

PELLA
JOURNAL *of the* **HELLENIC
DIASPORA**

VOL. 37.1&2 (2011)

DOUBLE ISSUE

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Representations of Women in Greek Cinema

by MARIA KOMNINOS

The delayed modernisation of Greek society resulted in the delayed adoption of the icons of international cinema during the period of silent movies and during the era of the talkies. Patriarchy in Greece and a weak film industry promoted depictions of women that were either folkloric or stereotypical. When film stars such as Louise Brooks and Greta Garbo enjoyed international fame, their counterparts in Greek cinema were Alikí Theodorídi, Frída Púpelína, and Lucy Matlí. The inexperience and charm of some of these Greek film stars made them look appealing even to foreign audiences during the era of silent film.

Greek cinema during the interwar period, however, did not witness anything like the emergence of vamps or flappers that appeared in Hollywood. Even in post-war years, Greek commercial cinema mainly promoted the image of the naughty rich girl who, instead of pursuing a career, was focused on finding a good husband. Films that promoted the image of independent Greek women struggling against the prejudices of the male dominated society were few and far between. For example, Melina Mercouri in *Stella* and *Never on Sunday*, or even Irene Papas in *Zorba the Greek* were the exception rather than the rule. It was not until 1974 with the restoration of democracy that the filmmakers—especially those who belonged to the New Greek cinema—began to focus on different types of Greek women.

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By the 1990s, more Greek women filmmakers were able to produce feature films and create a variety of interesting female characters. Films such as Katerina Evangelakou's *Think It Over / Tha to Metanioseis* (2004), Kleoni Flessa's *Let's Go for an Ouzo / Pame gia Ena Ouzo* (2002) and Olga Malea's *Risotto* (2000) present tragicomic stories of women who are trying to cope with the conflicting demands of their career and personal happiness.

A completely different image is projected by two other types of heroines, Stella and Irena in Nikos Panagiotopoulos' *The Edge of Night / Afti i Nibta Menei* (2000) and Kyriakos Katzourakis' *The Road West / O Dromos pros ti Disi* (2003) respectively. The heroines in these two films are victimized or make a narrow escape from the profiteers of human trafficking. In the case of Pantelis Voulgaris' *Brides / Nifes* (2003), written by Ioanna Karystiani, human trafficking recedes into the background as the story focuses on mail-order brides from Greece and the Balkans who travel to the United States in the early 1920s to meet their prospective husbands. Stella Theodorakis' *Close So Close / Para Ligo, Para Ponto, Para Triha* (2002) and Constantina Voulgaris' *Valse Sentimentale / Vals Sentimental* (2007) / also merit close attention for painting two different portraits of post-feminist *flâneurs* in a chaotic Athens.

Shepherdesses and Fallen Angels

The female stars of silent movies fit the stereotype described by Laura Mulvey as being representations of male fantasies rather than portraits of actual women.¹ Three of the great box office hits during the Greek silent film era had shepherdesses as their protagonists: Achilles Madras' *Maria Pentayiotissa* (1926), Dimitris Gaziadis' *Astero* (1929), and Orestis Laskos' *Daphnis and Chloe* (1931).

The story of *Daphnis and Chloe* is based on Longos' short poem descriptive of rustic life (idyll) from the second century AD. The story gave director Orestes Laskos ample room to experiment with shooting on location in Vouliagmeni (near Athens) and on the island of Lesbos. In the case of Lucy Matli, who was the star of the film, the camera manifested a strong element of voyeurism when she played young Chloe as an innocent shepherdess who was unaware of her sex appeal. Matli, however, exuded a strong eroti-



Daphnis and Chloe

cism in the first nude swim to ever appear in European silent film.²

Frieda Poupelina played the lead role in *Maria Pentagiotissa*. The film was directed by her husband, who was an actor at the Sarah Bernhardt Theatre in Paris. Poupelina adopted the most extreme gestures from the repertoire of the European silent film era. In the case of Alikí Theodorídi, a well-known theatre actress appearing in the role of Astero, the temptation to follow the clichés of European, and in particular German cinema, was much stronger. Theodorídi, especially in the sequence of madness, adapted the repertoire of the divas of the silent films. However, Gaziadis had the good sense to prevent her from adopting the excesses, which had become the trademark of Frieda Poupelina.

