness for the atheists of today, seems to turn into a question of Žižek's timeliness for the Christians of today, and for Orthodox Christians at that. Our answer is that on the one hand he offers an acutely perceptive psychoanalytic probe into the history of a Christianity —mainly in its Western version— that is globalized today and is particularly relevant to the peoples of Southeast Europe (let it be remembered that Žižek comes from Slovenia, the very border between East and West). Žižek is, therefore, a valuable interlocutor in the *a contrario* articulation of orthodox (and Orthodox) dialectical thought, such as the version based on Maximus the Confessor's triad of *logos – tropos – telos.* And, on the other hand, Žižek offers a very moving vision in our contemporary context: the vision of a community of the Holy Spirit comprised of the "non-beings," a community that breaks free from the perpetuation of capitalist desire, which circulates incessantly from one commodity to the other, in favour of a violent love for the concrete neighbour.

Three detours to a straight line

What does all this matter for our inquiry? If anything, this shows that a consideration of the centrality of "Christian religion" (to deliberately misconstrue) to the *social* and the

political in a *subversive* direction —and, what is more, as a motion *not* emerging out of the community of the believers— may have a rightful claim to being contemporary West's *avant-garde* rather than a religious regression to a pre-modern misery prior to the advent of the angel of secularism.

A *refusal* to even consider engaging with ideas such as Yannaras' and Ziakas' in such a context cannot but face the rightful suspicion that what we have here is, again, a form of Orientalism: a Westerner may engage with the ecclesial experience as a *social* and *political* phenomenon and be subversive, postmodern, *avant-garde*; but if a Greek does precisely the same thing, then this is presented as a regression to pre-modern states, an inability to be in synch with the modern world, a desire to turn Greece into Byzantium or "a theocratic Iran" — and so on. To elaborating on Žižek's atheist (political) theology is to lay those double standards bare — and this is a digression worth taking.

The responses to the research questions at the core of this chapter have already been partly and implicitly articulated through these three "digressions" together with the explication of the *logic* of critical geopolitics: the coordinates *imply* the answers, getting the territory right is a map half done. Our digressions were not truly *digressions*, then: they imply the *context* in which the theories in question are to be examined comparatively, their proper interlocutors. But let us return to a *direct* confrontation with our subject at hand.

Occidentalism?

This study is premised on the diagnosis of "Greek Neo-Orientalism": could it be the case that the counter-paradigm located in our subversive Orthodoxies may be accurately named "Occidentalism," in inverse reflection of this (Greek neo-)"Orientalism"?

"Occidentalism" seems to be a term that is defined in numerous different ways by the scholars that employ it. Here I shall focus on three different conceptions of Occidentalism: the one described by Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit in their eponymous book, the one proposed by Michael Herzfeld (with a reference to Couze Venn), and a proposed inversion of

a particular aspect of Said's Orientalism. According to the first definition, Yannaras and Ziakas are certainly *not* Occidentalists; according to the second definition, it is the Neo-Orientalists that are, in actuality, Occidentalists; and according to the third definition, Yannaras and Ziakas may be indeed considered as Occidentalists, and rightfully so.

First Occidentalism: Enemies of the West

Let us start with Buruma's and Margalit's conceptualisation of Occidentalism. In the very title of their book, they define Occidentalism by describing it as "the West in the Eyes of its Enemies"; the book was written in the echo of the 9/11 attacks and jihad's wish to annihilate Western civilisation. Thus, Occidentalism is something related to self-professed and violent *enemies* of the West (not, as in our case, to self-professed *Westerners* engaging in internal critique such as Yannaras and Ziakas, in par with, for example, Stanley Hauerwas and John Milbank).

Apart from defining Occidentalism as a trait of the West's *enemies*, Buruma and Margalit engage in a quite pugnacious presentation of their case (e.g., "the Occidentalist view of the city, of capitalism, and of Western 'machine civilization' [is] the soulless whore as a greedy automaton"[669]). The premise of the book is that it does not consist merely in a distanced scholarly analysis, but in political gesture with the aim of saving humanity from those that threaten it: "To understand [Occidentalism] is not to excuse, just as to forgive is not to forget, but without understanding those who hate the West we cannot hope to stop them from destroying humanity."[670]

To cite an example, the book begins with a not-so-implicit association of (as the rest of that book will demonstrate) *any* discussion on what lies *after* modernity with military action against "the West": "in July 1942, just seven months after the Japanese bombed the American fleet in Pearl Harbor and overwhelmed the Western powers in Southeast Asia, a number of distinguished Japanese scholars and intellectuals gathered fora conference in Kyoto. Some were literati of the so-called Romantic Group; others were philosophers of the

[669] Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies*, 4. printing (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 19.
[670] Buruma and Margalit, 12.

Buddhist/Hegelian Kyoto School. Their topic of discussion was 'how to overcome the modern'."[671] In a variation of Godwin's law, topics of discussion such as "how to overcome the modern" have a (causal?) relation to the Japanese attacking Pearl Harbour. But even if Buruma and Margalit formulate their argument[672] in a pugnacious tone, what they refer to *is indeed* the discourse(s) of "the enemies of the West": again referring to the previous 1942 Japanese conference, "all agreed that culture —that is, traditional Japanese culture— was spiritual and profound, whereas modern Western civilization was shallow, rootless, and destructive of creative power. The West, particularly the United States, was coldly mechanical. A holistic, traditional Orient united under divine Japanese imperial rule would restore the warm organic community to spiritual health."[673] Buruma and Margalit describe a *loathing*, and it is *loathing* that forms the main trait of Occidentalism, not critical discourses: "The loathing of everything people associate with the Western world, exemplified by America, is still strong, though no longer primarily in Japan. It attracts radical Muslims to a politicized Islamic ideology in which the United States features as the devil incarnate."[674] The very definition of Occidentalism in Buruma and Margalit is that it strips Westerners of their human nature: "The dehumanizing picture of the West painted by its enemies is what we have called Occidentalism."[675] In further elaboration:

> The view of the West in Occidentalism is like the worst aspects of its counterpart, Orientalism, which strips its human targets of their humanity. Some Orientalist prejudices made non-Western people seem less than fully adult human beings; they had the minds of children, and could thus be treated as lesser breeds. Occidentalism is at least as reductive; its bigotry simply turns the Orientalist view upside down. To diminish an entire society or a civilization to a mass of soulless, decadent, money-grubbing, rootless, faithless, unfeeling parasites is a form of intellectual destruction.[676]

[671] Buruma and Margalit, 1.
[672] The book sets out to underscore the historical roots and causes of Occidentalism, but it is doubtful that its historical accuracy can be asserted. For example, the authors claim that "one of the most significant events in Russian history is the conversion to Christianity of the kingdom of Kiev at the time of Vladimir. Refusing to adopt Roman Catholicism, Vladimir converted to the Greek Orthodox version of Christianity in 988." Buruma and Margalit, 82–83. Of course, in 988 *there was neither Roman Catholicism nor Greek (sic) Orthodoxy*, since the Great Schism of the then undivided Christian church would only happen in the next millennium, and such an anachronistic terminology is, historically, thoroughly misleading. This is not the only such occurrence in the book.
[673] Buruma and Margalit, 3.
[674] Buruma and Margalit, 4.
[675] Buruma and Margalit, 5.
[676] Buruma and Margalit, 10.

Ergo, given that all this is the case, an Occidentalism such as the one described by Buruma and Margalit has no contact point to our object of inquiry and can in no way de employed to describe it. Buruma's and Margalit's Occidentalism refers more to jihadist suicide bombers and the discourses around them than to Westerners engaging in an internal critique of the West (such as Yannaras, Milbank, Ziakas, or Hauerwas). The threat of destroying humanity due to a hatred against the West[677] is not coming from those quarters anytime soon.

