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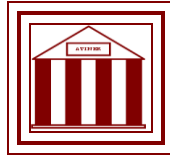
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Theatre in Education, Democracy and Greek National Celebration Performances

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Abstract

The focus of this paper is on Theatre, Democracy and National Celebrations. This is part of my thesis where I explore the students' negotiation of ethnocultural identity while participating in national celebration theatre performances within a Greek community school in London. My discussion proceeds in three parts. In the first section, I conceptualise theatre, democracy and national celebrations. In section two, I turn the focus on the selective aspect that permeates the ideological foundations of these celebrations. Lastly, in the last section, I examine these performances as ideological representations of struggles of resistance and I associate them with the current socio-political and economical conditions in Greece and Cyprus.

Greek National celebrations performances often commemorate a successful ethnic struggle over recognition and distribution of power and wealth. These celebrations are employed as symbolic representations that are legitimised as hegemonic ideologies through the State's educational institutions. When democracy is in jeopardy, these ideologies may inspire new struggles of resistance.

Habermas (2012) raises concerns about a post-democratic rule in the European transnational democracy. He argues that the essence of democracy has changed and power has slipped from the hands of the people and shifted to bodies of questionable democratic legitimacy. Disempowered nations struggle to reclaim this power. Recent examples suggest that the Greeks and the Greek-Cypriots employed the rhetoric and/or the occasions of national celebrations as mediums to publicly express and challenge the asymmetries in power and wealth. The national commemoration of resistance has been transformed into a contemporary act of resistance against inequities, misrecognition and socio-economic injustice in a post-democratic European Greece and Cyprus.

Theatre Democracy and National Celebrations

In ancient Greek mythology, Prometheus gave mankind fire and he was sentenced to eternal torment for stealing this gift from the Gods of Olympus. As Boal (2006: 66) stresses, Prometheus 'showed that what belongs to the gods can also be used by men' and he was punished because 'when it is fire today, it is power tomorrow'. In a similar way, during the Dionysian festival in ancient Athens, when Thespis introduced the Protagonist he gave mankind another gift: the power that it is possible to stand and speak in front of the Gods and those in Power. 'The actual words he used did not matter- what matters is that he said that it is possible to say things' (Boal, ibid). Thespis' gift, like Prometheus, gave men the fire that can become power: dialogue.

In this view, theatre, through Thespis' Protagonist and later Aeschylus' Deuteragonist, proposed that men have the power to speak. Moreover, theatre introduced the fundamental principle of democracy: dialogue. Dialogue proposes that there might be more than one opinion, more than one thought and more than one truth. As such, it questions the unquestionable truth and the naturalised dominant ideas. Therefore, theatre and democracy, both empower the person to speak and act so as to make a change.

Castoriadis also emphasises the significance of questioning. He suggests that in Ancient Greece we can witness a unique phenomenon that can explain the political, philosophical and cultural development of that era. For Castoriadis (1999) it was the dual questioning of institutional and social traditions that enabled the Athenians to transform their Polis into the most recognised Democracy.

Questioning is a process of denaturalisation where the familiar becomes unfamiliar and vice versa. It is the unmasking of imposed ideologies that gives the person the power to question Power. Denaturalisation is a process where more interpretations are explored than the self-evident or the imposed. As Foucault (in Kritzman, 1988: 155) argues, 'to show that things are not as self-evident as one believed, to see that which is accepted as self-evident will no longer be accepted as such...since as soon as one can no longer think things as one formerly thought them, transformation becomes both very urgent, very difficult and quite possible'.

Theatre in education employs the fundamental characteristics of the theatre craft so as to foster democratic thought and empathy. Many scholars - Neelands, O'Toole, Heathcote to name only a few- have stressed that when young people work together in classroom drama they 'have the opportunity to struggle with the demands of becoming a self-managing, self-governing, self-regulating social group who co-create artistically and socially and begin to model these ideals of the Athenian polis (autonomous, autodikos, autoteles) beyond their classrooms' (Neelands, 2009: 182). However, it should be acknowledged that theatre in education might be approached in a variety of ways that do not always serve democratic values.