In contrast to the idyllic and bucolic context of the previous films, a number of other box-office hits dealt with fallen women. The heroines in both Stelios Tatasopoulos' *Social Corruption / Kinoniki Sapila* (1932) and Achilleus Madras' *The Sorcerer of Athens / O Magos tis Athinas* (1931) lose their health and prosperity. Niki is an ambitious young actress who dumps Dino, the young and penniless hero, for a corrupt industrialist who promises to set her up

in her own theatre. The industrialist did not keep his promise and Dino finds Niki ill and abandoned and about to fall into the hands of a ruthless pimp. She is saved thanks to Dino's compassion. In turn, the heroine of *The Sorcerer of Athens* finds herself abducted by a band of outlaws. She is later saved by a bohemian fiddler, and the two of them "live happily ever after."

Where can one find a discernible profile of the modern Greek woman in these films? Is it to be found in the shepherdesses who embody the virtues of honor and shame?³ Or, is it to be found in the "fallen angels" who are either redeemed or lost? The most modern profile among them is that of Chloe, who is able to reverse many of the traditional role models of the 1920s, because she is a character from antiquity. She can therefore pursue her sexual desire with Daphnis, her childhood companion. She enters into an egalitarian relationship with a male companion by disregarding all social and gender constraints. The radical implications of their love story for the audiences in the 1920s are excused on two counts: by reference to the historical and literary precedent of the adapted story; and by the presumption that the young lovers lack carnal knowledge. Their innocent pursuit of carnal knowledge enlivens the plot and the voyeurism of the audience.

During the period of the "stillborn republic"⁴ from 1922 to 1936 Greece experienced a schism between the republicans and the royalists. In that polarised political environment, most Greek intellectuals did not adopt a feminist perspective and did not write about the peasant or the proletarian subcultures.⁵ Escapism to imaginary worlds was appealing to audiences, and the filmmakers of the period catered to them. The defeat of the Greeks in Asia Minor that shaped the worldview of the generation of the 1930s resulted in a search to find a path away from the influence of both the avant-garde and the Marxist intelligentsia.⁶

Even Penelope Delta, who was a literary icon in Greece during this period, had to censor herself. For example, she kept her love affair with Ion Dragoumis a secret while she was married to Stephanos Deltas—a fact that she recorded in her diaries,⁷ but not in her other writings. As many Greek authors did not write serious screenplays, filmmakers resorted to screenplays that offered escapist attractions to their audiences filled with visual pleasures. Since urban workers, rural peasants, refugees, and indigenous Greeks consumed the same escapist shows, one might say that

Greek cinema played a unifying and homogenizing role in an otherwise politically divided country.

A number of mechanisms were used to attract the lower-class audiences.⁸ Miriam Hansen, for example, has argued that in the United States in the beginning of the century local cinemas and nickelodeons catered to the various ethnic audiences through the use of vaudeville and lecturers.⁹ In like manner, even though the large cinemas in Athens were using orchestras with their silent films, those entertainment entrepreneurs who operated outside the big cities, had to use phonograph records or pianists and to hire a local lecturer to help the audience to appreciate a film. Such practices are understandable if the following hypothesis¹⁰ is correct—i.e., that film reception was similar to that of the traditional Greek shadow theatre where certain puppeteers were famous for mobilizing particular audiences. In phonocentric cultures, like the culture of Greece, silent films and talkies had to learn from and use older more established artistic idioms, such as folk songs, the shadow theatre, and the revue (epitheorisis) in order to gain an audience.

