

ITHACAS, A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY
EXILE AND DISPLACEMENT ARISING FROM THE
GREEK CRISIS

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Abstract

The economic crisis in Greece, that became an acute reality in 2010, revealed the pre-existing cultural crisis in the country and created the need to redefine the Greek identity. This practice-based research explores this particular need through the conditions of immigration to European metropolises, repatriation from abroad and internal migration to Greek islands that are incited by the crisis, and are part of the many consequences of the crisis. The aim is to create a photographic narrative on the subject with an approach embedded within it that emphasises the need to recreate both Greek identity and Greek photography, as the latter was never incorporated into a Greek cultural context but rather developed as an imitation of European and North-American photographic trends.

The project draws upon original visual and academic research to construct a photographic narrative. The process of image making works as a methodological tool that uses morphological, aesthetic, and narrative elements from the genres of subjective documentary and landscape photography and develops in parallel with the theoretical research on the areas of (i) displacement and exile, (ii) Greek culture and aesthetics and (iii) Greek landscape photography. To achieve a photographic approach that can be described as Greek, three basic methods are used; (i) the reappropriation of the myth of Odysseus as a representational and symbolic structure of the voyage of contemporary Greek migrants towards their own Ithacas, (ii) the appliance of the Neohellenic principle of entopia in image making as a code of symbolism, and (iii) the use of symbolic Greek landscape images to re-create/restore a collective memory.

The project uses the mythological ten-year journey on the sea of Odysseus towards his home and redirects it to represent the migratory flows of Greek neo-migrants. The story is seen from the perspective of Odysseus, who becomes the narrator that experiences displacement and tries to define his/her identity in relation to the borders of each place

he/she resides. The narrative, that is presented as four books in a slipcase, consists of two main types of images, colour landscapes and black-and-white instant images. The first explore the concept of the border and build the inner landscape of the narrator, based on theoretical research on displacement and exile and the code of symbolism inspired by Neohellenism. The latter refer to archive images and use representations of the Greek landscape to explore cultural memory.

In this thesis, the final outcome is analysed in a Greek cultural context and it is argued that just as the redefinition of Greek identity is possible by redefining the traditional values of Greek culture, the search for the new Greek photographic identity can be achieved by studying the principles of Greek culture and applying them into photography.

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Declaration

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Grigoris Digkas



20 May 2020

Introduction

1. The Greek context

a. Personal background

In September 2010 I left Greece to chase my dream in England—to start the MFA Photography degree at UCA, Farnham and pursue a career in photography. When I arrived, my perception of Northwest Europe ceased to be the imaginary and fabricated “Other” that is engraved in the Greek consciousness and I faced the reality. From the first moment in London, I remember an intense feeling of displacement, and my practice started to develop around this notion as an artistic necessity. I found my words and images were forming a new language, which became a haven for thoughts, concerns, and feelings accompanying the difficult and personal experience of displacement. This new language was heartfelt and spontaneous and helped me share worries that could have drowned me otherwise. However, my therapeutic need for expression through photography and text gradually transformed into a hybrid need for knowledge and understanding as well as expression. Over time the ‘haven’ became a space for investigating the deeper and more intimate reasons behind the condition of imposing displacement on oneself.

Theoretical research became an inseparable part of my practice, as reading key writers on displacement, diaspora, and exile allowed me to deepen my knowledge and understanding of what I felt, and to become able to communicate it. While I was digging deeper into such ideas, I realised that the photography course was just the excuse for moving away from Greece and the real reasons were far more complex. At that time fulfilling my creative aspirations in Greece seemed impossible under the Greek social and political conditions, even though I have a middle-class background, and thus more

opportunities than many in my country. There was the belief shared by many young educated Greeks that if you aspire to a creative lifestyle you need to move abroad. The European West was idealised. My movement coincided with the outbreak of the economic crisis in Greece in 2010. Since then a great number of young Greeks have moved to European cities in search of a better future or a life that is closer to their field of interest. Part of my investigation concerns the role of the crisis and its social and cultural implications in creating these tendencies for self-estrangement and migration.

These deeper issues were initially hidden behind the desire for fulfilling my aspirations, but when I reconsidered my need to leave Greece, I realised I had begun to feel displaced even before I moved; I was feeling 'European' in Greece. Probably if I had moved to the U.K. and everything was as I expected, then the story would have ended there. I would have just been part of the ambitious and very 'successful' Greek diaspora. But things were different from what I had expected. In London, I started feeling Greek. I developed a desire to search for my cultural roots, to understand 'Greekness' and try to comprehend the role of culture in creating mentalities, values, and ideals. I consciously avoided being assimilated by the European metropolitan culture, as might be expected to happen to diaspora communities which are not marginalised by native society. I also distanced myself from both cultures and tried to approach the collision between them critically.

In London, I was definitely an outsider, but my will to live there and build a new life made me an insider as well. In Greece, I will always feel an insider as I know the culture, I have connections with beloved people, and I care about the country. But my desire for not belonging there and the foreignness that I felt when I travelled back made me feel an outsider. This duality of being an insider and an outsider at the same time both in my home territory and in the western world, allowed me to see both cultures from a different viewpoint. I could appreciate certain characteristics of each culture and at the same time criticise others. I wouldn't suggest it is viable to talk about objectivity, but certainly, the point of view of a migrant offers an interesting and less 'fixed' perspective when it comes to comparing cultures.

The feeling of 'not belonging' is indescribable to someone who hasn't been in that position. After all these years being away and having returned, this feeling is still there.

The only difference is that I have now learnt how to live with it, even though I still have constant anxiety when it comes to permanency. At a personal level, this feeling, and my need for communicating it, is what drives my practice. Since 2010 the themes I have chosen to work on have always concerned different forms of displacement, whether physical or mental. Having become more conscious of what intrigues me, I can look back at my earlier work and see some kind of self-estrangement in my first subject matters or my approach to them. Since 2010, I have clearly been looking at forms of displacement as an effect of the Greek economic and social crisis.

b. Crisis, displacement and identity

In the context of that crisis, my research investigates appropriate ways to photographically represent the cultural and existential wandering of contemporary Greeks as expressed through various forms of geographical movement (mostly of highly educated Greeks). The history of the contemporary Greek state (founded in 1829 after the revolution against the Ottoman Empire in 1821), like the history of many other European states, has been one of constant political upheavals. Greece went through the Balkan and two world wars, the German occupation followed by the civil war and the dictatorship between 1967 and 1974. After the fall of the dictatorship in 1974, Greece made a political turn to 'modernisation, defined as insatiable consumption' (Douzinas, 2012a), which has tremendously influenced and confused social behaviour and the relatively newly invented Greek identity. It seems that Greece now struggles between a modern western life, eastern traditions, a conservatism coming from the Orthodox Church and the invented tradition of classical glories that, although it has helped to reunite the Greeks around a new identity before and during the revolution against the Ottoman Empire, is an invention of western Europe for Greece, as we will see below.

Since 2010 Greece has faced the most devastating effects of the wider global economic crisis.¹ With a more thorough look and a deeper inspection of the political complexity of the crisis, it can be seen that apart from the obvious economic crisis in Greece there is also a social crisis with its reasons rooted deeply in the contemporary neoliberal functions of the European Union. The outbreak of the economic crisis is only the effect of underlying problems that contemporary Greek society has been facing for over a decade. However, since 2010 the acceleration of crisis has formed a clear reality to be analysed.

Economists and political scientists offer an analysis of the multilateral phenomenon of crisis, in books, essays, and articles. There is also a significant number of writings by journalists, like Stathis Tsagkarousianos, Konstantinos Poulis, and Pitsirikos, artists, like actor and director Giorgos Karamichos and writer Nikos Xydakis, and others, who express their personal experience of contemporary life in crisis, as well as what they feel is missing from their Greekness. The more positive ones try to demonstrate hope for a change towards justice and solidarity. In some cases there is a struggle for a redefinition of Greek identity, personal and collective, that strives for expression. This identity could be potentially achieved through the reconsideration of what Greeks miss and what they think they have lost, which are part of the values of the Greek society, that tend to be embedded in people's collective memory.

Costas Douzinas (2012b) talks about a Greek social ethos that consists of values of friendship, hospitality, solidarity and *filotimia* (a mixture of pride, dignity and friendship). He suggests that Greeks until recently used to live with democracy as a way of life mediating everyday relationships, respecting the uniqueness and freedom of others (Douzinas, 2012b). Even though Douzinas' perspective comes from a Marxist radical left point of view, his analysis seems to be borne out by all the above-mentioned writings, coming from different political backgrounds, talking about the values and the life that they miss.

¹ The effects of the crisis are elaborated in detail in Chapter 1. It is widely accepted that the crisis has brought deterioration of living conditions and social unrest, unaffordable debts, tax evasion and avoidance, poverty, homelessness, unemployment, emigration, and the rise of the Neo-Nazi political party Golden Dawn.

Contemporary Greeks feel trapped in the political impasse of a neoliberal capitalistic culture that becomes inevitably problematic in Greek society because it contrasts strongly with the historical values and ideals that still exist as part of collective memory, education, and the way contemporary Greek identity has been constructed. In this social and political context, those Greeks who think beyond the current bourgeois ideas struggle to deconstruct their fixed identities and redefine their Greekness through the reconsideration of their values.

For the purposes of this research, the redefinition of Greek identity is approached through the study of the displacement of mostly highly educated people around the ages of 20-40 that they experience during their migration, supported by my personal experience and choices. As an effect of the crisis, a new stream of migration has been formed which is brought about not only by Greeks moving to north-west Europe and the USA, as expected, but also by fewer people returning back to Greece from abroad and others moving to islands and villages for a more moderate way of life.

Apart from the obvious effect of migration on the human geography of Greece, these categories of people become very interesting when seen from a cultural perspective. Their experience of cultural displacement makes them an interesting case study as it is an experience related both to the causes of the crisis and also the need to redefine Greek identity. Greeks who moved to north-western Europe are insiders in both cultures. Greeks who returned are dissatisfied with their experience abroad. Finally, Greeks who moved to islands choose consciously to renounce the westernised ambitions of Greek cities, for more modest lifestyles in harmony with the natural landscape.

The self-imposed displacement works on two levels. On one level there is a literal displacement that relates to the physical movement and on the other level a metaphorical, personal, and social displacement that stems from the oscillation between Western and Greek cultures. On this second level, the act of migrating transforms into an existential wandering between personal reasons, cultures, and identities. I use these stories, whose theme is somewhere between escape and expulsion, to talk about the need to redefine Greek identity and reconsider Greekness.

The key question when dealing with a subject related to a certain culture, and especially issues of cultural identity and redefining identity, is what would be the appropriate approach. Photographic theory and theories on displacement, identity, and migration, originate mainly from northwestern European and North American institutions. Greek culture and education, however, do not line up with the European model, as these realms of ideas developed differently. For that reason, in this thesis, I aim to create a context based on the exploration of Greek culture and taking into consideration Greek specificity in order to be able to develop and critically analyse a photographic project in a Greek cultural setting.

c. Neohellenism

My research project tries to identify residues and reminiscences of Greek traditional cultural characteristics and values in contemporary Greek culture and to define appropriate ways to translate these into contemporary photographic practices. A study of the development of Greek culture is necessary in order to explore the underlying principles and factors that set the framework on which contemporary culture is based: these are explored in detail in Chapter 2, but a brief outline of the key terms and historical developments are given here.

In the dictionary, Neohellenism is defined as: 'Hellenism as surviving or revival in modern times; the practice or pursuit of ancient Greek ideals in modern life, art, or literature'². However, this definition doesn't describe where and when Neohellenism appears. There is a counterpoint relation between Neohellenism and Western Hellenism. Western Hellenism existed before Neohellenism and is the perception of Western Europe concerning classical Greek culture (Leonti, 1998, p.34). Western Hellenism appears with the rediscovery of Hellenism in the Renaissance and develops further in the Romantic period with the movement of Philhellenism, which was strongly associated with German Romanticism. Philhellenists envisioned the revival of Hellenism with the re-creation of a

² Merriam-Webster, 2015. Merriam-Webster Online. [online] Available through: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/neo-hellenism> [Accessed 30 August 2015]

Greek state on the very territories that were sanctified by their view of Antiquity. They projected onto the physical space of ancient Greece their desire for the modern Greeks to live up to their ancestors' glorious past. Neohellenism, on the other hand, is the ideology of Greek national culture that appeared when Greeks themselves formulated a vague principle of territorial identification in their literature (Leonti, 1998, p.30). The distinction needs to be made because Western Hellenism might have influenced the development of Neohellenism, but it did not determine it.

There is still a debate on when Neohellenism starts chronologically, but certain elements of it appear right before the Greek revolution against the Ottoman Empire in 1821, which led to the creation of the modern Greek state in 1829. According to Benedict Anderson, a nation is created when clear and special characteristics are attached to a social body that helps it place its values and interests above those of the other nations that live in the same area (Anderson, 1983). Prior to the Greek revolution, Greek intellectuals, who were mostly living and being educated in Europe and were influenced by Philhellenists, tried to awaken the national morale of the oppressed peoples of the geographical area now called Greece. These intellectuals promoted the belief that the people who were speaking the Greek language and living in the geographical area of ancient Greece were racial descendants of ancient Greeks. This assertion was readily taken up by Greeks, and, as it combined with political and social interests, the modern Greek state, and a new modern Greek identity, started to develop.

As might be expected in a new state, still fighting for its independence until 1922, the confusion in all areas of public administration, as well as in defining identity, was immense. The asserted racial ideology was inevitably problematic for the new society to develop: it didn't actually reflect any reality. On the one hand, on political and ideological levels there were external influences on the Greek state, including the European perception of Greek identity through the idealised revival of Hellenism, and on the other hand there was the confused perception of Greek identity that Greeks had about themselves and their desirable burden of being descendants of the classical Greek culture. As Leonti argues 'Greeks had very early become aware of an inherent difference between themselves and their Greek identity, which, in turn, is split between modern and ancient/traditional elements' (Leonti, 1998, p.187). For the rest of the 19th century there

were diverse voices on how Greek identity should be defined, while administratively, the state mostly followed a European model (the first King of the establishment of the Greek Kingdom in 1932 was Bavarian).

The key step in defining Neohellenism seems to emerge from philosopher Periklis Giannopoulos, who argued in a series of essays between 1903 and 1910 for an aesthetic and ideological turn towards the Greek land (Papaioannou, 2014, p.147). Giannopoulos rejected European influences and shifted Greek artistic and existential self-consciousness towards the observation of Greek geography. In doing so he borrowed elements of the German ideology of romantic nationalism, drawing from a European artistic tradition that had never existed in recent Greek history. This created a contradiction that he solved by employing ancient Greek philosophies about the relationship between society and nature that constitute the base of all Hellenic art and architecture (Papaioannou, 2014, p.148). This way he managed not only to allow the development of an indigenous form of modernity but also to strengthen the belief in Greek uniqueness through the racial bond to ancient Greeks. Even though Giannopoulos' aesthetic nationalism, and his view that Greek art must obey the determining lines of Greek geography, did not manage to transcend a pure praise of the 'race' and 'intellectuality' of the Greek landscape, he was not only accepted by conservative parts of society, but also made a comeback in modernist manifestos from 1938 to 1948 (Leonti, 1998, p.194). His ideas were taken up from a range of social, historical, and political positions.

Giannopoulos' geoclimatic aesthetic theory became very popular with Greek artists because it offered a model that could support uniquely Greek artistic production. While strongly resisting the blatantly racial aspects of Hellenism, these artists and writers espoused Giannopoulos' beliefs about the effect of climate and geography on cultural orientation (Leonti, 1998, p.211). They managed to create a hybrid practice, merging western practices with traditional ones. Their work expressed an intellectual and spiritual relationship with Greek landscape that was endearing to Western Europe due to Western Hellenism, but which also differed aesthetically from Western European models, allowing them to create their own style that was not only for domestic consumption. Greek poets and writers of the 1930s, in particular, assimilated this aesthetic and constituted the first literary current that didn't simply celebrate ancient Greek culture, but brought Hellenism

into modern reality. Even after half a century, these intellectuals, writers, and poets, such as the Nobel prize-winning poets Seferis and Elytis, are still considered to be the foundation of Neohellenic literature and art, and contemporary Greek cultural education has been structured around them. The ways that these artists used geoclimatic aesthetics and nature as a metaphor for existential and social issues are elaborated further in Chapter 2.

