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<b>Abstract:</b>	<p>This paper compares the poetry and writings of Nikos Kavvadias (1919-1975) to the diary of Malinowski (1884-1942) in order to critically reflect upon the alienation of the anthropologist from the field, and to further expand on the professionalization and alienation of the anthropological discipline in a privatized world of education from world(s). In this context it distinguishes two general types of ethnographic writing, amateur and professional, highlighting the role of the ethnographer as that of a charismatic auteur. In respect to the historical predicament of anthropology the paper then asks: If we accept ethnography as a semi-fictional genre, the ethnographer as an auteur, and the monograph as a chronotope, what can the anthropological thought gain by a turn towards fiction? By placing the amateur anthropological vision within the liminal space in-between fiction and non-fiction, subjectivity and objectivity respectively, the paper highlights the dissociation of the anthropological discourse from the same historical processes that ideologically formulate the methodology used and interpretation of the field, in order to focus on the 'poetics' of amateur ethnographic writing, and the potentiality to rewrite a subjective and diverse body of world history(ies) in the spirit of Emmanuel Kant.</p>

**Michelangelo Paganopoulos (Goldsmiths College, UCL)**

**The Affinity between Anthropology and Literature: Reflections on the Poetics of Ethnography in the work of Nikos Kavvadias<sup>1</sup>**

**Introduction**

In the Introduction of *The Waste Land* (1922) T.S. Eliot acknowledges the influence of two works of early anthropology on which the epic poem was based: Miss Jessie L. Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* and Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (2002: 58). Eliot's use of anthropological resources in his poetry reveals the exotic (folklore) side of anthropology itself, which Malinowski, in his strong effort to offer a 'scientific' anthropological method, totally rejected. But following Clifford and Marcus (1986) challenge of the 'scientific' claim of ethnography as a way of objectively constructing knowledge about Other-Worlds (through extensive fieldwork, participant observation, translation and categorization of data) in the last two decades anthropologists, sociologists, and other fieldworkers increasingly turned towards literature treating ethnography as a *genre* of semi-fictional literature with its own advantages and limitations, rather than a scientific experiment:

Ethnography is seen more often as a species of creative writing than as science; and the realism of conventional accounts is considered to be as limited in its formal scope as its content is often deceptive (Grimshaw and Hart 1995: 46)

In the current anthropological debate regarding the widening of ethnographic theory, which included the issues of interpretation and translation of fieldwork data, there has been an effort to 'produce ethnographically grounded, theoretically innovative engagements with the broadest geographic and thematic range' (da Col and Graeber 2011: viii). In this spirit, the paper will distinguish between the amateur and professional anthropologist in terms of method and aims, returning to the notion of the role of the ethnographer as that of a charismatic *auteur*. By placing the amateur anthropological vision within the *liminal* space in-between fiction and non-fiction, subjectivity and objectivity respectively, the paper highlights the dissociation of the anthropological discourse from the same historical processes that ideologically

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<sup>1</sup> This is a revised and completed version of a paper with the same title first presented in the 3rd Biennial Hellenic Observatory PhD Symposium, European Institute, London School of Economics (14-15 June 2007).

formulate the methodology used and interpretation of the field. In respect to this historical predicament of anthropology the paper asks: If we accept ethnography as a semi-fictional *genre*, the ethnographer as an *auteur*, and the monograph as a *chronotope*, what can the anthropological thought gain by a turn towards fiction? In answering to this question, I will be reflecting on the poetics of ethnography by looking at the travelling writings of the Greek poet Nikos Kavvadias (1919-1975) in reference to the field diary of Malinowski (1884-1942). Before moving to the evaluation of Kavvadias's own work from an anthropological perspective, it would be useful to briefly examine the central motifs of his work. My aim is to investigate and further expand on the relationship of anthropology to prose. Paraphrasing Kavvadias' question in his poem *Kuro Siwo*: 'Is it the compass turning, Or the Ship?' (1933) the paper asks: is it the method that makes anthropology, or the introverted and subjective experience of travelling?

### **Modern Odysseus**

Nikos Kavvadias was a travelling sailor and a poet in the tradition of Herman Melville, Joseph Conrad, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Robert Louis Stevenson, among others. Kavvadias was born in 1919 in Harbin, Manchuria. His parents were from the Greek island of Kefalonia. He worked as a radio-operator in cargo ships from an early age with various shipping companies based at Piraeus. Similar to Herman Melville's self-confessional distaste of the land, Kavvadias was born a traveller who could not stand the land for a long time and always had to move on. Unlike many of his contemporary Greek scholars who focused on folklore writing of at times nationalist sentiment, Kavvadias wrote both about modern Greece and about the world. He did not seem to distinguish between the two. For him, Greece was never a home, because although he was Greek, he was not born there. His writings are characterized by a strong sentiment of universal humanism, a sense of a world united in cosmopolitan places, such as the dirty ports of multinational cities, which became his true home. The sailor-poet drew huge inspiration and admiration for Konstantinos Cavafys (1863-1933) the writer of the masterful pseudo-historical poem *Ithaka*, [see Index 1] who was born in Alexandria to Greek parents but spent most of his life travelling from Egypt to England, and who was the advocate of a universal Hellenistic spirit surpassing beyond the borders of the nation state.

Kavvadias's style of writing was based on his personal experiences and emotions reflected upon the sea, the weather, and the lost cities with their dirty ports. During his life, he produced a relatively limited amount of work, however, heavily invested with these experiences. He only published one novel entitled *Vardia* ('The Shift', 1954) written in the tradition of Herman Melville's early storytelling in *Typee* and *Omoo* (1846-7). In addition to this, his first selection of poems entitled *Marabu* was published in 1933 at the age of twenty-four; his second collection entitled *Pousi* ('sea fog') in the middle of his life in 1947; and a few months after his third collection *Traverso* was published, he died in 1975. Following his death, the cosmopolitan character of his prose was highlighted by the famous Greek composer -and former minister of Culture- Thanos Mikroutsikos, who produced two rock albums using his poetry that became hugely successful, especially among young people.

Furthermore, twelve years after his death, three short stories were also published in a single volume: *Lee*, *Of War* and *On My Horse* (my translation from Greek). *Lee* in particular is written in the form of a diary, which I will be looking more extensively below. In addition to this material, more recently Guy M. Saunier published *The Diary of a Skipper* (2005), which contains extracts of intimate travelling experiences and memories written as a prose or poetry in the form of a diary. Originally, this was the first publication of the young Kavvadias in the journal *Peiraikon Vema* (January and February 1932). The diary gives us a first glance to his future mythological themes that stigmatized his poetry as a whole: from 'A Bord de l'Aspasia' (1933) and 'Kuro Siwo' (1947) to 'Woman' (1975) [see Index 2]. These include references to the dangerous and enchanting Indian Ocean; his first trip to the sailors' favourite and mysterious Marseille; his life-changing visit to Stromboli which is the Italian island opposite the volcano Etna; his parents' home Argostoli the capitol of the Greek island Kefalonia, and other texts, which juxtapose his childhood expectations against the reality and dangers of travelling. In a text from his diary entitled 'Argostoli: The Melancholic Capitol of Kefalonia' (2005: 40-43), Kavvadias reveals his feelings for his parents' Greek home as a place without life: 'only mountains rising in a threatening and mourning manner' (*Ibid*: 40), an experience that is contrasted to the colourful and monotonous at the same time experience of travelling. At times, during his journeys, he might even consider committing suicide, but it is clear that he could

not live for a second on the island of Kefalonia. Thus, in his life and poetry, he consciously took the role of a modern Odysseus, the sailor trapped in his inner search for a 'home' that is never there, becoming the protagonist in Cavafys's imagination for a long gone Ithaca:

As you set out for Ithaka  
 Hope the voyage is a long one,  
 Full of adventure, full of discovery  
 (Opening verses of *Ithaka*: Index 1).

