

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW EDITION



Historicizing a History

Greek Folklore and the Emergence of an Anthropology of Europe

It is truly an honor for me to see *Ours Once More*, my first book, reprinted and with new materials added to give historical context: this essay, Sharon Macdonald's elegant framing of the work in terms of present-day interests in the politics of heritage and the anthropology of Europe, and my translation of Alki Kyriakidou-Nestoros' brief but moving prologue to the Greek edition. *Ours Once More* was, it now appears, an exploration of the politics of heritage *avant la lettre*; the anthropology of Europe was just then embarking on what proved to be a long and difficult struggle for recognition as a legitimate research arena despite the early publication of several distinguished ethnographic monographs. I would like to think—and Sharon Macdonald's generous words let me dare to imagine—that *Ours Once More* played a modest but noticeable role in the emergent strengthening of both foci.

At the time of the composition of *Ours Once More*, a healthy critical literature on the relationship between folklore studies and nationalism was already flourishing; William Wilson's *Folklore and Nationalism in Modern Finland* (1976) was something of a model, as was the work of Felix Oinas (1975) in the then Soviet Union, and the conversation was already spreading far beyond Europe (see especially Janelli 1986 on Korea). But Greece represented a particularly complex and central problem. On the one hand, there was the promise of Greece's supposed parentage of the very concept of a humanistic, civilized Europe. On the other, however, the Greeks' profound reluctance—to some extent the product of precisely this attributed role—to countenance any kind of comparison of the Greek case with that of other emergent nation-states meant that Greek folklore studies had remained hermetically turned in on themselves.

No matter that Nikolaos Politis, the towering figure of Greek folklore studies at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, had inherited the strong comparativist predilections of the Germans whose scholarship he so admired; in their work he also found confirmation of his nationalist leanings (Alexakis 2012). Indeed, in the work of Politis and others, that German intellectual tradition was at least a contributory factor in the emergence of Greek exceptionalism, or what in this book I call “ecumenical ethnocentrism.” Before the humiliation of Greek irredentism in the aftermath of the 1920–22 war with Turkey, anything less than a strongly nationalist outlook would have made little sense, and it was buttressed by the assurance—frequently belied by the Great Powers’ attitude to Greece in the political arena—that the country would always be respected in the wider world for its glorious role as the *fons et origo* of European civilization.

After that cataclysmic conflict, however, the ideological tensions prefigured in the clash of the Hellenic and Romeic self-images emerged in more intense and complex forms. The military regimes of 1967–74 represented the climactic ascent to power of an especially toxic version of ethno-nationalism. With the restoration of democracy in 1974, critical questions about the official reading of folklore, already adumbrated as early as the middle of the nineteenth century, resurfaced in an increasing variety of intellectual styles. Notably, Alki Kyriakidou-Nestoros—despite the proud burden of a parent, Stilpon Kyriakidis, who was widely viewed as a distinguished proponent of the old school—brought radical refreshment to the discipline, reaching out to anthropology especially in her embrace of the theoretical ideas of Claude Lévi-Strauss. Folklore studies, although still deeply philological, shook off some of the restrictions of earlier years, while social anthropology finally arrived as an academic discipline with the 1987 creation of an active department at the University of the Aegean.

By this point, the models of Greek identity advanced by the previous generations of folklorists had filtered into the popular imagination through schoolbooks, radio, television, and newspapers and magazines. They have remained a potent presence in the ongoing political dramas of the country. The so-called “crisis” in Greece today calls for new approaches to their role and a re-examination of their history; it is not sufficient simply that they have become irrelevant. The old polarities have adapted to new external pressures. On the one side rages the biogenetic chauvinism that colored so much of the earlier folklorists’ work, but without the excuse of *Zeitgeist* to justify it; on the other, we find a generous and welcoming solidarity with the migrants whom the more powerful European states as well as the domestic far-rightists would like Greece to dispatch back to their homelands.