Another interesting aspect of the work of these artists is that they invented the term Greekness and they tried to define what distinguishes the Greek specificity from the dominant European culture. Dimitris Tziouvas argues that the persistent interest of Neohellenic artists of the '30s in Greekness was the result of the institutional instability in Greece, as well as the political, cultural and geographical marginalisation of Greece in relation to Europe (Tziouvas, 1989). The biggest problem for Neohellenism was the definition of Greekness, or how Greek Hellenism could be distinguished from Western Hellenism (Tziouvas, 1989). The solution to this problem was provided by the principle of entopia, which is inspired by the realms of Giannopoulos' work. 'Entopia describes a society that tends to perfection because of its integration with nature. [...] Entopia represents the aesthetic principle of the dominant style of Greek modernity. It is the principle of indigenous authenticity. It is the principle that culture is nature, that culture is autochthonous. [...] It attributes the origin of beauty to indigenous forces, thus making art dependent on geographical and climatic factors. [...] The achievement of entopia is to draw art directly from the Greek landscape rather than from foreign styles or movements. The aesthetic must be indigenous' (Leonti, 1998, pp.188-192).

Neohellenism is not a static ideology with clear chronological limits, but rather a constantly developing process. From the early 20th century until the fall of the dictatorship in 1974, entopia seems to appear as the principle that best describes the era of Neohellenic modernism as a whole. Furthermore, entopia clearly involves a development of the Hellenic relationship of culture and nature. This era is of great significance, because, at that time, the artworks that were produced gained domestic and international recognition. Today, Greek education regarding culture is still structured around this principle, and the artworks of that era are still considered high culture even by today's standards. Reminiscences of entopia can still be found in contemporary Greek

culture, even if western postmodern influences have affected cultural identity and have become dominant in contemporary globalised culture.

Neohellenism from 1974 to today has in many respects taken on a negative slant and has acquired a new set of connotations owing to its link with the word 'Neohellene', which is associated with contemporary Greek superficial mass culture and particularly with glamorous lifestyles. This latter change in the perception of Neohellenism came after 1974 with the political turn towards capitalistic development following European and North American models and the consequent import of neoliberal globalised culture that stands in contrast to traditional Neohellenic culture. Once again Greece is facing the dilemma of defining its own cultural identity or importing one.

This thesis studies the principles of Neohellenism, in particular, those relating to symbolism and imagery, in relation to Greek landscape photography and experiments with possible methods to embed them in contemporary photography. In the research process, Greek photography is studied in relation to the development of the theoretical discourse on the perception of place and the Greek landscape, and the reasons why Greek photography didn't follow the principles of Neohellenism are explored. In contrast to the lack of a Greek Neohellenic photographic current, significant literary artists of the mid 20th century in the context of entopia used geography and climate metaphorically. Through the elaborate description of nature, they created literary imagery with a mood and a notation that describes a social situation or speaks about social values. These are examples of literary, metaphorical images that create a code of symbolism from nature to society that could potentially be used in contemporary photographic practices.

Director Theo Angelopoulos is also a very interesting case study for Neohellenism, as his films dating from the 1970s combine the metaphoric use of geography and climate, as described above, with the subject of exile, which seems very relevant in relation to contemporary Greek migration associated with the crisis. Angelopoulos explores his internal exile through the literal exile of his characters, and through the use of natural elements, he creates a physical space that works as a metaphor for the internal state of the exile. As Peter Alberó states, 'his work took the form of a cinema of exile, with characters who seek identity or home, starting with a primary, brilliant discovery:

ignorance. With this awareness, an incentive and basis for all knowledge, Angelopoulos introduced the central theme of his films: the voyage' (Alberó, 2000). Interestingly, Angelopoulos likens the continuous search for an identity to a kind of exile and uses the voyage as a way to represent this search. Similarly, in the case of the crisis in contemporary Greece, the identity crisis could be linked to a form of exile and one way to represent it could be the voyage. When talking about people migrating or returning back, the voyage becomes a literal as well as metaphorical voyage towards an identity, a home, or a utopia.

2. Aims of the research

Through this research, my main aim is to develop a body of work about the need of a new identity as a way out of the Greek crisis through photographic representations of the various expressions of displacement and exile experienced by those who choose to redefine their identity in a new environment. In addition, I aim to suggest a photographic approach that is embedded in the need to recreate both Greek identity and Greek photography and create a photographic narrative that makes use of this approach. I aim to propose a Greek photographic identity in international contemporary photographic practice by locating principles of Greek culture that could be brought into photography and assessing the possibility of analysing the final narrative in a Greek cultural context.

The exploration of Greek cultural principles and their appliance in contemporary photography is intended to preserve an important cultural identity and bring characteristics of it into photography that have not been explored before.³ Establishing an identity for Greek photography is a key issue for the development of photography in Greece, its integration into the international photographic scene and the evolution of

³ Exile as a state of loss is inextricably linked to memory. For those experiencing exile issues of cultural identity come to the forefront and perhaps are exaggerated to some degree. As it is described later on in this thesis, I have chosen an intimate approach for my subject and I have looked at exile through a first person narrative, so issues of cultural specificity become paramount in my approach. In this sense, my choice to seek a Greek photographic identity is not identified with nationalistic ideals, but more for the preservation and evolution of cultural characteristics and their introduction to the international dialogue around the development of the photographic medium.

Greek culture. Over the last few decades of globalisation, an international language of photography tends to be imposed by the dominant Western countries through their international institutions and the art market. This is not only a problem for Greece, but for most weaker countries, which try to incorporate this language to the detriment of their own cultural identity. Allowing these countries to develop their own photographic identities can create a diversity that will open up new perspectives for the development of the medium internationally.

In order to find appropriate ways to approach my subject, I have investigated three main areas: notions of displacement and exile in relation to the Greek crisis, Greek culture with a focus on the Neohellenic metaphoric use of geography and climate, and the development of Greek landscape photography from early 20th century in relation to Greekness and Neohellenism. In each of these areas, I have set subsidiary aims that are either vital for the main rationale or relevant to the approach to the subject.

Regarding the first area, I aim to argue that the Greek crisis creates contemporary forms of exile and/or reveals forms of exile that existed before the outbreak of the crisis but were left unattended. This argument requires an understanding of the crisis and its cultural complexity, as well as knowledge of theories of exile in order to note the similarities of the theoretical writings with the Greek condition. Furthermore, I show why these forms of exile are significant to study in the wider context of redefining Greek identity. In order to understand the roots of the crisis, I explore the development of the modern Greek state from its formation in 1829 till today, and inevitably the development of culture and identity. This creates the necessity to look thoroughly into Greek culture, which brings me to the second research area. Here I aim to argue that the development of Greek culture, and particularly the adaptation of Hellenic ideals in Neohellenism, defines a Greek cultural specificity that collides with the Euro-American neoliberal globalised culture. This collision as I argue is also the main reason for the social and cultural crisis that Greece has been facing in the last decades.

The exploration of Greek culture also leads me to look into the principles of Greek culture in order to assess the possibilities of embedding cultural and aesthetic characteristics of Neohellenism into contemporary photographic practices. This assessment has the

ultimate goal of using certain aspects of Neohellenism and the Greek cultural notation in the practical body of work in order to represent photographically abstract ideas related to the conditions of displacement and exile and define my visual approach. For that reason, I identify aesthetic conditions, principles, and metaphors in Neohellenic culture that have a potential to be translated into photographic imagery, then to practically experiment with these, and finally to assess the visual results.

Taking my investigation one step further and aiming to combine the above two research areas I look to representations of exile and displacement in Greek culture. The myth of Odysseus appears to be a story that comes from ancient Greek mythology, which has become iconic internationally and has been reappropriated globally throughout history.⁴ We may be familiar with the myth of Odysseus from Homer, but Homer's version of *The Odyssey* came from the oral tradition of story-telling. Thus the ideas carried by the myth reveal that the existential concerns of the myth pre-existed. The myth of Odysseus resonates universally the same concerns historically to this day. This essentially shows that Odysseus' journey of wandering is a reference, not specifically to Homer's version, but to a category of unsolved existential issues that concern the world to date.⁵ In this research, I attempt to find appropriate ways to bring a new directive to the myth that will allow the contemporary journey of Greeks in search of redefining the Greek identity to be contextualised based on Greek culture and theories of exile at the same time. My

⁴ The myth of Odysseus, as we are familiar with it through Homer's version, reflects the society of ancient Greece and thus inevitably promotes patriarchy. The depiction of women in the *Odyssey* varies from the patriarchal model of the loyal wife Penelope, to their demonisation through the female monsters and to their deification through the female goddesses. Throughout the years, the archetype of the male wanderer that was introduced through Odysseus has been romanticised. The problems of the myth are mainly due to the fact that it was created in periods before questions of gender had developed, and it was reproduced and reappropriated in later patriarchal societies. Despite the flaws of the myth, however, the reason why it has acquired such longevity lies on the universal themes that it deals with and the way these explain the human condition. Furthermore, it can be argued that Odysseus represents a man who exploits human intelligence rather than muscle power, which is possibly another reason why the myth remains so resonant today. Within this thesis, ideas related to patriarchy are not reproduced and the myth is reappropriated in a contemporary context having in mind gender equality. The myth is used as a narrative device for ideas related to travel, exile, and identity seeking, as well as for linking a contemporary narrative with Greekness.

⁵ There is an ongoing debate around the longevity of the myth of Odysseus and the revisions of the myth in contemporary art. Mary Beard, professor of classics at Cambridge University, argues (2008) that every revision or adaptation of the myth is "a gloomy reflection, perhaps, on the unoriginality of the western literary tradition that it can't escape the constraints of the first story it ever told". On the other hand, however, the myth preceded the version of Homer, and this proves that the same concerns were relevant not only to societies in Homer's time, but humanity even before that period. From my perspective, we have not been historically attached to a myth, but to a series of concerns. The myth functions as a reference to these deep existential concerns of humanity that are probably impossible to solve.

reference to myth is essentially a reference to specific issues of identity and self-identification in relation to an established society.

In the third research area, I examine the reasons why contemporary Greek photography seems separated from Greek cultural tradition in contrast to other disciplines in the arts that are integrated into the evolution of Greek culture. The effects of mimicry of a Westernised style can be observed both in the approach of contemporary photographers and in the academic critical analysis of contemporary Greek photography. Firstly, I locate the appropriate bibliography and visual examples to support this argument and position myself in relation to these. Then I familiarise myself with Greek photography and contemporary Greek photography in order to evaluate their relation to Greek culture. Finally, I practically experiment with possible visual approaches, both conceptual and aesthetic, that aim to the development a new Greek photographic current that is not imitative of any western style and could be analysed in a Greek cultural context. In particular I place great emphasis on the use of geography and climatic conditions metaphorically, in a way that has been used in Neohellenism and ancient Greek culture, with the aim of transforming photographic landscapes into metaphorical inner landscapes. The practical body of work that is created in parallel is developed based on the assessment of all the findings of this thesis and is analysed accordingly.

Regarding the physical outcome of the practice, I aim to create a body of work that is presented in the form of a book that investigates notions of exile and returning back in relation to the Greek crisis. The book will explore three forms of exile (leaving, returning, moving to the islands) not as photographic documentation of the condition, but rather as a lyrical and reflective visualisation of the ideas that accompany each condition and the inner state of mind of Greek people experiencing each form of displacement. I aim to engage myself in the situation and produce imagery as a reflection of the experience that communicates ideas in an intimate and profound way.

In this process, I use photography as a means to explore a situation which, though its roots are economic and social, intrigues me at a personal level. Photography becomes a language that I use to translate and communicate my physical wandering in new spaces and ideas. This language is developed over time through research, understanding, and

development of the medium's codes and extended experimentation. I use the photographic medium to understand the experience of people moving away, returning, and moving to isolated settings, and furthermore reflect on the philosophical ideas that accompany the reality of the experience.

The role of the book is very significant for this project for various reasons. Mainly, the book gives me the opportunity to develop a narrative in a more complex level, where different layers of meaning, as well as different narrative times, intervene with each other.

Furthermore, the book as an object has a tactile physicality that the viewer is able to explore, unlike in other ways of presenting photography, like a gallery or a digital platform, where normally the viewer is not allowed to touch the photographs. This particular quality of the book, combined with careful design, makes it a welcoming space to introduce personal work, as a certain level of intimacy between the viewer and the work can be developed. In addition, the book fulfils my intentions of keeping the work accessible to a wider audience than the purely photographic related one. The book itself is an object that people are generally more familiar with than any other art form.

Particularly in Greek culture, the book is a less intimidating art form than any other, mostly because of education, the economic condition of modern Greece, and the wide recognition of the Greek literary work of the 20th century. Although the photobook has scarcely developed as an autonomous art form in Greece, there is a great potential of acceptance from the Greek audience, as long as something interesting and contemporary is proposed.

My aim for this work is not to produce a negative critique of our era, but rather a reflective and suggestive narrative for a future that can be imagined and built based on our memory of the past, our experience of the present, and our expectations of the future. Thus I do not document the impacts of the crisis or the difficulties of migration, but rather present the condition of exile as a state of awareness and a process of redefining. The sense of perpetual voyage that I communicate encourages this idea of a journey towards an elsewhere, wherever and whatever this elsewhere might be for each person. I am very interested in bringing traditional Greek values that still exist in the collective memory in contrast with the alienated present, in order to reconsider the future. As such, Greekness is not handled as a national identity, but rather as 'a way to see and feel things' (Elytis,

1980) that is related to our common culture. In my case this culture is the Greek one, which rather than being allowed to develop is, I feel, being threatened with extinction for the sake of the neoliberal international culture. In times of depression, as this era is regularly called in Greece, the need to narrate personal stories of today, and to aspire and communicate a future can only be an optimistic escape from the pessimism of today's impasses. I hope my work speaks to this need that many people have, but, for various reasons, fewer manage to communicate.

The final outcome of this research aims to address in the first place a Greek audience, as the work explores issues to do with the Greek crisis, exile, and identity. However, I aim to make the work as legible as possible to as a wider audience as possible and comprehensible by an international photographic audience. That is why with the use of the appropriate text I intend to guide the reader/viewer of the work by providing the context and introduce him/her to the elements of Greek culture that have been used.

3. Literature review

The different areas of literature that inform this research project could be divided into four main categories. Each category has its own extended literature; however, for this research certain references have been selected that both give an overview of the thinking in each category and can be interrelated between the different categories in order to meet the purpose of the project. The main areas of the project are the following:

- writings on the current crisis
- writings on exile and diaspora
- writings on Greek culture, Hellenism and Neohellenism
- writings on Greek photography

a. Writings on the current crisis

The aspects of my study that relate to the recent Greek crisis depend very much on contemporary articles. When I started my research in 2010 there wasn't a substantive

bibliography on the subject. As the crisis is a current situation that unfolds in parallel with this project, new studies are being published simultaneously making it difficult to keep track of what is being argued, and also problematic to assess it. The crisis is still an unresolved condition and the aftermath is not yet fixed but can only be assumed according to personal opinions. From the very beginning of the crisis in 2010, I was collecting interviews and articles from the press by various authors regarding people's experiences of the crisis. Most of these only describe facts and don't go beyond the surface level of focusing on the obvious economic problems. As such they don't manage to document the crisis from a political, social, or cultural perspective and, for this reason, I do not intend to look at them in this thesis. Other articles, however, started revealing aspects of the deeper social crisis, and hesitantly suggest alternatives for overcoming it. These articles are the ones that I have focused on and are described below.

There are broadly three subcategories of articles in the press that have helped me develop my perspective on the crisis from its very beginning. The first subcategory includes articles that are subjective and occasionally very emotional, focusing on displacement as a personal everyday experience that is revealed by the crisis even though it existed before its outbreak. These articles are written by various kinds of people, such as journalists, intellectuals, artists and others. When seen in a wider cultural context, these become documents of various forms of displacement as an effect of a social crisis, and as such are used in my research. A typical example of this genre is from the popular Greek blogger Pitsirikos who wrote:

'People are tired. And, without wanting to injustice or to underestimate the struggles of people who were tortured and suffered, people do not need to be in exile [...] to get tired. You can easily get weary in the exile of Kypseli [district in Athens]. Everything is in the mind. [...] What is getting you tired is loneliness. What is getting you tired is the absence of horizon and perspective. What is getting you tired is when each day is identical to the previous one. What is getting you tired is that there is no love. [...] There are too many tired people. It is this fatigue that leads you to do the same things and the same mistakes. It leads you to your home, in your little world, to death' (Pitsirikos, 2011).