The icons of modernity, Melina Mercouri and Irene Papas

In the opening scene of Michael Cacoyannis' *Stella* (1955), Stella is singing in a tavern under a spotlight, which is operated by the headwaiter (Dionisis Papagiannopoulos). She is doing an imitation of Rita Hayworth in *Gilda* accompanied by the music on the record player. At a certain moment during her act, the spotlight falls on her eyes, blinding her, and the needle of the phonograph gets stuck on the record. Stella, utterly frustrated, goes to the phonograph and breaks the record. The parody in this scene allows the audience in the movie theatre to extricate themselves from the narrative and to distance themselves from Stella as an "object to be looked at".¹¹ The audience in the movie theatre is not charmed by Stella, as is the audience in the tavern. With this scene, Cacoyannis shows how some women are treated in Greek society and then he starts to deal with Stella's seductive powers.

Other aspects of this scene in the tavern either defy, or conform to, convention. For instance, Alekos (Alekos Alexandrakis) who is embarrassed by Stella's unsuccessful performance avoids looking at her and lowers his eyes. Annetta, the other singer in the tavern, is

pleased because she is envious of Stella's popularity with the customers. Stella, on the other hand, who thinks that Annetta's mother has jinxed her performance, asks Maria (Sophia Vembo), the tavern-owner, to keep her out of the tavern.

Stella is different from previous women characters in Greek films and from the *femme fatales* in the American film noir of the 1940s and 1950s. Film noir depicted a period of paranoia and phobia in the United States during the war and the McCarthy era. As it has been argued, the *femme fatale* is like a "black widow," which destroys her lovers or leads them down the road to perdition.¹² It follows from this argument that the *femme fatale* must be punished so that the narrative can relieve the male spectators from their fear of castration. The expressionist style in film noir often complemented the dark spaces in which these spider-like women lived and loved.

The style of *Stella* is quite different thanks to the inspirational work of Giannis Tsarouhis and Michael Cacoyannis. However, the paranoia and phobia of the Greeks were centred on two issues: the first was to keep silent about the Greek Civil War in the late 1940s and the persecution of the Greek communists in its aftermath well into the 1950s;¹³ the second was to set the clock back on the question of emancipating the Greek women. Greek women—especially leftists—were deeply involved in the battlefields and in the local governments during the Resistance against the Germans and, subsequently, the Greek Civil War.

Following the defeat of the Greek communists in 1949, the Greek Stalinist faction gained control of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) and it favoured a return to a petty bourgeois way of life, including its attitudes on marriage. As for the bourgeois political parties, they were not eager to press forward with measures favouring the emancipation of women. Women were finally granted the vote as late as 1952. During this period, the humanities and the social sciences experienced a considerable decline (Tsoukalas: 1986, 577-83). However, in the arts (especially in the visual arts, music, and film) some artists such as Cacoyannis, Tsarouhis, and Manos Chatzidakis experimented with new forms but also used some older forms of Greek popular culture—such as the *rembetiko*—in new ways.¹⁴ In the context of their efforts, the style of *Stella* departed from the tradition of film noir because the shooting was done on location and its "dark" moments were brightened and uplifted by the performance of *rembetiko* singing.

The character of Stella retained some of the features of the *femme fatale*: she is blonde, tall, and sexy. However, Stella loves sunlight and the outdoors. At the end of the movie, she dies in the street in the arms of her lover when he stabbed her with his knife. However, her death is not intended as a punishment so that the male spectators can be relieved from their fear of castration. Her death is intended to make the spectators empathise with Stella who abhors petty bourgeois hypocrisy and wants to control her own sexuality. As for Alekos' premature death earlier in the film, the plot suggests that it is his oppressive family, not Stella that must be blamed for driving this young man to despair.

Like Catherine in François Truffaut's *Jules and Jim / Jules et Jim* (1962), Stella wants to define her own identity even at the risk of transgressing social norms and rules. Milto, her soccer-playing lover, cannot let go of his aggressive masculine pride (*machismo*). Following the death of Alekos, Stella is weakened by her misgivings. Milto seizes the opportunity and he asks her to marry him. She yields to his persistence, and she accepts. Subsequently, when Stella, dressed in a splendid black dress, sings that love has become like a double-edged blade, it is made clear that it is Milto who has entrapped her. Her situation is the exact opposite of a *femme fatale* who typically entraps her man.