In these debates, some very familiar and widely used metaphors—notably that of inherited “blood”—continue to infuse the excesses of the ultra-right

Golden Dawn, but biogenetic assumptions about the ability to learn the Greek language or to understand the Greek way of life enjoy a far wider appreciation across the political spectrum. This is a time when true expertise is needed to offset the pontifications of self-styled experts with very little knowledge of the country and its language, let alone of the migrants' linguistic and other cultural backgrounds (Cabot 2019). Such expertise would usefully include a careful historical re-examination of the role of folklore studies in both constituting and challenging the central tenets of the nationalists' understanding of Greekness.

Analysis of the efforts that went into creating the "evidence" for the Greeks' unbroken and unsullied continuity with the ancient past—a past partly constructed outside Greece itself—will give us a more secure purchase on the turbulent presence of ethno-nationalism in Greek political and cultural life today. For while I would argue that Greece has largely shed the more obvious trappings and much of the political substance of its crypto-colonial past, traces remain in the exceptionalism that continues to resist comparison with other countries. Yet comparativism was in fact already very much in vogue in nineteenth-century philology, at a time when arguably Greek nationalism had not yet acquired the all-or-nothing character of its extreme incarnations in more recent times.

Motives and Ideologies

In response to the original publication of *Ours Once More* in 1982, one benign critic suggested that in leaning so firmly backwards to avoid imputing dishonesty to the nineteenth-century folklorists, I had actually ended up exposing their widely shared assumption that, as intellectual leaders, they were entitled to meddle with the content of folk songs and narratives (Beaton 1984). That is a fair assessment. It is important, however, to emphasize that the goal was not to discredit the folklorists' motives but to explain them with as little prejudgment as possible. With living informants, it is less productive to conclude that they are lying than, instead, to try to understand the social conditions under which they enunciate and recognize truth. Socially, truth is a highly contextual and relative matter (see, e.g., Shryock 1997: 148–152), and our task is to understand how, when, and why our interlocutors acknowledge or deny it. In writing history from an anthropological perspective, therefore, it seemed both appropriate and useful to accord the same courtesy to those long-deceased writers whose work forms my subject.

This restrained approach, moreover, was also dictated by the logic of what I was trying to do: I could not very well accuse these scholars of fakery and then, in the same breath, argue that they should be taken seriously as our own intellectual forebears or at least cousins. Respect meant respect—by all means rather more so for those few folklorists who from the earliest days of discipline

and nation-state refused to hew to the official line and academic affectations of intellectual superiority over the rural folk. But those in the majority, who did endorse and contribute to the building of mainstream ideology, were also passionately engaged in a search for knowledge and were using the generally approved scholarly methods of their time. The shape of their efforts must be read in the context of their cultural and historical environment.

For these more conventional folklorists, the discipline was an unambiguously national project; and a national project, by their definition, was engaged in demonstrating the European character of the country as guaranteed by Europe's respect for Greek antiquity as the foundation on which European culture was built. They were also engaged in a task of national pedagogy, that of inculcating Greek youth with a strong sense of the two fundamental axioms of continuity through time with the ancient past and through cultural space with the powerful nations of Western Europe. Without question, their writing was richly ideological, and I have tried in this book—and in these new prefatory comments—to clarify what that ideology was. But to assume that ideology must in general be a form of false consciousness is surely one of the most egregious ways in which serious scholars have denied others the recognition of their agency. These folklorists knew what they were doing and why it was important; and, insofar as it is ever possible to assess personal convictions, it seems at least highly probable that they were sure they were right—right, that is, both morally and factually.

The debates continue to rumble on, albeit in modified form, and doubtless will do so for many decades to come. That, too, is evidence of the importance of continuing to examine the role of folklorists in the construction of modern Greek identity, as, indeed, others have done for history (e.g., Liakos 2002) and archaeology (e.g., Hamilakis 2007, 2008; Plantzos 2012). In folklore itself, Alki Kyriakidou-Nestoros (1978) was a pioneer in this regard, but the relative displacement of folklore by anthropology in Greek universities may have whittled away further interest in pursuing the topic.