Second Occidentalism: Greek Neo-Orientalism

Another way of defining Occidentalism is to see it as a variation of Westernism rather than as an inversion of Orientalism. James Carrier defines Occidentalism as "stylized images of the West,"[678] but he also describes Michael Herzfeld's paper on Greece in the same volume —thus incorporating it in his own definition— as follows:

> As Herzfeld shows, Greece is unusual because mundane elements of life are frequently seen as reflecting Turkish influence, and hence are oriental. At the same time, Greece claims to be the heir to Hellenism, the very source of the occidental. However, a growing number of Greeks are rejecting elements of their Turkish cultural heritage of the past several centuries, and replacing them with elements that mimic the West. The genuinely local and oriental, then, is being replaced by the alien and occidental, which itself is being redefined as traditional because it reflects Hellenism. This is not some spontaneous, pan-Grecian movement, for it is the Greek elite who promulgate a Hellenist and Occidentalist construction of the country, and it is they who justify their ascendancy by pointing to their own Hellenized selves.[679]

Thus "Greek bourgeois identity," having incorporated a *metakenosis* understanding of Hellenism (as first propounded by Adamantios Korais, seen as the progenitor of the "reformist camp" in War of Independence-era Greece in the context of the cultural dualism discourse) sees what derives from the West as the truly local and indigenous since it is

[677] Buruma and Margalit, 12.
[678] Introduction in James G. Carrier, ed., *Occidentalism: Images of the West* (Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1995), 1.
[679] Introduction in Carrier, 23.

indirectly "Hellenic," i.e. Western, while also discarding what is actually indigenous as foreign, of Ottoman influence. In Herzfeld's words:

> Stereotypes are both instrument and symbol of hegemony, as they flood the hidden corners of everyday awareness. Like a barium enema, they brightly outline the cultural indigestion of which the national patient so bitterly complains. It is in this sense that I suggest as a parallel and complement to "practical Orientalism" the equally grounded phenomenon of "practical Occidentalism." We must look, not only at the discourse of European identity that so pervades the Greek national media, but also at its less verbally explicit but equally pragmatic reception in the consumerist world that is so central to Greece today. For if some self-appointed critics from the West today decry the consumerism they see in the streets of Athens (or, more horrifically yet, of the villages), their stance is just the latest in a series of attacks designed to castigate the Greeks for living up to the standard so arbitrarily imposed on them from outside. These attacks keep the Greeks in their appointed place on the margins of Europe, even while imposing an economic regime under which it is hard to imagine the Greeks being able to do otherwise. The purchasing of goods clearly marked as "Western" —whether "European" or "American"— represents a striving for cultural purity that conflicts with indigenous concepts of intimacy and everyday-ness (*kathimerinotita*). [680] … For Occidentalizing Greeks, a cultural continuum links the traditional with the modern, a necessary step on the return road to cultural Eden, and places *both* in opposition to the evil intrusiveness, the un-Greek impurity, represented by the infidel Turks and their influence. For those Greeks who have not yet unlearned the imposed lessons of Enlightenment Hellenism, "the West" is the Greek tradition. The logic is exactly that whereby, two centuries ago, puristic linguists imported French and German syntactical structures into their so-called 'pure' Greek language, and whereby bourgeois townsfolk imitated —and bourgeois villagers now imitate— the canons of West European architectural style, once neoclassical and today starkly modernist, in preference to other models that too strongly recall the East. If the artisans whose job it is to preserve and rebuild tradition say it is traditional, then traditional it is. [681]

In many ways, this is precisely the opposite of the ideas propounded by the "Neo-Orthodox current" as a whole (and by what has been dubbed "the underdog camp" as a whole) and could be seen as part *their* criticism to the "reformist camp," as well as the reflection of Greek Neo-Orientalism on the everyday life of Greek society (i.e., Greek Neo-

[680] Michael Herzfeld, "Hellenism and Occidentalism: The Permutations of Performance in Greek Bourgeois Identity," in *Occidentalism: Images of the West*, ed. James G. Carrier (Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1995), 222.
[681] Herzfeld, 229.

Orientalism would be the equivalent in political discourse of what Herzfeld's Occidentalism is in Greek everyday life, particularly of the middle class and upwards). Herzfeld is not alone in describing Occidentalism along such lines; for example, according to Couze Venn "[Occidentalism] relates to the process of the becoming-West of Europe and the becoming-modern of the world" [682]; rather than the gaze of the enemies of the West, such as in Buruma and Margalit, it consists in the very process of Westernisation and modernisation — and its triumphalist discourses: "Occidentalism refers at once to the space of intelligibility of a triumphalist modernity and to the genealogy of the present as a history of the transformations that have in the course of time instituted the forms of sociality and the lifeworlds that inscribe Occidentalism."[683] Neither will this definition aid us in seeing subversive Orthodoxies as Occidentalising: rather than that, the "underdogs" are seen (by Greek Neo-Orientalists) as the very obstacle to Occidentalism thus understood.

Third Occidentalism: the West as a mode of being

There is, however, a definition with which Yannaras and Ziakas could fall under the umbrella of Occidentalism. This would be an inversion of one of Said's Orientalism crucial points, i.e. that of *imagining* the "Orient." Referring to the Balkans, Fleming reminds us of Said's *caveat* as follows: "Said has alerted us to the fact that the 'Orient' is less an actual place than a frame of mind, and he defines it in fact not as a territory but as a mode of thought. But this does *not* mean that more or less any place can be de facto Oriental. Said writes, 'The Orient that appears in Orientalism, then, is a system of representations' (*Orientalism*, 202-03). It is precisely this dimension of his work that has led to such widespread use (and abuse) of his interpretive model across a wide array of disciplines and fields, among them those concerned with the Balkans."[684] In our particular concern with the Balkans' Greece, the clarification that the "Orient" is "less an actual place than a frame of mind," "not a territory but a mode of thought" is particularly relevant. In inverting this and

[682] Couze Venn, *Occidentalism: Modernity and Subjectivity*, Theory, Culture & Society (London ;aThousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications, 2000), 8.
[683] Venn, 8.
[684] Fleming, "Orientalism, the Balkans, and Balkan Historiography," 1230.

imagining the "Occident" instead, we arrive at a definition of Occidentalism that would apply to Yannaras and Ziakas.

As a matter of fact, both thinkers in question would readily subscribe to the declaration that their West is "less an actual place than a frame of mind," "not a territory but a mode of thought." Yannaras studiously translates the cultural/civilisational difference he proposes as a difference in *mode of existence* rather than a concrete geography or polity. His "West" is precisely a frame of mind rather than an actual place, a mode of thought rather than a territory — although "mind" and "thought" should be taken here in their wider, expanded sense, since Yannaras would not refer to conscious processes, but to an implicit, pre-conscious mentality and, more importantly, mode of activity. Ziakas theorizes on civilizational stages that progress in semi-cyclical rotation, "the West" having actualised in its long history almost every one of those stages (save the prosopocentric one) and being today merely one instance of a transition stage (individualism-towards-nigilism) in this grand scale of civilizational evolution. Thus, it is neither for him that the West —in which contemporary Greece is decisively included— is a place or a territory: it relates to an anthropological/civilizational *mode*, and more accurately not even to a particular one, but to a succession of different anthropological/civilizational *modes*. Thus, using this particular definition of ours, Yannaras and Ziakas may be designated as Occidentalists; however, in our opinion this would not be a recommendable terminology precisely due to the polyphony concerning the meaning that "Occidentalism" as a notion bears or should bear, as has been demonstrated in the three cases above.

Geographies of u-topia: on the spatiality of non-places

Continuing our examination of (the absence of a) political geography in "Neo-Orthodox" thinkers Yannaras and Ziakas,[685] I shall comment on three territories: the territory of "the West," the territory of Byzantium, and the territory of Greece. Following this, and

[685] Given that a hopefully comprehensive *introduction* to their thought has been provided in previous chapters dedicated to their thought and drawing from their writings, in the present chapter I am building on those introductions and examinations: my recapitulation and observations will be based on the preceding chapters rather than on a further inquiry into their works. Thus, pointing to book-and-page among Yannaras' and Ziakas' bibliography shall be kept here to a minimum.

given that in the authors examined *these territories are u-topias*, i.e. geographies that do not exist, I will inquire on whether these authors are indeed proper *objects* of study for critical geopolitics — or, possibly, its potential *subjects.*

The territory of the West (and of the East)

Bringing to mind our presentation of the thought of Yannaras and Ziakas in previous chapters, the reader may recall that neither "the West" nor "the East" are *geographies, actual places*. Whereas "the West" plays a central role as a concept, particularly in Yannaras' thought, this is not juxtaposed to any "East." There is no "East" in Yannaras, and Ziakas refers to the "East" either only in the context of *other thinkers'* references to "our own East" (ἡ καθ' ἡμᾶς Ἀνατολή) —i.e. a geographical space that is neither "the West" as "Western" states understand it nor "the East" proper, be it the Near East, the Middle East or the Far East— or in referring to the "Far East," to "eastern" peoples that are collectivist in nature and prone to despotic regimes.