When later Stella decides not to go to her own wedding at the church, the dialogue between Annetta and Maria expresses patriarchal norms. They condemn Stella even though Maria expresses her admiration for Stella's courage. So, Cacoyannis' camera brings to light a hidden part of Greek society with an unprecedented public critique of the hegemonic phalocentric discourse. However, Dan Georgakas offers a different interpretation:

Stella denounces marriage as a condition that drowns a woman's liberty in the kitchen sink . . . Her distress is not a conflict between career and domesticity; she is not interested in domesticity and never takes up the issue of whether she wants to be a mother. In that sense, Stella is not a realistic character exploring a new sexual role for the Greek women but rather a poetic embodiment of the irresolvable conflict between absolute independence and the commitments associated with a permanent relationship. (Iordanova 2006: 15)¹⁵

It could be the case indeed, as Georgakas argues, that the portrait of the “strong willed woman” which was popular with other male directors in the Balkans,¹⁶ was inspired by their memories of the strong role that Balkan women played in the Resistance during the Second World War.

Stella became a major box-office hit,¹⁷ which could be a sign that Greek women, as a lower-class audience, appreciated getting a taste of the imaginary reversal of patriarchy. Another reason for its success could have been that the male spectators appreciated Melina Mercouri’s looks in spite of her flare for independence. However, the Greek critics were divided about the film. Bourgeois critics, such as Mitropoulou and Sokou, praised the film. The leftist critics, on the other hand, had nothing but scorn for the film because it gave a debased representation of Greek social reality, and it set a dangerous precedent for young Greek women who would be victimized if they were to emulate the unrealistic character of Stella.¹⁸ Some of the leftist critics were so intolerant of the film’s feminist viewpoint that they even called for the film to be banned.¹⁹

Cacoyannis could not have imagined that *Stella* would elicit such a negative reaction from the leftists because, as he acknowledged, the goal of his film was to criticize bourgeois values:

Stella was a pretext to explore the world of *rembetiko*, which was so exciting. It was a milieu of ordinary people that was completely unknown to me, and it was despised by both Athenian society and the rest of the directors. (Cacoyannis 1990)

Cacoyannis’ goal was not to make a feminist movie, but *Stella* hit a nerve with some critics because it went against Greek patriarchy by contesting established perceptions about the role of women in Greek society and female singers of *rembetiko* music.

Nine years after *Stella*, Cacoyannis wrote and directed *Zorba the Greek*.²⁰ In this film, which is based on Nikos Kazantzakis’ novel, a young widow (Irene Papas) is trapped and killed because she took an Englishman (Alan Bates) as her lover and rejected Mavrantonis’ son, a local boy, who then committed suicide.²¹ The scene begins when Mavrantonis prevents her from entering the church, and a moment later she is driven away from the church to be slaughtered like a lamb. Zorba (Anthony Quinn) intervenes on behalf of his

boss but fails to save her. The widow pays with her life for having defied the villagers' patriarchal code of honour.

Zorba the Greek became a hit internationally. However, Greek public opinion was divided. Some saw the film as "an unpatriotic betrayal" of Kazantzakis' novel because Cacoyannis highlighted the mistreatment of two women in the hands of the Greek islanders. They stoned and murdered the young widow, and they stole the personal property of old Hortence who was lying helpless on her deathbed.²² Psathas' article, mockingly titled "Zorba the Turk", denounced the film for having presented the Greeks as savages, assassins, and thieves. In Psathas' opinion the film reinforced the negative image of the Greeks that was fomented by Turkish propaganda.²³

Two testimonies—one by Aglaia Mitropoulou and one by Peter Bien—assigned two diametrically opposed motives to Cacoyannis. Mitropoulou, who had interviewed Cacoyannis, wrote that he said to her: "Neither myself nor Kazantzakis had any intention of portraying the Cretans negatively . . . The killing of the widow . . . is an act of vengeance or crime of passion since even the father is in love with the widow".²⁴ Peter Bien, on the other hand, who was in Crete during the shooting of the film, wrote the following: "Rubbing his hands together sinisterly, Cacoyannis told me that he chose the stoning of the widow as the movie's central scene. I'm making it a true rape,' he explained 'a kind of mass psychodrama in which all the men of the village, who craved the widow sexually but could not have her, take their revenge by stoning".²⁵

In the case of the widow in *Zorba the Greek*, as in the case of *Stella* nine years earlier, the critics of Cacoyannis' films failed to address the issue about the status of women in Greek society. Instead, they paid more attention to the film's inability to project a positive image of the Greeks to its international audiences.