This kind of textual introverted exoticism is also echoed in the poetry of the Argonaut Kavvadias and his description of static seascapes and cosmopolitan ports. Kavvadias takes the role of the folklorist, amateur ethnographer, absorbing the exotic life surrounding him in his journey to nowhere, until he dies, and stops moving/experiencing. Yet, in these life journeys, he intimately connects the internal feelings of loss of childhood innocence, against the collective disillusion with the increasing homogenized 'modern world'. Furthermore, his 'world' is not only increasingly becoming smaller but also polluted. This disillusion is masterfully expressed in his early poem 'Kafar' (1933):

[...]  
 Once the ships were our hidden wish  
 But now the world is an empty page  
 It is the same to be in Greece  
 And travelling to Fernando Po

[...]  
 The poles became familiar to us  
 We admired numerous times the northern Selas  
 And the ice is covered for years now  
 With empty cans of Spanish sardines

[...]  
 The Japanese, the girl in Chile  
 And the black Moroccan girls selling honey  
 Like all women they have the same legs  
 And kiss the same way

(Extracts from 'Kafar' in the collection *Marabou* 1933, *my translation* from Greek)

The sailor does not seem to move, but rather, the world travels around him: ‘Is it the compass turning, or the ship?’ he asks. His journey is static like the seascapes of the equator, as he is trapped in the ship, a metal coffin, which remains immobile in space, letting the globe move around it. For the sailing poet, the juxtaposition of romantic nostalgia to the modern reality is a universal condition of the human being, which he reflects upon his strong sentiment of nostalgia for a ‘home’ that is never there. This feeling of loss painfully stigmatises his entire work. It is an endless journey that takes him from the mountains of Switzerland to the immobile seascapes of the equator, as people are different and the same, exotic in their own account but banal in their modern reality.

This pessimistic and alienating portrayal of the modern world<sup>2</sup> echoes Heidegger’s definition of modernity as an ocular-centric process which is: ‘increasingly reified, closed, restricted, narrowed, tightened, distorted, and destructively fixated in representations –of self, of others, of knowledge, truth, and reality- that interpret the visible world by imposing confrontations of opposition between subject and object’ (as in Levin’s reading of Heidegger, 1993: 5-6). Levin (1993: 1-29) drew an evolutionary perspective of ocular-centrism, referring to the process of developing a particular rationality (i.e. ‘science’), that supposedly began with the European Enlightenment on the exclusive basis of vision and perception as the means of understanding the world in terms of objective and subjective forms of knowledge and truth: from Descartes’s and Husserl’s return to Plato’s Cave, to Habermas’s ‘ethics of communicative processes’, and via the epic visionary experiences of Romanticism, to an increasingly nihilistic and en-framed view of humanity (Heidegger) driven by ‘the violence of light’ (Derrida).

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<sup>2</sup> By ‘modern world’ I refer to the historical process of the transition from agricultural and feudal economies, which were based on collective types of ‘mechanical solidarity’, to nation states which were built on various types of capitalist economies on the basis of ‘organic solidarity’ (Durkheim [1893]). The transition from agricultural to industrialized societies was parallel to the processes of ocular-centrism (Levin 1993: 1-29), ‘disenchantment’ (Weber [1904, 1920]), nationalization, industrialization and urbanization. This processes were followed by a global ‘re-enchantment’ towards new kinds of ‘dream world of mass culture’ (Walter Benjamin in Buck-Morss 1991: 253-4, and Comaroffs 1993). Arendt (1958) defined this transition as a way of thinking, on the basis of three events: the discovery of America (the collective vision to satisfy the *wanderlust*); the Reformation as the means of morally understanding and categorizing the ‘self’; and ‘the invention of the telescope and development of a new science that considers [...] the universe’ (1998: 248) as the means of morally understanding and categorizing the ‘world’.

Kavvadias's writings highlight this process of homogenization, narrowness, and confinement of the 'world' through the scientific and technological reduction of human experience. However, he further expands on this by underlying the paradox and contradictions of modernity in itself as a process of confinement: while increasingly the 'world' becomes smaller in terms of compressed time and space, simultaneously, it also becomes more exotic and strange through new phantasmagoric objects and new technologies (i.e. the binoculars and shipping industry of the past, or the computer screens and the internet of the present day) which expand the vision of/about the 'world'. Yet, although we come to know more about this 'world' the more alienated we become. For Arendt, this form of impersonal alienation was the result of the rise of the capitalist economy in which the concepts of 'society' and 'social solidarity' (as in Durkheim 1893), with all its malice, poverty, unemployment, and social indifference, replaced the protective and traditional structures of family life, as well as, private property (1998/1958: 254-257). This alienating aspect of modernity is further illustrated by the alienation of the traveler in a foreign world, which he observes from a 'scientific'/ technological distance, a position of power, but is also hesitant to *touch*.

### **Confined Argonauts**

The natives set fires in the sand  
 And as they play their organs, we get more anxious  
 To triumph over the Sea's deaths  
 I wish I'd see you at the wharf

(Kavvadias' extract from "Karanti" in *Pousi* [1947], 2002: 24, *my translation* from Greek)

The Mayos stood on the shore; I watched them a long time through binoculars and waved my handkerchief—I felt I was taking leave of civilization. I was fairly depressed, afraid I might not feel equal to the task before me... I looked at them through binoculars; they reminded me of the Saturday excursion to Blackall Ranges... I went to the cabin and felt asleep after an injection of Alkarsodyl. The next day was spent in my cabin, dozing with a bad headache and general numbness

(Malinowski on his arrival among the Mailu, New Guinea, 1967: 5)

Travelling for long periods of time can be a cruel experience, as much as boring. As Firth in his introduction to Malinowski's diaries writes: 'The feeling of confinement,

the obsessional longing to be back if for the brightest while in one's own cultural surroundings, the dejection and doubts about the validity of what one is doing, the desire to escape into fantasy world of novels or daydreams... -many sensitive fieldworkers have experienced these feelings' (1967: xv). In the above very different in style texts, the feelings of confinement, anxiety, and numbness, as well as, nostalgia for a 'home' that is not there, and alienation from the 'world' that is thought to be out there, are expressed by both Kavvadias and Malinowski. The experience of travelling is common to modernity as a whole: as much as a stranger is always a stranger -even an 'illegal' immigrant these days. Both Kavvadias and Malinowski were travellers, and they both regarded travelling as the means of learning about the world and yourself. They were both in places that never became their homes, and in many respects they were born 'foreigners'.

Malinowski was born in Krakow, Austria-Hungary (present day Poland) in 1884, but like Kavvadias, he travelled all his life from Poland to Britain and from there to Papua New Guinea, Melanesia, Oceania, the Trobriand Islands, Mexico, Scandinavia, and North America among other places. His achievements in the field of anthropology are well known, mainly his systematic study of reciprocity (the *Kula* system), kinship, sexuality, and rites. Malinowski was a graduate of Leipzig University where the famous folk psychologist Wilhelm Wundt taught him (1908-1910) before moving to the London School of Economics (1910) under the supervision of the psychologist Charles G. Seligman (1873-1940) and the social philosopher Edward A. Westermarck (1862-1939). He also kept contact with Cambridge University and the professor of Zoology and film maker Alfred C. Haddon (1855-1940), and the medical neurologist and ethnologist W. H. R. Rivers (1864-1922). All five men had a huge influence on Malinowski's effort to make the distinction between description and analysis (1922) on which the whole project of scientific anthropology was based ever since.