The second subcategory includes articles regarding the stream of Greek migration (external and internal) as an effect of the crisis. Again in this subcategory, there are both personal, subjective articles from people who emigrated, and others written by journalists. An example of the former is the following letter that was published online in *Protagon* and was signed by P.M., who emigrated in 2010 for studies and wrote—or appeared to write—back to his/her mother announcing that he/she wouldn't return.

'[...] Mom, I've been thinking about it for so long and I don't know how to tell you. I will not come back eventually. Do not cry please. It's not that I don't want to return. I miss you all so much. But there is no place for me there. My friends are leaving. They are emigrating. Every day I'm looking desperately for a reason, albeit fictional, to convince myself that I can bear to return, but I cannot find anything. [...] I love Greece, and you even more, but if I return I will be trapped' (P.M., 2012).

Another example displaying a similar level of emotion, this time as observation, is by the writer and journalist Lykesas, who writes about Greek youth: 'They leave angry. In their suitcases they carry degrees and silent anger. The wild, carefree generation has crash-landed in reality' (Lykesas, 2012).

Besides the articles written by Greeks who are experiencing the crisis themselves, and which are therefore subjective and personal, there are different kinds of writing by Greek and foreign academics and journalists, who analyse certain aspects of Greek migration more rigorously. Helena Smith wrote in the *Guardian* about Greeks moving from Greek cities to rural areas as an effect of the crisis (Smith, 2011) and described Greeks moving abroad as the world's biggest brain drain (Smith, 2015). There is also a key piece of ongoing statistical research by Lois Labrianidis⁶ on Greek migration resulting from the crisis, which shows the significance of the massive brain drain for the human geography of Greeks and the future of Greece. Furthermore, Eurostat has published statistics about the emigration of Greeks, estimating that around 300,000 people emigrated from 2010 to

⁶ Lois Labrianidis is a professor at the University of Macedonia and is considered an expert in the study of the phenomenon of the Greek 'brain drain'. He has shown that the number of Greek scientists living abroad amounts to the population of a middle-sized town. He has defended the need for a change in the model of production in Greece in order to keep the most qualified human resources in the country and repatriate those who have already left, as the brain drain contributes to weak growth (Labrianidis, 2011).

2014. The European Commission reckons that the Greek population will shrink by a fifth over the next 40 years.

The third subcategory of writings on the crisis includes more academic articles in the press, such as those by Professor Costas Douzinas (2010; 2012a; 2012b), which describe a growing need to redefine Greekness through the reconsideration of traditional Greek identity as a way to progress beyond the crisis and also to offer an ideological alternative for the future of the European Union. His perspective is analysed in detail in Chapter 1. The European Union at present has broken with its foundational ideology of prosperity and solidarity, by imposing austerity policies that have failed to bring development, and by promoting imbalance among its members. Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz also commented that the Greek case brought European leaders to confront the existential question of combining 'a modicum of economic understanding with a visionary sense of, and concern for, European solidarity' (Stiglitz, 2015). The Union's future is in question and, as Douzinas (2015) argues, Greece could become the motive for European leaders to suggest an alternative for Europe based on the foundational ideas of solidarity and democracy.

My approach to these works is that the first subcategory of articles allowed me to build up a sense of how people experience the effects of the crisis at a personal level by reading the thoughts of other people and comparing them, as well as filtering them through my own experience. They also opened up my understanding of a condition that many Greeks were feeling, but which hadn't been clearly described before. The second subcategory helped me realise the significance of Greek migration as an effect of the crisis and the deeper cultural implications that come with it. However, research in this subcategory is quite broad about the phenomenon of migration and includes migrants with different perspectives on migration. My interest is in people who experienced their migration as a form of self-exile rather than just a movement for economic prosperity. The articles from the first subcategory reinforced my starting position and then finally the articles from the third subcategory helped me develop an ideological framework on the need to redefine a Greek identity and its significance in a European context. All these three together helped me to develop my initial argument that has become the backbone of my research ever since and is outlined in detail in Chapter 1. These articles together with my experience as

an emigrant allowed me to show the significance of studying Greek migration, both literally and also metaphorically as a form of displacement that is revealed by the crisis, for the redefinition of contemporary Greek and European identity.

b. Writings on exile and diaspora

There is wide-ranging literature related to notions of displacement, exile, and diaspora. At first sight, this discourse may seem irrelevant to the Greek case, as it was developed within a completely different framework, mainly in relation to European and postcolonial societies and countries in conflict. My interest in this area started after I moved to London and first read Edward Said's *Reflections on Exile* (2002) and *Intellectual Exile* (1994). I felt an engagement with his work as it clearly described emotions and behaviours I was experiencing, such as 'solitude', 'aloofness' and 'estrangement', 'sentimentality', 'insecurity', 'stubbornness', and 'the need to exaggerate the differences' between cultures (Said, 2002, pp.173-186). These were feelings that had developed due to my displacement, even though in a different context from that which Said addressed. I perceived through those two essays the relevance of the notion of exile to Greek displacement and migration of Greeks. By getting deeper into these ideas and updating the literature that I was studying, I found this area very fruitful for an analysis of the contemporary migration of Greeks. Furthermore, after reading Julia Kristeva's *Strangers to Ourselves*, I understood 'foreignness' as a personal condition that is very resonant within Hellenic culture, for example in Homer's *Odyssey* where Odysseus' foreignness is expressed as a ten-year adventurous journey towards his home (Kristeva, 1991, pp. 49-50).

My research in the area of theory around exile and diaspora makes use of these notions in a Greek context in order to relate certain aspects of the 'temperament of the exile' to contemporary Greeks in exile, giving rise to understandings which will then be developed in practice. For that reason, I have tried to get a sense of the different terms and meanings and provide here my perception of the rhetoric of displacement as it relates to the Greek case of today.

The condition of exile is one that is difficult to describe if it doesn't exist as a personal experience. Theories of exile and diaspora have been developed mostly by exiles and self-exiles who had the need to externalise the condition. Theory of exile usually develops in parallel with the experience of the author. Edward Said is a characteristic example of a Palestinian who has lived in the USA and England, as well as Bulgarian Julia Kristeva who lived in Bulgaria until 24 years old and then moved to France. When talking about the notion of exile, we often see intellectuals talking about 'writing in exile' rather than 'exile', since we see and study the expression, i.e. the act of writing, of the experience (Israel, 2000, p.22). The condition of exile has occasionally been considered as a fetishised one owing to the choice by certain intellectuals and artists to impose exile on themselves as 'a practice that distances him or her from all connections and commitments' (Said, 2002, p. 183). Said talked about exile as 'an alternative to the mass institutions that dominate modern life' (Said, 2002, p.184). Even Theodor Adorno himself seems to perceive his exiled condition as an intellectually privileged one when he writes 'The splinter in your eye is the best magnifying glass' (Adorno, 2006, p.50).

On a theoretical level, exile 'connotes the estrangement of the individual from an original community' (Kaplan, 1996, p.27) and is a term associated with modernism, as it informs 'modern social and philosophical thought, from Marxian alienation to the Freudian unconscious, from Nietzsche's transvaluation of values to Heidegger's thrownness' (Israel, 2000, p.5). Modernist exile 'celebrates singularity and solitude' and is 'melancholic and nostalgic about an irreparable loss and separation from the familiar' (Kaplan, 1996, p.28). As Kaplan argues, the attributes of exile were particularly adopted by middle-class expatriates as 'an ideology of artistic production' (Kaplan, 1996, p.28), meaning that they would voluntarily experience separation in order to become experimental. Thus over time exile started merging with the notion of tourism (Kaplan, 1996). There was a need for a new term that would include the many forms of displacement, like exile and self-exile, expatriation, and cosmopolitanism. Diaspora is the term used in postmodernism, postcolonialism, and globalisation and has 'acquired new meanings, including global processes of deterritorialisation, transnational migration and cultural hybridity' (Tziouvas, 2009, p.5). 'The term now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community' (Tölölian, 1994, pp.4-5). Key

texts on diaspora include those by Karen Kaplan (2006), Salman Rushdie (1991), Stuart Hall (1995), Avtaha Brah (1996), and James Clifford (1989). The concept of diaspora is focused on studying communities, whereas in modernist writings on exile the focus is on the individual. As such, diaspora studies include discourses on identity and particularly hybrid identities. Nico Israel (2000) suggests the term 'between exile and diaspora' as a way to accept both modernist exile and postmodernist diaspora as legitimate and complementary terms, describing a condition from different points of view. Israel describes the differences between the use of the terms exile and diaspora, presenting them 'as overlapping ways of describing the predicament of displacement' (Israel, 2000, p.3). As he argues, exile tends to imply a more circumscribed, limited conception of place, while diaspora 'aims to account for hybridity or performativity that troubles such notions of cultural dominance, location, and identity' (Israel, 2000, p.3).

Exile is defined as being away from one's home. The word exile itself, however, has gained a very strong connotation due to the political conditions under which people are forced into exile and also the institutional strictures faced by people in exile. However, the word itself doesn't necessarily have to have that particular resonance, as 'it also expresses a sense of "leaping out" toward something of somewhere, implying a matter of will' (Israel, 2000, p.1). For Said, exile was also a metaphorical condition, meaning a personal decision of becoming an outsider to a community and institutions (Said, 1994, pp.35-47). Theodor Adorno originally described this metaphorical notion of exile in his autobiographical *Minima Moralia* (2006) as a deliberate positioning away from 'home' in order to look at it with the exile's detachment (Said, 2002, p.185). From this perspective, exile has also been used to refer to self-exile or self-imposed exile, and this is the definition that is more proper in the Greek case.

Politically, in the contemporary Greece of the crisis, there is no direct institutional act of force relating to exile, but rather there is an indirect form of expulsion through a social and cultural impasse, and the austerity brought by the financial crisis. In addition, there is usually a matter of will in Greek migration, which is very much a complex mixture of different cultural identities that pushes people to the misconception of the idealised cultures of the West. In this research, the term exile is used in this broader sense including the matter of will. The problem with using the term diaspora is that it is focused on the

community, while I am interested in the individual and his/her inner exile, whether that is visualised through a literal displacement or not.

To summarise: the most influential texts on exile for this research are Edward Said's essays *Reflections on Exile* (2002) and *Intellectual Exiles: Expatriates and Marginals* (1994). As already mentioned, these two essays describe the 'temperament' of the exile, and they are the main references for building the narrative's voice in my practical work.

Furthermore Said's understanding of the notion of exile is as a permanent state, rather than the conventional transient stage, and this suggests a permanent spiritual condition that doesn't end when the literal expulsion from one's homeland stops and becomes transmuted into an inner intellectual condition (Said, 2002). This permanent internal exile as a state of mind is my focus in this research since I am not interested purely in the economic terms of migration but in a state of wandering physically and mentally.

Similarly to this latter argument, Julia Kristeva in *Strangers to Ourselves* defines the notion of 'foreignness' both as a literal condition in relation to others but also as an internal personal condition. She relates the sense of foreignness to the act of wandering as a way to reach an elsewhere (Kristeva, 1991). Culturally, this utopian elsewhere when expressed in arts becomes culture itself, which then also becomes part of the national and cultural identity of a community or a nation. Kristeva adopts a psychoanalytic perspective on the question of exile, and her approach ignores the identity and political issues that usually accompany each form of exile. Thus the condition of exile becomes for her a matter of separation, literal or allegorical. This too is a fruitful concept for the purposes of my own project.

c. Writings on Greek culture, Hellenism and Neohellenism

As was described earlier in this Introduction, Neohellenism is the culture of the modern Greek state: it emerged right before that state's creation and has continued to develop until today. Neohellenism has developed through many different stages, becoming stronger and weaker at different times in history. Its main peak was in the 1930s when it

became a strong current, created and fostered by influential Greek writers, with an influence reaching to the 1970s. Since then Greek culture hasn't really flourished at a level that could create the impetus for such a current. Contemporary Greek education in the disciplines of culture is still attached to that mid-20th-century era, maintaining it implicitly as the cultural standard of today. For that reason, the cultural ideology of the mid-20th century is still dominant in the collective consciousness of contemporary Greeks who have been educated in Greece, even if this ideology conflicts with the globalised culture that has infiltrated the country over the last decades. My focus is on developing an understanding of the continued existence of the Neohellenism of the mid-20th century within contemporary culture, and the role it plays in the development of contemporary ideas, ideologies and aesthetics, in order to find residues that could be developed in parallel with contemporary international culture. This would allow a balance to be struck between the Greek specificity and the homogenized international culture, without the Greek cultural tradition being considered a hindrance to the development of Greek art on an international level.

In order to understand Neohellenism and its relation to Hellenism, there needs to be an understanding of the formation of contemporary Greek culture and particularly the role of Hellenism and its use of nature as a cultural model, which was inherited by the modern Greek state as it took on a national identity. There is substantial literature around this area, mostly from authors who are part of the international Greek diaspora and are analysing the development of Greek identity and culture. Some key writers on these issues who have provided background bibliography for my study are Dimitris Z. Andriopoulos (2000), Nicholas Doumanis (2010), Stathis Gourgouris (1986), Eratosthenis Kapsomenos (2002), Vassilis Lambropoulos (1988), Fani-Maria Tsigakou (1981), and Dimitris Tziouvas (1989). Andriopoulos looks historically at the most important cultural currents and principles of Neohellenic aesthetics, while Doumanis and Kapsomenos try to identify the relationship between modern and ancient Greece, and trace Hellenism in Neohellenic literature. Gourgouris, Lambropoulos, and Tziouvas (who is referenced in the Neohellenism section of this Introduction) look at the formation of modern Greek identity in relation to European Philhellenism, and Tsigakou explores the Philhellenists' perception of Greece in the 18th and 19th centuries as expressed through European art.

In my in-depth research, however, I have followed closely a few key authors, Roderick Beaton and David Ricks (2009), Maria Koundoura (2007), and Artemis Leonti (1998), because they focus on the development of Greek identity, culture, and Neohellenism in ways that are particularly relevant for my project. Roderick Beaton and David Ricks in *The Making of Modern Greece* (2009) have edited essays that show how the 19th-century European desire for the revival of classical Greek culture contributed to the making of modern Greek identity. They describe the role of Philhellenism and German Romanticism in the formation of the early Greek identity. Maria Koundoura in her book *The Greek Idea; The Formation of National and Transnational Identities* (2007) maps what the dual representation of ancient Greece signifies for Greeks, both national and diasporic. This is a very central issue in terms of Greek identity, because while Europeans and mostly German Romantics had an interest in the revival of a 'Greek spirit' in the 18th and early 19th century, in Greece this interest in the revival of Hellenism became a framework on which the whole creation of modern Greek culture was based. As Koundoura (2007, p.12) argues, Greece is dependent on its fictionality. These two books explain how Hellenism has been inherited in the modern Greek state and identity, which is of great significance for understanding the cultural principles that have shaped contemporary Greek culture.

Leonti, in her aforementioned book *Topographies of Hellenism: Mapping the Homeland* (1998), studies the interactive relationship between culture and geography in the formation of contemporary Greece. She argues that through topographies a nation collects narratives, references, symbols, and images of its physical presence that are used in the creation of culture. Furthermore, literature attaches cultural identity to a place even when that place is utopian or hasn't been attached to the identity of a nation, as was the case with the modern Greek nation, where through literature and the connection with ancient Greek literature the first modern Greek cultural identity was formed even before the existence of a Greek state. Particularly when mapping an imaginary or desired country, literary topographies reference real places, which then become part of the desired identity.

Leonti gives important evidence of the use of Hellenic principles for creating Greek national culture and consequently national identity. Even though the ideological making of modern Greece was mainly a nationalistic construction, the culture developed to a level

that the same principles were used by artists who were not endorsing nationalism and these principles became a norm regardless of ideology. Early nationalistic culture transformed into a dominant form of indigenous culture that still contrasted with European modernism.

d. Writings on photography

Leonti's book can be seen as very significant for Greek photography because of the direct relationship between geography and landscape photography. Leonti describes how the creation and development of modern Greek culture has drawn on the Hellenic equation of nature and society; Hercules Papaioannou extends this line of study to the photographic field with *Photography of the Greek Landscape* (2014), which takes a historical overview of the development of photographic representations of Greek landscape from the formation of modern Greece until today. Papaioannou necessarily looks at the relationship between political ideologies that were employed in the formation and development of the Greek state, and Greek culture. For this reason, he studies cultural principles and ideologies in parallel with the development of landscape photography. In the last chapter of the book, he talks about the use of landscape in contemporary photography, presenting and analysing all the important approaches to Greek landscape by contemporary photographers. This book contains the only complete bibliography on contemporary Greek landscape photography and provides the starting point for developing further critical thinking in the use of landscape in photography. Since I explore appropriate ways to embed the Neohellenic use of geography into contemporary photography, this book is extremely important for my project. It offers a clear understanding of the development of cultural ideologies from the early nationalistic conceit to the milder geoclimatic culture and finally to contemporary westernised approaches to landscape.