The feminism of Liappa, Marketaki, Evangelatou, and Karistiani

The politics of identity began to take precedence over class politics in the period of 1981-2004. The modern woman, refugees and immigrants came to the fore to dominate the screen. The New Greek Cinema slowly became oriented systematically towards the

representation of the new woman (Athanasatou: 2002). Three films acted as catalysts that precipitated this change: Frieda Liappa's *Love Wanders in the Night / I dromi tis Agapis Ine Nibterini* (1981), Nikos Vergitsis' *Revenge / Revans* (1983), and Tonia Marketaki's *The Price of Love / I timi tis Agapis* (1984).

Love Wanders in the Night is about two sisters who are entangled in a deadly love triangle with their cousin. *Revenge* is about a young man and his girlfriend; she has an affair with his best friend and instigates a ménage-à-trois arrangement between herself and the two friends. *The Price of Love* is an adaptation of Constantine Theotokis' novel, *Honour and Money / I Timi ke to Hrima*. It is about a pregnant woman who paid her lover a dowry to get him to propose marriage to her; but then decides to turn him down and go to Athens where she plans to find work and give birth to their child. The sexual emancipation of these three women in the 1980s reflects trends in Greek feminism that developed during the last quarter of the twentieth century. These three films inspired several emerging women filmmakers, such as Katerina Evangelakou, Kleoni Flessa, and Olga Malea. These filmmakers used the genre of comedy to portray the pleasures and problems of Greek women in the twenty-first century.

It was left to male filmmakers such as Nikos Panagiotopoulos, Pantelis Voulgaris, and Kiriakos Katzourakis to portray the dark side of their heroines. In Panagiotopoulos' *At The Edge of Night / Afti i Nibta Meni* (2000), the heroine follows in the footsteps of Cacoyannis' Stella, and she is ruined by Greek mafia operatives. These men entrap ambitious young women singers by promising to help them with their careers in provincial nightclubs. However, they soon turn these young women into victims of sex trafficking. The subject of sex trafficking is also treated by Voulgaris' *Brides / Nifes* (2003) and Katzourakis' *The Road West / O Dromos pros ti Disi* (2003), albeit less directly.

Evangelatou presents a less grim subject matter in her film, *Think it Over / Tha to Metaniosis* (2002). Her forty-year-old heroine undergoes a severe emotional crisis, which is exacerbated by her discovery that she is pregnant. While walking in her elegant dress and high heels, she stumbles in broad daylight and falls down in the street. Her entire life passes before her eyes in a flashback as she lies on the pavement. First, she turned down a scholarship to study math at the university. Second, she turned down a school-

mate whom she fancied when she found out that her sister loved him. Third, she stayed home taking care of her neurotic mother and ran a pastry shop in her small provincial town in order to pay for her sister's education. Fourth, she had a love affair with an old friend of the family, and now she is afraid that he will not want to marry her. Fifth, as an elected member of the municipal council, she comes to the defence of a female custodian who was fired by the mayor. As soon as her flashback is over, her lover, her mother, her sister, and the custodian rush to her side. She gets back on her feet and things turn around for her.

Whereas Cacoyannis could be seen as a reluctant or latent feminist, Evangelakou can be seen as an overt and conscientious feminist. Even though Greek women have gained equality before the law, they still face many barriers to achieving full emancipation because the patriarchal culture persists.²⁶ The heroine of the film decides to have a child in her forties without being married, speaks her mind against the mayor in local politics, and upsets the delicate social norms, exposing contradictions in Greek society.