If we regard theatre in education as another subject of the national curriculum, then we should not disregard the institutional character of

education. As such it will be aligned with the State ideologies and it will respectively induce, reproduce and legitimise hegemony of dominant forces. Apple (1990: 2), drawing on Bernstein's and Young's work, emphasises that 'the structuring of knowledge and symbol in our educational institutions is intimately related to the principles of social and cultural control in a society'. In a similar way, Bourdieu (1992: 24) associates institutions with symbolic violence, which is 'a necessary and effective means of exercising power. For it enables relations of domination to be established and maintained through strategies which are softened and disguised'. Therefore, he suggests that to understand how symbolic violence is exercised we need to scrutinise the institutionalised mechanisms, such as educational systems, that tend to produce and sustain domination and inequalities.

Embarking from that concept, in my research project I explore the ideological representations that are hidden and embedded in the national celebration theatre performances that are commemorated within a Greek community school in London. Though, my main focus is on how the students negotiate these ideologies and whether theatre in education can play an emancipating democratic role, in the present paper I will analyse only the ideological representations of Greek national celebrations.

Greek National Celebrations within the Greek community schools in London

I shall begin by explaining the use of the term National Celebrations. The term denotes the ceremonial celebration of historic National Days that are recognised as such by the state calendar and school curriculum. In the literature one can also find the term 'ethnic celebrations' (e.g. Williams, 2005; Meleis, 1996) with an emphasis on the cultural and religious ceremonies of an ethnic group.

Though ethnic sounds closer to the Greek equivalent term Ethnikes Yiortes (*Εθνικές Γιορτές*), the word ethnos in Greek is closer translated to Nation, which is the emphasis of these celebrations. However, within the Greek mono-ethnic context the terms ethnic and nation often overlap. Greek ethnicity is often congruent with Greek nationality (some exceptions may be found in Thrace's Muslim minority communities of Greek or Turkish nationality). On the contrary, in dual-ethnic Cyprus, ethnicity and nationality are marked through differentiation between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots. Despite minor differences within the two contexts, both terms 'ethnic' and 'national' are highly valued both in Cyprus and Greece. More often the term Hellenic Ethnos is often employed as a big umbrella inclusive term that embraces all Christian Orthodox Greeks, irrespective of geographical and spatial positions.

National Days should also be defined in reference to a broader context. In some European countries, such as the U.K., National Days include religious (Christmas Day) and/or other public holidays (Bank Holiday). In Greece, National Days refer to a designated date that marks a historically significant

national war that maintained the sovereignty of the Hellenic Nation. Therefore, the main focus of Greek National Celebrations is on the concept of nationhood, but can also integrate religious and cultural aspects.

In Greek community schools in London the commemorated National Celebrations are the following: the 28th October 1940 (Greco-Italian war); the 25th March 1821 (Greek Independence Revolution against the Ottoman rule); and 1st April (Greek-Cypriot EOKA fight against the British Colonial rule). A form of selectivity appears in two elements: on what the schools choose to celebrate and on the way they present it. This selectivity is associated with what Williams (1980: 39) defines as 'selective tradition'.

> 'There is a process which I call the selective tradition: that which, within the terms of an effective dominant culture, is always passed off as "the tradition", the significant past. But always the selectivity is the point; the way in which from a whole possible area of past and present, certain meanings and practices are chosen for emphasis, certain other meanings and practices are neglected and excluded…some are reinterpreted, diluted or put into forms which support or at least do not contradict other elements within the effective dominant culture'

Greek National Celebrations encompass 'selective tradition' in two domains: reinterpretation and exclusion. As regards the former, I will use the example of 28th October. This national celebration is presented as the commemoration of the Greek victorious fight over the Italian invasion in 1940. Despite the fact that the Greco-Italian war ended successfully for Greece- only in relation to Italy-, a few days later the Greek army of Epirus surrendered to the Germans. The 28th October (often referred as 'Oxi Day'- *Ημέρα του Όχι*) is a celebration of the Greek fight and resistance against the Italian army. *Όχι* means No and refers to the negative response that the Greek dictator Ioannis Metaxas gave to the Italian ultimatum demanding occupation of Greek territory. It could be argued that this celebration focuses selectively only on the success that the Greek army achieved against Italy and not on the German Nazi invasion that resulted in the death from starvation of at least 300.000 Athenians and thousands of other Greeks (Hionidou, 2006; Mazower, 1994).

There is another aspect of selectivity that appears in the 28th October. That is the role of the Greek Prime Minister. Metaxas, who said the later glorified '*OXI*', was a dictator. However, the character of his authoritarian regime is excluded from the ceremonial narratives of this National Celebration. The exclusion serves the 'patriotic' character of '*OXI*', hence does not contradict the celebratory character of the Greek victory.