However, infamously Malinowski's publication of his diary, which came twenty five years after his sudden death in 1967, sent shock waves across the discipline, as it unmasked the 'scientist', a title that he so eagerly defended in the 'Introduction' of the *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922) of the Robert Mond expedition to New Guinea (1914-1918). The result was that the diary revived the interest to his ethnography from the Andaman Islands that still remains the Bible of British



anthropology. Ironically, it also offered the first self-reflective anthropological text that became the nail on the coffin of ‘scientific ethnography’, because of its intimate content that indeed reveals the writer behind the pen in a confessional way. A second publication followed, edited by Helena Wayne (1995), focusing on the letters of Malinowski and his wife Elsie Masson from 1916 until her death in 1935, which highlights the emotional impact of Malinowski’s personal life on his self-proclaimed ‘scientific’ functionalistic fieldwork.

Kavvadias’s own *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* is *Vardia* (‘The Shift’) published in 1954. It is a prose on the life of the sailors blending poetry with personal memories that reveals the unique narrative talent of the writer. As Michel Saunier (2005) wrote in the Introduction of the French edition of the novel, *Vardia* is both an inner and an outer journey, which, just like Malinowski’s ethnographic material, is based on the experiences of the writer, the discussions he had with other sailors and local peoples, and just as Malinowski’s diary at times it takes the form of self-confession. The language of the novel uses the dialect of the sailors, which is a universal type of language with words of special meaning referring to the experience of travelling (Trapalis 2002, *see* also poems in Index 2), as the Ship becomes a travelling cosmopolitan environment with its own language, customs, and ethics.

In *Vardia*, the sailor Kavvadias functions as an ethnographer, collecting data from the field and echoing Malinowski’s sacred trinity: an emphasis on routines in the village (the Ship in Kavvadias), living and experiencing life among the ‘natives’ (the ports and the market), and talking to people on various interpretations of myths and customary practices (the poetry of the bordellos). Conversely, Kavvadias’s Ship could have been Malinowski’s famous Tent in the field (Clifford and Marcus 1986) standing immobile in time and space, observing and recording the life of the village/ship (participant observation). In their respective writings, both Malinowski and Kavvadias identified with the natives and the sailors (informants) they travelled with, ‘becoming native’ and reflecting their experience on paper. This becomes particularly evident in their respective diaries, which owned a humanitarian spirit that did not distinguish between the ‘savage’ and the ‘developed’, the ‘prostitute’ and the ‘mother’, or the ‘primitive’ and the European, but rather, saw everyone as a ‘savage’ (also famously in Levi-Strauss 1966). Of course, their respective views, “all-men-are-savages” in

Malinowski's case, and all "women-are-prostitutes" in Kavvadias's writings, should certainly be accounted for. However, departing from trivial matters of political correctness, both writers became innovators of the travelling genre in their respective institutions, and seen from their eyes, they were indeed motivated by a love/hate relationship for the human being, as much traumatic and passionate as creative. Consequently, their writings were in essence amoral and humanitarian, personal and universal, at the same time.

The confinement of Kavvadias's *Ship* and Malinowski's *Tent* is the confinement of modernity in itself: a scientific understanding of a "world-out-there". Modernity is thus a process in which the more we learn, the less we imagine; the more we travel, the less we experience; the more we look (through new microscopic and macroscopic visions, the magnifying glass or the binocular, the microscope or the telescope, and nowadays, the television and computer screens) the less we understand. In other words, modernity is a dialectical process that is constructed on the *paradox* of gaining knowledge (meaning the discourses of knowing/ researching/ proving/ travelling/ translating/ representing) in order to expand our vision and knowledge of the world, which, however, make the (representations of a) 'world' increasingly smaller, homogeneous, predicable, and dull. This has explicit consequences in the study of anthropology and the practice of fieldwork, which I will be looking at below in relation to Kavvadias's amateur ethnography.

### **The Gift of *Lee***

The folklore quality of Kavvadias's writings is illuminated in his short novel entitled *Lee*, which refers to an anonymous young Chinese girl who was living in the international port of Green Island (Hong Kong) serving food and cleaning the cabins of the sailors. Similar to his previously published novel *Vardia*, *Lee* is written in self-confessional style in the form of a diary. In the text, the girl takes the role of the informant for the traveller Kavvadias. *Lee* masterly contains all the motives that mark Kavvadias' prose as personal experience: economy of expression that underlines the limits of personal memory; introverted exoticism invested with heavy symbolism; a cosmopolitan understanding of the world in humanitarian terms in terms of suffering that is common to all humans in sharp juxtaposition to external appearances and

differences; an obsession with objects that travel across the globe creating their own history, including knives, letters, and cheap gifts; an ethnographic interest in local history, family structures, the market, and even local food.

The story is structurally divided in three parts, gradually taking us from the inside deck of the Ship to the reality outside it: the first part takes place in the Ship, the inside world in which both the sailor and the girl spend their lives working; the second part takes place on Green Island, the international dream-world Port; and the final part takes place at the girl's home stigmatised by poverty and prostitution. In the novel, the girl is too young and too proud to be a prostitute, and she earns the admiration, even the love of the poet, because of her crystallized decency, high ethical values, and hard working maturity. In fact, she could have been his first love, as portrayed in his poem *Marabou* (1933): the 'aristocratic, elegant, and melancholic [...] sister friend' (2002: 10) symbolizing the innocent world of the young, in sharp juxtaposition to the corrupted world of the old: the ideal of youth versus the reality of experience. This kind of exoticism is supported by his life-long search for 'home', that is, his lost forgotten first love to which *Lee* conforms.

The young girl of the story was never allowed inside the international port of Green Island, and for her, as also for the sailor, 'Green Island' represents a materialist Paradise that combines a strong element of nostalgia for a cosmopolitan world society with material prosperity: it is 'a place of flowers' from which, however, the local population is excluded (2002c: 21-22). The writer finds the opportunity to take her for the first time on land to shops such as the international bazaar China Emporium and the Happy Valley (*Ibid*: 26-39). But then, in the third part, this ideal and ethnographic description of Green Island with its foods, noise, smells, and colours, is cruelly juxtaposed to the reality of Hong Kong with its poverty and cheap prostitution (*Ibid*: 44-46); the reality of colonialism in other words.

In meeting her family in such a cruel world, Kavvadias comes even closer to her as their relationship surpasses the anonymity of ethnicities, boundaries and words; it is a matter of personal experience. The self-confessional texts of both Malinowski's and Kavvadias's writings show that it was experience that motivated their respective works, rather than a method. Therefore, it could be argued that Malinowski's effort to create a scientific method was a product of his own insecurities (his sexuality and

status amongst the natives), which are so strong in his diaries. However, while Malinowski's way out of this trap was his scientific status, Kavvadias was much more conscious of colonialism and world poverty, as the short novel *Lee* shows, which made both his prose and contact far superior to that of Malinowski's methodological account of 1922, and equal to his diaries of 1967. In other words, Kavvadias did not carry with him the academic bourgeois arrogance of Malinowski, but instead, he advocated a spirit of humanism that made him an anthropologist of the Enlightenment, rather than the anthropologist of the British Institution and its politics. As he reflects in his following dialogue with the Chinese girl:

-Lots of books, she said, are they all yours?

-Yes.

-And have you read all of them?

-All of them.