In his other book, *Greek Photography and Photography in Greece* (2013) Papaioannou has collected and edited all the significant texts on Greek photography. This means that for the first time there is an edited book that makes available all the critical essays that have been written regarding Greek photography, which therefore clarifies the existent academic discourse in Greek photography. Some of the essays were not previously

accessible to the public because they were presented at conferences but were not published. In total, as the editor suggests, the book reveals the lack of indigenous critical thinking in photography and aims to build the foundation for further development of Greek photography and develop critical discourse in relation to history in a Greek cultural context.

Nikos Panagiotopoulos, in his essay *On Greek Photography: Eurocentrism, Cultural Colonialism and the Construction of Mythic Classical Greece* (2013), studies the photographic representation of Greece by Greek and international photographers and argues that this operation has been determined or influenced by dominant Western culture. Furthermore, he elaborates the term 'Western Gaze', as a gaze that is produced and imposed by Western cultural hegemony and 'is imported into Greece through a number of both overt and covert processes and media' (Panagiotopoulos, 2013, pp. 189-190). This Western Gaze inhibits indigenous photographic production, practical and critical, and moreover does not allow for the study of Greek photography in a specifically Greek cultural context. Consequently, the Western Gaze doesn't encourage the formation of a Greek photographic movement, such as I argue for in this thesis.

Penelope Petsini in her essay *Reappropriation and (Self-)References* (2013) elaborates further Panagiotopoulos' notion of the 'Western Gaze' and brings it into an analysis of contemporary Greek photographic practice. By giving examples of contemporary Greek photographic projects, she locates the problem of reading Greek postmodern photographs in a Greek context, since they use iconographic references from a culture and reality outside that context. In addition, she raises the question of what a borrowed aesthetic, a mimicking of a Western trend, or the use of references from other cultures, have to offer to Greek photography. This is exactly the question that I attempt to answer through the approach of this project by trying to embed aspects of Neohellenic culture into contemporary photography.

4. Methodology

This project is a fairly complex practice based research around various academic fields; the Greek financial crisis, migratory flows of Greeks as part of the consequences of the crisis, and Greek photography in relation to the evolution of Greek culture. All these fields are approached from the perspective of seeking a new identity as a way to overcome the crisis. The research question that brings all those varied aspects of the project together is: How can the need for a new identity as a way out of Greek crisis be represented through the various expressions of displacement and exile experienced by those who choose to redefine their identity in a new environment? And how can this be done through a photographic narrative that becomes part of the need to recreate both Greek identity and Greek photography?

The various aspects of this research project require a range of methodologies, encompassing secondary research, as well as primary research. Secondary research includes: reading international and Greek theory on exile and displacement, Neohellenic literature, literature on the myth of Odysseus, and journalism regarding the Greek crisis including articles and interviews; the study of Greek photography, and particularly Greek landscape photography in relation to Neohellenism; and bringing together data and statistics on the effects of the Greek crisis. Primary research includes my autobiographical experience on displacement, working with Greeks in exile, bringing reading into practice, image-making as a thought process, applying Neohellenic principles in photography, and practical experimentation with photography, text, and book design.

The key texts which have provided my secondary research material have been discussed in the Literature Review. Here, I will discuss the ways I have made use of those texts in my primary research and how they have helped shape my practical project.

Writings on displacement, diaspora and exile, while not all specifically relevant to the Greek situation, nevertheless offer some perspective to approach the situation and build an understanding of the condition of displacement, as well as the mentality and temperament of people in exile. First of all, I use certain theoretical writings to understand the condition of exile. It is possible to observe common features between various aspects

of exile examined in these writings, such as literal exile and intellectual exile, and the Greek migration due to the crisis. These common features relate to certain characteristics that accompany the condition of exile, such as nostalgia, sentimentality, loneliness and solitude, unsettlement, and insecurity. These characteristics, together with the exile's relation to home and attitude to life, which are observed both in theoretical readings on exile and the reality of contemporary Greek migrants, are of great significance as they allow the analysis of Greek migration through theories of diaspora and exile and offer an understanding of the condition that goes beyond the purely economic analysis that is mostly seen in the press.

These writings contribute to the perspective and approach I take in my primary research as well. A key part of my method is to find ways to translate the qualities and characteristics of exile into imagery. This is achieved through the point of view of the narrator, the choice of the subjects of the photographs and their aesthetics. My visual narratives tell a story from the point of view of someone experiencing exile. The visual narrator (i.e. the person whose point of view the imagery portrays) is a fictional character inspired by these writings, incorporating their observations about the temperament and ideology of the exile. The effect of this can be seen in the images in the perspective that the narrator retains in relation to the subject depicted. Also inspired by these texts, the choice of the themes is made on the basis of symbolic features of exile, such as the border. Finally, the aesthetics of the images is adapted to convey a certain mood and enhance the sense of exile as a living experience. The combination of the above three aspects aims to reflect the inner intellectual space of the exile.

In addition, the above-described characteristics and knowledge gained from these writings on exile have contributed to the process of choosing which people to study and photograph, as described below. In creating my visual narratives I have worked with people who are experiencing three particular forms of exile. Discussion with these people helped me develop an understanding of how different kinds of exile feel and what they mean in the Greek context, and helped develop the different subjects of my imagery and shape the mood of the narrative. I have also taken the participants' portraits, which are interspersed in the narratives as described later in this section and elaborated further in Chapter 3. I have focused on the following categories of individuals:

- Greeks who moved to western metropolises
- Greeks who returned home (Greek cities) from western metropolises and
- Greeks who moved to Greek islands

The common element with these categories is that they all involve people who have abandoned the place they feel dissatisfied with in order to chase their aspirations elsewhere, giving rise to a new perception of both cultures after their movement. Thus, I have chosen to confront these three seemingly different categories as a whole, moreover, as sequential stages of a personal existential voyage. The observed similarities suggest commonalities in the individuals' mentality and the deeper existential anxiety which underlies their aspirations.

The chosen participants are the actual migrants who I have chosen based on specific criteria. Their common point is that they are all highly educated people around the ages of 20-40. This particular age group consists of young people who are more likely to be socially independent and have the will to take risks and look for ways to reframe their lives or change their existing lives in order to fulfil their aspirations. Their obligations and their bonds to the place they reside are not strong enough to prevent them from turning their lives around. In addition, they were chosen based on consideration of the characteristics of the exile, as described above, and their perception of their migration as a form of self-exile.

Each individual is selected for a very specific reason, which has affected my understanding of the deeper reasons that push someone into voluntary migration and the complexity of the situations that we tend to categorise under the general sign of the migrant. So for example, someone was selected because he/she repatriated after being unable to cope with the distance from his/her children in Greece, someone due to the depression that he/she suffered from in London and someone else because he/she moved to London due to his/her inability to deal with the establishments often imposed onto children by parents in Greece. These various reasons show how personal and different the concept of exile is for everyone. Although these small stories are important and have allowed me to develop various themes in the narrative, after extended experimentation I have chosen not to use any text along with the photographs or provide any information that would attach identity to these people. Anonymity aims to highlight

the common way they perceive migration as a form of exile, and as such to build a community of migrants, rather than further developing the personal and intimate reasons behind each migration. Furthermore, in this way the narrative retains its poetic consistency, as the informative text would change the way the narrative is read.

With each category, my method of approaching potential participants was somewhat different. In London, as I was part of the Greek diaspora, I very often spent time with groups of Greeks. Choosing people for the first category from among these, I selected characters who engaged my interest through everyday conversations. I wanted to choose people whose experiences connected with the profile of the exile as described above, but who also had different stories from one another so that each person could add something different to a comprehensive story. Similarly, on coming back to Greece and selecting participants in the second category, I met most of the people I chose through friends, and through contacting people I used to know. Interestingly, there is a level of connection and communication between people who have lived abroad, somewhat similar to the bond of being foreigners from the same country in London. In selecting for these two categories I tried not to reveal my research to people until I was convinced through casual conversation that their story was of interest to me. I then told them about my project and arranged a photo shoot with them. For the third category, with people who had moved to Greek islands, I had to specifically set up the meetings with potential participants, as I didn't know anyone on the island. It was not hard to find people. I started by telling them about my project and then asking them about their experience of life on an island, the reasons for their decision to reject urban life and finally the change in their perspective for the future. I have found that people in exile often have a strong need to narrate their stories and compare their life now with their past one, and so it was easy to develop a discussion about their experiences—and mine as well.

This leads to another important aspect of my methodological approach, which is my immersion in the situation that I am researching. As I have experienced emigration and repatriation myself, my personal experience of displacement allows me to have an understanding of the very personal nature of the situation. Besides making a theoretical study of the condition, which allows me to focus on specific ideas and ideologies of

displacement, my visual approach has always been very personal, and in this research, I aim to address the social through the personal.

The approach for my visual work has also been developed in relation to the question of how to represent abstract ideas related to the condition of exile, Greekness, and Greek identity, while at the same time adopt an approach that promotes a new Greek photographic identity that is influenced by the principles of Neohellenic culture. In order to structure the appropriate approach, I draw on secondary research in three major areas. Firstly, I build an understanding of Greek culture's development from its formation until today, as well as its relation to Hellenism through Neohellenism, mainly through key writings in this area (discussed further in Chapter 2). This allows me to identify fundamental principles of Greek culture that are part of contemporary Greek culture even though they are somewhat suppressed by the influence of international culture. Secondly, I study Neohellenic literature and poetry in order to understand the application of certain Neohellenic principles to art. I identify Greek cultural and aesthetic characteristics, mainly from Neohellenism, which could be used in photography either as narrative techniques, metaphors, or aesthetic approaches. Particularly of interest is the Hellenic equation of nature and society that was re-introduced in the contemporary Greek state and developed in the principle of entopia that was adopted by great Neohellenic writers and poets in the first half of the 20th century.

Thirdly, the study of Greek contemporary photography has been central to my visual approach. I investigate the history of Greek photography from the first half of the 20th century onward with a focus on landscape photography, in order to see whether Greek photography ever developed independently from Western European and American photographic influence. Then I study in depth two contemporary Greek photographers dealing with Greekness with a focus on the tension between the relevance of their work to Greek culture and European and American photographic trends. I examine their visual approaches and influences, taking into consideration their educational background, in order to draw conclusions about the possibility of developing a Greek photographic movement. This method involves primary research as well, through visual analysis of the photographers' work, in order to evaluate the qualities of Greekness in their work. With this last research area, I develop an overview of contemporary Greek photography in

relation to Euro-American photography and question the possibilities for developing a style that could be relevant to Greek culture, while also retaining contemporary qualities in order to be communicated internationally. (This question is explored further in Chapter 2.)

The findings of the secondary research in these above three areas are applied to primary research in the experimentation and development of the appropriate approach to the subject. In developing my photographic approach I have used 3 main methods that allow the photographic narrative to obtain an identity that can be characterised as Greek and features that allow it to be analysed in a Greek cultural context. The first method is the use of the myth of Odysseus as a means of allowing the narrative to be filtered through the perspective of the search of an identity of the protagonist of the project. Odysseus' myth is deeply rooted in Greek culture and, in addition to the questions of identity that are automatically raised, allows for the direct connection of the narrative to Greek culture and the reading of it in a Greek cultural context. When seen through this myth, the images of the sea and the voyage become symbols, at least for the Greek audience. The second method is the use of metaphor and, in particular, the aesthetic techniques that can transform a landscape photograph into a metaphor of an inner landscape belonging to the narrator. By applying the Neohellenic principle of entopia, I use the geography and the climatic conditions metaphorically in the images. The skies and the landscape compositions create a metaphorical landscape, that of the exiled narrator describing the experience of displacement. This creates a common code of symbolism that remains consistent throughout the project and allows an analysis of it through a Greek context. The third method is the use of images that refer to archive images and bear elements/symbols of Greek culture. These images are black-and-white instant photographs of Greek landscapes without any human intervention, which exemplify the Greek landscape and constitute carriers of Greekness as, mainly through art, have acquired symbolic value in Greek culture. These images are used to re-create/restore a collective memory that has weakened or forgotten the last decades of the Westernization of Greek society and the change of lifestyle, implying the importance of memory and culture in the evolution of identity.

The primary research aspects of my visual method have also involved practical experiments, which I critically assess in order to find the appropriate approach for the subject. I have undertaken extensive experimentations on visual narrative and image making. I am particularly interested in narratives containing different narrative times together, which have been tested in book dummies in order to bring images in the story that refer to personal and collective memory or challenge the notion of memory. In particular, I have experimented with combining colour with black-and-white imagery in the same narrative, trying to make the black-and-white images resemble archival imagery or imagery from the past. Furthermore, I have researched narrative techniques in Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey* due to the similarity of the subject with my subject on a metaphorical level.

The narrative I have constructed contains three types of imagery; colour images, black-and-white instant images, and colour portraits. Each type offers a quality to the narrative and the subject. The colour images are used to represent the experience of the present from a personal point of view. The changes in the perception of the present from one category of migration to another, the places where the photographs are made, and their themes, determine the differences in each experience. These images convey a sense of movement and journey. Roads, signs of wheels on tracks, pathways, seascapes, and birds are some of the themes that I use to create the notion of voyage. Through these images and their personal point of view, together with the use of light, I also create a suitable allegorical mood of the inner space of each form of exile. The actual process of producing these colour images is very much based on intuition. I prefer walking alone in a predetermined geographical area and trying to feel the scenery and make images that reflect on that experience. The areas of interest are mostly geographically chosen based on their position in relation to the border of the city or the island that I photograph for each type of migration. The images are mostly landscapes, or urban landscapes, and often situations or objects that appear in the landscape. There are particular predetermined themes that I look for according to the category of migration that I am working on. When in the metropolis I make images in the city, and I am interested in artificiality in relation to nature. Through the absence of people and the claustrophobic environments, the images reveal an alienation, and, in doing this, they question possibilities of assimilation or not in the new environment from a cultural perspective.

When returning to Greek cities, I look at the borders of the city, using the place where nature meets the urban as a location to talk about returning with a realisation of foreignness. The border of the city is the zone where familiarity meets unfamiliarity, and the narrator becomes a wanderer through the outside of the city as an insider and the inside as an outsider. Images of the third form of migration on an island focus on the geographical constraints of the place. Through the natural boundary of the island, which corresponds to the boundary of the condition of the self-exile, I explore the nature of self-exile and the choice of people to retreat from urban lifestyles and re-define themselves in harmony with the natural environment.

The black-and-white instant images are black-and-white landscapes made with a Polaroid camera and reproduced in the original size. These images are edited in the narrative in a way to contrast and complement the colour images and function as flashbacks that refer to collective memory. The photographed landscapes were selected mainly on the basis of landscape references in Neohellenic literature, since at that time the descriptions of nature and the Greek landscape were used metaphorically for the purpose of creating landscapes-carriers of Greekness. Thus these landscapes are symbols of the Greek values. The use and themes of these images throughout the narrative changes in accordance with the changes of memory in each type of migration that is studied. Thus during the migration abroad these images are more of a nostalgic remembrance of the homeland, and later on the repatriation and migration to the islands a study and deeper search for the Greekness in the landscape and the inherent cultural characteristics of the landscape.

The last type of imagery is portraiture. The portraits are a selection of the portraits of the Greek migrants I made while meeting with them for the needs of the project. The role of the portraits in the narrative is to give a documentary quality to the otherwise personal and lyrical imagery. The portraits also intervene in the narrative and divide the whole story into shorter internal ones. The places where the portraits are made are in relation to the type of migration portrayed. In the metropolis, I photograph people outdoors in the city. The people who have returned are photographed on the terraces of their homes, as a space of insecurity that exists on the border of their home. People who moved to islands are not photographed, as in contrast to the other types of migration, these people chose to distance themselves from the social and the community.