These debates reveal ongoing political and ideological tensions within Greek society. In such a context, it is particularly important not to attribute personal motives to any of the actors. For many years, anthropologists have engaged in a fairly consistent discussion regarding the thorny question of intentionality—of how we know what motivates others. From Rodney Needham's (1972) categorical rejection of the very possibility to the discussion of "opacity" in intersubjective relations by Joel Robbins and Alan Rumsey (2008), the discipline has usually, when brought to order, taken a resolutely agnostic position. I have suggested that we can only discern what is culturally considered to be a *plausible* representation of innermost thoughts and motives, and that one way to do this is to examine the public reaction to fictional works where such imaginary reconstructions are commonplace—in my case, in an examination of the writings

of the Cretan author Andreas Nenedakis (Herzfeld 1997c). John Leavitt (1976: 517), by contrast, argues that ethnographers sometimes write their most compelling prose when they appear to violate this canon by attributing specific emotions to their informants. That, however, as Leavitt acknowledges, does not mean that these anthropologists have failed to understand that doing so is a recognition of empathy in fieldwork situations rather than a claim to read minds.

Similar ambiguities apply to the interpretation of historical texts. I can do little more than speculate about what nineteenth-century folklorists were thinking. We can only know what they *claimed* to be thinking. The conventions of their rhetoric are clear, and, as with excuses (Austin [1956–57] 1971), their declarations conform to those conventions. Readers of those times were more or less compelled to *accept* those conventions, much as most people, most of the time, accept the conventions of everyday excuses (especially as they will probably want to use the same excuses at some point); this does not mean that either the authors or their readers actually *believed* their declarations. We can only know what they said and how they said it; and we also know that they said it rather often and with an appearance of passionate commitment to the national ideal, so that those few who dared to challenge the dominant thinking even minutely always ran the risk of seeming eccentric and perhaps even traitorous.

The political reasons for this highly pressured environment, moreover, are clear and have been extensively documented. The folklorists were presenting their ideas to a public educated, in part by the folklorists themselves, to entertain specific expectations of a scholar's role in the consolidation of the newly-created nation-state. That state required a single definition of historical truth. Whatever else the folklorists may have written about national history—the role of Byzantium, for example, or the relations between the independence fighters and the emergent Greek state authorities—the one tenet they would challenge at their peril was the premise of unbroken continuity with the classical past. Still more dire was the position of any foreign (European) scholar who dared to challenge that tenet. This is understandable, since the survival of the Greek state, and especially its endorsement by the European powers, seemed to rest on the claim to unbroken links with classical antiquity; challenging that claim was therefore a threat to national security. For a Westerner to pose such a challenge was adding insult to injury. But the outright refusal to countenance even modifications of the continuity hypothesis meant that the identification of *local* continuities was largely ignored. Inasmuch as it might have become the point of departure for separatist arguments, it would have seemed as dangerous a threat as the outright denial of any continuity at all.

In one sense, then, this book is an account of the construction of a single history representing a single, and singular, nation-state. It is a history of a remarkably well-disciplined and internally coherent exceptionalism. As we proceed chronologically, however, we will hear a few contrarian voices, even if they

were dismissed or ignored at the time. Along with the emergence of a strong binary contrast between two images of Greekness—as Hellenes (heirs to the classical past) and as *Romii* (heirs to the Byzantine and Ottoman eras)—came an increasingly tense relationship between the self-presentation of national culture and ordinary people’s affectionate, amused, embarrassed, and sometimes bitterly angered sense of another version of that culture, one that did not favor the double cloak of classical and European identity but acknowledged the realities of daily life as a better gauge of the true socio-cultural experience of Greek people everywhere.