Selectivity as 'exclusion' can also be found in the commemoration of 17th November. In 21st April 1967 democracy was suspended in Greece by the intervention of the Armed Forces (Kassimeris, 2006: 64). The 1967 coup resulted in a seven-year military rule often referred to as the period of 'Papadopoulo's Dictatorship', 'The Junta' or 'The Regime of the Colonels'.

Papadopoulos declared a martial law, the violation of which resulted in exile and imprisonment of 3.286 people in 1968 alone (Clogg & Yannopoulos, 1972). Small and large-scale manifestations of resistance were organised and escalated in 17th November 1973 'when about 3.000 Polytechnic School students rallied with the open support of thousands of Athenians. Junta responded with tanks that turned the protest into a blood bath' (Haritos-Fatouros, 2003, 28). The rule of Junta ended a few months later with the attempted assassination of Archbishop Makarios in Cyprus.

Two aspects of selectivity emerge in this historical event. Formerly, it is the only National Day that is titled 'Anniversary' and not 'Celebration'. Moreover, in the Greek community schools in London, the curriculum does not include this anniversary as a national day. Therefore, Greek state education reinterprets the notion of National Days by creating two categories: celebrations and anniversaries. Similarly, community education discards selectively these historical events that may dislocate the Hellenic collective character of the diasporic community; thus jeopardise the creation of an effective dominant culture. And at this point, we should not forget that 'the educational institutions are the main agencies of the transmission of an effective dominant culture' (Williams, 1980: 39). Therefore, this process of selectivity is strongly associated with the efficacious character of education. However, it is debatable whose interests are served through this 'efficacy'.

Two arguments could explain this selective reinterpretation and exclusion. The first is associated with the concepts of 'alterity' and 'Other'. 'In Hegel's thesis, the formation of personal and social identity is an inter-subjective and dialogical process. One recognises oneself only by virtue of recognising, and being recognised by, another subject' (Neelands, 2007: 307). This other subject in Levinas' terms is the alter and it's center lies both inside and outside us. It is 'my being interpellated by the other' (Critchley & Bernasconi, 2002: 67) that determines the socially constructed identity positions that someone takes. However, the differences and similarities that permeate the continuum between the self and the other define whether the subject will identify with the other or will categorise it as something different.

In collective identity positions (such as national identities), when the difference of the other jeopardises the sovereignty of the group, the notion of alterity takes a hostile character. Thus, the Other is recognised as an enemy and as such it can evoke actions and feelings against the Other and/or in-group unity. Lev-Aladgem (2010: 141) argues that the element of the 'Other' is a psychological component in the repertoire of those in conflict and it involves 'emotional orientation such as fear, anger and hatred toward the opponent'. The hostile or unknown Other provokes fear and anxiety that collectivity will be lost or changed into something unfamiliar. As Castoriadis (1990: 53-54) maintains on this issue, this is 'the fear, which is in fact quite justified, that everything, even meaning, will dissolve'.

In the aforementioned historical examples, the attributes of the Other define whether the selective tradition will include it or exclude it from the collective memory. More explicitly, in the 28th October the Other is an out-

group alterity, a foreign opponent, and for this reason it is considered legitimate to 'celebrate' the victorious war against the Italian enemy. It is an element that can promote unity and pride within the in-group members. It unites them against the danger of the external, alien Other.

However, in the case of 17th November, the Other is an in-group member whose actions dichotomised the Nation into two opposing groups. However, both opposing groups shared the same fundamental characteristics of the effective dominant culture (language, religion, ethnicity, etc). Therefore, in this case there is no clear classification of the Other as enemy. Moreover, the issue of the in-group enemy along with the abolishment of democracy do not encourage unity and pride within the national community. This results in defining this 'commemoration' as 'anniversary' and not as a 'celebration'.

I would argue that in reference to the historical events of 17th November there are two different educational practices that serve 'selective tradition'. The former is the 'selective reinterpretation' that titles this National Day 'anniversary'. The latter is the 'selective exclusion' that abolishes the reference of this National Day from the Greek community school curriculum. What could possibly reason this selectivity is grounded in historical reasons. As I mentioned earlier, two historical actions resulted in the restoration of democracy after the 7 years of military Junta: the events of 17th November and the attempted assassination of the Cypriot President Makarios. This latter event could possibly interpret 'selective exclusion'.