My method of working is to take a substantial number of images, which are then categorised in groups of similar themes and put up on a wall for a long time in order to be able to see them constantly and study the relationships between them. The images are then edited down to a smaller quantity, on the basis of relevance to the subject, and the aesthetic considerations discussed above and put in narrative series. Then I look for missing themes in the story, which are arranged for the next shoot. Through the contingency of the photographic image and also the editing process, new needs for photographs are formed, which then become the subjects searched for during the next shoot. Photography itself is a medium of exploration into the subject and plays a vital role in the research process.

As has been described above and is also analysed later in the thesis, climate and geography become a system of symbolism in Greek culture. This symbolism is deeply rooted in Neohellenism originating from the principles of Hellenic culture. Therefore I have conducted extensive experiments photographing in different weather conditions and assessing the different qualities of light. The aim is to find the right conditions that represent the subject symbolically. The general rule that runs throughout the project is to photograph on cloudy days, although there are significant variations in light even with cloudy skies, which are also used appropriately. On a cloudy day, light diffuses into the landscape and creates no shadows. Shadows add contrast in the image, make elements of the landscape invisible, and create forms, while diffused light from cloudy skies provide a visual silence that leaves all the elements of the landscape still, visible, and neutral for observation. Cloudy skies before or after rain usually give to the image great clarity and depth with enhanced detail and convey a sense of neutrality. Hazy weather provides more shallow images with added flatness, and emphasises a sense of isolation. The fog on the other hand conceals the landscape and creates a mysterious isolation and detachment from the landscape that enhances the viewer's presence in the landscape trying to discern what he/she sees. The overcast skies have also great diversity depending on the height and density of the clouds that charge the image differently and affect how

dramatic the image appears. All of these variations are tools for creating symbolic landscapes of the narrator's inner landscape.⁷

Technically, my images are made with various camera formats, and extensive experimentation is done on the qualities of each camera as well as the type of imagery that is more suitable for each format. The cameras that have been tested are instant Polaroid and Fujifilm cameras, 35mm digital and analogue cameras, medium format digital and 6x7 analogue cameras, and a large format camera. The process of choosing the right format included photographing the same subject with different cameras and comparing the results, in regard both to portability, and the technical qualities of the images produced.

The use of text is also an important method of the project. The aim is to guide the viewer through the reading of the narrative by giving the appropriate context, which becomes an inseparable part of the work, and introducing the code of symbolism of the work.

Experimentation has been done with the use of image and text presented together, separately with text intervening in the narrative, and separately with the text working as an introduction to the narrative. Experiments have also been done with various styles of text, like personal and poetic text, small stories, and fictional text, as well as with the different points of view of the narrator. I have also decided not to accompany the images with descriptive captions of the actual place, because these would make the narrative restrictive to the place. The places where the images were taken are of no importance as places, but rather as symbols. It is not important if the images are in London or the island of Ithaca, but in a metropolis or a remote island instead. The final decision about the use of text, as described in Chapter 3, was made on the basis of the narrative flow I wanted to achieve and providing a particular context for reading the narrative without limiting the ambiguity of the images and the openness to interpretation.

⁷ The images of Greek landscapes with such conditions contradict the iconic popular vision of the Greek landscape as found on the internet or mainstream media. The image that foreigners may have of Greece, of blue waters and white houses on the islands or of the Acropolis in a sunny Athens, is not an image that represents reality, but the promotion of a picturesque image of Greece that began in the mid-20th century with the development of mass tourism. This is described in detail in Chapter 2 and is not related to the art based photography to which this thesis refers.

A significant methodological aspect of presenting the visual work is the use of the book as a platform for narration. As discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis, the book as an art form is an integral part of my project mainly due to its personal nature as a physical object, but also the possibilities for inexpensive dissemination. I have tested various book formats and designs in order to find the appropriate form for the project, the form that adds to and helps understand the meaning of the work.

The stages of my methodology will be exemplified further in the chapters that follow, which explore secondary sources relating to exile, Neohellenism, and photography, and outline the process of my primary research and photographic practice.

5. Chapter outline

In Chapter 1, *Odysseus' voyage in relation to a contemporary migration of Greeks*, I look in detail at the effects of the crisis on the geographical movement of Greeks. First, I present some facts about the experience of living in the crisis and explain how it has affected the Greek social ethos, which forms the Greek social identity. I argue that the crisis has revealed a pre-existing cultural crisis and has developed a need to redefine Greek identity as a way to move beyond the crisis. I then present Greek migration in numbers and argue for the importance of studying migration, owing to the dual identities of the migrants, in terms of redefining Greek identity. From this perspective, I explain who are the migrants that are more relevant to my study, and through whom I analyse Greek migration as a form of exile.

I then move on to find possible ways of bringing this theoretical argument into visual representation and particularly representing Greek migration and abstract ideas of Greek cultural identity. Thus I explain the importance of storytelling in times of crisis and recall on the myth of Odysseus as an iconic search for identity in Greek history, which becomes relevant to the contemporary Greek migration. To emphasize the significance of this myth, I present how the myth of Odysseus has been reappropriated in art and literature throughout history to better suit the characteristics and debates of each era. Through these uses, the myth has become almost like an international common language to talk

about the perpetual issues of searching for an identity. In addition, this search for identity has come to represent both the society and also the artist's own search for defining his/her own artistic language. Finally, in order to reappropriate the myth for the purposes of this research project, I make one more remark that is based on Gilles Deleuze's essay *Desert Islands* (2004), where Deleuze argues that the island symbolically has become a place of re-creating, of re-beginning. In that perspective, *The Odyssey* is about the islands and I reappropriate and redirect Odysseus' voyage to match the voyage of contemporary Greek migrants and their effort to redefine their new identity. Using all these elements I create a symbolic system that I use to structure my photographic narrative.

Chapter 2, *Greek Photography in a Neohellenic Context*, deals with the development of Greek photography, and particularly landscape photography, in relation to the fundamental ideas of Greek culture. As such I identify four particular aesthetic eras in photography and describe how each era was influenced by the main European ideologic, aesthetic, and thematic interests. This European influence affected and occasionally determined Greek photographic production, leading to the lack of independent aesthetic currents in Greek photography. In order to explore the possibilities of developing an approach that can be contextualised in a Greek cultural framework, I describe the development of Greek culture from the formation of the modern Greek state until today and locate elements of Neohellenism that could be incorporated into contemporary imagery. I investigate how Hellenic cultural principles were used in the development of Neohellenism from its beginnings in the 19th century until its first clearly defined cultural principle, that of entopia, in the first decades of the 20th century. I then explain in detail the meaning of entopia and, through the work of significant writers and poets, I show how it has been expressed in practice. I also look at the relatively recent work of director Theo Angelopoulos who uses entopia, and in particular, geography and climate, as a means to building an aesthetic mental landscape that is used as a metaphor for the inner state of the characters of his narrative. Finally, I analyse the work of two contemporary Greek photographers, Paris Petridis and Petros Efstathiades, in relation to Greek culture and the concept of Greekness in their work. I argue the lack of a clear and consistent approach of Greekness based on Greek culture, but on the contrary, the development of approaches based on European and North-American photographic trends.

Chapter 3, *Neohellenism in Photographic Practice: An Analysis of Ithacas* is dedicated to an analysis of my practical body of work. I start from giving a brief outline of two projects that I had worked on before this research project started, my book project *Memento Mori* and the first edition of *Ithaca*, in order to show how ideas were born and started to develop. Then I get in a full description of all the parameters of the project *Ithacas*. I describe in detail all the different categories of migration that I am investigating and how these are represented through photography. I analyse how each category is different and similar visually from the others, and how I approach the themes of the photographs for each category that build the narrative. I then explain the approach that I chose and the conceptual reasons behind it. After the project has been described in detail, I elaborate further on all the experimentation that took place and the gradual developments throughout the years. I describe how I have arrived at the final approach and how all the elements that have been discussed in the previous chapters are reflected in it. I also include all the technical details of my approach regarding the use of photography and light, narrative techniques, different formats, colour and the design of the book. Finally, I explain how the process of image making has worked as a research method for this research.

In Conclusions, I discuss the conclusions of the whole research process and the final outcome in a Greek cultural context. I also describe the relevance of the work to other disciplines and suggest possible ways for further research development.

Chapter I: The Contemporary Crisis: Migration and the Redefinition of Greekness

1. The experience of living in the Greek crisis and its effects of the Greek social ethos

The Greek economic crisis appeared in 2010 as the aftermath of the world economic crisis in 2008, bringing immense economic, political, and social changes, as well as raising issues of national sovereignty. The economic and political consequences have generated a rich and distinct literature, some exemplary examples of which have been discussed in the introduction. Some of the effects of the crisis, however, are important for the understanding of the experience of living in the Greek crisis, which has provoked an inquisition into contemporary Greek identity, and thus are further elaborated below. It is widely accepted that the crisis has brought deterioration of living conditions and social unrest, unaffordable debts, poverty, an increase in homelessness, unemployment, and emigration. However, there are also effects which cannot be clearly described with numbers or statistics and are related to the experience of change. These are relevant to social behaviour and the population's mental health. The deterioration of living standards and the general feeling of insecurity and uncertainty that have developed have had detrimental effects on public health and in particular, mental health as shown by the rise in depression and suicides. (Kentikelenis, A. & Papanicolas, I., 2012).

The experience of the effects of the crisis has been regularly described in the media since 2010. There are various kinds of articles written about the crisis: factual articles that provide statistics and facts about the crisis, analyses by specialists that provide a critical opinion, emotional articles that mostly focus on the personal experience. Particularly in the early years of the crisis, there was a great number of emotional articles mostly in mainstream newspapers and online news and informational websites, many of which

have been collected as part of this research and some characteristic examples are presented below. Journalists, artists or ordinary people felt the need to externalise the changes felt in their close social circle, and they expressed their experience mostly on a personal level. These articles were usually emotional, which is understandable, if we consider the intensely harsh reality that people lived through, especially in the early years of the crisis. They often took on a populist tone, however, and they remained on the surface of the conditions described without developing any level of critical analysis as if their writers were only looking for sympathy. In every case, these writings are significant documents that describe the direct experience of the crisis and allow the reader to get a feeling of how people experienced the effects of the crisis.

Writer Nikos Xydakis (2011), who became minister of culture with the Syriza government in 2015, wrote an article on youth violence, which has increased since the crisis. 'Is it anger, is it boredom, is it a sense of exclusion?', he wondered and continued by describing his perception of youth's behavioural change: 'I find only pieces of a fragmented world, producing vast anger, violence, self-destruction, relationship breakdown and exclusion. Self-sustaining herds of raging youth, existentially angry, returning to society the venomous anger that it has caused them.' It is interesting that he describes youth behaviour as an 'existential anger' that is caused by society, revealing the underlying problems of contemporary Greek society and—the already in 2011—confused Greek identity. Journalist Stathis Tsagkarousianos (2012) also commented on young people, as the ones who are not to blame but will face all the effects of the crisis in their adult life. He describes them as people 'who want to live with dignity, and this whole situation just delays them, just kills them'. Tsagkarousianos (2012) argues that young people are forced to inaction, which delays their personal development.

Actor and director Giorgos Karamichos (2011) wrote an interesting article where, in my opinion, he presents a view that is shared by a large part of society. He clearly describes that the crisis originated in a cultural crisis that preceded the financial one and this has only been revealed now. This is exactly the point; as I have argued in the Introduction, the economic crisis has brought to light problems that pre-existed the crisis in Greek culture, like the behaviours of greedy consumption that supported the transformation of the traditional society to a new problematic form that tried to mimic Western consumerism in

every level of culture. This type of greedy behaviour was created after the fall of the dictatorship in 1974 in a more general period of Westernization and modernization of Greek society (Douzinas, 2012a) and therefore have influenced Greeks, not only behaviourally, but also culturally. Karamichos (2011) argues that over previous years Greeks had developed 'behaviours and needs that were unregulated and foreign to the place and the history of our people'. Interestingly, he argues that we now live in exile in our own home:

'This is what we live today. Social, political and ideological orphanhood. And the orphanhood is exile. We are migrants in our own land and fully aware of our responsibilities, because deep down we know that each one of us is to blame for our plight. All of a sudden, we are forced to redefine our needs. Our first need is our identity. Who are we? What do we want? Why are we oppressed by ourselves and others? I do not fear that there is no justice. It never existed. I'm afraid when we do not look each other in the eyes. I'm afraid when we think that someone else is to blame for our misery. This mentality is precisely what I have seen changing recently. I see that more and more people of my generation have begun to ask questions, to admit that we do not know. And now we want to know' (Karamichos, 2011).

Karamichos has quite an emotional tone, something that was very common in the first years of the crisis when people were experiencing social fear and the harsh deterioration of living standards for the first time in recent Greek history. He mentions four important aspects of Greek society and describes today's condition as an exile on a spiritual level. Retrospectively, society has had a problematic dominant cultural condition for decades. Karamichos blames everyone who, to a greater or lesser extent, tacitly accepted a cultural situation that has led to the current collapse. He goes on to describe the sudden realisation of the loss of such values like honesty and dignity by saying that we do not look each other in the eye. These values may not have existed in recent decades, but we are aware that they do exist through any interaction with traditional Greek culture. The crisis, however, has revealed the awareness of their loss. Finally, he expresses the very important need to redefine Greek identity that has been created due to the crisis. Journalist Konstantinos Poulis (2011) argues that 'the timely question of the era is whether the bourgeois will dare to rebel against a system that produces inequality, now that the illusion of equal opportunities dissolves and that the bourgeois will not be allowed to live

the life he had aspired to'. Poulis poses an interesting question of whether due to the crisis, people will start looking at a new expression of solidarity.

A debate has arisen around the future of the country at every level. Many people have realised that they were part of a problematic social establishment that brought the country to an impasse, with the loss of social values—an intellectual orphanhood. Under the same rationale, there is no hope for the future without political, social and cultural reform. People now realise this; and because they feel hopeless, they are alienated and depressed. Costas Douzinas has written a series of articles about the Greek crisis, mostly in the Guardian, where he tries to reveal the essence of a problem that pre-existed and has been accelerated by the crisis. Douzinas argues that the problem has now become clear, because of the direct and aggressive effects on people's lives that brings them face to face with a historic chance to reconsider their traditional identity and define the course of their future. Furthermore, he interestingly correlates the future of Greece with the future of European society.

As was described in the Introduction, Greece after the fall of the military dictatorship in 1974 made a political turn to modernisation and westernisation of society by following neoliberal political policies similar to those of North-Western Europe and the USA. This gradual development in Greek society did not meet with the resistance, at least from the majority of society, that would be expected under today's conditions. This was mainly because this political turn brought prosperity, which unfortunately brought greed, transforming the society into a Western consumerist society. Douzinas (2012a) describes this modernisation 'as insatiable consumption', trying to show the mentality that supports in practice the production model of late capitalism. During these 30 years, new living standards developed in Greece and aspirations that conflicted with traditional Greek culture. Up until the crisis in 2010, or maybe a few years before, the prosperity that people have been enjoying allowed them to turn a blind eye to the underlying problematic complexity of modernisation. Douzinas describes (2012b) how, due to the crisis, 'the imagined class⁸ that was organised around consumption is being destroyed

⁸ Here, Douzinas, as an imagined class, means a class that is created not on the basis of productive structures, but on the basis of a myth and a narrative, that is, on the basis of which the members of society perceive themselves, their relations with the others, with the community and the authority.

[...] and the overall mental organisation begins to decompose'. The direct effects of austerity measures on people's lives can no longer be hidden behind false aspirations, as the 'imagined class' collapsed. People started to realise that their life of recent decades had been borrowed, built with borrowed money and borrowed aspirations.

Furthermore, Douzinas (2012b) believes that 'the utter individualisation of late capitalism, which developed more aggressive characteristics with the austerity memorandum, is the completion of the modernising program of the previous years' in Greece. 'The memorandum aggressively and negatively completes the modernisation program of forcing a withdrawal from the common. [...] It becomes a violent transition from public to private' (Douzinas, 2012b). The violence behind the transition from public to private in the crisis is of great significance to Greek society, because the policies of the memorandum weaken the Greek social ethos that defines the traditional part of Greek identity.

Ethos is defined as the characteristic spirit of a culture, era, or community as manifested in its attitudes and aspirations⁹. Douzinas elaborates this definition further by adding an element of how ethos is formed, and he describes it as 'the process of socialisation and independence of the individual' (Douzinas, 2012b). He continues:

'These are things that we learn in the family, at school, ineffable values, preconceptions, qualifications and pre-occupations. It is the general way to discern what is good and what is bad, indispensable in order to develop a completely individual judgment. This ethos is the basis on which our identity is based, our specificity, our uniqueness. It is the basis for understanding the world, which of course is always in a process of slow change due to the dialogue with others' (Douzinas, 2012b).