In Pedro Almodovar's *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* / *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios* (1988), which was released fourteen years earlier, the heroine's anxiety stems from her lover's infidelity; it is not fuelled by her reaction to her social environment. In Evangelatou's film, it is the social environment that causes the heroine's anxiety as people comment about her age, her failure to get married, and her love affair with a younger man. The Greek Christian Orthodox Church condemns premarital sex, and Greek feminism lost its social momentum during the period of conflicting loyalties and contested identities. In this context, Evangelatou's film is a courageous contribution to the debate about the place of women in Greek society because it resolves the heroine's dilemma in her favour.

In Voulgaris' *Brides*, the two heroines, Niki (Victoria Haralambidis) and Haro (Evi Saoulidou), have different experiences as mail-order brides. Niki becomes a bride voluntarily, while Haro is coerced. Niki, who is a seamstress on a Greek island, replaces her sister as the bride for a tailor in Chicago, when her sister is unable to adjust to life in Chicago and returns home. Haro, on the other hand, who was forced to give up her Greek fiancé and to marry a baker in Canada instead, attempts to escape. When she is caught, her father beats her up and then ships her to Canada. Niki, during

her trip to the United States, meets Norman (Damian Lewis) on the ship.²⁷ Her brief relationship with Norman transforms her because she now sees herself as an immigrant woman in search of a job, rather than as a mail-order bride.

With Norman's help, Niki also becomes an activist for women's rights by opposing the plan of Karaboulat who tries to turn some young Russian women on the ship into prostitutes. Niki's feminist activism and her solidarity with Norman reflect the feminist activism of Ioanna Karistiani, the screenwriter of *Brides*, rather than the reality of Greek mail-order brides in the 1920s. Karistiani was active in the events that occurred at the Athens Polytechnic in 1973. The new attitudes of militant feminism adopted by young Greek women in the 1970s are discussed in Maro Douka's book, *Ancient Rust / Archaia Scouria*.

Conclusion

The films discussed above illustrate how the images of Greek women changed over time. In the period of silent cinema, these were shepherdesses and fallen angels. In the post-war period, the new woman made an early entry to the Greek screen. In *Stella*, artistic style meshed with the heroine's personality, but in a way that is significantly different from American film noir. This Greek film emphasized the heroine's love for sunlight, the outdoors, and her *joie de vivre*. I suggest that because of memories of the forceful women who were active during WW2 and the Resistance, female audiences identified with the subverting positions of *Stella*.

The women filmmakers of the so-called New Greek cinema, such as Marketaki and Liappas, expressed the "romantic views" of French *nouvelle vague*, whereas successors, such as Evangelakou, Malea and Flessa, were more flexible in their use of artistic styles, which often shared the undertones of the films of Almodovar. The declining impact of feminism has shaped the shift of texts from tragic to tragic-comic. The new sensibility towards the plight of immigrant women and sexual trafficking is well reflected in films such as *Brides* and *The Road to the West*. In the case of Panayiotopoulos' film, the influences of road movies and auteurism are too evident to require discussion here. In the case of *Brides*, the seamstress becomes an activist, a heroine partly inspired by tales of mail-order

brides in the 20s and partly by the feminism of Karystiani. In a later wave of contemporary Greek cinema women directors such as Constantina Voulgaris and Stella Theodorakis provide portraits of women which come closer to post-feminist *flâneurs* and present heroines who are no longer objects to be looked at, but personalities who take an active role in directing the narrative.

Notes

¹Laura Mulvey, *Visual and other Pleasures*. London: Palgrave, 1989.

²Aglaia Mitropoulos, *Ellinikos kinimatografos*. 2nd edition. Athens: Papazissis, 2006. This scene precedes the famous nude scene with Hedy Lamar in *Ecstasy* (1933), which is often cited in textbooks as the first nude scene.

³John Campbell, *Honour. Shame and Patronage in Rural Greece*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

⁴George Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn Republic Social Conditions and Party Strategies in Greece, 1922-1936*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1983.