More explicitly, in 1955, EOKA (National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) started a national struggle against British colonial policies (Knapp & Antoniadou, 2002: 22) with the demand for Enosis (Union of Cyprus with Greece) (Stern: 1975: 34). In 1960 this fight leads to the foundation of the Republic of Cyprus with Archbishop Makarios as president. In 1971 General George Grivas and his supporters form an ancestor of EOKA that is often found in the literature as EOKA B (Papadakis 1999). As Knapp and Antoniadou (2002: 23) suggest, 'with the support of Greek military junta, Grivas set up EOKA B, a para-state terrorist organisation, whose primary target was Makarios and whose chief intention was to overthrow the government'. On the same issue, Markides and Cohn (1982: 90) argue, 'the under-ground groups unified under EOKA-B joined with the Greek-led National Guard to overthrow the government'. In 1974, EOKA B launched a military coup d'etat so as to kill Makarios. Makarios escaped but the result was political destabilisations that five days later lead to the Turkish military invasion.

The questionable role of Greek Junta in these political and historical events could be the reason for the selective exclusion of 17th November anniversary from community education in London. Given that the majority of the Greek school population in London is of Greek-Cypriot origin, this selective abolishment is not unanticipated. The presentation of the historical era of Junta could raise political debates between community members and issues of affiliation to the greater Hellenic community. Therefore, Greek

community institutions in London select to exclude historical events that might threat the community's harmony.

In summary, I would argue that Greek National celebrations are treated as elements of the effective dominant culture that is produced and transmitted through educational institutions. In order for the dominant culture to be effective and hegemonic, a process of 'selective tradition' is employed. This results in a selective legitimate distilled symbolic representation that produces and reproduces hegemonic ideologies.

Ideologies are described as 'false ideas and beliefs about itself that society somehow systematically manages to induce people to hold…Moreover, ideologies are functional false beliefs, which, not least because they are so widespread, serve to shore up certain social institutions and the relations of domination they support' (Finlayson, 2005: 11). Ideologies are strongly associated with what Gramsci defined as hegemony.

Gramsci argued that two elements define hegemony and can help us understand the idea of hegemonic relations: the hegemonic structures and the intellectuals who legitimise them. 'It is not merely that our economic order 'creates' categories and structures of feeling which saturate our every-day lives. Added to this must be a group of 'intellectuals' who employ and give legitimacy to the categories, who make the ideological forms seem neutral' (Apple, 1990: 11). Educational institutions and respectively the educators as intellectuals often legitimise and reproduce hegemonic structures. For this reason Williams (1980: 37) argues that hegemony is stronger than ideology: 'For if ideology were merely some abstract, imposed set of notions… then the society would be very much easier to move and to change than in practice it has ever been or is'.

In view of the above arguments, hegemonic ideologies saturate the economic, social and cultural structures of the society and reproduce domination. This domination is expressed through an 'effective dominant culture' (Williams, ibid), which is communicated from the educational institutions. Therefore, as Apple (1990: 15) suggests, 'we must study schools as institutions that 'process knowledge' and serve an ideological function'. In the following section I turn the focus on this process and ideological function of Greek National Celebrations.

Greek National Celebrations: symbolic ideologies

In this section I will argue that Greek National Days could be defined as the commemoration of a 'selectively' successful resistance: a fight/war/struggle against military, totalitarian, colonial or occupational dominant power forces. This resistance often stems from a 'struggle over recognition and distribution' (Tully, 2000) of marginalised groups who suffer inequities of access to resources and/or power. 'A struggle over recognition irrupts whenever some of the individuals or groups subject to a prevailing norm of mutual recognition experience it as unbearable' (Tully, 2007: 89). This

might be identified with what Habermas (1976: 1) defines as crises: 'the idea of an objective force that deprives the subject of some part of his normal sovereignty'.

In that sense, a National Day is often the commemoration of a 'successful resistance' that (re)claims sovereignty. These struggles result in freedom and/or independence, thus liberate or create a nation. Struggles over recognition are not limited to the Greek case but can be found in other National Days, such as the American Independence Day; The Mexican Independence Day; the French Bastille Day etc. However, as it will be argued later, National Days are often established and commemorated so as to reproduce a hegemonic ideology that serves the effective dominant culture. National Days are celebrated through hegemonic ritualised performances (e.g. military and school parades), which affirm membership to the natural order of power. These national secular rituals, similar to religious rituals (Mass or Liturgies), are codified performances 'consist of sequences of publicly performed symbolic behavior expressing meanings shared by both the performers and the receivers' (Schechner, 2002: 163).