-You must know many things

-No more than you, I thought, and *those that I don't know I am learning now from you*, in my late forties... [Lee, 2002c: 19, my translation from Greek]

As mentioned above, recent anthropologists turned away from participant observation as the anthropological method, towards literature and the text looking at the poetics of culture as the means of *learning*. As a reward for his friendship, she gives him a gift: a cheap box with a golden dragon knitted on it, invested with the memory of their close but brief relationship. After his departure the two will never meet again. Instead their friendship and mutual understanding is sealed with this cheap gift, which in itself implies a spiritual commitment to the fragility of their friendship that goes beyond time, life and death. The object owes a corporeal power, invested with the mysticism of personal exchange –poetically echoing Marcel Mauss and his famous analysis on the corporeality of the 'gift' (1950)-: an eternal commitment to their friendship. But ironically, back at the Customary Service of Piraeus where Kavvadias was stationed, the officer evaluates the box as an 'item without value' (2002c: 50). The officer, who represents the new bureaucratic nation state, cannot comprehend the real value of the item, which is indeed priceless from the writer's perspective. Yet, this item seals for eternity an exchange that takes place between two forbidden worlds: the sailor takes her inside his ship, and in exchange she takes him outside to her hometown; vice versa, Lee takes him inside her world and he takes her outside to Green Island, as what for Kavvadias is internal (the ship, the harbour) for the Lee is external, and vice

versa, what for Lee is internal (her neighbourhood in Hong Kong) for Kavvadias is external. Lee's gift to Kavvadias seals this momentary, but also eternal, personal commitment, beyond the borders of nation states, languages, religions, customs, or the cold and impersonal bureaucratic world.

Furthermore, in *Lee* Kavvadias reflects upon his own life, as he explains that he can speak some Cantonese because he was not born in His La Kwo ('Greece' in Chinese) but in Tung Sun Sheung in Manchuria (2002c: 15). This cosmopolitan, and at the same time, humanitarian understanding of the world by the sailor is also illustrated in his two poems entitled *Thessaloniki*: the first published in *Pousi* ('Sea Fog' 1947), which nostalgically takes us to the lost cosmopolitan metropolis of Thessaloniki; and the second published twenty-eight years later in *Traverso* ('Reverse' 1975) that takes a pessimistic look of Thessaloniki at its present time. In the first poem, Kavvadias refers to the city of Thessaloniki before it became officially Greek in 1923 with the Treaty of Lausanne (*see also* Hirschon 2004: 19). The city was famous for its trade and was also known as "the mother of Israel" since Hispanic Jewish dominated its social life. It is estimated that in 1920 there were 30000 Jewish leaving in Salonique, as well as 20000 Turkish and 15000 Greeks, and a number of Bulgarians. During the occupation of the city by the Nazis in WWII, the Jewish population of Thessaloniki 'disappeared' in one night. The new arrivals came to the city from Istanbul (Constantinople) and Izmyrn, as well as, from Pontus, and had to live a hard life in poverty, in small huts which sheltered many families together.

By the 1950s and 1960s, while Athens began to prosper with its population steadily increasing to more than half of the rest of Greece, Thessaloniki's economic life continued to decline. The city 'sleeps under the red lights' if I paraphrase Kavvadias's final verse in the poem (*see* Index 2: 'Thessaloniki') no matter the efforts to re-engage the city as the central port of the Balkans. The economical decline is reflected on the social life of the city that once was speaking at least four different languages.

Kavvadias's poem prophesises with the nationalization of Thessalonica -or Salonique as it was known- the city would lose its 'golden sleeve', meaning its economic central power in the Balkans. He was right. Today, all the economic and political power of Greece is centralized in Athens. Thessaloniki has transformed from a cosmopolitan centre of trade and the arts into a religious local ghost of a city that used to be.

The humanist and experiential motives of Kavvadias's writings and poems are therefore not far away from the humanist ideal of anthropology, which has been long argued against in the context of post-colonialism. But the writer seems to be more conscious of colonialism and the change of history than anthropologists. The element he lacks that does not make him 'anthropologist' is a method. Below, I will first be critically reflecting upon the death of the *auteur*, the anthropological authority of fieldwork, and its scientific claim (*see* Clifford 1986: 6, 15, 32) in order to argue for the return of the *auteur*, the poet, the sailor, or amateur ethnographer, as a charismatic collector and source of historicity, towards the rising of a global historical consciousness that breaks the boundaries of 'modernity' as exclusively defined by and within the ideals of the European Enlightenment.

### **The Ethnographic Imagination: The Death of the *Auteur***

In a fascinating article on the ethnographic imagination, Fernanda Penaloza (2004) focused on the 'vanishing Indian' in Muster's 19<sup>th</sup> century travelogue in Patagonia (1871), in order to highlight the influence of pre-professional ethnographic narratives on contemporary anthropological studies. Penaloza discussed how the discursive operations of Muster's narrative 'turned the unfamiliar into the familiar' (Penaloza 2004: 4, 8), operations which were further developed with Malinowski's method of fieldwork. Her aim was to show: 'how evasive and oblique is a world that has been imaginarily and nostalgically recovered, and how strong are the myths that created it' (*Ibid*: 9).

Echoing Kavvadias's work, *nostalgia* is a central feeling in the construction of the ethnographic imagination, a product of modernity. Herzfeld (1987) reflected upon this idealism, making a historical association between the survivalist thesis of Victorian anthropology to folklore. In illustrating his point, he highlighted Giambatista Vico (1668-1744) as the 'ancestor of both nationalism and anthropology' (*Ibid*: 9), in order to draw a parallel between the thesis of survivalism and nationalism, in the sense that they both refer to a nostalgic past. Within the context of anthropology, nationalism is replaced by the term 'exoticism', that is, the anthropological interest for the particularly unique and universal at the same time. Underlying the ahistoricity of functionalism and structuralism Herzfeld argued that: 'all ethnography is in some

sense an account of a social group's ethnocentrism' (1987: 18). It is thus this kind of nostalgia of something that is never really there, the method, which is the source of exoticism and ethnocentrism.

Back in 1986, Clifford and Marcus approached ethnographies as incomplete ““true fictions””: ‘systems or economies of truth’, in a process aiming for: ‘the reconstitution of selves and others through specific exclusions, conventions, and discursive practices (Clifford 1986: 6, 24). In his opening article on the impact of the post-mortem publication of Malinowski's diary in 1967, Clifford challenged Malinowski's claims for a ‘scientific’ methodology and ‘objective distance’, in order to highlight the cultural significance of allegory in ethnographic writing, which calls for a more active and critical reading of texts (*Ibid*: 7-14, and 98-121). In further undermining the scientific authority of the ethnographer, Clifford cited Bakhtin's concepts of ‘polyvocality’ and ‘heteroglossia’. In the ‘Dialogic Imagination and Genre Theory’ Bakhtin analyzed the novelization of the novel as a ‘process of becoming’ and ‘coming to self-consciousness’ (1981/1992: 5, 11). He incorporated this into open-ended texts, based on different voices, languages, and cultural values (*polyglossia*) contextualized within the novel's *chronotope* (a sphere/ a world of meaning, ‘literally “time, space”’) seen within a process of *becoming* in-between the familiar and the strange, the past and the future, the local and the global: ‘by incorporating extraliterary heteroglossia and the “novelistic” layers of literary language, they become dialogised, permeated with laughter, irony, humour, elements of self-parody and finally –this is the most important thing- the novel inserts into these other genres an indeterminacy, a certain semantic openendedness, a living contact with unfinished, still-evolving contemporary reality [the openended present]’ (*Ibid.*: 7, 84).