Over the last decades of modernisation and globalisation, Greek ethos, along with Greek identity, have gradually changed, often coming into conflict with the traditional ethos. The crisis has driven a wedge between the way we learn and perceive Greek ethos and its actuality. At this very moment the preconception of Greek ethos is coming into contrast with reality and as such a moment in time is created in which we are becoming aware of

⁹ Oxford Dictionaries, 2015. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/ethos>

this contrast and can reflect on it. This moment of awareness could become a trigger for change and redefinition; however, we first need to understand the gap that has developed between the traditional Greek ethos and the modernised one. For this reason, we come to the question of defining Greek social ethos.

The definition is not fixed and very much depends on the perspective of the person who is trying to define it. According to Douzinas (2012b), Greek social ethos consists of friendship, as family and friends were the foundation of people's sociability in Greece, *filotimia*, and *filoxenia*. *Filotimia* is a Greek word that can only be translated periphrastically in English. It is a mixture of honour and dignity, 'but always in reference to others, a rewarding relationship with others, but without any economic basis or utilitarian calculations' (Douzinas, 2012b). *Filoxenia* means hospitality and derives from the word φίλος (meaning friend) and ξένος (meaning foreigner). Using this definition, we can analyse the effect of the crisis on Greek identity. Friendship has been replaced by a form of melancholy, where people avoid sharing personal problems. This means that there is alienation from the closest social environment and displacement from the places where common bonds develop. *Filotimia* is transformed into a condition of individualisation, where social bonds are weakened in favour of opportunism. Hospitality becomes indifference toward those who are not part of the immediate and close environment. In conclusion, we observe a disintegration of the way in which the human identity is associated with others (Douzinas, 2012b).

The social ethos described by Douzinas mainly refers to the traditional form of ethos, but which nevertheless tends to disappear as the structures of society westernize. This traditional form of ethos still exists in non-urban social structures which are at a remove from the commercialised forms of life of contemporary neoliberal Greece. Such structures, however, are rare even in isolated low population communities, since tourism has in many cases expropriated even non-cosmopolitan destinations. In this very bipolar coexistence of traditional and modern ethos lies the conflict in Greek identity.

As Douzinas argues (2010), Greece urgently needs to rebuild its cultural identity. This argument, however, as seen in the articles presented above, has also become a common claim for a significant number of Greeks who see the crisis as a necessary phase of the

process of re-examination of identity and social roles. Douzinas takes this thought one step further arguing (2012a) that 'ordinary Greeks now have a historic chance to redefine the meaning and values of European civilisation'. This redefinition of the European identity relates to his claim that 'the European Union has become a dysfunctional organisation that has betrayed its founding principles of economic stability and prosperity based on social solidarity and respect for human rights and justice' (Douzinas, 2010).

Similarly, the obligations of taking an individual stand are socially divisive. There are people who think that they are not to blame for the plight of Greece and are only interested in their own self-interest, and others who think that the political void that has been created should be filled with real democracy, in which everyone will work collaboratively to move the country towards a more viable future. Journalist George Toulas, who was interviewed by John Henley (2011) for the Guardian, described his perception of the dilemma between emigrating or staying: 'You have a choice: leave, or stay and try and change things for the best as you can. I think for my generation, who have lived the good times, it would be a betrayal to leave. We are obliged to stay.' Toulas raises a very important issue that has emerged since 2010: emigration.

2. Displacement as an effect of the crisis

Before the outbreak of the crisis in 2010 and since the foundation of the modern Greek state, the country has faced three major migratory currents. During the Revolution in the first half of the 19th century, Greeks were mostly migrating to urban centres of Europe due to better living conditions offered by European and neighbouring countries. In the late 19th and early 20th century, rural populations migrated primarily to America and Australia, but also to Russia, Romania, Istanbul, Egypt, Sudan and elsewhere. The reasons for migration for this second migratory stream are to be found in the poor economic situation of the newly established Greek Kingdom that mainly plagued the rural population of the country, in the rampant usury in the countryside, in the frequent mobilization, the feudal structures of agricultural property with the existence of estates,

and the phenomenon of banditry which was still ruining the countryside. The third migratory current comes after the Second World War and its political and economic causes are to be found in upheavals that were created after the World War and the Greek Civil War in 1946-1949. Europe comes out wounded from the Second World War but determined to recover. The economies expanded rapidly and there was a growing need for cheap labour. On the other hand, Greece did not manage to recover during and after the civil war and the country's economy deteriorated severely. Greece, along with Italy and Spain, becomes the primary sender of untapped and underused labourers to central Europe.

Over the last decades, young people from middle and upper classes migrated to major Western European and North American countries for high-salaried work in high tech and financial institutions or in academic and art related sectors. These people emigrated due to the lack of career prospects in Greece and the country's intellectual immaturity in relation to the globalised intellectual West. The underlying political cause in Greece, however, went mostly unnoticed. It was obvious that Greek education was producing internationally competitive human resources, but the Greek state had not developed the appropriate structures and a production model capable of absorbing its workforce.

The outbreak of the crisis and the austerity measures that were taken to prevent the consequent default caused the economy to collapse. Living costs grew much higher, many companies in every field had to close, families and companies were thrown into debt, and companies had to reduce costs, and thus fire employees. According to the Hellenic Statistical Authority, unemployment in 2015 reached 26-28% of the population: in particular there was 50% unemployment among young people up to age 25, 40% between the ages of 25-29 and 25% for 30-45 year-olds (Lakasas, 2014). As might be expected, the crisis and political policies enacted in response to it increased migration. Lois Labrianidis has shown that more than 100,000 scientists under the age of 40 are working abroad, of whom 73% have a master's degree, 51.2% a PhD and 41% have studied at a highly recognised institution (Lakasas, 2014). According to Eurostat's data, nearly 300,000 people left Greece between 2010 and 2015, which represents about 3% of the Greek population (Karaian, 2015). The European Commission calculates that the Greek population will shrink by a fifth over the next 40 years (Karaian, 2015). Apart from

the more convenient immigration to European countries, 'Greeks are going anywhere they can find work, and that might be Asia, Africa, Australia, or the Middle East, and we are seeing a new phenomenon of non-degree holders who are also joining the flow' (Labrianidis, quoted in Smith, 2015).

The massive brain drain has attracted international attention. Jason Karaian (2015) talks about a 'lost generation' in Greece, while Helena Smith (2015) in an article published in the Guardian calls them 'Generation G: young talented Greeks' and talks about 'the biggest brain drain in an advanced western economy in modern times'. She also highlights that near-bankrupt Greece stands really close to losing its intellectual class, as the country is losing its brightest and best minds, who are migrating abroad (Smith, 2015). The problem is magnified even more as this issue has not yet been seen as a political issue and no action has been taken towards finding a solution to prevent it and solve it. 'Nobody is speaking openly about this but the prospects for the Greek economy are going to get much worse as the brain drain accelerates and the country loses its best minds' (Labrianidis, quoted in Smith, 2015).

Apart from emigration, a new phenomenon of internal migration has also emerged in Greece. This phenomenon is new, as, during the previous decades of modernisation and the gradual transition of society from a rural to an industrial model, migration from villages to urban centres was observed, not the reverse. Now in the crisis, this condition has been reversed, and there has been a substantial internal migration from urban centres to rural areas, a movement of 'thousands of Greeks seeking solace in rural areas as the debt-stricken country grapples with its gravest economic crisis' (Smith 2011). The reasons for this movement are the high living costs and high levels of unemployment in Greek cities coupled with the more moderate, less expensive, lifestyles of rural areas. Often the migrants might have extended family in the countryside, who are able to offer a family home and support. The traditional structures of Greek society that still exist in rural areas provide security and hospitality. In rural areas, people usually prefer to work in the primary sector, and particularly farming, a sector that has been both avoided and neglected in recent decades. Furthermore, working in the primary sector of production, despite the hardships, provides a sense of confidence about the future preferable to the insecurity of being an employee in today's Greece. In addition, returning to rural areas

often means returning to popular tourist destinations, and in terms of the Greek economy, tourism provides financial security that is comparable to the primary sector of production.

However, not everything about migration is negative, as there are voices arguing that this new wave of migration in Greece can provide hope for the future. Smith argues that 'many of the newly mobile Greeks want to return home once the country recovers. Experts say with their new skills and mindsets the emigrés could become the "change agents" Greece needs' (Smith, 2015). Similarly, Russell Shorto (2012) wrote in the New York Times that the individual stories of young, educated Greeks returning to villages 'are signs of hope in a country that is searching for viable future'. And he continues by arguing that it is an interesting example for the whole of the western world. As economies in the Western world are very much dependent on each other, the example of Greece could affect other economies too. These people moving to rural areas present an alternative to the crisis, and their example reveals the social significance of the vibrant traditional sense of community that still exists in Greek villages and rural communities and has prevented a large part of the Greek population from falling into poverty.

Similarly to other European countries of the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe, migration of Greeks has increased rapidly since 2010 under political and economic circumstances that are extreme for a country of the western world. Although the European notion of cosmopolitanism had existed in Greece for years, the situation now is completely different, because the concept of choice has shifted drastically. The reasons that prompted each individual to migrate are quite different and very complex. They relate to various personal aspects, and in some cases, the subject might not even be consciously aware of the underlying cause, for example, feelings of insecurity or exclusion. However, the sudden and dramatic change in Greek society has imposed an element of coercion on the decisions that people have to make, or at least, has posed a dilemma that wouldn't exist otherwise. This 'coercion' brings the concept of migration into the lives of some people who wouldn't normally consider it as an option, and it clinches the decision for some others who had been merely toying with the idea. Even though there is some level of choice to people's decisions, the degree of necessity due to extenuating circumstances means that, for the purpose of this research at least, it would

not be entirely inaccurate to talk about a form of expulsion, even if the expulsion is not literal. Expulsion is expressed as a geographical movement and displacement.

3. Representation of displacement

For the purpose of this research, I am searching for a suitable approach to represent narratives of Greek displacement within a Greek cultural context. Particularly, I am looking for an approach that emerges from the complexity of this contemporary cultural issue, is part of it and suggests Greekness in its structure and analysis. Art practice reflects society and, in countries with social and political turbulence, a blossoming of the arts is usually observed. Similarly, in Greece, the crisis has inspired experimentation. Particularly in photography, there have been many projects and major exhibitions addressing the theme of the crisis. Can this expression trigger the development of a language inspired by the place and culture that bore it and constitute the beginning of an artistic movement that will create an impact over time?

Two collective lens-based projects are of great interest for the purpose of this research. The *Depression Era* and the *Caravan Project* that have been initiated in Greece since the beginning of the crisis could unwittingly suggest a path towards creating a new language, regardless of whether or not their own aims were achieved. As the initiators of the *Depression Era* project suggest in their statement, *Depression Era* is 'a collective storytelling experiment [...], connecting significant instants and documenting untold stories in a mosaic of images and texts' (Depression Era, n.d.). 'It navigates, with open-ended innocence, a world of deepening humanitarian crisis, ruin landscapes, insecurity, cracked democracy and an everyday culture of mediated hopelessness' (Babasikas, 2014). The *Depression Era* project started in 2011 as an online platform, where already existing photographic projects by various photographers were edited in, in order to create a collective archive of the social, economic, and political transformations that Greece was facing. The project was fleshed out with radical text, enthusiastic presentations around Greece promoting the importance of the project artistically and

socially, major exhibitions in Greece and abroad and publications¹⁰. *Depression Era* is a very ambitious project, perhaps overly-ambitious, that tries to overcome the idea of documentation of the crisis and our era and suggest ‘an image of our future and of the future of Europe’ (Vorgia, n.d.). As Pasqua Vorgia (n.d.), a founding member of the Depression Era Collective, states,

‘the *Depression Era* project is a state of mind, that of our era, and it states something before the facts. It takes the local and makes it universal, it is our here and now, and a projection of a future that feels dark and frightening. It does not only talk about death but perhaps, by talking about endings, poses the question of life and presses on the necessity of having to create new possibilities, to change course of action.’



Figure 1.1 Depression Era exhibition at Benaki Museum, Athens, 06/11/14-11/01/15

¹⁰ Some of the main exhibitions are the exhibition at Benaki Museum in Athens (06/11/2014-11/01/2015), the participation at the 5th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art in Thessaloniki, Greece (23/06-30/09/2015) and the exhibition No Country for Young Men: Contemporary Greek Art in Times of Crisis at Bozar, the Palais des Beaux-Arts & Atelier Bouwmeester in Brussels (26/03-03/08/2014). Presentations include the presentation and discussion with students and faculty working on Princeton and Patras Universities at Schools of Architecture Athens (11/12/2012), the presentation and discussion at Embros theatre in Athens (22/12/2013), the presentation and discussion with students and faculty of the MS in Arts, Culture, Media and Entertainment of Bocconi University’s ASK research center in Athens (12/04/2014) and the open discussion under the title Art and Activism: Defining the Relationship between Aestheticization and Political Action at Benaki Museum in Athens (02/12/2014).



Figure 1.2 *No Country for Young Men: Contemporary Greek Art in Times of Crisis* exhibition at Bozar, the Palais des Beaux-Arts & Atelier Bouwmeester in Brussels 26/03-03/08/2014

According to the initiators' statements, *Depression Era* seems to aim to inspire a social change in Greece by documenting the effects of the crisis. The choice of the name itself supports this position, as 'Depression Era' refers to the Great Depression of America in the 1930s and to the work of the Farm Security Administration¹¹ commissioning photographers to document the effects of the Great Depression between 1935-1944 as a way of social change. The question in the arts of whether a social change through a form of art is possible, although still up-to-date, always seems to remind us that arts cannot change the world but can inform, sensitize, and mobilize people towards a political act. Similarly to the aims of the Farm Security Administration project, that have not been achieved, (even though the outcome of the project still has an impact historically and artistically), the way in which the *Depression Era* project has emerged has weakened its

¹¹ 'The Farm Security Administration (FSA) was a New Deal agency created in 1937 to combat rural poverty during the Great Depression in the United States. It succeeded the Resettlement Administration (1935-1937). [...] The FSA is famous for its small but highly influential photography program, 1935-44, that portrayed the challenges of rural poverty. The photographs in the Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Photograph Collection form an extensive pictorial record of American life between 1935 and 1944. This U.S. government photography project was headed for most of its existence by Roy E. Stryker, who guided the effort in a succession of government agencies: the Resettlement Administration (1935-1937), the Farm Security Administration (1937-1942), and the Office of War Information (1942-1944). [...] Eleven photographers would come to work on this project (listed in order in which they were hired): Arthur Rothstein, Theo Jung, Ben Shahn, Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, Carl Mydans, Russell Lee, Marion Post Wolcott, Jack Delano, John Vachon, and John Collier.' Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farm_Security_Administration#cite_note-1 [Accessed 10 April 2019].

very importance. The aspirations of its initiators were perhaps unattainable and different from what the project actually did. The importance of the project lies in the fact that it is a very important record of Greek photography at the time of the crisis and inspired by it, with works that present the situation in Greece in a way that poses questions about the crisis and people's lives before and during the crisis. In fact, this spontaneous desire to document the effects of the crisis, and reflect on them, created a narrative that may also lead to the search for solutions as a way to overcome the crisis and dream of a new future. Similarly to the *Depression Era*, the *Caravan Project* (n.d.) is also a project that uses documentary photography and storytelling to structure a platform for the communication of major issues of our times.



Figure 1.3 The team of the Caravan Project

The *Caravan Project* is composed of photographers and documentarists that tell stories of people who inspire with their attitude towards life. In addition, they move around Greece with a caravan and build two tents, where their stories are exhibited, and educational events are organised. Through their action, they want to show the human side of existence in times of crisis, open discussion of the human values and the importance of the human effort. As such, they use the reality of the crisis as a means to sensitize their audience, strengthen their resolve, and show the power and social impact of human values. In the introductory text of the *Caravan Project*, the significance of creating stories in the era of the crisis is argued.

‘Narration and myth exist prior to writing and are a core element of thought and culture. In every culture, the narration of stories holds a special position as the tissue connecting the collective subconscious is woven by them. [...] In ancient Greece, the role of myth was to awaken people, to unravel the darkness which hinders their inner vision and to help them see things as they really are. [...] The stories act as bridges, designed to help us overcome our isolation and to reunite with the world and our fellow human beings. [...] They provide a continuation of our experiences and assure us that imagination is more powerful than knowledge, that myth is more necessary than reality, that dreams themselves are more essential than their interpretation’ (Caravan Project, n.d.).