The fights of resistance are often grounded in unequal distribution of wealth and power and it is usually the former (lack of wealth) that motivates people to resist to the latter (lack of power). Thus, the ideology of resistance has its roots in inequalities of economic capital (limited access to resources) but it is often manipulated and organised on grounds of cultural and symbolic capital (ideals of freedom, democracy, country). It is a resistance to a political, social and economical status quo.

Moreover, struggles over recognition are often intertwined with struggles over distribution. Both occur when socio-economic and/or cultural/symbolic injustices prevail in the social structures. As Fraser (in Olson (ed.), 2008: 14) argues:

> 'socioeconomic injustice is rooted in the political-economic structure of society and includes exploitation, economic marginalisation and deprivation. …Cultural or symbolic injustice is rooted in social patterns of representation, interpretation and communication and includes cultural domination, non recognition and disrespect'.

In view of Fraser's argument, socioeconomic injustice calls for redistribution; and cultural/symbolic injustice for recognition. However, there are cases where marginalised groups might be deprived from both culture and wealth, so they might demand both redistribution and recognition. Fraser suggests there are two kinds of remedies that could correct the socioeconomic and cultural inequities: affirmative and transformative remedies. The former remedies, aim at 'social arrangements without disturbing the underlying framework that generates them' (ibid, 28). In contrast, the latter, aim at corrections 'by deconstructing the generative framework' (ibid, 28).

Similar struggles over recognition and redistribution are embedded within the Greek National celebrations. More explicitly, in the case of 28th October 1940, the threatened and marginalised group are the Greeks. The threat comes from the external Italian Other (and later from the German Nazis) who invades Greece and destabilises the social order, the economy and the politics. The civilians experience cultural domination by the external invader that results in symbolic injustice that calls for a struggle over recognition. This struggle is expressed through the defensive Greco-Italian war: an act of resistance. This resistance could be described as the remedy that deconstructed partly the generative framework of injustice while leaving intact the content of group identity. I argue about quasi 'deconstruction' because the Italian invasion was not the only generative source of injustice.

Prior to the Greco-Italian war, since 1936 the Greeks live under the dictatorship of Metaxas. Therefore, they experience in parallel other forms of symbolic injustice due to internal political destabilisation. This symbolic injustice demands further struggles over recognition. Metaxas' regime (1936-1941) 'is considered a hostile period by the average contemporary Greek and Metaxas himself a controversial and unpopular figure' (Petrakis, 2006: 2). However, these struggles are getting more complicated because after the death of Metaxas (1941) and the Greco-Italian war, the Germans occupy Greece.

The Axis occupation during the World War II-referred as *Κατοχή* [Katochi]- entails relentless economic exploitation, famine and atrocities (Hionidou, 2006). During this period the Greeks experience both forms of injustice: socioeconomical and cultural. They are deprived from economical resources; they suffer exploitation and they live on the margins of their own country. Evident of the symbolic propaganda and injustice is that Greek National symbols, such as the flag, are removed and replaced by the Nazi swastika. Evident of the economic injustice is that thousands of Greeks died of famine (Mazower, 1994). As Maratzidis & Antoniou (2004: 223) stress, 'Greece was about to go through its worst crisis, at least in the 20th century. The famine, the reprisals, the holocaust of the Jewish population and the internal conflict of the Greek people were only some of consequences of the harsh Axis occupation (1941-44) and the civil war that followed (1946-49) - events that resulted in hundreds of thousands of deceased, displaced and homeless people'.

These socioeconomic and symbolic inequities resulted in limited access to wealth and power; there were of course exceptions of Nazi sympathizers, collaborators and anti-simites who enjoyed the privileges of their affiliation to the Nazis by having better access to power and wealth. During the Civil War many collaborators were exemplary punished and assassinated (Mazower, 1999). However, for the majority of the population this limited access resulted in several forms of resistance: political, ideological and armed. With the establishment of '*Εθνική Αντίσταση*' (ethniki antistasi- National Resistance) a new era of struggle over recognition and distribution begun that was so 'transformative' (Fraser in Olson (ed.), 2008: 29) that affected the group's 'sense of belonging and affiliation' (Fraser, ibid). Indicative of the

transformative effect of this struggle is that these acts of resistance functioned as the prelude to the Greek civil war (1946-1949) (Woodhouse, 1976; Marantzidis & Antoniou, 2004).

In view of the historical context that precedes and follows the resistance acts of the 28th October, I would argue that the element of struggle is embedded in this celebration. However, two new elements emerge: The former is that the struggles that aimed at correcting the initial socioeconomic and symbolic maldistribution lead to further struggles. For these further struggles transformative remedies were employed, which finally deconstructed and restructured the underlying framework (after the end of the civil war).