Following Bakhtin's inspirational writings, Clifford and Marcus called for the involvement of “informants” in the process of collecting and recording field material (1986: 15-17, and 1988: 50-51): ‘[...] if the interpretive authority is based on the exclusion of dialogue, the reverse is also true: a purely dialogical authority would repress the inescapable fact of textualization’ (Clifford 1988: 43). New digital technologies offer the opportunity to encourage the participation of informants, increasing the voices, languages, and perspectives, and to widen the terminology of ethnography, which ideally makes anthropology more accessible, outside its elitist,

European, and bourgeois legacy. In this context, there is renewed emphasis on illustrating *how* knowledge is produced in respect to portrayals of the ‘strange’ and untranslatable Other (Katz and Csordas 2003: 278, and de Col and Graeber 2011: vii-xii, among others). The writers suggest the use of terms taken from the field (‘i.e. ‘indigenous’) as theoretical openings towards new anthropological paths and ways of thinking, and the development of a polyglot type of anthropology, in reference to Bakhtin’s vision regarding the emergence of a global consciousness as: ‘The new cultural and creative consciousness lives in an actively *polyglot* world. The world becomes *polyglot*, once and for all irreversibly. The period of national languages [...] comes to an end. Languages throw light on each other; one language can, after all, see itself only in the light of another language’ (Bakhtin 1981/ 1992: 12). In this sense: ‘The multiplication of possible readings reflects the fact that “ethnographic” consciousness can no longer be seen as the monopoly of certain Western cultures and social classes’ (Clifford 1988: 52).

Yet, despite these idealist developments, the opening of ethnographic writing remains an impossible task for various reasons. In everyday life, language is fluid; it is not a sacred remnant of a lost past, but rather, an active and ever-changing part of day-to-day experience. Laura Marcus criticized the devaluation, or complete rejection of ‘hybrid’ genres of literature, such as the auto/biography, which when approached in polarized ways in terms of subjectivity/ objectivity, hybrid and authentic, non-fiction (i.e. the monograph) and fiction (i.e. the novel), interpretations of ‘science’ and ‘culture’ respectively, and so on, is seen as a ‘dangerous double agent’, ““transcending” rather than transgressing categories’ (1994: 7-8, and 80-81). This polarized approach to language echoes anthropology’s modernist legacy, and the juxtaposition of ‘hybrid’ from ‘authentic’ types of culture, often in terms of ‘tradition-vs.-modernity’. As Asad pointed out such dichotomies carry forms of power and subjection, root into anthropology’s European legacy, as a by-product of the European Enlightenment, the rise of Protestantism and capitalism, and the bourgeois ideal of cosmopolitanism (Asad 1993: 13)<sup>3</sup>. In this polarised context, modernity, with its

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<sup>3</sup> ‘The idea that cultural borrowing must lead to total homogeneity and to loss of authenticity is clearly absurd, but the idea of projects’ having translatable historical structures should not be confused with it [...] The acquisition of new forms of language from the modern West [...] is part of what makes for new possibilities of action in non-Western societies. Yet, although the outcome of these possibilities is never fully predictable, the language in which the possibilities are formulated is increasingly shared by



humanistic ideals, professional practice, and political correctness, is misconceived as *exclusively* European (i.e. ‘western’), on the one hand, denying access to non-European peoples to History (Wolf 1982), and on the other, affirming this exclusion on the basis on the assumption that modernity is ‘western’, i.e. defined in terms of “‘civilization”, “social progress”, “economic development”, “conversion”, and the like’ (Comaroffs 1993: xxx)<sup>4</sup>.

Anthropology is [...] inserted into modern history in two ways: first, through the growth of Europe’s political, economic, and scientific powers, which has provided anthropologists with their means of professional existence and their intellectual motive; and second, through the Enlightenment schematization of progressive time that has provided anthropology with its conceptual site: modernity (Asad 1993: 19)

In this context, a number of anthropologists, from various perspectives, came to question the ethnographic ‘method’: collection, translation, and interpretation of data from the field, in relation to its ideological association to both to colonialism and to the bourgeois society (including Leach 1961, Needham 1970, Ardener 1971, Asad 1973, Bourdieu 1977, Tambiah 1990, Comaroffs 1992 and 1993, Grimshaw and Hart 1993, 1995, and Hutnyk 2004, among others). These criticisms vary from functionalism and structuralism being ‘mechanical and lifeless’ (Ardener cited in Asad 1973: 10), to the political association of fieldwork with ‘the political physiology of dominance’ in ‘the neo-Darwinian synthesis and the social functionalism of Malinowski’s theory of culture’ (Haraway 1991: 15). In relation to Malinowski’s diaries, for instance, Hutnyk recently underlined the continuity from Malinowski’s method of fieldwork to Clifford’s self-reflective method: ‘The sometimes progressive, relativist, racist, Malinowski was part of the land grab that was the colonial project in the South Seas; Clifford is part of the latter-day version of the same project, this time glossed as globalisation by neoliberal ideology [...]’ (2004: 10).

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Western and non-Western societies. And so, too, the specific forms of power and subjection’ (Asad 1993: 13)

<sup>4</sup> This point has been discussed in a number of fields, including both cultural and anthropological studies: Said’s juxtaposition of Occidentalism to Orientalism (1978); Bhabha’s writings on ‘the visibility of the racial colonial Other’ as ‘a point of identity’ (1994); Fabien’s criticism of the fictional distinction of ‘our time’ from ‘their’ a-historical time (1983); Tambiah’s criticism of ‘rationality’ and ‘science’ (1990); and in Asad’s genealogy of ‘religion’ as the historical product of the discourse of a Westernized and Christianized modernity (1993), as well as, in fieldwork monographs, such as Comaroffs’ research on cultural imperialism in Africa.

Hutnyk's point is illustrated for instance by Nicholas Dirks (1993: 279-313), in his analysis of Colonel Colin Mackenzie's (1754-1821) extensive collection of 'historical' data from India, while he was working for the East India Company. Mackenzie's co-operation with, and reliance to, native assistants, helped him to collect an extensive kingship record, as well as, a record of traditional practices, local beliefs, and philosophical texts, with the help of 'native assistants' who 'were in position to mediate a complex sociology of local knowledge' (1993: 295). And yet:

When local documents were collected, authority and authorship were transferred from local to colonial contexts. The different voices, agencies, and modes of authorization that were implicated in the production of the archive got lost once they inhabited the archive [...] And the role of Mackenzie's native assistants became relegated to the position of technical mediation, the diaries and letters rarely if ever recopied and collated with the documents they discuss (*Ibid*: 301).

Dirks's example illustrates the power structures, assumptions, and misconceptions regarding early ethnographic practices, as well as, how the latter was supposed to be a 'western' innovation and a by-product of an alleged 'western' modernity. At the heart of this definition of 'modernity' is the idea of 'common sense', which, as Asad highlighted, is in itself problematic in respect to anthropology's historically constructed modernist legacy (1973: 16-17). Namely, the European ideal of modernity, defined in terms of progress<sup>5</sup> and universalism in the form of so-called 'European humanitarianism', are often misconceived as being exclusively homogeneous (Breisach 1983/2007)<sup>6</sup>. This has direct implications in the study of anthropology. For Asad (1973) the absence of a coherent style in anthropological and

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<sup>5</sup> Weber in 'Science as a Vocation' (1919) questioned the European concept of 'modernity', defined in terms of Protestant secularism, the division of space and labour, and the industry of war, as a 'meaningless progressiveness' (1968: 299).