Thus, for a start, "the West" is not a place juxtaposed to an "East" in either of our authors. "The West" itself is, as we examined, more of a *cultural/civilisational* concept. Both authors —who explicitly consider themselves as Westerners— see "the West" as the historical development of the civilisational paradigm inaugurated by the new peoples of Western Europe after the fall of Rome in the fifth century, eventually leading to today's "globalised" paradigm. In Ziakas, "the West" has assumed in its history each and every one of the anthropological and civilisational types he describes (except of the prosopocentric one) and is currently the globalised paradigm of an individualism that is sliding off in its deterioration as nihilism. In Yannaras, "the West" is a cultural mode, having a particular understanding of *ratio*, the priority of efficacy and utilitarianism at its core — a mode that is described as historically emerging in contradistinction to the Byzantine Empire. However, this "Western mode" is fluid and not localised: Yannaras himself is a Westerner, and there are elements of "West" as well as of "non-West" everywhere: the particular designation of "the West" is employed because Yannaras sees the historical roots of this *mode* in the new predicament of Europe after the fall of Rome, not necessarily due to a current geographical spatiality. Thus, "the West" is for our authors a *dys-topic u-topia*: it is the cultural and

civilisational paradigm they articulate their proposal (from within and) against, yet it is still non-spatial, essentially a-territorial; *"the West" is not a place.*

The territory of Byzantium

Could it be that Byzantium, the Eastern Roman Empire, is the territory proper, the *geographical* territory of Hellenism — together with all the irredentism that this would imply? Could it be that, while "the West" is *everywhere*, *true* Hellenism-as-Byzantium was *somewhere* during the reign of the Byzantine empire? Be that as it may, neither this is the case. Apart from our authors in particular, this would be hardly a tenable position itself, as *geographically* the Byzantine empire, the Eastern Roman empire as current scholarship prefers to name it (together with its own historical self-designation), was in constant flux during the vertiginous 1.123 years of its existence; its frontiers and borders, to the extent that we may refer to such things, were constantly changing. Even the geographical "core" of that empire for most of its history, i.e. Asia Minor, today's Greece and Constantinople, was not within Byzantine territory for a number of its later centuries.

Not only are our authors aware of this fluidity, but they also often underscore how even during the times of the Byzantine empire, being under the civilisational/cultural influence of the empire (and, thus, a bearer of what our authors now use the term "Hellenism" for) *did not require actually finding oneself within its territory*[686] — Saint John the Damascene (675/676–749) was, as conveniently indicated by his name, *a Damascene*, born and raised in the caliphate of Damascus. Never a subject of the Eastern Roman empire, some sources describe him as having served in the administration of the Muslim caliph of Damascus in his early years. At the same time, he is seen by our authors as one of the prime representatives of the culture they look up to, and that not *in spite of* never being "Byzantine" in terms of territory and "citizenship" as we would say today, but *precisely because of* such a-territoriality, demonstrating according to our authors the extent to which their object of inquiry are existential/civilisational *modes* (for Yannaras) and anthropological/societal

[686] For example, Yannaras stresses that repeatedly in his *Cultural Diplomacy*, passim.

types/stages (for Ziakas). Thus it is neither in Byzantium that we may find the territoriality that would aid us in approaching Yannaras and Ziakas as geopolitical thinkers.

The territory of Greece: unholy land

One cannot but remain with the hope that our authors assert the territoriality, the geographical spatiality of their own nation-state, of their own country — were one to believe the portrayal of all "underdogs" by the "reformists," of their *holy land*, Greece. However, the contrary seems to be the case: Greece as a country seems to be, veritably, an *un*-holy land.

Ziakas' critical stance towards Greece as a *state*, as an aggregate of state institutions, has been described in the relevant chapter; the extent to which Yannaras de-territorialises Greece is notable, as this forms a central aspect of his thought. For example, in a memoir he juxtaposes the decisively un-Greek state of Greece to his de-territorialised *boundless/undefined/abstract Greece*,[687] ἀόριστη Ἑλλάδα, a "Greece" that is not a place but a mode.

In a recent collection of 2014's weekly feuilletons, the designation of Greece as an *un*-holy land (rather than merely a less-than-ideal country) will be made explicit: there, Greece is named the "site of the unfamiliar/unsuitable/improper mode,[688] τόπος τοῦ ἀνοίκειου τρόπου, thus spelling out the incompatibility of not merely the *state* of Greece (which would in such a case be conceived as being "on" Greece, "on" Greece's territory yet not identical with it), but of the very *site*/geography/spatiality of Greece with his proposed Hellenic *mode*. It is the τόπος itself, the very *locus*, place and territory, that fleshes out this incompatibility. Even when Yannaras proposes a cultural diplomacy to the Greek state,[689] this is a cultural diplomacy that does not invest on *today's* Greece or to an invocation of a long-bygone classical heritage, but relies on his conception of a Hellenic civilisational *mode*.[690]

[687] Christos Yannaras, *Ἀόριστη Ἑλλάδα: Κονσέρτο Γιὰ Δυὸ Ἀποδημίες [Boundless/Undefined/Abstract Greece: A Concert for Two Journeys]* (Athens: Ianos, 2016).
[688] Christos Yannaras, *Τόπος Τοῦ Ἀνοίκειου Τρόπου: Ἡ Ἑλλάδα Τοῦ 2014 [Site of the Unfamiliar/ Unsuitable/ Improper Mode: Greece in 2014]* (Athens: Ianos, 2015).
[689] Yannaras, *Cultural Diplomacy*.
[690] This is, in a sense, comparable to Emmanuel Macron's strategy on France, since France is indulging in IR by projecting an importance of itself in international diplomacy that is not based on a preeminence —economic,

With Greece as an *un*-holy land rather than as a "sacred geography," we are left with nothing purely geographical which Yannaras and Ziakas would imbue with political (or national) meaning and content — no *object* for critical geopolitics. Could it be, however, that Yannaras and Ziakas may be approached as *subjects* of critical geopolitics, as thinkers that are unknowingly invested in what could be labelled as a project of,, implicitly, critical geopolitics?

Objects or subject of critical geopolitics?

Critical geopolitics' response to the (rhetorical?) question "who dictates geopolitics" is: *statecraft*, intellectuals of statecraft. Ó Tuathail remarks that "geopolitics can be described as problem-solving theory for the conceptualization and practice of statecraft. ... [It] sees itself as an instrumental form of knowledge and rationality. It takes the existing power structures for granted and works within these to provide conceptualization and advice to foreign policy decision-makers."[691] Geopolitics operates within *existing* power structures and re-conceptualises geography to the ends of policy: "geopolitics is of the same ilk as political realism, distinguishing itself by its proclivity to find 'geography' as a singularly important element in foreign policy conceptualization and practice."[692] The human subjects indulging in this are intellectuals of statecraft, i.e. the community of "state bureaucrats, leaders, foreign-policy experts, and advisors throughout the world who comment upon, influence, and conduct the activities of statecraft."[693] To cite a non-Greek example of conceptualisations by intellectuals of statecraft for comparison, a European example would indicate how EU statecraft promotes, for instance a fourfold conceptualisation of Europe *as a security*

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demographic, militaristic, colonial, or otherwise— that the country *currently* has, but on the basis of the preeminence and importance it *had* in a past that is no longer the case. Surprisingly, this strategy is not without its fruits, as was demonstrated in the April 2018 diplomatic "upgrading" of France and Emmanuel Macron (through his state visit to the USA on 23-25 April 2018) together with a "downgrading" of Germany and Angela Merkel (in an informal meeting on 27 April 2018) in the context of how the USA relates to them via their president.

[691] Ó Tuathail, "Understanding Critical Geopolitics," 107.

[692] Ó Tuathail, 107.