The second element that has already been addressed is that of selective tradition. Selectivity becomes more apparent if we approach the historical events from a holistic perspective that encompasses the before and the after of the 28th October. Therefore, this National Day may be presented ideologically as a successful act of resistance, but the 'glorious' and 'successful' aspect is questionable given the further struggles and inequities that followed 1940. Karakasidou (2000) argues that the Greek government established 28th October as a National Celebration orchestrated through patriotic pageants so as to instil a conservative national identity after the two wars (WW II and Civil war). Her analysis shows how the state employed symbolic narratives to propagate patriotism and to discredit leftist and communist values. Therefore, the establishment of this celebration is strongly associated with state hegemonic ideologies that are rooted in selectivity and propaganda.

Similar patterns of struggle over recognition/distribution along with selectivity are also present in the Greek Independence fight of 25th March and the Greek-Cypriot anti-colonial fight of 1st April. Therefore, it could be argued that the struggles that are embedded in the National Celebration narratives are selective so as to induce hegemonic ideologies that serve the effective dominant culture. The reproduction of these ideas/beliefs through the educational institutions legitimises the ideological hegemony and instils a habitus that maintains the social, political and cultural status quo of the nation. It is a nationalistic ideology that can take different forms depending on the interests that it serves.

National celebrations, like cenotaphs and tombs of Unknown soldiers are 'arresting emblems of the modern culture of nationalism' (Anderson, 2006: 9). The role of these celebrations could be identified with forms of ethnic nationalism that emphasise the sharing of a common culture between the members of an ethnic group within an historical continuum. 'An historical dimension of ethnic nationalism, basic to nation formation, are processes of exclusion and the construction of an other or others as foreign or alien to the national self' (Colley, 1992 cited in Brett and Moran 2011,189). This 'monological' form of nationalism contradicts 'dialogical' cosmopolitan nationalism in the sense that the former is more hostile and less open to different ethnic groups.

However, the agency of these national/ethnic ideologies does not only belong to those who produce it or reproduce it, but also to those who accept it.

Therefore, people who are baptized with the patriotic ideologies of a National Celebration may draw on these ideologies to celebrate ceremoniously a National Day; or they might be inspired by these ideologies so as to organise their own struggles over recognition and distribution.

During the last two years we have witnessed examples of this latter approach in Greece and Cyprus. Recent political and economical factors, what is often called the European Crisis, have led both countries into a struggle to survive economically within the Eurozone. Severe austerity measures, unemployment and socio-economic and political insecurity lead the citizens in crisis, thus deprivation of full possession of their power (Habermas, 1976: 1).

On the 28th October 2011, the National Day of '*Oxi*', groups of civilians in many cities of Greece blocked the national parade. In Thessaloniki, Greeks protesting against the austerity measures of wage cuts and extra taxes, shouted 'traitors' at President Karolos Papoulias and other political representatives. According to Reuters (2011):

> 'The annual military parade in the northern city is one of the most symbolic events in Greece's political calendar and commemorates the rejection of Italy's ultimatum to surrender in 1940. It was the first time it had been cancelled' (http://www.reuters.com/article/ 2 011/10/28/us-greece-protest-idUSTRE79R34J20111028, accessed 5/12/11)

In a similar way, the Cypriots employed the rhetoric of Oxi when they first denied the haircut to the bank deposits in 19th March 2013. A few days later, during the celebration of 1st April, many Cypriot political representatives also employed the symbolic representation of the EOKA fight so as to encourage their compatriots.

In view of these incidents, I would argue that national celebrations as symbolic representations can serve as instances for resistance. Greeks based on the symbolic and selective ideology of successful resistance against the Italian army, expressed their own resistance against the political institutions that are blamed for the inequities of power and wealth that they experience at the moment. By resorting to this kind of struggle and resistance they managed to publicly express and challenge the asymmetries in power and wealth (misrecognition and socio-economic injustice) with the intention of social change.

In summary, I would argue that National Celebrations have an embedded element of resistance that stems from struggles over recognition and redistribution of power. This embedded element can both serve the interests of the state by reproducing hegemonic ideologies, but in several political and social conditions it can also serve the interests of the civilians and may lead to affirmative or transformative remedies for change. As Williams (1961: 10) argues, 'It seems to me that we are living in a long revolution… The democratic revolution commands our political attention'.

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