At the time of its first appearance in 1982, anecdotal evidence suggests, this book was seen by Greeks as somewhat avant-garde and provocative. I can no longer make such a claim for it, and some of the analysis—for example, discussion of the *Ellinas-Romios* distinction—may now sound dated, and rightly so. But these old structures, while no longer operative at the explicit level to any significant degree (one hears the latter term less and less frequently), may still inflect the attitudes that I have just described as reflecting the tension between an introverted nativism and the extroverted appeal to a universalist model of classically-derived European culture.

Indeed, as I remarked with the first appearance of another of my books, *Cultural Intimacy* (1997a), the hard edges of such contrasts—which on the surface resemble nothing so much as the binarisms of structuralist writers like Lévi-Strauss—may now be yielding to a more dynamic and flexible model. Moreover, that more open-ended approach appears both in the ideological debates now taking place in Greece about the place of that country in the larger evolution of political Europe and in the theoretical frameworks that anthropologists use to think about cultural identity and change. The reactive defensiveness that some of my observations have provoked even quite recently would nevertheless seem to justify the impression that some in Greece still harbor the strong feelings conveyed in the single Greek phrase that best summarizes the basic principle of cultural intimacy: “domestic matters should not be discussed in public” (Herzfeld 1997a: 95; 2016: 126). It also suggests that the Greek nation-state is an all-embracing *oikos* that still, disclaimers to the contrary, commands a powerfully defensive collective sentiment. *Ours Once More* may help readers to understand how a country supposedly so soaked in ancient glories should so often appear deeply concerned about its international image—a matter in which Greeks are realistic at least in understanding that impressions do matter.

It is also my hope, consistent with some of what I have already remarked here, that the book will increasingly be seen as not just another narrow work about Greece. In many ways it is a book about both anthropology and Europe—anthropology, because in many ways these folklorists derived so many of their ideas from common (and today largely discredited) forebears such as Edward Burnett Tylor and James George Frazer; and Europe, because Greek

folklorists were working through a tangle of assumptions and effects created by the ideology of European supremacy. In that sense, their writings hold a critical mirror to the shifting perspectives of Western European scholarship. It is nonetheless significant that very few intellectual historians of Western Europe have ever taken the trouble to look in that mirror. They might well be shocked by the unanticipated self-recognition.

Anthropologists, for their part, might learn to appreciate anew the value of the rich philological scholarship that has been too easily jettisoned along with its discarded antiquarianism. While I would never claim professional knowledge of classical Greek, moreover, I am grateful that a schooling in the ancient language in England allowed me to manage the intricacies of *katharevousa*, the neo-classical language favored by right-wing governments and regimes through much of Greek history and the language of university instruction during my scholarship year at the University of Athens (1969–70) during the military dictatorship, and to understand the folklorists' attempts—some more successful than others—to connect the ancient language with the modern. The realization that I was perhaps more comfortable with the language used in the lecture halls of the university than were some of the students—from whom my extremely conservative and nervous local supervisor actively tried to keep me apart—became a catalyst for my later thinking about Greek national identity politics and its relevance both for the larger project of European anthropology and for the institutional processes of European integration.

Concepts and Controversies

A consequence of that year's exposure to the realities of fascist militarism, in the context of a Europe that wanted no truck with such a retrograde politics but seemed unable to do much about it, was thus a growing awareness that led, first, to the production of *Ours Once More*, and from there to the formulation of two concepts that have been central to my subsequent work in Greece and elsewhere: cultural intimacy (Herzfeld 1997a, 2016) and crypto-colonialism (Herzfeld 2002). For both these concepts, the contrast between the self-presentation of the Hellenic model and the self-knowledge of the Romeic have been foundational.