[693] Ó Tuathail and Agnew, "Geopolitics and Discourse," 193. For a more comprehensive treatment, see Mathew Coleman, "Intellectuals of Statecraft," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Critical Geopolitics*, ed. Klaus Dodds, Merje Kuus, and Joanne P. Sharp (Farnham, Surrey, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 493–508.

community, as an upholder of democratic values, as a political project and *as a cultural space*.[694]

Whereas considering thinkers such as Yannaras and Ziakas as "intellectuals of statecraft" would be downright impossible, the same cannot be said of "cultural dualism" intellectuals. In the first chapter of the present study, a number of intellectuals were named that explicitly endorse and publicly propagate the "cultural dualism" narrative: among them, indicatively, Nikiforos Diamandouros, Theodore Couloumbis, Thanos Veremis — national and European ombudsman as well as fellow and former chairman of the Academy of Athens, and former directors (and, essentially, founders) of influential foreign policy think tank ELIAMEP respectively. An overview of other endorsers of the "cultural dualism" narrative as detailed in chapter one reveals similar itineraries, clustered around, in total, all four types of geopolitics (i.e. formal geopolitics, practical geopolitics, popular geopolitics, and structural geopolitics, as detailed in table 7.2): this constellation describes, with certain exception, Greece's "intellectuals of statecraft" quite aptly. The geopolitical state doctrine articulated in the context of this statecraft comprises variations of the one uttered by Constantine Karamanlis: "Greece belongs to the West."

In this context, the forceful *de*-territorialisation of this "West" —to which Greece self-evidently belongs or *should* belong, as per Greek intellectuals of statecraft— by "underdogs" can be seen as, unbeknownst to the underdogs themselves, an exercise in *critical* geopolitics. The geography proposed by Greek statecraft, according to which there is a "West" to which Greece *naturally*, geographically even —since geography "*simply is there*"— belongs, is inverted: according to the "underdogs," *even if the West is asserted, then it is de-territorialised, it is not a* "*place*" — and thus not apt for *geo*-politics. The response of the "underdogs" is *not* "no, Greece does *not* belong to the West"; rather than that, it is a conceptualisation of "the West," along with Greece, precisely as a *utopia*, i.e. not-a-place, and the propagation of this a-territorial conceptualisation in Greece's public sphere. In this sense and context, the "underdogs" undertake, without being conscious thereof, what could only be described as *rogue critical geopolitics*: a dismantling of state geopolitical narratives *in the arena of public discourse*, of the public intellectual exchange of ideas. Seen through

[694] Senem Aydın-Düzgit, *Constructions of European Identity: Debates and Discourses on Turkey and the EU*, Identities and Modernities in Europe (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 171.

this perspective, Yannaras and Ziakas could perhaps be considered as *subjects*, rather than objects, of a peculiar and implicit critical geopolitics.

May subjects of critical geopolitics be objects thereof as well?

It has been just been suggested that Yannaras and Ziakas may be more fruitfully approached as *subjects* of critical geopolitics rather than as its *objects*, for reasons not only relating to the fact that they may not be described as intellectuals of Greek statecraft, but primarily due to the decisively *de*-territorialised way they relate to geographical terms such as "the West," thus making their commentary a *critique* and subversion of particular political projections on geographical spaces in Greek public discourse.

However, could one still isolate instances in which the two thinkers' discourse may be truly and properly taken as the *object* of critical geopolitics? I shall indicatively focus on a 2009 *Kathimerini* feuilleton entitled "Bridging the Neo-Ottomans with Brussels," in which Yannaras engages with the thought of then-Foreign Minister (and later Prime Minister of Turkey) Ahmet Davutoğlu.[695] In this article, which ruffled quite some feathers in politically conservative quarters, Yannaras is essentially proposing that Greece offers itself as the intermediary between the considerably larger and more powerful Turkey and the EU — Greece being, according to Yannaras, uniquely positioned to that end. EU/Brussels is dubbed "post-Roman West," while Turkey the "post-Byzantine East": the Greek state is the only possible intermediary, and playing such a role would provide the country with future prospects it would not otherwise have, given the country's current predicament (it should be remarked that 2009 marked the peak of a particularly successful phase for Turkey). In Yannaras' own words, the 2009 article concludes with the following paragraph:

> Greece is to act as a cultural (and therefore political) catalyst for the creative collaboration between this post-Byzantine East (under the Neo-Ottoman leadership) with the post-Roman West (under the leadership of Brussels). The West claims the continuation of the classical Greek legacy, Turkey claims the continuation of Byzantium. The inclusion of present-day Greece under Ottoman influence while

[695] Christos Yannaras, "Νεο-Ὀσμανιδῶν Καὶ Βρυξελλῶν Γεφύρωση [Bridging the Neo-Ottomans with Brussels]," *Kathimerini*, September 6, 2009, http://www.kathimerini.gr/716229/opinion/epikairothta/arxeio-monimes-sthles/neo-osmanidwn-kai-vry3ellwn-gefyrwsh.

> simultaneously also partaking in the European Union would probably be Hellenism's last chance to play an active role in the flow of history. [696]

In this present digression I shall not enter into an elaborate analysis of Yannaras' proposal, of its context, or of the outrage it sparked at the time. Contrariwise, I will focus on two elements that make Yannaras' position a prime *object* of critical geopolitics, for a change. The first is that a proposal such as this constitutes what we could term as "unsolicited statecraft": while Yannaras is not part of Greek statecraft per se, he is here nevertheless willing to suggest a potential strategy to the Greek state, thus engaging in a kind of uninvited statecraft. His book proposing a cultural diplomacy for Greece could also be approached in the same light.[697] The second is that, interestingly, this position of Yannaras' corresponds in an almost textbook way to one of Dijkink's observations concerning geopolitical visions: "in spite of their name, geopolitical visions rarely satisfy the classic realist description of the world as an anarchic universe with the national state as a safe haven. Most geopolitical visions portray the world as divided between two systems, with one's own nation in a strategic position either to defend the cause of right or to act as an intermediary."[698] This is precisely what is the case in this particular position of Yannaras'. Two worlds in division are being portrayed, the EU as the "post-Roman West" on the one hand and Turkey as the "post-Byzantine East" on the other: the nation and state of Greece is, in this case and according to Yannaras, "in a strategic position to act as an intermediary," to echo Dijkins' words. I shall not delve on this example longer, as it is merely offered here as a consideration of certain aspects of Yannaras as *objects* of study for critical geopolitics, as textbook definitions for Dijkins' geopolitical visions.

After all, as Ó Tuathail notes, even critical geopolitics "is inevitably a form of geopolitics itself."[699]

The nation (and nationalism): essentialism or a social construct?

[696] Yannaras.
[697] Yannaras, *Cultural Diplomacy*.
[698] Gertjan Dijkink, *National Identity and Geopolitical Visions: Maps of Pride and Pain* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1996), 141.
[699] From Gearóid Ó Tuathail's Foreword to Dodds, Kuus, and Sharp, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Critical Geopolitics*, xx.

In examining theories on the nation such as Theodoros I. Ziakas' or Christos Yannaras' understanding of Hellenism, particularly in view of their claims to *some* continuity one might be tempted to situate these firmly in the essentialist camp as far as the reality or the constructed nature of the described commonality is concerned — the question being, of course, integrally related to the question whether we may categorise Ziakas and Yannaras under nationalism. This would merely be a first-level reading, yet an inescapable one, since in an exclusive essentialism/construction dilemma every reading that clothes nationhood with *reality* cannot but fall within the spectre of essentialism. The reader's attention should be brought back, however, to last chapter's reference to Ziakas' juxtaposition of his understanding of nationhood and the ontology of substance–activities–hypostasis.[700] In contrast to this, it is difficult to miss the uncanny resemblance between the classic essentialism/constructed-imagined communities debate and the Western medieval realism/nominalism debate. As we have underscored, this dilemma is not to be encountered in the same way and with the same force in Late Antique and Byzantine Graecophone ontology, which rests on a balance between the reality of the universal and the reality of the particular via the bridge between them, i.e. the unique realisation in the particular of what is common in the universal that is comprised by the *activities* (ἐνέργειαι).

Given that this is the case, just as a wider language-tied tradition of thought (a symbolic order of meanings, the linguistic presuppositions in philosophy) that maintains a dilemma between realism and nominalism at the ontological level will then proceed to engender a dilemma between essentialism and constructed/imagined community at the level of the "collective subject," thus it is that a language-tied *Greek* tradition of thought (a symbolic order of meanings, the linguistic presuppositions in philosophy) that does not engender such a dilemma will then proceed to infer a similar balance at the level of understanding the "collective subject." It seems then plausible that Ziakas' theorising on the "collective subject" and its reality —which, when seen under different perspectives, can be identified both under a peculiar essentialist reading and under a peculiar "imagined communities" reading, them being "imagined" not making them any less *real*— may be seen not merely as the individual oddity of a theorist, but indeed as a grounding of a Graecophone ontological reading in the political plane (thus realising Ziakas' conjunction of the political, anthropological, and ontological level).

[700] See also Ziakas, *Homeland-Self-Eater*, 25–57.