⁵Maria Komninos, *Apo tin agora sto theama*. Athens: Papazissis, 2000.

⁶Mario Vitti, *I genea tou trianta*. Athens: Ermis, 1977.

⁷P. Delta, *Anamnis tou 1921*, edited by P. Zannas. Athens: Ermis, 1996.

⁸For the use of this term see Nancy Frazer, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," In *The Phantom Public Sphere*, edited by B. Robbins. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993). For its application to Greek context, see Maria Komninos, *Apo tin agora sto theama* (*op.cit.*).

⁹Miriam Hansen, "Chameleon and Catalyst: the Cinema as an Alternative Public Sphere." In *The Film Cultures Reader*, edited by G. Turner. London: Routledge, 2002.

¹⁰Aglaia Mitropoulou, *Ellinikos kinimatografos* (*op.cit.*).

¹¹Maria Komninou, "Eisagogi." In *Optikes ke alles apofasis*, edited by Laura Mulvey, translated into Greek by Margarita Koulentianou (Athens: Papazissis, 2004). Mulvey submitted that three perspectives affect a film's image: those of the director, the actors, and the spectators. She argues that the director controls the perspective of the audience in Hollywood films.

¹²Jeannette Plaisey, "Women in film noire." In *Women in Film Noir*, edited by Annette Kaplan, 41-45. London: BFI, 1980.

¹³Maria Komninos, *Apo tin agora sto theama* (*op.cit.*).

¹⁴Maria Komninos, "Kinimatografos-Ideologica-Kritiki stin Ellada kata tin period 1950-1967." In *I elliniki kinonia kata tin proti metapolemiki periodo (1945-1967)*, Proceedings of the 4th Congress organised by Pantion University (Athens: Foundation Sakis Karagiorgas, 1994), pp. 420-421.

¹⁵Dan Georgakas, "Stella, Michael Cacoyannis, Greece, 1955." In *The Cinema of the Balkans*, edited by Dina Iordanova. London and New York: Wallflower, 2006.

¹⁶*Ibid*, p. 20.

¹⁷Ioanna Athanassatou, *Greek cinema, 1950-1963*. Athens: Finatec, 2001. Athanassatou argues that the box-office success of this film indicates the maturity of lower-class audiences, and it makes the distinction between art cinema and commercial cinema redundant.

¹⁸*Ibid*, p. 20.

¹⁹A similar case was that of Stratis Tsirkas' *Drifting Cities*, a trilogy of novels, which attacked by leftist critics for the alleged immorality of its heroes; see Dimitris Raftopoulos, *Tebni ke dinami*. Athens: Kastaniotis, 1985.

²⁰The Greek dimension of this international production is evident even though it was done in English. The script is based on Kazantzakis novel, the music is by Mikis Theodorakis, most of the crew members were Greek, the heroine was Greek, virtually the entire supporting cast were Greek, and the film was shot on the Greek island of Crete.

²¹This scene also brings to mind the ritual killing of *Iphigenia at Aulis* in Euripides' tragedy. Cacoyannis adapted and directed Euripides tragedy and produced it under the title *Iphigenia* (1977).

²²Dimitris Papanikolaou, "O Zorbas metousiomenos." In *Nikos Kazantzakis: I proslipsi tou ergou tou*, edited by Nikos Psychogios, 91-108. Heraklion: Centre for Cretan Literature, 2006.

²³*Ibid*.

²⁴Aglaia Mitropoulou, (*op. cit.*), p. 166-167.

²⁵Peter Bien, "Nikos Kazantzakis novels on film." *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 18/1 (2000): 164.

²⁶Maro Pantelidou, *To fillo tis dimokratias*. Athens: Savallas, 2002.

²⁷According to Vernan and Frondisi-Dycroux, Niki is modelled after Penelope, and she serves as a mirror for Norman. For details, see Pierre Vernan and Françoise Frondisi-Ducroux, *Le miroir de Penelope*, translated into Greek by Vasso Mertzou. Athens: Olkos, 2003.

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