<sup>6</sup> 'In the interest of a culture's homogeneity the ideal of heterogeneity was diminished. Even the word *people*, or the phrases *popular culture* and *popular religion*, assumed improperly the homogeneity of these groups or phenomena. The use of the term *human* had the same effect, as it suppressed important differences among human beings [...] In two decades of creative excitement, cultural history tried to encompass the totality of life. But after a period of innovative vigour, cultural history's creative energy began to wane. The fullness and reality of life, larger than the scope of any theory, was reasserting itself' (Breisach 1983/2007: 426, 427).

ethnographic writing was the result of the increasing specialization of anthropology into disconnected anthropological discourses, which contributed to its professionalization, that includes anthropological associations, new memberships, pointless conferences, and a market based on publications. In this context, the multiplication of voices, actors, and subjectivities was commercially contextualized within ‘now packaged in fee-paying postgraduate courses’ (Hutnyk 2004: 6). In the new market of anthropology, alienation becomes professionalized and commercialized. This new form of alienation is not that of the iconic figure of Malinowski, rather, it is an alienation from anthropology and humanity itself; the alienation of professionalism. But this new type of professional anthropology has nothing to do with the experiential, human condition of shared experiences; rather, professional anthropology has murdered the outcast, out-dated image of the lost uncle, the ‘anthropologist’, who returns to a home that is not his any more; a long lost Odysseus returning to a foreign Ithaca. Today’s anthropologist knows his or her place in the private world of education, but not in the world of everyday experience.

In this increasingly politically and historically indifferent context, ethnography as an art form returned to its 19<sup>th</sup> century bourgeois legacy, that of ‘the latest form of evening entertainment’ as MacClancy put it in respect to the modernist explosion of *genres*, including novels, paintings, and photograph exhibitions, that accompanied the rise of the bourgeois society (2003: 75-93). This echoes Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s famous essay ‘Discourse on the Science and Arts’ (1750) in which he directly associates the hypocrisy of social politeness to the ‘vile and deceitful uniformity’ of refined art, aiming to pleasing established rules and norms:

Without ceasing politeness makes demands, propriety gives orders; without ceasing, common customs are followed, never one’s own lights [...] Thus no one will ever really know those with whom he is dealing [...] No more sincere friendships, no more real esteem, no more well-founded confidence. Suspicions, offences, fears, coldness, reserve, hatred, betrayal will unceasingly hide under that uniform and deceitful veil of politeness under that much vaunted urbanity that we owe to the enlightenment of our century (Rousseau 1987: 4-5)

The bourgeois legacy of anthropology both contradicts, as well as, adds (by contradiction) to Malinowski’s feeling of *alienation*, expressed in his false claim of ‘scientific’ distancing, which, following the post-mortem publication of his diary in

1967, ironically proved to be an alienation of himself from the world, the Trobriand islanders, and the bourgeois academic environment from which he struggled to escape. The Polish immigrant, an outcast of life itself, who clearly disliked the bourgeois environment of London society, and instead, chose to travel to satisfy his *wanderlust*, the need to escape in an-Other world(s) (*see* also Paganopoulos 2011 and 2013). The professional anthropologist is alienated from the world, remaining historically and politically indifferent amongst, which inevitably raise the ethical question: ‘How useful are even “historical” and “political” juxtapositions without thinking politically about what to do with them? And what does this mean for anthropology?’ (Hutnyk 2004: 32-33).

In sum, in this section I juxtaposed the early ‘objectifying’ limits of ‘scientific’ ethnography to the current development of ethnographies as an ‘art form’, and highlighted the influence of the market and the privatization of education on the anthropological discourse, in order to make two points: first, despite the positive development of the multiplication of visual ethnographic projects and anthropological degrees, as the new media gave access to a variety of projects and equal opportunities of expression to those who can afford them, I wished also to note that this flourishing of packaged creativity was inevitably accompanied by a general indifference and lack of a political and a historical vision, which have led to an increasing alienation of anthropology itself from the world. Second, by highlighting the importance of authorship in the anthropological vocation as a whole, amateurish or professional, and the role of the *auteur* amateur ethnographer as a poet, in reproducing knowledge and concepts unfamiliar to his/her audience, I wish to argue below for the return of the *auteur* ethnographer, within the context of a rapidly changing and heterogeneous world(s).

### **The Historical Imagination and the Return of the *Auteur***

Returning to the poetry of Nikos Kavvadias, it is worth noting that there is a huge writing tradition in Greece that is often ignored in anthropology by being labelled under the category of “Fiction”. Herzfeld (1987) argued that Greece is marginal to

anthropology, in the same way anthropology is marginal in Greece<sup>7</sup>. Yet, Kavvadias's marginal position between poetry and ethnography reveals the unsettling interconnection between fiction and ethnographic imagination, challenging the institutionalisation of anthropological thought by the Victorian anthropologists, and later by Malinowski, into a British School of (racial) colonial way of thinking. Kavvadias, in spite lacking 'methodology' is much more conscious of colonialism than Malinowski. The study of his poetry offers us not only an accurate recording of his journeys around the globe and the life of cargo ships, but also a reflection on his own marginality, which is an extension of the marginality of Greek identity in itself, trapped between an idealized ancient past and a history of Ottoman colonialism. In this respect, if we accept that anthropology as an institutionalised practice that has been preserved since Malinowski's time, then arguably anthropology is marginal to Greece, as Greece is to anthropology (Herzfeld 1987). But if we evaluate anthropology as a dynamic way of thinking and *living*, rather than a static method and an impersonal institution, then anthropology existed in Greece even before Kavvadias's time in the form of the Hellenistic ideal (as in the poetry of Cavafys), which corresponds to the Kantian project for a universal history.

In this sense, we end up with two definitions of 'anthropology'. The first refers to the European imagined ideal of 'ancient Greece', which the European Enlightenment aspired to in a nostalgic manner. As also Herzfeld (1987) discussed, the Hellenistic ideal has to be further historically investigated in relation to the nationalist ideology of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and the (European rather than 'Greek') claims for historical continuity from ancient Greece through Byzantium to Modern Greece. Even more recently, anthropologists who focused on Greek literature, such as Mackridge (2004: 235-246), investigated the Greek Minor Asian writers from Izmyrn and Ivali, who wrote from the island of Mytilini after the compulsory exchange of populations between Turkey and Greece in 1923 (Laussane Convention). Mackridge culturally and politically re-evaluated famous Greek texts of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century by Ilias Venezis, Dido Sotiriou, Kosmas Politis, and Stratis Myrivilis, in terms of their particular language, location, the political division of Left and Right during the bloody Greek

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<sup>7</sup> Until recently there was no recognized anthropological school in Greece. Papataxiarchis, among others, have engaged themselves in an effort to create a school of Greek Anthropology to the University of Mytilini (Lesbos), which was the first stop of the refugees from Izmyrn to Athens and Thessaloniki.

Civil War after WWII, the strong sentiment of nostalgia for a ‘lost’ Greek past, and the colourfulness of the depictions of the Turkish characters of those novels -who at times remind more of Malinowski’s ‘primitives’ rather than real people-, in order to offer a historical and anthropological account of the Modern European Greek imagination as reflected on the culture and politics of the Greek literature on ‘the myth of Asia Minor’ in the construction of Greek identity. Yet, the poetry of Homer, Cavafys, and Kavvadias among others, contest this collective nostalgia on which the entire so-called ‘scientific’ enterprise of Malinowski was built and developed into its bourgeois racist legacy.