That persisting collective identity in Ziakas and Yannaras, however named and defined, is then neither "real" as a nation essentialist would understand it (akin to a Platonic idea/form) nor "imagined/constructed" as a poststructuralist would understand it; rather than that, what is attempted here is precisely the transcendence of this polarity in a way that may be approached only through the transcendence of the (back then not yet existing) realism/nominalism polarity in Late Antique and Byzantine ecclesial ontological terminology (substance–*activities*–hypostasis).

Of course, all this is a *claim*, precisely in the same way that *any* theory on the nation, be it essentialist or poststructuralist, constitutes a theoretical *claim*; however, it should be recognised with its actual content and within its actual context, and not with the content externally projected upon it following an engagement with those ideas that would be deficient in accuracy and terminological care. On the other hand, if we heed the definition of nationalism as primarily (yet not exclusively) the *territorial* expression of identity,[701] then it would be quite challenging to include the discourses in question under this term.

Are our authors *nationalist*? For Agnew, "nationalism is a type of practical politics mobilising groups by appealing to national interests and identities";[702] however, it is also "a set of ideas about the 'nation' as the key or singular reference group for identity that did begin with the vesting of 'sovereignty' in the people as a model of political excellence which then spread under the label of 'self-determination' to groups defining themselves largely on ethnic grounds."[703] It should be obvious by now that it is difficult to predicate *classical* nationalism to thinkers such as Yannaras and Ziakas, i.e. the kind of nationalism "dating from the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries."[704] Of more interest would be a consideration of them in comparison with a minority of theorists that support the pre-modern ethnic origins of nations: nations and nationalism before the age of nationalism, pre-modern *ethnie*, etc.[705] This is currently a rather peripheral tendency in political science and the theory of nationalism, and it should be remarked that its arguably most visible proponent, Anthony Smith, situates the beginnings of certain *ethnies* in the Middle Ages rather than as far back as classical antiquity; however, the fact that the Greek intellectuals under scrutiny here would

[701] Alison Mountz, "Nationalism," in *Key Concepts in Political Geography*, ed. Carolyn Gallaher, Key Concepts in Human Geography (London ; Los Angeles: SAGE, 2009), 277.
[702] John A. Agnew, ed., *Political Geography: A Reader* (London: Arnold, 1997), 317.
[703] Agnew, 317.
[704] Graham Day and Andrew Thompson, *Theorizing Nationalism* (Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 8.
[705] An overview is offered in Day and Thompson, chapter four, "Against Modernity," 63-83.

perhaps see such theoretical tendencies with a sympathetic eye is worth mentioning. An examination of how Yannaras and Ziakas see the Greek *nation* could place them side by side with assertions such as that "nations are artefacts of cultural processes ... their existence is preceded, rather than followed, by the creation of a sense of nationality, and this occurs in people's imaginations, as a cultural construct."[706] Arguably, Yannaras and Ziakas would have nothing against a designation of Greece/Hellenism as an artefact of cultural processes, whose existence is preceded, rather than followed, by the creation of a sense of nationality. Last but not least, scholarship has engaged with this modal understanding of identity as *cosmopolitanism* in Yannaras' thought, notably Elena Paris in "Re-Thinking Universalism: Post-Foundational Cosmopolitanism in a Relational Key."[707]

Subverting the subversion: a further critical consideration

The reading of underdog utterances afforded in this study explicitly aims to be an *internal* reading: the argument is that the state of public discourse in Greece has rendered any reading of "underdog" utterances that would not be *a reading internal to the Greek Neo-Orientalist discourse* impossible, in absence of a relatable frame of reference. Thus, what is here attempted is a non-neo-Orientalistically bespectacled heeding of underdog utterances, which is first made possible by their *internal* reading.

Seemingly paradoxically, this reading makes possible a counter-intuitive conclusion. As explained, the very premise of the "cultural dualism" narrative is that the "reformists" that lie on the one side of the spectrum strive for a Greek state and society in tune and in pace with Europe/the EU —the distinction is often projected as blurred— and "the Western world," essentially the "modern world," whereas the conservative-reactionary "underdogs" try to keep Greece in a non-"Western," pre-modern, traditionalist and populist state. One of

[706] Day and Thompson, 87. Here Day and Thomson summarise Benedict Anderson's 1983 *Imagined Communities*, resulting however in a partial misrepresentation, at least as far as the alleged *precedence* "of a sense of nationality" is concerned. This being the case, the quoted position is not being attributed to Benedict Anderson in this thesis, but rather highlighted as a perspective by Day and Thomson that is certainly relevant to our object of inquiry.

[707] Elena Paris, "Re-Thinking Universalism: Post-Foundational Cosmopolitanism in a Relational Key," in *Re-Grounding Cosmopolitanism: Towards a Post-Foundational Cosmopolitanism*, ed. Tamara Caraus and Elena Paris (London: Routledge, 2015), 64–85.

the counter-intuitive, seemingly paradoxical conclusions made possible by the reading formulated in the present study is that it is (some among) the "underdogs" that are, in spite of their shortcomings and surely *unbeknownst to themselves*, in tune and in pace with the "modern," "Western" world's *avant-garde* —e.g. postcolonialism,[708] post-secularism, critical geopolitics—, echoing developments in areas as disparate as the post-modern movement of Radical Orthodoxy, Slavoj Žižek's politically theological explorations, or the scholarly discussions on what lies *after* modernity. Whereas it is, somewhat startlingly, the "reformists," the Greek Neo-Orientalists, that strive to conserve an ossified picture of modernity and of being Western —a picture either *already* obsolete or en route to becoming obsolete—, thereby being in fundamental disharmony with the actual "Western world's" intellectual pursuits and appearing as stuck in the past. Furthermore, the Neo-Orientalist refusal or inability to read the Greek equivalents of today's Western worlds' intellectual pursuits *as such* and the insistence to identify them as remnants of a reactionary past, to call for their exclusion from the public sphere, engenders the cultural and political pressure that follows sharp and violent binaries and polarisations. Whether such a reading is a correct and accurate one is not a judgement of the present study's to make: if anything, its contribution consists in making such a reading *possible.* However, some further critical considerations are to be taken into account.

It is a fact to be reckoned with that while the essence of the intellectual undertakings under examination here lies in their post-secular and statecraft-dissident nature, these are not always *used* and *employed* as such in the public sphere. While any given thinker cannot be blamed for the misconstrual and unorthodox marshalling of her ideas by others —or else, for example, Nietzsche would be held accountable for Nazism—, it remains a fact that the margin a thinker leaves while alive for said misconstrual is a valid object of scrutiny. Thus, if there is a noticeable discord between a body of ideas itself and the way said ideas are used in the public sphere, this should be taken into account.

Ziakas' relatively low public profile (in comparison to Yannaras) and "stealth impact" give little way for an organised misconstrual and public utilisation of his thought. It must be

[708] "Postcolonial" does in no way always mean "progressive": for example, George Demacopoulos describes *fundamentalising yet at the same time postcolonial* tendencies within Eastern Orthodoxy, particularly in "the West," in his "'Traditional Orthodoxy' as a Postcolonial Movement," *The Journal of Religion* 97, no. 4 (October 2017): 475–99, https://doi.org/10.1086/693164.

observed, however, that —in contrast to Yannaras'[709]— Ziakas' thought is looked favourably upon by the circle around Karambelias' magazine *Ardin*, which can be safely described as anything but *critically* geopolitical or post-secular. Yannaras' public image is more nuanced, since his interventions through his weekly *feuilletons*, currently in *Kathimerini*, shape his public persona more than his actual books (the ones, that is, that are treatises rather than yearly collections of feuilletons). In this study we have consciously opted to focus on the latter (the treatises) than on the former (the *feuilletons*), since it is there that Yannaras' contribution to theory is located; this choice signals, at the same time, the realisation that these two levels differ substantially from one another. This is not a study of Yannaras' newspaper *feuilletons* and shall not develop into one, but let it suffice to be said that the audience of the *feuilletons* is by definition a *national* audience, and the voice employed to address it is often in par with that: thus, the Greek *state* and its state is the focus of attention in numerous such articles. Thus, it is not unusual to see politically conservative circles cutting across Greek party lines taking delight in marshalling Yannaras' *feuilleton* discourse to their cause, a cause that in its many manifestations does certainly not *refute* Greek statecraft in the way that Yannaras' body of theoretical work does, but *asserts* it.