Yet the contrast is often misunderstood. Let me therefore emphasize that I have never claimed that there were two kinds of Greeks, Hellenic and Romeic, but only that these names represent different ideological and highly stereotypical interpretations of Greek history and thus signal different views of what, in consequence, should be emphasized in representations of Greek culture. These arguments have been vital to the survival of the Greek nation-state and have exercised a powerful influence over its management of its geopolitical

relations. Broadly speaking, one could say that the nationalist right-wing tradition emphasizes the importance of presenting the neoclassical façade to the world, while the more internationalist and left-wing view recognizes the appeal of a less formal view and thus also seems less anxious to protect the realities of everyday existence in Greece from the foreign gaze. To be sure, this is an over-simplification, but it will help to contextualize the story told in *Ours Once More* and to highlight its relevance to Greece's recent history. It also provides an introduction to both cultural intimacy and crypto-colonialism.

Reducing all of Greek cultural politics to a simple binary opposition between two images of national identity certainly makes no sense. The importance of that opposition lies elsewhere, in the uses to which it is put both at the level of national self-presentation and in the day-to-day encounters of everyday life, and a more dynamic model allows us to track the various ways in which it is used and the ideologies with which a particular emphasis on one or the other side of the pair is associated. What is more, even those who would profess total fealty to the Hellenic image will often, grudgingly or surreptitiously as it may be, display in their ordinary interactions an array of attitudes and actions more appropriate to the Romeic even though they might never use that name. After the publication of *Ours Once More*, therefore, it became apparent that the crucial factors in determining such cultural patterns did not—at least overtly—center on the Hellenic-Romeic opposition as such but instead, more broadly, pointed to a ubiquitous and tenacious tension between sometimes ostentatious collective self-display and an often defensive idiom of collective self-recognition. The latter is the shielded domain that I have called cultural intimacy.

I have already mentioned the reactive defensiveness that the other key concept, crypto-colonialism, sometimes evokes—a response that perhaps signals alarm over the breaching of that shield. Here again, at the risk of appearing to over-generalize, I would say that the reaction comes primarily from those on the political right, heirs to the nationalist paradigm that has dominated much of Greek history and rejects, or has reasons to conceal, its deep ties to the Western Powers' interest in maintaining Greece as a political and cultural buffer zone and as a client state. Within that client state, the unequal mutuality that we call patron-client relations reproduces the country's own historically beholden condition in relation to the Western Powers. Much as right-wing politicians launch accusations of corruption against leftist opponents—and without denying the probable truth of at least some of those accusations—we can say that the tradition of patronage, which nationalists too easily blame on the long years of Ottoman rule (and therefore as foreign to the Greek spirit), was deeply entrenched among establishment politicians from the very inception of the Greek state. The complex tangle of cultural, economic, and political dependencies thus gives the Greek right a host of reasons to be anxious lest too much of the cultural reality on which the entire complex rests be revealed to potentially hostile foreign eyes

(and again we cannot say that leftists are totally innocent of such subterfuge or of the behavior that seems to require it). Hence the defensive reactions to foreign observations about practices that foreigners are imagined to despise, and that—a not unrealistic thought in some cases—some Greeks fear they will use, or allow hostile neighbors to use, to hurt Greek national interests.

Among these reactions have been some that particularly target my second key concept, that of crypto-colonialism. This is a model intended to describe situations in which a nominally independent nation-state depends, for that independence, on the approval and support of “patron” (or “protector”) states, which in exchange require it to adopt certain features—secure borders, a centralized administration, and a strong model of a unified “national culture” and history modeled on those of the Western Powers—considered to be essential components of modern statehood. This model describes the situation of many other countries, including Afghanistan, Iran, Nepal, and Thailand. It is a model intended to promote the comparative perspective that is a core dimension of social anthropology, and, as such, to point up differences as well as similarities. For those (especially on the right) who take an exceptionalist position, justified by the view that Greece is the starting-point of European civilization, such comparisons are deeply troubling; the idea that Greece might have something in common with Asian states clearly touches a nerve, perhaps because “Asia” first and foremost implies Persia in antiquity and Turkey in the recent past. And Turkey, too, can conceivably be discussed as a crypto-colonial state.