The second definition of ‘anthropology’ relates to the Kantian tradition of universal anthropology, in which ‘Kantian subjectivity (is) at once personal and cosmopolitan’ (Hart 2005: 2). This is expressed in Kavvadias’s and Cavafys’s poetry, among other Greek poets, based on experience and humanism as the motives for writing a kind of ‘universal history’ (Kant 1784) for a ‘perpetual peace’ (1795). Hart traced the birth of anthropology in the writings of Immanuel Kant, particularly on the latter’s essays on the ‘Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose/ Point of View’ (1784), ‘Perpetual peace: A Philosophical Sketch’ (1795), and ‘Anthropology’ (1798) in which he ‘coined the word “anthropology”’ (Hart 2003: 1). Crucially Hart distinguished two periods of anthropological thought: the first refers to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and the Enlightenment in the humanist writings of Rousseau and Kant, in which the term anthropology was coined as ‘a democratic alternative to agrarian civilization’, based ‘on conditions of universal hospitality’ (2006: 1-2). And this is the same kind of humanism the Victorian and later functionalist ‘scientists’ of anthropology chose to ignore (*see* also Penaloza 2004). As Hart writes on the second period of anthropological thought:

The dominant paradigm shifted in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Anthropology now explained western imperialism’s easy conquest of world society [the totality of social relationships linking the inhabitants of earth] in terms of racial hierarchy whose evolution was revealed by speculative history (2006: 2)

In discussing the relation of autobiography to history, subjectivity to objectivity respectively, Laura Marcus followed the German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey’s

(1833-1911) dynamic concept of historical consciousness<sup>8</sup>, which he defined as a collection of personal experiences and subjective memories (the subjective consciousness, Marcus 1994: 135-147). Marcus pinpointed to ‘anthropology’ as the discipline that can reach ‘beyond history and literature [...] the only stance adequate to meet an emergent “consciousness”’ (1994: 161). The accumulation of this personal accounts of the world, formulate a world-history of suffering and laughter, pain and redemption, happiness and sorrow, clarity and madness. This kind of deeply ethical (i.e. ‘human’), world-‘history’ in itself becomes a category of the a *collage* of the collective imagination; a matter of identity through which each one of us connects to a heterogeneity of identities and worlds, in-between ‘what is done and what can be done’:

“History” is only made up of stories that we tell ourselves, but simply that the “logic of stories” and the ability to act as historical agents go together. Politics and art, like forms of knowledge, construct “fictions”, that is to say material rearrangements of signs and images, relationships between what is seen and what is said, between what is done and what can be done’ (Ranciere 2006: 39)

Marcus developed Dilthey’s ideas in respect to Georg Misch’s writings on autobiography and biography as literature *genres*, in which the French thinker embraced Dilthey’s ideals of a collective unity achieved through subjective and lived experiences towards a process of self-realization and individuation: ‘[...] self-awareness can be seen as synonymous with self-assertion in so far as consciousness of selfhood necessarily involves a separation of self not only from but against others’ (Marcus 1994: 151). In a similar spirit, Michel de Certeau (1988/1975) examined historiography as a type of ‘ethno-graphy’, referring to a knowledge system based on meaning and carrying power, within the European ‘historiographical operation’, referring to the evolution of historical knowledge from notions of the ‘sacred’ to the modernist formations of identity, in respect to an imagined Other, the Shadow of our-Self. In this respect, the writing of ethno-graphy should be treated as a *genre* of

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<sup>8</sup> Dilthey’s unitary ideas of a historical conscious preceded the affiant and *a priori* notions of Durkheim’s collective consciousness and Carl J. Jung’s collective unconscious/ archetypes (Paganopoulos 2010 and 2011). For both Jung and Durkheim ritual was a matter of *experience*; the personal way to connect to the wider collective through the luminous experiential concept of ‘numinous’ (Otto 1958: 5-11).

autobiography (rather than of ‘science’). It is an inner calling, corresponding to the *wanderlust*, the need to escape in an-Other world(s):

[...] an “inner necessity” which motivates and guides the writing of autobiography. The spatial metaphors of “inside” and “outside” which repeatedly appear in a range of critical discussions are closely linked with oppositions between self and world, private and public, subjectivity and objectivity, the interior spaces of mind and personal being and the public world, including that of the literary market place (Marcus 1994: 4)

Marcus places auto/biography, along with the formation of other ‘modern disciplines’, such as anthropology, sociology, and literary studies, literature and science, experience and experiment respectively (*Ibid*: 8, and 79). ). It is therefore important to highlight here that *the politics of representation* take place within the ambiguous space of representation in itself, that is, in the *liminal* space between the self and the world, the familiar and the unfamiliar, exoticism and reality, between ‘the politics founded on the play of exchanges and displacements between the art world and that of non-art’ (Ranciere 2004: 51); ‘history(ies)’ are political fictions (2006: 39), formed in the grey area *in-between* fiction and non-fiction. In this context, ethnography is a historical discourse that is part and a product of History itself.

In discussing Nietzsche’s essay ‘The uses and Disadvantages of History in Life’, Bell highlighted the ‘responsibility in the communal, as well as the personal, sphere’, which the philosopher emphasized in his attack on the ‘supposed objectivity of the scientist as a model for the historian’ (Bell 1997: 30). Nietzsche distinguished three categories of historical consciousness: on one extreme, the ‘unhistorical’ (as in early functionalism and structuralism); the ‘super-historical’ (i.e intellectual, ‘couch-anthropology’ as that of Levi-Strauss); and in-between the two extreme poles Nietzsche defines the ‘*historical*’ to which: ‘The unhistorical and the superhistorical are inextricable aspects of a truly vital, *self-critical historical consciousness*’ (*Ibid*: 32, *my emphasis*). This tripod of knowledge is manifested in its totality in the ‘impersonal vision of the artist: “the outwardly tranquil but inwardly flashing eye of the artist”. Only when conceived as a work of art is history truly impersonal and this involves some superhistorical detachment’ (Bell citing Nietzsche, 1997: 33).

The intellectual detachment from the ‘world’ required for an artist, in order to observe and reproduce it, places him/her in-between the position of the ethnographer and that



of the historian. The charismatic artist-scientist, a Weberian prophet of his/her generation and a collective projection of the archetype of Leonardo da Vinci, records and reflects upon paper or film the historical changes that take place in *his/her* world, from his/her *liminal*, creative status, in-between reality and fiction, experience and thought. This marginal position of the charismatic *auteur* liberates him/her from the burden of existing institutionalized authorities and needs. This freedom is expressed by the innovative and diverse ways of telling a story, most memorable when they work outside the specific, culturally dominant, and politically imposed, conventional, marketed, narrative structures (i.e. 'scientific', 'politically correct', etc.). This emancipating freedom of the text, which is both creative and dangerous, both open to distortion as well as to fruitful allegory, is contained in the term 'poetics'<sup>9</sup> as defined by Fischer (1986) who underlined the self-reflective power of 'irony and humour as tactics... (that) draw attention to their own limitations and degree of accuracy' (1986: 229). 'Poetry' offers the means for (historical) self-reflection; and in a sense, self-reflection is what poetry also achieves; the means to rewrite human history in relevance to the realities of human experience in everyday life.

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<sup>9</sup> See also Herzfeld's 'poetics of manhood' (1985) among the men of the (anonymous) village Glendi in Crete, and on the subversion of silence among 'Greek women' (1991) in which he further developed the notion in relation to Foucault's ideas of the power of silence as irony.

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**Index 1: *Ithaka* (C.P. Cavafy, *Collected Poems*. Translated by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard. Edited by George Savidis. Revised Edition. Princeton University Press, 1992)**

‘As you set out for Ithaka  
 hope the voyage is a long one,  
 full of adventure, full of discovery.  
 Laistrygonians and Cyclops,  
 angry Poseidon—don’t be afraid of them:  
 you’ll never find things like that on your way  
 as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,  
 as long as a rare excitement  
 stirs your spirit and your body.  
 Laistrygonians and Cyclops,  
 wild Poseidon—you won’t encounter them  
 unless you bring them along inside your soul,  
 unless your soul sets them up in front of you.