To the extent that Yannaras' severely critical stance towards the Greek state is indeed taken notice of while at the same time his *feuilleton* discourse is employed for purposes consistent with Greek (geopolitical) statecraft —the Macedonia naming dispute may be cited as an indicative example—, this creates a seemingly impossible balance that may indeed be made possible only in the context of a *crypto-irredentism* that is projected on Yannaras' writings.[710] This crypto-irredentism would take the following (implicit) form: yes, the Greek state is problematic, *because it is partial or adequate*: the Greek *ecumene* is not an a-territorial notion, but something along the lines of the "Great Idea" (Μεγάλη Ἰδέα) revisited and materialised, i.e. an incorporation *into* the Greek state of the very territories on which this "ecumenical Hellenism" was located/localised in earlier times. The geography of this localisation is usually not made explicit, but would ostensibly allude to Byzantine territories. That this is a misconstrual of Yannaras' thought follows naturally from the fact that an a-

[709] Yannaras is described by Karambelias as, essentially, anti-Greek: Karambelias, *Ἡ Ἀποστασία Τῶν Διανοουμένων [The Intellectuals' Apostasy]*, 229–71.
[710] This balance is but one of the possibilities. The aforementioned example of Karambelias is one according to which *precisely because* Yannaras' critical stance is taken notice of, he cannot be marshaled to a Greek geopolitical cause and is thus rejected.

territorial Greece, an ἀόριστη Ἑλλάδα,[711] a "mode rather than a place" lies at the centre of his theory —together with a certain hostility towards statehood—, not a "partial" Greece or a territorially "inadequate" Greece. However, the fact *also* remains that Yannaras has not protested to his *feuilleton* discourse being enlisted to the (geo)political causes of Greek statecraft, even in spite of himself. This bilocality, as it were, is to be taken notice of, particularly to the extent that we take interest in how discourses function, develop and interact in Greece's public sphere rather than simply in pure ideas in serene isolation.

To close this critical reconsideration with a note on Ziakas: while as remarked earlier Yannaras can hardly be charged with nation essentialism, given that his insistence on a *modal* (τρόπος) understanding is precisely the negation of an *essential* one (οὐσία), charging Ziakas with nation essentialism, along with constructing a grand narrative (which, however, may be predicated of both thinkers) seems unavoidable. Were one to guess Ziakas' own response to this, it is to be assumed that he would attempt a subversion of the charge's premises: his writings lead us to believe that his response would consist in pointing out that it is precisely *nihilism,* the "zeroing" of actually existing realities, that makes the very critique and suspicion of essentialism (as a criterion of cardinal importance) possible.

Despite the above shortcomings and the third-party *employment* of subversive Orthodox discourses for decisively non-subversive aims, what is to be clarified is that the stance of our two thinkers as a *self*-critical stance *within* "the West" should not be called into doubt. In the case of Yannaras for example, John Milbank comments that "for one thing, [Yannaras] is fully alert to degeneracies within his own Orthodox tradition and fully prepared creatively to learn from modern Western thought in order to correct them. For another thing, and this one much more crucial, his most basic case is not that the West has suppressed apophaticism, personhood and relationality, but that it has forgotten the unity and dynamism of all truth-seeking and that it is a collective and natural endeavour. In this respect, he accuses his own tradition of having forgotten the true import of *apophasis* as well."[712] If anything, the discourses of Yannaras and Ziakas are anything but triumphalist as far as today's Greece is concerned, even if other rampant triumphalists may be eager to embrace carefully selected *parts* of such discourses.

[711] Yannaras, *Ἀόριστη Ἑλλάδα: Κονσέρτο Γιὰ Δυὸ Ἀποδημίες [Boundless/Undefined/Abstract Greece: A Concert for Two Journeys]*.
[712] Milbank, "Hellenism in Motion," x–xi.

Successfully abducted by Zeus, Europe currently resides in "Norway" — or, geography and the post-secular

Why critical geopolitics and post-secularism *in particular?* My choice to examine my object of inquiry mainly through critical geopolitics and post-secularism is not an arbitrary one: these two perspectives are, in the particular case of the matter at hand, integrally related. Allow me to explain.

In 2015, Slavoj Žižek published an influential paper on "The Non-Existence of Norway."[713] In this he claimed that the purported goal and dream of many refugees, i.e. not to merely escape their homelands of torture, but to arrive at a land and country that has the *obligation* to fulfil their needs, is a privilege not afforded to the Europeans themselves: such a country, which is never the country of actual arrival but the *next* one, be it Germany, the UK or Norway, does not exist. *"Norway,"* the country and territory where this ideal Europe actually materialises, *does not exist*. It is literally a *u-topia*.

> In escaping their war-torn homelands, the refugees are possessed by a dream. Refugees arriving in southern Italy do not want to stay there: many of them are trying to get to Scandinavia. The thousands of migrants in Calais are not satisfied with France: they are ready to risk their lives to enter the UK. Tens of thousands of refugees in Balkan countries are desperate to get to Germany. They assert their dreams as their unconditional right, and demand from the European authorities not only proper food and medical care but also transportation to the destination of their choice. There is something enigmatically utopian in this demand: as if it were the duty of Europe to realise their dreams – dreams which, incidentally, are out of reach of most Europeans (surely a good number of Southern and Eastern Europeans would prefer to live in Norway too?). It is precisely when people find themselves in poverty, distress and danger – when we'd expect them to settle for a minimum of safety and wellbeing – that their utopianism becomes most intransigent. But the

[713] Slavoj Žižek, "The Non-Existence of Norway," *The London Review of Books*, September 9, 2015, https://www.lrb.co.uk/2015/09/09/slavoj-zizek/the-non-existence-of-norway.

> hard truth to be faced by the refugees is that "there is no Norway," even in Norway.[714]

In many ways, what is "Norway" for the refugees is "Europe" for much of the Greek public sphere, particularly for the "reformist" camp. "Europe" and the "Western world" in general is a space, an aggregate of countries, that is the realm and domain of the "Enlightenment" — which is not *the Enlightenment* per re, but every conceivable positive value in full flourishing and realisation. "Europe" is *entelechy*, i.e. the complete realisation of potentiality — and if it is not there yet, then *comparisons* emerge that make it appear thusly *by comparison.* In "Europe," there is no nationalism as we encounter it in the Balkans — contrariwise, of course, to the reality of the unprecedented surge of various forms of nationalisms across the EU and Europe during the latter part of the new millennium's second decade. The buses arrive *always* on time, and life is easy beautiful, at least compared to the Greeks' horrendous predicament. Citizens are, of course, not overwhelmingly taxed —there is no statism in utopia— *but at the same time* the state provides abundantly (the contradiction seems to be elusive): education, healthcare, proper urban infrastructure, proper pensions, clean, functional cities. Of course, "Europe" is the domain of rationality: the *ratio* is the crowned sovereign of this Enlightened territory, which has as its enemy *religion*, equated with *superstition.* "The Western world" and "Europe" are the realm of the secular: religion is tolerated, provided it is hermetically contained in the domain of private, individual superstition. "Nowhere in Europe" is there a church-state relationship as strong as in Greece, which is "mediaeval," "Eastern/Byzantine" or "theocratic/Iran/Tehran"; "nowhere in the Western world" do priests publicly opine on politics. "Nowhere in Europe" is there a constitutional provision for a particular church or Christianity (perhaps one of the most crass distortions).[715]

It shall be obvious to the reader by now that, particularly in the case of religion and secularism, "Europe does not exist" and "the West does not exist," at least as encountered in their representation in the Greek collective imagination.[716] Of course, in the *real* "West," the heads of church and state may coincide in the same person, thus resulting in the very dictionary definition of theocracy (United Kingdom), a Finnish Orthodox priest may be

[714] Žižek.
[715] These *axioms* of the public discourse in Greece are so widespread that they defy particular pinpointing in that or the other professorially-authored newspaper/magazine article propounding them.
[716] After all, on a more general note, it is more than a decade ago that Agnew would remark that "religion is the emerging political language of the time." Agnew, "Religion and Geopolitics," 183.

elected as a social-democratic MEP (Mitro Repo), a pastor may become President of Germany (Joachim Gauck), and an acting archbishop Governor-General of Australia (Peter Hollingworth) — without daring to mention the role of religion in US politics.[717]

It is not difficult to see in this imagined secularity binary and its application to the Greek *state* what Gertjan Dijkink has named *geopolitical visions*. Dijkink defines geopolitical visions as "any idea concerning the relation between one's own and other places, involving feelings of (in)security or (dis)advantage (and/or) invoking ideas about a collective mission or foreign policy strategy."[718] Not only is this a most apt definition of the problem under examination here but, as it happens, Dijkink also comments on the fallacy of constructing an imagined coherent European whole: the fact that there are important similarities in the world views of different European countries, he writes, "does not justify the choice of a European level of analysis in studying *geopolitical* visions. One might expect a European geopolitical view to emerge only if all or a number of European countries encountered external forces or dangers. The Second World War and the 'occupation' of Europe by foreign forces (the United States and the Soviet Union) is the closest to such an experience in modern history."[719] Given, of course, that such a reality is not the case in the Greek imagination of the radically *other* that is "Europe" and "the West," the problem can be easily discerned.