Figure 1.4 Inside the tent of the Caravan Project

Finally, after the *Caravan Project* came to an end in 2017, we were left with the question of what impact this project actually had on society or whether this impact was even close to its inspirational aims. Similarly to the *Depression Era* project, both projects seem to start as a reaction to the change brought about by the crisis and as an awareness of a situation that needs to be changed, seeking inspiration in reality and the human values that seem to have been lost. Both projects want to engage with their audience in an active way with presentations, participatory events, workshops and educational programs, almost like instigating a social movement. In their enthusiasm and passion for their goal, the photographers behind these projects might be asking too much, misleading us from the actual significance of their work, which is to produce documentary work that

communicates contemporary issues of the crisis, interact with people around these issues, and give hope to people.

The recent financial and political strategies in the globalised environment of modern Greece has raised issues of political and cultural sovereignty in Greece and have affected and will continue to affect the lives of people on so many levels that it is impossible to obtain a global view of the impacts. At the time of the crisis when people have lost their stability and existing values have come into question, people have the need to create stories of today in order to give meaning to what is happening. The situation is far too complex for ordinary people to grasp and the simplicity of a story can be more real than the actual reality and have a more positive effect in their everyday life. Whether successful or not, both projects use storytelling as a way to document Greece of today, and use stories to inspire a future that is closer to humanistic values and solidarity; in other ways to communicate on a deeper humanistic level. To a greater extent, the need for storytelling is an allegory of the need to redefine Greek identity. *Depression Era* narrates the fall of today's society and dreams of another future through independent and fragmentary stories using the language of contemporary photography, while *Caravan project* gives a more poetic bent to the idea of the story. Instead of presenting the effects of the crisis, *Caravan Project* is all about revealing small everyday stories as a doctrine of humanity in the alienated harsh reality. *Caravan Project* uses these narratives of human strength, memory and tradition in an effort to create a contemporary mythology.

4. The myth of Odysseus and the search for identity

The myth has always been used by people to communicate the essence of an incomprehensible situation. A myth is a form used to describe reality through imagination and can potentially simplify the complex aspects of a particular situation without losing its essence, making it widely comprehensible. Looking back through the history of Greek culture there is a myth that never fades; the myth of Odysseus, which has been topical for over 3000 years. Odysseus, king of Ithaca, after the Trojan war, starts a ten-year journey towards his home island of Ithaca, his wife Penelope, and his son Telemachus. His journey

through all the adventures, death, love, experiences at many levels, together with continuous nostalgia for home, becomes an iconic voyage that has worked allegorically throughout the world.

Odysseus, on the other hand, becomes a symbol of the wanderer, and particularly a wanderer of the other. As D. N. Maronitis (2014a, p.12) argues, *The Odyssey* might be about nostos on the surface, Odysseus' desire to return, but in the background, there is always the notion of wandering and quest. This quest evolves on two planes, the external space and the internal space of the hero. On the first level, the question that is set is 'Where is Odysseus?' and on the second level 'Who is Odysseus?' (Maronitis, 2014a, p. 17). This perspective correlates physical wandering and the place of the quest, whether foreign or not, with identity, something that is very fruitful for the purpose of this research.

The notion of the wanderer is very deeply rooted in Greek culture. The example of Odysseus that is found in Homer's epic poems is not the only one from that time in Greek mythology. However, it is the most famous worldwide and certainly the most influential, particularly due to Odysseus' realisation of his own foreignness during his ten-year journey towards his home island of Ithaca. The myth of Odysseus pre-existed Homer and is not confined to the Homeric *Odyssey*. Homer takes earlier material from various myths and transforms it to create *The Odyssey* which has become one of the most significant writings in literature (Oikonomou, 2016). Barbara Cassin (2015) in her research on nostalgia emphasizes the importance of the continuity of myth after Odysseus' return to Ithaca and recognition by the people of Ithaca.

'[...] when Odysseus finally reaches the land of Ithaca, he does not recognize it, and he himself is at first recognized only by his dog. And when he wins back his identity, after having massacred the suitors and unfaithful attendants, when he finds his wife again and she consents to recognize him at last, the hero stays only for a night and then he leaves again' (Cassin, 2015, p.9).

This part of the myth that we are not very familiar with, as it is not included in Homeric *Odyssey*, conflicts with the happy ending of Odysseus' return to the propriety of home. Odysseus becomes the symbol of the wanderer who cannot reconcile with the idea of

permanence, and inside him the fire of the quest constantly burns. 'He must thus take off again for the other end of the world, as far as possible from the Odyssey and the Mediterranean, all the way to the land of those who do not know the sea or Greek glory [...] assimilating what they do not know to and through their culture, "integrating" [...] foreignness and alterity' (Cassin, 2015, p.22).

Many writers since Homer have revised this part of the myth based on their cultural and moral background in order to make the myth contemporary to their era. Dante utilizes the prophecy of Tiresias that is recounted in Book 11 of the Homeric *Odyssey*, to narrate the second journey of Odysseus after his return to Ithaca, which was implied in Tiresias' prophecy. 'Dante creates a significant change in the myth by enlarging the image of the hero who dreams of the return home to the image of a hero who is willing to immigrate again towards the quality of human nature to seek for knowledge and virtue' (Oikonomou, 2016, pp.66-67). Alfred Lord Tennyson (2004) in his poem *Ulysses* (1842) presents an Odysseus, tired of his aged wife Penelope, dissatisfied and restless upon his arrival home, who yearns to explore again. His hero dreams of the untraveled world until he decides to 'abandon the suffocating limits of Ithaca and move to new knowledge and experiences' (Oikonomou, 2016, pp.79-80). Tennyson's Odysseus sails off again, but without a clear destination as in his first journey. This second journey lasts until his death, exemplifying the ideal of continuous wandering. Unlike Dante's Odysseus who was condemned to hell for his sin of disregarding Christian morality to follow virtue and truth beyond the known world, Tennyson praises the need for knowledge beyond the limits of what is known. Both Dante and Tennyson used a similar revision of the myth, but each instilled a new interpretation according to the ethics of his era. Tennyson 'positions endless wandering as a new treaty by turning to the "nostalgia of the distant" (Fernweh). [...] In this regard, the poem ventured beyond optimism to address the nuance and pathogenicity of the modern age' (Oikonomou, 2016, pp.79-80).

James Joyce, Jean-Luc Godard, Stanley Kubrick, Rainer Maria Rilke, Franz Kafka are only a few other artists that based their work on the myth of Odysseus. Revisiting the myth, however, doesn't mean that it remains the same content and is only updated to match the contemporary world, but rather the whole myth might be altered in order to become appropriate for the aims of the artist, such as in the examples of Dante and Tennyson that

have been discussed above. Especially in modernism, writers return to the myth as a symbolic move to devise their own adventures as writers. Oikonomou argues that:

‘without the Odyssey, much of modernism would be unthinkable, not to say that if there is a myth that is synonymous with the modern thought/reason, then this is Odysseus’ myth. The adventures of Odysseus seem an appropriate vehicle for modern writers to describe their own poetic obstacles; to depict their own “Odyssey”, such as the struggle and agony for form and the adventurous road of art, and so experimenting to reach, through shakes and crises towards something new’ (Oikonomou, 2016, p.14).

In modern Greece, the poet Constantine Cavafy in his *Ithaka* returned to the myth with a poetic revision of the search for Ithaca that instils the experience gained by voyage with significance. Cavafy was born to Greek parents in Egypt, and even though he didn’t live in Greece, his poetry is directly related to Greek culture, and he is considered to be amongst the masters of Neohellenic poetry. Particularly the poem *Ithaka* is very existentially influential in Greek culture. The poem ends:

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.

(Cavafy, tr. Keeley E. & Sherrard P.,
1992)

In the Introduction of the Greek edition of Cassin’s work, the translator Sesil Inglesi Margellou turns her attention to the second of the three verses above, while we usually

focus on the first, because 'it defines homeland, not as the goal of returning, but as a springboard of migration that imposes and gives meaning to our long journey in search of others and of ourselves' (Margellou, 2015, p.14). 'Ithaca gave you the marvelous journey. Without her you would not have set out' (Cavafy, tr. Keeley E. & Sherrard P., 1992). If seen in a Greek cultural context, this particular verse reflects on the significance of the notion of the voyage in Greek culture and thus illustrates the interpretation that the myth of Odysseus has taken on over the years. From this perspective, the myth of Odysseus becomes relevant to the representation of contemporary Greek migration and the feeling of foreignness in your own home. The home culture becomes the origin of a journey, wherein the destination is the same as its origin. The journey itself though, with all its delights, bumps, and experiences, symbolises the knowledge that is gained through the interaction with both the other and the self, having the intrinsic values and ideals of 'Ithaca' as motivation. The importance is not on the destination, but rather on the nostalgia of it that keeps us motivated. What determines us and moulds our identity is the constant quest and interaction with the other, always having our inherent ethos and culture in the background.

5. Ithaca and the islands

Odysseus' journey is a ten-year sea voyage with the only stops on islands and the final destination his home-island, Ithaca. Both the sea and the islands gain a symbolic meaning, which defines Greek culture until today. The sea in the Homeric *Odyssey* symbolises quest and experience, along with all the muddles and disasters it can bring, while the islands are the places of arrival and at the same time departure, places of redeployment and redefinition. An interesting remark is made by Oikonomou, who argues that *The Odyssey* reminds us of and is about the islands. 'A place of disarray that Odysseus traverses looking for Ithaca, which from his perspective is the future of his origin' (Oikonomou, 2016, p.13). These islands are places that symbolise experiences through the interaction with the other, while the quest on the sea between them is the constant search for identity. Ithaca as the destination is the end of nostalgia, where Odysseus will finally be identified or set his new identity after having gained wisdom from

many years of wandering; 'the future of his origin' as Oikonomou has argued (Oikonomou, 2016).

Oikonomou continues her argument one step further by saying that 'beyond geography, Odyssey itself seems to contain the genetic traits of the islands, to the extent that follows the movements that produce them: fracture (from the old) and recreation' (Oikonomou, 2016, p.13). For Homer, the creation of the myth works alongside the myth itself. He takes elements of old myths, distances himself and re-creates his own myth. Homer goes on his own Odyssey through his islands until he finds his own Ithaca. Oikonomou's thinking is mostly based on Gilles Deleuze's essay *Desert Islands* (2004), which approaches the ways islands are created philosophically. Deleuze uses the geographical method of how islands are created by fracturing from the mainland and becoming autonomous as a metaphor for the existential perception of the island in contemporary thinking.

'We have to get back to the movement of the imagination that makes the deserted island a model, a prototype of the collective soul. First, it is true that from the deserted island it is not creation but re-creation, not the beginning but a re-beginning that takes place. The deserted island is the origin, but a second origin. From it everything begins anew. The island is the necessary minimum for this re-beginning, the material that survives the first origin, the radiating seed or egg that must be sufficient to re-produce everything' (Deleuze, 2004, p.13).

As Deleuze argues, the island symbolically has become a place of re-creating, of re-beginning. The natural isolation offered by an island functions as a desire for isolation and yearning for something new. In the modern world, the thought of the island is often related to nostalgia, and the island has taken on an almost romantic embodiment, in regard to the desire of being on an island and pulling away from the contemporary world. The space of the island offers the possibility to distance oneself from the complexity of the present situation symbolically and to redefine the identity one desires. Deleuze also argues that this symbolism is not due to the separation that the island offers, but rather due to people's desire to be separated when on an island.

'Dreaming of islands is dreaming of pulling away, of being already separate, far from any continent, of being lost and alone—or it is dreaming of starting from scratch, recreating, beginning anew. Some islands drifted away from the

continent, but the island is also that toward which one drifts; other islands originated in the ocean, but *the island is also the origin*, radical and absolute. [...] It is no longer the island that is separated from the continent, it is humans who find themselves separated from the world when on an island. It is no longer the island that is created from the bowels of the earth through the liquid depths, it is humans who create the world anew from the island and on the waters' (Deleuze, 2004, p. 10).

This thinking around islands helps us perceive Odysseus' journey today and reuse the myth to talk about a contemporary condition of searching for an elsewhere. The desire of Odysseus to return to his origin and be recognised in his new identity can be viewed in parallel with the modern desire to create a new identity on an island. Cassin supports this argument by stating 'Odysseus' entire journey, the entire *Odyssey*, sails under the aegis of a quest for identity' (Cassin, 2016, p.15).

In addition, Oikonomou's argument seems to offer a very interesting aspect for the purpose of this research as it correlates a myth that has become the cultural heritage of Greece, the geography of the islands of Greece, and the philosophical meaning of the islands in terms of social fracture and recreation. Using this perspective, we can correlate the Greek need to start again after the crisis with the myth of Odysseus and the physical space of the islands.

Today's *Odyssey* of displaced Greeks due to the crisis is a narration of forging a personal identity, but also forming an identity for contemporary Greek society. Continuous movement, contact with otherness and the experience and knowledge that these experiences bring are unwittingly rebuilding Greek identity. The people who left with the dream to bring something back, those who returned early due to the demystification of the Western metropolises that were formerly idealised, and also those who metaphorically retreated from the westernised urban environment to more moderate lifestyles on the Greek islands, are all people who realised that they have broken away from Greek society, they have been exiled. 'The question raised by the *Odyssey* is whether Odysseus, the only one of the survivors not to have returned home, is "returnable", [...] whether he is ever going to know "the day of the return" [...] or whether this has been taken "away", whether his day of homecoming "has perished" or been "lost"' (Cassin, 2016, p.10). Cassin suggests that even after the return the desire for quest continues to

exist. Similarly to Odysseus, modern Greeks who are forced to migrate, have lost the hope of returning to their previous lives, even if they are literally able to return to the physical space of home. They are certainly not “returnable” to their previous lives since the realisation of their fracture has set them in search of something new, wherever they are based.

‘From nostalgia to exile, from one epic to another, the goal (telos) is no longer return and the home but a founding’ (Cassin, 2016, p.29). For the purpose of this research, exile is connected to the idea of recreating an identity based on the experience of displacement. The lives of the modern exiles have become a journey of redefining personal identity, but also a new collective Greek identity. The space occupied by this search for identity is the voyage of the exile. The “Deserted islands” are all the stops on the Odyssey that have begun to force them to go one step further. They always have the nostalgia of home as a compass, wherever or whatever that home might be, which incites the voyage. Following Oikonomou’s thinking, I approach each destination of migration as an island, a fracture from origin, home culture, and society, and also a stop along the long voyage of re-creation. Every island offers its own new adventures and dilemmas, its own experience that moulds an identity. The contemporary Greek Odyssey is also about the islands, about being separated, about those stops which are not destinations, but rather places of redefinition and re-creation, having always reaching Ithaca as a goal, one’s “home”, the ‘future of the origin’ as Oikonomou has stated.

‘An island is real in a way that is very precise. Its edges can be seen from a boat or a plane. And, when seen from an island, the maritime horizon bends; in the evening, with the setting sun, the earth is round. When we are in the middle of the water, we know that there is a shore, a limit between an inside and the great outside, and that the island is finite. An island is an entity par excellence, an identity, something with a contour, an eidos; it emerges like an idea. In its finitude, an island is a point of view of the world. [...] At each bend in the road, at each turn, at each step, the world gets recomposed and reorganised. What the eye sees at that very moment becomes structure; the eye is seized by harmony, each time astonished anew. Between cosmology and cosmetics, the horizon, at once immense and limited, renew its order. An island is a place par excellence. [...] The nostalgia for an island. An island is a place, but a very singular place, a place that invites departure: one can only leave an island [...] And one wants to return; one must return to it. It determines and magnetises. One begins to believe that time bends like the horizon and that one will return

after a long journey, a cycle, an odyssey. But do we ever really return? And do we ever really remain?' (Cassin, 2016, pp.4-5).

As Cassin reflects on the islands' finitude, an island delineates the border between the inside, mainland of the island and the unknown outside. This border that appears so simple in literal finitude, the shore of the island, and the relationship that we develop with the inside and outside, become the backbone of the philosophical quest for redefinition. The inside becomes a symbol of familiar ground and stability, while the outside is the unexplored and the unknown.