Hope the voyage is a long one.  
 May there be many a summer morning when,  
 with what pleasure, what joy,  
 you come into harbors seen for the first time;  
 may you stop at Phoenician trading stations  
 to buy fine things,  
 mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,  
 sensual perfume of every kind—  
 as many sensual perfumes as you can;  
 and may you visit many Egyptian cities  
 to gather stores of knowledge from their scholars.

Keep Ithaka always in your mind.  
 Arriving there is what you are destined for.  
 But do not hurry the journey at all.  
 Better if it lasts for years,  
 so you are old by the time you reach the island,  
 wealthy with all you have gained on the way,  
 not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.

Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.  
 Without her you would not have set out.  
 She has nothing left to give you now.

And if you find her poor, Ithaka won’t have fooled you.  
 Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,  
 you will have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.’

## Index 2: Four Poems by NIKOS KAVVADIAS

Contents:      Introduction  
                   *A Bord de l' "ASPASIA" (Marabou 1933)*  
                   *Thessaloniki (Pousi 1947)*  
                   *Kuro Siwo (Pousi 1947)*  
                   *Woman (Traverso 1975)*

### *A Bord de l' "ASPASIA" (in Marabou 1933)*

Hunted by fate you travelled  
 To the all-white but grieving Switzerland  
 Always on deck in your old chaise-langue  
 For a dreadful but all too-well-known reason

At all times your worried family surrounded you  
 But you, indifferent, gazed at the sea  
 All they said only raised a bitter smile  
 Because you felt that you were walking towards the Land of the Dead

One evening, as we were passing-by Stromboli<sup>10</sup>  
 You turned to a smiling someone in a funny way and said  
 "How does my sick body burns  
 Like the heated pick of the volcano!"

Later I saw you lost in Marseilles  
 Disappearing into the noise without looking back  
 And I, who loved the field of water,  
 Say: "You are someone I could have loved"

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<sup>10</sup> *Stromboli*: Island in Southern Italy opposite the volcano Etna (3340 metres)

*Thessaloniki* (in *Pousi*<sup>11</sup> 1947)

It was the night when Vardaris<sup>12</sup> was blowing  
 The wave was winning the prow fathom by fathom  
 The First<sup>13</sup> sent you to clear the waters  
 But you only remember Smaro<sup>14</sup> and Kalamaria<sup>15</sup>

You forgot the tune the Chileans used to sing  
 “St Nicolas<sup>16</sup> and St Sea protect us!”  
 A blind girl guides you, the child of Mondellianni<sup>17</sup>  
 Loved by the First-rate and the two (sailors) from Marmaras

Water sleeps through Fore Peak, water and the sails  
 But instead, a strange dizziness moves you  
 Did the Spanish girl knit that stamp (on you)?  
 Or was it the girl who was dancing on a rope?

A hibernated snake sleeps on your collar  
 And the monkey hangs around looking in your clothes  
 Nobody remembers you but your mother  
 In this terrifying journey of loss

The sailor throws the cards and the stoker the dice  
 And the one who is at fault and does not realize, walks on the slant  
 Remember that narrow Chinese alley  
 And the girl who was silently crying in the dark

Under the red lights Salonique<sup>18</sup> sleeps  
 Ten years ago, drunk, you said, “I love you”  
 Tomorrow, like then, and without gold on your sleeve  
 In vain, you will be looking for the road to Depot<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> *Pousi*: A word coming from the sailors’ dialect meaning ‘sea fog’.

<sup>12</sup> *Vardaris*: The northern wind that hits the city of Thessaloniki in the winter. It has a nasty reputation for being the coldest wind in Greece making the atmosphere wet and freezing.

<sup>13</sup> The terms ‘First’ and ‘first-rate’ refer to the first among the sailors

<sup>14</sup> *Smaro*: Greek name of a girl, meaning ‘Pearl’

<sup>15</sup> *Kalamaria*: Neighbourhood of Thessaloniki with a very good reputation.

<sup>16</sup> St Nicolas is the Saint of sailors and fishermen

<sup>17</sup> Famous painter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century for his portraits of people with blank eyes staring at nothingness

<sup>18</sup> The term “Salonique” refers to the cosmopolitan city of Thessaloniki before it became officially Greek in 1923 with the Lausanne Convention of 1923. It is still used today

<sup>19</sup> *Depot*: Industrialized area near Kalamaria



*Kuro Siwo* (in *Pousi* 1947)

First fare by chance to the south  
 Difficult watches, bad sleep and malaria  
 India's strange lanterns are deceptive  
 They say you don't see them at first glance

Beyond Adam's bridge in southern China  
 You received thousands sacks of soya  
 But not for a single moment you forgot the words  
 What they've said during an empty hour in Athens

The tar leaks under the nails and sets them on fire  
 For years your clothes smell fish-oil  
 And her word whistles in your head  
 "Is it the compass turning, or the ship?"

Early the weather went full and turned nasty  
 You altered course, but sadness holds you  
 Tonight my two parrots died  
 And the ape I had so much trouble training

The iron plate!<sup>20</sup> ... The iron plate wipes out everything  
 The Kuro Siwo pressured us like a Girdle  
 But you are still watching over the wheel  
 How the compass plays point by point

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<sup>20</sup> In the actual Greek text Kavvadias uses the word 'lamarina' which has a double meaning. In Greek it means the 'iron-plate', and it is the material from which the poorest people used to build their houses. The houses of course were ultimately hot in the summer under the burning sun, while freezing in the winter, like refrigerators. But at the same time, in the language of the sailors 'lamarina' is another word for the 'ship', since the ships are made from iron. It is easy to imagine that when these ships are in the middle of the equator, the temperature of the heated iron must be going really high, and thus, it 'wipes out everything', memories, feelings, passions, identities.

*Woman* (in *Traverso*<sup>21</sup> 1975)

Dance on the shark's fin  
 Play your tongue in the wind, and pass-by  
 In some places they called you Yudith; here, Maria  
 The snake tears apart itself on the rock with the sea krait

Since I was a child I hurried up, but now I take my time  
 A chimney defined me in the world, and whistles  
 Your hand petted my rare hair  
 And if it has bended me once, today it does not define me

Painted. A red lantern shines on you  
 Your hair of seaweed and flowers, amphibian Destiny  
 You were riding without saddle, without curbing  
 First time, in a cave of Altamira

The seagull dives to bend the dolphin  
 What are you looking at? I will remind you where you saw me  
 On the sand I was behind you on top  
 The night when they founded the Pyramids

Together we walked across the Sine Wall  
 Next to you sailors from Ur were building a new ship  
 In between the naked swords of Grammikos<sup>22</sup>  
 You dropped oil into the deep wounds of the Macedonian

Green. Foam, deep blue and purple  
 Naked. Just a gold girdle hanging from your waist  
 Your eyes separated by seven equators  
 In *Giorgione's* workshop

I might have thrown a stone and the river doesn't want me  
 What have I done and you wake me up before the sunrise?  
 Last night at the port will not be wasted  
 A sinner should always be happy and guilty

Painted. A sick light shines on you  
 You are thirsty for gold. Take, Search, Count  
 Here, next to you, I will remain unmovable for years  
 Until you become my Destiny, Death, and Stone

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<sup>21</sup> *Traverso*: Sailor language for going backwards/ changing root

<sup>22</sup> Grammikos is a river at Northern Greece