If anything, the mode in which the desire to be *like* of "Europe" and "the West" as a state and a society —to belong to that community of the "progressed" and prosperous— engenders a *geopolitical* vision that has been diagnosed by Dijkink (with reference, however, to twentieth-century geopolitical visions): "geopolitical visions in the twentieth century seem to betray a deep longing for a community which transcends national boundaries. However, this does not mean that the national position is made indistinguishable from those of a country's allies. Actually, the wider community is often used for national glorification."[720] As far as Greece is concerned, we might want to entertain the possibility that the *opposite* of national glorification may be the case: i.e., a symbolic self-flagellation that engenders a (geo)political injunction. It should be remarked that the inexistence of "Europe" and of "the West" has very real repercussions for Greece's political alignment to "the West," as Greek

[717] On which, and beyond, see for example Jason Dittmer, "Evangelicals," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Critical Geopolitics*, ed. Klaus Dodds, Merje Kuus, and Joanne P. Sharp (Farnham, Surrey, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 477–92.
[718] Dijkink, *National Identity and Geopolitical Visions*, 11.
[719] Dijkink, 9.
[720] Dijkink, 141.

public opinion is educated to perceive the Greek state as eternally *lacking* substantial elements that would make it a *real* state, i.e. a *Western/European* state. It creates a desire that cannot possibly be fulfilled, given that the "Western/European country" that Greece should become *does not exist* in the West/Europe itself, thus the recommended route that logically follows would be to eternally imitate "the West," to follow its political lead and to strive to gain favour with it. The *inexistence* of the West guarantees precisely that this procedure will never reach its completion and stop, since it cannot be saturated. This settlement reminds us of Dijkink's observation, "religion is simply the only discourse available when territorial identity fails,"[721] though in an *inverse* way, for it is here the *absence* of religion that is offered as such a discourse. The same *inverse* reading can be afforded to Dijkink's other observation: "where the (geopolitical) logic of the state system or security appears to fail, religion emerges as a source for the self-image of groups or the discourse on global relations."[722]

To return to religion and the secular, Žižek's refugee "Norway" is particularly useful as an example, for it is precisely in Norway that church-state relations have recently become *much more like Greece* after a long state church period: this transition (towards Greece, as it were) was labelled as a church-state separation. Prior to the 21 May 2012 constitutional amendment (i.e. the "separation of church and state") and the laws that followed it, the Norwegian state (nominally, the King) —whose government's ministers *had to* adhere to the Church of Norway in their majority— would appoint the church's bishops, whereas the constitution stated that "the Evangelical-Lutheran religion remains the public religion of the State." *After* the separation of church and state, it is the Church of Norway that appoints its bishops, yet (a) the King of Norway is still required to be Lutheran, (b) the state still pays for clergy salaries; all municipalities are required by law to support the activities of the Church of Norway, (c) the constitution states that "the Church of Norway, an Evangelical-Lutheran church, remains Norway's people's church, and is supported by the State as such," and (d) precisely because the Church of Norway is no more a *state* church, *more* provisions have been added in the constitution referring to Christian values and heritage in order to cover the gap.[723] All this points to a change in state-church relations in Norway *in a direction "towards*

[721] Gertjan Dijkink, "When Geopolitics and Religion Fuse: A Historical Perspective," *Geopolitics* 11, no. 2 (July 2006): 201, https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040600598403.
[722] Dijkink, 192.
[723] Dag T. Hoelseth, "Grunnlovsbestemmelse 21. Mai 2012 (Kirkeforliket) [Constitutional Provision 21 May 2012 (Church Settlement)]," *LOVDATA* (blog), May 23, 2012, https://lovdata.no/artikkel/grunnlovsbestemmelse_21__mai_2012_(kirkeforliket)/138; Frank Cranmer,

Greece," yet with a more explicit endorsement of Christianity than that of the Greek constitution and its "prevailing religion." However, the news on Norway's church-state separation reached Greece with the poignancy of "what is long overdue in the country."[724]

In all this, no claim is raised that the situation in *some* "Western" countries is characteristic of "the West," "Europe" or the EU; that Greece's church-state relations are ideal and need no reform; that either Norway's prior arrangement or its current one should function as a model; no value-judgement has been made. What should be obvious to the reader, however, is that as far as the Greek public discourse is concerned, "there is no Europe," even in Europe; "there is no West," even in the West.

Secularism as a geography

In absence of a recognition that "the West" is a u-topia, Greeks indulge in geographically designing its map. As far as secularism is concerned, the reader should note that this is *geographically defined.* "The West" and "Europe" may not exist, but to the mind of those that invoke them they are *actual geographical spaces*, actual countries and territories, not ideas or ideals: not "modes of being" nor "states of mind," but *actual states* where what is being projected upon them actually materialises. This is only made possible by the elimination of nuances: in the case of church-state relations and religion in the public sphere, the fact that these issues are complex and exceedingly nuanced among the states that make up "the West" must be negated, as it shatters the very geographicality of the binary.

"Separation of Church and State in Norway," *Law & Religion UK* (blog), January 2, 2017, http://www.lawandreligionuk.com/2017/01/02/separation-of-church-and-state-in-norway/.

[724] Shockingly, the Greek public confusion on the very meaning of the terms used to refer to different church-state relations models will often be exported as scholarship. Thus, a Brill article written by a Greek scholar bluntly takes as evident that "the Orthodox Church of Greece is a state church." Alexandros Sakellariou, "Religion in Greek Society: State, Public or Private?," in *Religion beyond Its Private Role in Modern Society*, ed. Wim Hofstee and Arie van der Kooij (Brill, 2013), 153–66, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004257856_010. Suffice to say, one of the defining characteristics of state churches is that in their case it is the state, and not the church, that selects and appoints senior clergy —i.e. precisely what changed in Norway in 2012, constituting a church-state separation— which is not the case in Greece. Thankfully, such spreading of peer-reviewed misinformation is remedied by other, well-researched outputs that indeed achieve to nuance the account, such as Effie Fokas, "Religion in the Greek Public Sphere: Nuancing the Account," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 27, no. 2 (2009): 349–74, https://doi.org/10.1353/mgs.0.0059.

Thus, "secularism" is *a geography*: for Greece's public discourse, *secularism is that which takes place in particular states*, those of "Europe" and "the West." It is *real* and materialises *there.*

In this binary-laid-on-a-map, on the one side of which monodimensionally "modern" and "secular" states reside, having their opposites at the other side of the map and with Greece as something in between, wishing to become properly modern and secular but failing to do so due to residues of pre-modernity its religious connotations, *post-secularism is inconceivable.* There is no place for it on the map, as it were. There are no nuances/subtler dimensions *because* we deal with a geography/spatiality and vice versa, and on this map a territory is *either* modern and secular *or* not there yet. *There can be no dimension for the post-secular.*

Thus, in lack of a *language*, a viable conceptual coordinates system and seemingly heeding Wittgenstein's advice in *Tractatus 7*, "what we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence," post-secular discourses cannot but remain misunderstood (or simply untranslated) in Greece, *when they emerge from "the West"* — such as, for example, Peter Harrison's historically descriptive *The Territories of Science and Religion*, John Milbank's Radical Orthodoxy or materialist philosophers' Christian political theology. The question of how can "Western" thinkers arrive at such conclusion *must* remain unanswered in order for the "map" not to be shattered (or rather: the question *must not be asked*). When comparable discourses emerge from Greece itself, however, discourses that beyond the territory of Greek Neo-Orientalism would be readily recognised as in part with their similar post-secular theoretical undertakings elsewhere on the globe, matters are markedly easier: the bearers of such discourses cannot but be traditionalist conservatives with a nostalgia for superstition and irrationalism, nationalists, or pre-modern religious fundamentalists — i.e., *on the wrong side of the map*. If subversive Orthodoxies may be *either* fundamentalist/pre-modern *or* beyond modernity, then within Greece only the former approach is intelligible — i.e., the demonstrably *wrong* approach.