The major comparison I have attempted thus far has been with Thailand, and not purely because that is another country where I have done extensive research. A common reaction has been to dismiss the idea out of hand, as though it violated ordinary common sense. But common sense, as Gramsci famously reminded us (see Bates 1975), is a hegemonic system in itself; I have often remarked that anthropology should in fact be seen as the comparative study of common sense, thereby revealing its relative *lack* of a common or even sensible basis. Here, I would simply note that the critics may have forgotten that it was the Thai student revolt of 1973 that partly inspired the revolt of the Athens Polytechnic students a month later—a revolt, moreover, that has now become part of the establishment discourse even as conservative voices seek to disembody the Polytechnic itself from its physical (and to some extent ideological) location in one of the more “revolutionary” parts of the national capital (see Stavrides 2019: 192–194). I have never claimed that Greece and Thailand had identical trajectories. I would insist, however, that a comparison of the two countries proves unexpectedly revealing, as much for the differences that it disinters as for the significant similarities. I hope that someone will find the time to write the equivalent of *Ours Once More* for Thailand; cultural historians like Thongchai Winichakul (2001) have certainly paved the way. Again, the contrasts will probably be as instructive as the resemblances.

What the criticisms of the crypto-colonial model miss so spectacularly is the irony of how well they themselves reflect the crypto-colonial situation.¹ Why such ire at the very idea of being compared with non-European countries, if not because of the extraordinary political investment in promoting the concept of a Greece that essentially founded the European civilizational ideal? *Ours Once More* includes numerous examples of that discourse at early stages of its formulation. What ideologically right-wing commentators will not easily concede, however, is that almost from the inception of the Greek nation-state there were also critical responses. Andonios Manousos (1850), while clearly committed to the nationalist cause, nevertheless complained with particular bitterness about the academic establishment's habit of hijacking local folklore for its own interpretative ends and of ignoring the performers' own understanding of their narratives and songs. So if the critics feel that the model of crypto-colonialism somehow denies the Greeks any agency in the construction of their national identity, they could do worse than to discover here the evidence that at least a few critics actively opposed the Eurocentric establishment's expropriation of local lore. They might also reflect on the extent to which that establishment's complicity with the Western Powers, both geopolitically and culturally, was itself a form of agency—an agency that perhaps held political benefits for those who wielded it and that, intelligently deployed, advanced their ideological interests and perspectives.

Thus, for example, when Nikolaos Politis (1901) explicitly opposed the adoption of the "Romeic" name for the Greek people, he made the political character of his reasoning explicit and unambiguous, although he did so by the innocent-sounding philological device of pointing out that the nation-state of Romania already used that name—an argument that was later to be used in reverse in the protracted struggle over the right of the government in post-Yugoslavia Skopje to call its country Macedonia (see Danforth 1997; Sutton 1997). Such arguments are never politically neutral, and least of all in a country like Greece in which language itself has been, and remains, so highly politicized (see Herzfeld 1997b; Kazazis 1982). That, too, is why the historical significance of the Hellenic-Romeic debate—as Alki Kyriakidou-Nestoros briefly acknowledges in her preface—cannot be gainsaid. Politis' essay makes that significance especially clear. He was a thinker of some subtlety and deep erudition with a network of contacts in other European countries, and he also served actively in the educational sector of the government bureaucracy. His interest in promoting the Hellenic over the Romeic—without denying the historical significance of the latter for the development of Greek identity—draws these two strands of his personal engagement together in a revealing combination.

A Historical Auto-Ethnography?