Putting the "fun" back in "fundamentalism" — or rather not?

The problem is that all this makes an examination of Greece's subversive Orthodoxies *impossible*, for the immanent frame of Greece's public discourse is the "cultural dualism" narrative, which has been merely given voice by Greek neo-Orientalising scholars, as it pre-exists them as the dominant hermeneutic mode. Hence the present inquiry, which does not study Greece's subversive Orthodoxies *per se* and does not seek to indulge in value judgements concerning them, but rather attempts to approach them from a perspective that *would render their examination possible*, changing the neo-Orientalist frame of reference and creating a new one.

A more systematic juxtaposition of our subversive Orthodoxies and the Radical Orthodoxy movement —a juxtaposition that would be a monograph of its own— would go a long way in further developing latent lines of thought in this study. However, I do hope that the present attempt to examine "underdogs" such as Yannaras and Ziakas as a postcolonial project through post-secularism and critical geopolitics shall not be found wanting. These are *subversive* in the dual sense of an attempted subversion of the limitations of late modernity towards what lies beyond it and in the sense of a subversion of Greece's state political geography concerning "the West."

Of course, our subversive Orthodoxies are neither knights in shining armours nor the nemesis of the neo-Orientalistically bespectacled. However, we hope that our inquiry fleshed out a more nuanced and interesting picture than the one offered by simplistic binaries: one in which the cognate yet different theories of thinkers such as Yannaras and Ziakas actualise post-secularity by circumventing the modern understanding of "religion" altogether and in re-grounding the social and political reality "beyond secular order." Ziakas' organic intertwining of the individual, the collective and the metaphysical level is a particularly scandalous gesture in a late modern conceptual context; however, Ziakas proceeds to it by *circumventing* the conceptual context that would make it inconceivable. Yannaras proceeds to a similar gesture on the ecclesial/theological level. In doing this, and in framing this post-secular undertaking in terms of a discourse on "the West," they attempt —unbeknownst to them— what could be understood as an exercise in critical geopolitics against Greek statecraft's conception of "the West," to which Greece "belongs." However, the irony is that this deconstruction of the Greek state's peculiar nationalism through subversive Orthodoxies may be employed by third parties in order to fuel, after certain necessary modifications, that very same state nationalism. These modifications consist in the eradication of the subversive element and the

integration of such discourses into the "banal Orthodoxy" as imagined and employed by Greek statecraft — a comparable process takes place in Russia, where an un-Orthodox Orthodoxy is theoretically employed in the context of statecraft.[725]

In the event that, for better or worse, "religion is at the root of international relations, with the question of religious identity at the core of the Treaties of Westphalia that are often cited as the beginning of modern understandings and practices of sovereignty and the inter-state system,"[726] and if this relevance is expected to intensify rather than to recede, then post-secular discourses and theories in the periphery of "the West," however understood or defined, merit closer attention — and, for a start, *attention,* in stark contrast to the distinctively Greek method of negatively branding such ideas in the context of cultural dualism narratives in order to hegemonically exclude them from the public sphere.

If, however, on the academic level there is much joy in heaven in engaging with post-secular utterances —in spite of their many shortcomings— by circumventing past limitations on doing so, and in treating this as a postcolonial gesture, the same cannot be said of what such an inquiry spells out for the Greek public square, Greek statecraft, and the curiously symbiotic relationship between the two. The closer the scrutiny on such ripples in Greece's public discourse, the more poignant the awareness that no way out seems to be in sight: unbeknownst to their bearers, various forms of cultural dualism narratives emerge as national identity discourses and proceed to morph into political injunctions, (geo)political visions and performative geopolitical codes.

[725] Even in Russia, where Orthodoxy is "geographised" in Third Rome narratives, those narratives are usually *external* to Orthodoxy itself and much more Orthodoxy-*related* than in any sense Orthodox: "'Orthodoxy-related geopolitics' ... is an inclusive, umbrella term: it is not about the Russian Orthodox Church's teaching per se, rather more about various Orthodox, quasi-Orthodox or even secular intellectual currents in post-Soviet Russia that use the Church's historiosophy in their geopolitical constructs. 'Orthodoxy-related geopolitics' here is a convenient substitute label for a more accurate term 'Third Romist geopolitics'; it is the use of the major Orthodox metaphor, the concept of Russia as the Third Rome, that is utilised here as a formal criteria for labeling authors as belonging to 'Orthodox' geopoliticians." Dmitrii Sidorov, "Post-Imperial Third Romes: Resurrections of a Russian Orthodox Geopolitical Metaphor," *Geopolitics* 11, no. 2 (July 2006): 318, https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040600598585.

[726] Jason Dittmer and Tristan Sturm, eds., *Mapping the End Times: American Evangelical Geopolitics and Apocalyptic Visions*, Critical Geopolitics (Farnham, Surrey, England ; Burlington, Vt: Ashgate, 2010), 2.

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BACK COVER

Louis Tikas (1886–1914) — Resurrectional Ethnogenesis at Ludlow, USA

Artist: *Gigas* & Peggy Kouvari

PROSOPA project* — http://prosopa.eu/?page_id=344

This painting in the style of ecclesial iconography by the Christian Anarchist iconographer Yannis "Gigas" Thomas was exhibited at the Art Athina Exhibition 2014. It depicts the Ludlow massacre (April 20, 1914), the deadliest single incident in the Colorado Coal Wars and Strike (September 1913–December 1914), which resulted in the deaths of ~25 people. The chief owner of the mine, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., was widely criticized for having orchestrated the massacre. Greek immigrant Louis Tikas (born in Crete in 1886 as Elias Anastasiou Spantidakis), the UMWA (United Mine Workers of America) organiser of the strike (and a good friend of Mother Jones), was murdered by gunshot. A host of figures appears in the painting. Indicatively, Louis Tikas (Elias Anastasiou Spantidakis); Spiros Kayales; John R. Lawson; Mary Harris "Mother" Jones; Martin Luther King Jr.; St Basil the Great; William "Big Bill" Haywood; Red Cloud; Russell Means; Margaret Thatcher as Hades; and John D. Rockefeller Jr. as Death.

While the artist would not necessarily feel comfortable with the "Neo-Orthodox" label (and neither would anyone, for that matter, as the fifth chapter of the present thesis demonstrates), I chose this painting for the back cover due to such an artistic style (with its left-wing and Christian Orthodox references and connotations) having been made possible and conceivable precisely through the intellectual and political currents coalescing in the '80s and '90s resistance to what would later solidify as the "overdog" normative and performative account of Greece's past, present, and future. If the "underdogs" are able to speak via the visual arts as well, then this painting would form part of the answer to this thesis' main question.

*"It is an ecumenical practice, known to all ages and all nations and central to all popular traditions to celebrate certain prominent figures that have fought for justice, liberty and truth as the voices of their people and it's particular qualities. The Prosopa ("persons") project aims to present a series of world renowned personalities, held by their people as well as internationally as heroes and/or example setters, worthy of honour and admiration. We chose to paint in the visual language of greek iconography, as a way to demolish any cultural barriers and illustrate the way heroic archetypes unite and resurrect the peoples of the World." — *the artists*, http://www.prosopa.eu.

The "Iconostasis" as it currently stands (September 2018): Albert Schweitzer; Aline Sitoe Diatta; Camilo Cienfuegos; Emiliano Zapata; Ernesto (Che) Guevara; Frank Zappa; Georgios Kastriotis, Skanderbeg; Grigoris Afxentiou; Henry Ford; Hokusai; Hugo Rafael Chavez Frias; Johnny Cash; Jose Marti; Kiriakos Matsis; Leo Tolstoy; Louis Tikas — Resurrection at Ludlow; Mahatma Gandhi – Phoolan Devi; Mark Twain; Pascha in Dachau,1945 AD; Patrice Lumumba; Petros Yiallouros; Qiu Jin; Roald Amundsen; Saladin, Salah ad-Din; Simon Bolivar, Latin America; Stavros Stilianidis; Tassos Papadopoulos; Terry Fox; The nine Cypriot martyrs; The ten Irish martyrs; Thomas Sankara; Truganini.