In many ways, the best characterization of *Ours Once More* is as an exercise in the study of *auto-ethnography* as expounded by Deborah Reed-Danahay (1997). A leading contributor to the development of Europeanist ethnography and an active participant in my 1990 NEH Seminar on “Social Poetics” that anticipated the production of *Cultural Intimacy*, Reed-Danahay (1997: 9) argues that the term should be used, not in the purely generic sense of an exercise in reflexivity as such, but as a respectful but also analytical recognition of the skills that local people often display in narrating their life experiences in relation to the social context—in other words, practicing ethnography in all but name. The distinction she makes is an important (and all too easily overlooked) contribution to the reflexive turn in anthropology; it entails recognition of the anthropological capacities and conceptual contributions of those who have hitherto been regarded simply as “informants.”

In claiming that *Ours Once More* is an ethnographic work, I am proposing in just this spirit to examine the historical and textual community of Greek folklore scholars from the perspective of what they say or hint about their knowledge of their own social and cultural environment. I try to understand the reasons behind choices and interpretations that often do not accord with my own *a priori* assumptions. In calling for serious respect for scholars and thinkers with whose ideas and conclusions I certainly often disagree, at times vehemently, I ask that they, no less than the semiotically smart shepherds with whom I have worked on Crete, be taken seriously as, precisely, scholars and thinkers. I am not endorsing the views of one Greek folklorist who many years ago told me that he did not have to spend long periods of time in any village setting because, as a Greek, he immediately understood what he was encountering. But that does not mean that he, too, did not possess important perspectives and insights that derived from his own background as a Greek of rural origins, or that his intensely philological approach to folklore could contribute nothing to its interpretation. Recognizing the ideological bias of a nationalistic discipline allows us to view it with greater analytical rigor; it does not disqualify it as serious scholarship.

I hope, moreover, that I am not blind enough to believe that my own work is devoid of ideological bias. But here again I also do not think that such bias automatically disqualifies my work from being taken seriously; if it did, all scholars would have to abandon their calling. By the same token, I continue to extend the same respect—a respect that I believe enriches *our* understanding—to those long-deceased scholars, apostles of a nationalism now largely considered outmoded and even embarrassing, whose researches nevertheless add up to a story that I thought worth telling nearly four decades ago. The ongoing, periodic

eruption of debates about Greek identity suggest that an examination of their work may have even greater relevance for our scholarly self-awareness today.

Looking far beyond Greece, moreover, it should also shed a refracted and complex light on such controversial projects as the search for a European identity and the brutal exclusions with which it is so often associated in practice. Perhaps Greece's unfair treatment by its more powerful European Union "partners," especially in the requirement that Greece should contain and process all migrants who enter Europe through Greek borders, reflects the long-standing contradiction between Greece's carefully cultivated image as the ancient fount of European culture—an image built largely on the work of the folklorists and their allies in archaeology and historiography—and its real-time treatment as the bad child of the European continent. Perhaps, too, Europe's claim to a transcendent humanism (and humanitarianism) paradoxically defended by the vicious policing of European borders (see De Genova 2017; Feldman 2012) is an appropriate successor to the equally self-contradictory universalism that places European values at the exclusive apex of human achievement. The story told in *Ours Once More* can thereby illuminate contemporary geopolitical and cultural dynamics, even as today's politicians artfully conceal deep historical ties and a ramified kinship with the colonialism that once made Europe and its imagined Greece the undisputed models of civilization for the entire world.

Note

1. See especially the recent debates between Vaso Kindi and myself in *To Vima* (11, 18, and 25 August and 15 September 2019) and the commentary by Theodoros Georgiou in *I efimeridha ton Sindakton* (3 September 2019, https://www.efsyn.gr/stiles/apopseis/209339_apo-tin-epistimi-sti-sahlamara-bullshit); see also my interview, conducted by Tasos Tsakiroglou in the latter newspaper (28–29 September 2019, p. 14; https://www.efsyn.gr/politiki/synenteyxeis/212636_i-ekfrasi-eyropaikos-tropos-zois-myrtzei-ratsismo, last downloaded 13 January 2020).

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