6. The symbolic system

In conclusion, at times of crisis or oppression, storytelling becomes a vehicle to communicate in a simple way the complexity of a situation that people experience and inspire a change. I am using the myth of Odysseus, as a familiar story, to represent the modern Odyssey of contemporary Greeks that are migrating due to the crisis. The well-known myth has been used throughout the history of literature as a narrative for seeking identity and has become iconic. In addition, the Greekness of the Odyssey provides a connection with contemporary Greek culture as it is described in the introduction and will be further elaborated on in the next chapter. The modern Odyssey, similarly to the myth, is about the islands, islands become symbols of the experiences and the adventures that Greek are facing in the various destinations that they are migrating to. On each of these islands, the relationship of people to physical borders is studied as a metaphor of the mental borders that appear in each type of migration.

The metropolis becomes a symbolic island that encompasses the Greek perception of the modern metropolis, with all the desires and ambitions that this entails. The borders aren't really visible, but they exist on a level of demystification of this perception. The focus is not on the actual borders, but on the chaotic mainland and the artificial construction that man has created as a symbol of the western culture.

The return home becomes the return to Ithaca. Similarly to Odysseus, the people who return feel foreigners in their own home. The experiences that they have gained and the mentality that they have developed separates them from their previous self. On the island of Ithaca they are now foreigners and they are searching for answers on the physical border of the city, where familiarity meets the unfamiliar, where borders become vague and the feeling of inbetweenness, being an insider and an outsider at the same time, takes the meaning of searching for an identity between the old and the new.

The third place of migration is the Greek islands, where the voyage is literally about the islands. The borders here are obvious and are at the shore of the island. The mainland symbolises the deliberate decision for self-exile on an island, for fracture from society and recreating a life based on the simplicity that life on an island can offer, while the view of the sea and the horizon stands for the desire for further adventures, wandering, and departure towards an elsewhere.

Finally, further to a modern approach of the Odyssey to talk about the migration of Greeks, the Odyssey also depicts my own struggle for fracture and recreation, for creating a symbolic system that generates meaning for myself as I am also part of this condition. My own voyage follows the same movement of fracture and recreation, where I am taking various elements from Greek culture, the myth of Odysseus, and contemporary photographic language in order to create a language that engages with the subject matter and has a Greekness that would allow the project to be analysed within a Greek cultural context. The myth works on three levels. On the first level, the myth of Odysseus becomes a structural frame of the narrative that I am building. On the second level, the Odyssey becomes an allegory of the modern Odyssey for a search for identity. On the third level Odyssey becomes an allegory of my own Odyssey to create a new photographic language.

Chapter II: Greek Photography in a Neohellenic Context

1. Greek photography and the landscape

Photography as a medium was born around the same time as the modern Greek state. As the Greek state developed rather differently from other European countries, photography in Greece followed a similarly peculiar evolution. While in Europe photography was explored and developed as a medium throughout the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, in Greece any developments in photography were delayed in arriving.

Photography was serving the purposes of the Greek state that were very different than those of the dominant countries of Europe. This, of course, is to be expected if one considers that Greece was getting gradually liberated from the Ottoman Empire and was in the process of becoming the state we recognize as Greece today. Until the first decades of the 20th century, the state's borders were being negotiated and this would clearly have an impact on all aspects of society including the arts.

The lack of theoretical and critical discourse on photography until the end of the 20th century was a hindrance to the development of a Greek photographic style. Even though over the last decades with the establishment of various museums and institutes for photography the critical discourse has grown, it mostly follows and imitates the Western way of thinking, again making the independent development of photography more difficult (Papaioannou, 2013, p.14). Similarly to Greek photography, Greek critical thinking on photography has not managed to create an impact on photography or any distinct stream of thought (Papaioannou, 2013, p.18). So what was the course of photographic evolution in Greece and how is that different from the rest of the western world?

a. Images of ruins

The European interest in ancient Greek civilization began during Enlightenment and developed further during the period of Romanticism. Several travellers came to Greece to see the ancient ruins and the place where the ancient Greek civilization was born. In their effort to praise ancient Greek culture, and even revive ancient Greece, they created romantic literary narratives about the place of Greece, as well as paintings. Later on, with the discovery of photography, this effort continued with the use of the newly invented medium by imitating the image of the Greek landscape that already existed in painting and literature. The image of Greece at the beginning of the 19th century came from European travellers and Philhellenists, rather than Greeks themselves.

As Leonti explains, 'culture takes part in power, defends revolutions or counter-revolutions, and becomes willingly or reluctantly a collaborator in colonial and post-colonial regimes' (Leonti, 1998, p.33). The narratives of Greece that were created by the European travellers and Philhellenists were not serving the purposes of the Greek nation, but rather of their creators. These narratives were used by the Philhellenists to rally the Greeks of the region around the idea of national unity and fight for their independence. Europe's interest in ancient Greece through the Philhellenists was what essentially established the identity of the new Greek nation, whether that represented reality or not.

Before and during the revolution, and also during the establishment of the new state, Greeks were attached with an identity that came from the Western image of Greece and the perception that Greeks are racial descendants of ancient Greeks. This very Western image of Greece was adopted by the Greeks in the 19th century and was incorporated in the Greek culture of their time, as it was the common element between a heterogeneous Greek society (Stathatos, 1996). Particularly in photography, Greek photographers imitated the visual tropes of European travellers, which often focused on the dominance of ancient ruins in the landscape. These images served two purposes: the interest of Europeans in viewing and purchasing photographs depicting monuments and temples of the world, including ancient Greece, and the need of Greeks to create a national identity. As expected, Greek photographers in war-torn Greece with the prevailing ideological

liquidity have been unable to develop their own view of photography in Greece (Papaioannou, 2014, p.83).

Some typical examples of photographs of this period belong to the photographers Philippos Margaritis, who is also considered to be the first Greek photographer whose works have been rescued (Papaioannou, 2014, p.58), Romaidis brothers, Dimitrios Konstantinou, and Petros Moraitis. There are also a number of photographs by unknown artists that have survived over the years.



Figure 2.1 *The Parthenon* (Margaritis, 1855)



Figure 2.2 *The temple of Olympian Zeus with the Acropolis in the background* (Konstantinou, 1865)



Figure 2.3 *Temple of Olympian Zeus and the Acropolis* (Moraitis, 1870)

Panagiotopoulos, who has dealt extensively with the issue of Greekness in photography and the way Greek photography has taken the form it eventually took in history, argues that ‘the Greek nation was recreated with the terms of a European conception of the history of the world and settled in a repertoire of things, themes and places-landscapes, on which future writers, painters and tourists were extensively

supported' (Panagiotopoulos, 2013, p.369). We observe that the Greeks based their culture on a merely borrowed, or even imposed, image of Greece by the West. As expected in such a situation, culture didn't develop autonomously on the basis of the existing cultural specificities but rather tried to follow the principles of the culture that it borrowed from. Panagiotopoulos talks about a Western cultural hegemony that 'produces and imposes a particular look, a Western Gaze' (Panagiotopoulos, 2013, p.373). The term 'Western Gaze' that was introduced by him is very apt since, as we will see further on, it follows Greek photography until today. Moreover, the photographic trends in Europe ultimately determined Greek photography and what is worthy to be photographed or not (Panagiotopoulos & Petsini, 2013, p.348). The examples of the images of ruins are the first photographic current in Greece that was imposed by the West.

b. The bucolic landscapes



Figure 2.4 Corinth, Apollo Temple (Romaidis bros, 1890)

Greek photography developed in parallel with archaeology, thus giving antiquities the ideological stamp of the new state. Until 1890, virtually no photographer escaped from the subject of ancient monuments (Stathatos, 1996). We observe, however, that during all these years the photographs of the ruins slowly escaped the tight frames that focused

on the ancient monuments and included elements of the Greek nature or the Greek people. Even in that case, though, the focus remained on the ancient ruins, but a dialogue between the present culture and history had begun. This can even be seen in the photograph of Corinth by the Romaidis brothers (1890) above, where the mountain in the background is an indispensable element of the image and comes into direct dialogue with the ruins of the temple of Apollo. Another example is the image below from the excavations of Delphi, where the presence of people is in dialogue with the stillness of the statue.

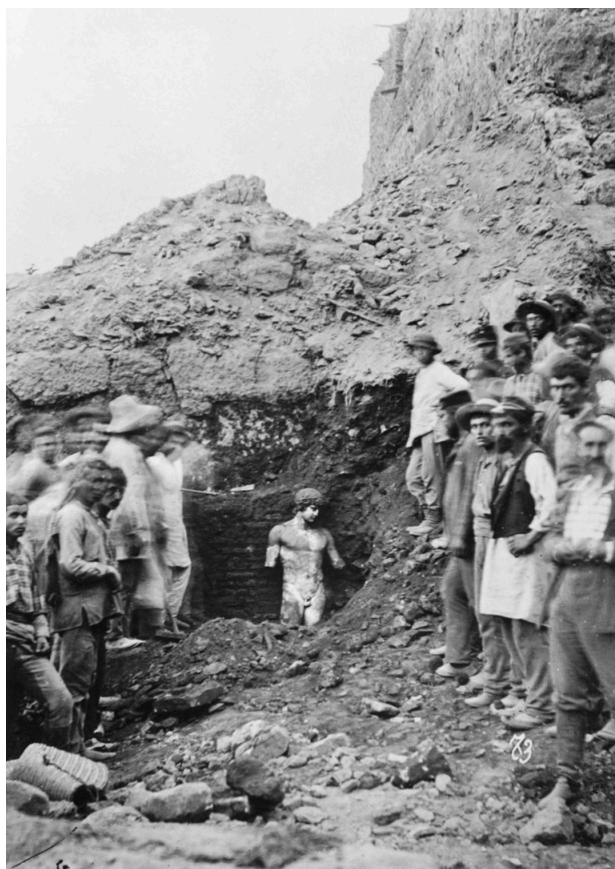


Figure 2.5 *The Great Excavation of Delphi, The Revelation of Antinoos* (n.d., 1892-1893)

The last decade of the 19th century and the first of the 20th were important for photography in Greece, as various technological achievements made photography more accessible to professionals, 36 commercial photography studios in Athens started to operate, the illustrated magazine *Ikouografimēni* (Illustrated) was issued and the first photographic book was published (Stathatos, 1996). The most important fact, however, seems to be the extensive photographic work of the Swiss photographer Fred Boissonnas,

who is the first photographer to capture the Greek landscape, beyond the ancient monuments (Stathatos, 1996). Boissonnas was financially supported by the Greek state, as the state's aim was to familiarise Greek people with the new lands annexed to the country during the Balkan wars in 1912 and 1913, which became Boissonnas' subject (Papaioannou, 2014, p.162).



Figure 2.6 *Shepherds at the top of the Parnassus* (Boissonnas, 1903)

The work of Boissonnas had a great influence in Greece, as Greek photographers were mimicking his images of Greek landscapes that followed his folklore and postcard aesthetics. Among the photographers that have been influenced by Boissonnas are Spiros Meletzis, mostly known for his later work on the Civil War, and Nelly's. Particularly Nelly's, who was educated in Germany, focused on the ancient ruins and the Greek bucolic landscape, making her the first Greek landscape photographer. By following the style of Boissonnas, and occasionally copying his images, she developed an idealised view of the Greek landscape that was a result of her German education. Her work is a combination of her love of ancient Greek culture, folklore, Arcadianism¹², and picturesqueness, and, aesthetically, she is influenced by her German education more than the primary stimuli of the Greek space (Papaioannou, 2014, p.209-210). Nelly's adapts Greece to the image of

¹² Definition of Arcadianism: the use of Arcadian literary conventions in writing. Merriam-Webster Online. [online]. Available at: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/arcadianism> [Accessed 20 April 2019]. Here it is used as the use of Arcadian literary conventions in photography.

the West for Greece (Panagiotopoulos, 2013, p.379) rather than having a critical stance on it and mythologizes the relationship between nature and culture to the standards of iconography defined by the aesthetic needs of the Western world.



Figure 2.7 Santorini, *The Volcano* (Nelly's, 1925-1930)



Figure 2.8 *Young Shepherds* (Nelly's, 1930s)

For the second time, Greek photography followed the 'Western gaze', a gaze of the foreign traveller who captured the landscape with a romantic perspective, in order to imprint an idealised form of Greek identity. While in the earlier images of the ruins the idealisation referred to Greek peoples' history, in these bucolic images the idealisation focused on the folk and rural culture. In both cases, this idealisation aimed to unite the

heterogeneous Greek population, as Papaioannou argues (2014, p.110), under a single Greek identity. However, in contrast to the fetishised archaeological past, in the new folklore landscapes, the cultural ethos of the Greek people is embedded in the landscape, 'even in a mythologized form' (Papaioannou, 2014, p.110). This photographic period introduces the landscape as an integral part of Greek identity and culture. 'The landscape began to be treated as a diachronic symbol of Greek values, since it was also a cradle of Greek culture' (Papaioannou, 2014, p.182). This change in photography of the early 20th century and the connection of nature to culture was also a result of the theoretical engagement with issues of Greek identity that had now matured and the effort of intellectuals to seek for the specificities of Greek identity and culture. As we shall see below, important intellectuals in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, such as Ioannis Psycharis and Periklis Giannopoulos, laid the foundations of Neohellenism, which continues to concern Greek culture even today.

c. The touristic images

The next critical phase of photography is during the 1950s. That was the period after the Second World War and the end of the Greek Civil War (1946-1949). At that time Greece had to overcome the wounds and the suffering of the civil war that was apparent in society and had divided the country. Politically, the country moved on with a willingness to keep the controversy low in order to reach normality and follow a more European course. In the aftermath of the previous turbulent years, however, state censorship continued to exist with the excuse of reducing tensions. Thus, whole areas were banned from being photographed and photographers were afraid to photograph subjects that could carry the memory of the civil war (Stathatos, 2013, p.136). As such, there is a lack of independent photographic imagery that didn't follow the political line.

As the Greek identity changed, the perception of nature changed, which until then was indissolubly linked to the Greek identity. The former symbols of Greek identity that were coming from the natural landscape had to be updated to line up with the new course of modernisation and industrialisation. Moreover, the Greek mountains, a symbol of

freedom during the Second World War and of resistance during the civil war, had to be deleted from the collective consciousness as symbols of Greekness, as they were politically charged. As such the bucolic images that were mostly taken in Greek mountains had to be deleted as well from Greece's iconography. Greece had to reinvent its identity and together with it promote the new image of modern Greece.

This need for a redefinition of the Greek identity coincided with the development of the idea of excursionism that had already begun during the dictatorship of Metaxas (1936-1940). This new concept changed the perception of nature, which started to be perceived as a good that allowed the bourgeois to return to the countryside 'for the enjoyment of the landscape, in search of the lost paradise' (Papaioannou, 2014, p.206). Furthermore, the development of small format cameras in the 1920s and their popularisation in the following decades made photography even more affordable for amateurs and almost everyone could make an excursion and capture a landscape. As such the landscape, and its representation, was now perceived as a commodity that could be consumed for enjoyment rather than exist as an indispensable part of culture.

The idea of excursionism that developed during the 1950s together with the aftermath of the civil war incited the change in the perception of nature, and consequently landscape photography, as well as the cultural turn towards tourism. The focus of the tourist destinations was on the Aegean Sea and the Greek islands, which were mostly unexplored and rarely photographed, and there was also no hidden connotation between them and the Greek bucolic landscapes that reminded the period of the civil war. This was also the approach of the Greek Ministry of Tourism, which, more or less, wishing to look away from the blood-stained landscapes of the mountains, promoted the superficial picturesque landscapes of Greece, and especially of the Aegean Sea, as the new image of Greece.



Figures 2.9 - 2.11 from left to right: *Hydra* (Byzantiou, 1948), *Mykonos* (n.d., 1949), *Corfu* (Kourkoulos, 1949)

During this period, the photographs that mostly appeared came mainly from the Ministry of Tourism and the illustrated magazines of that time, which followed the appropriate political line (figs.2.9-2.11). There were also photographers working with Greek landscape, such as Dimitris Charisiadis and Voula Papaioannou, whose work gained significance much later and had no impact on the evolution of the photography of the time, although Papaioannou's perspective, in particular, could otherwise have become an influential modernist approach to photography. Both Charisiadis (fig.2.12) and Papaioannou (fig.2.13) photographed the Greek landscape, but their approach did not oppose the official state directive.



Figure 2.12 *Pontikonisi* (Charisiadis, 1954)



Figure 2.13 *Oia, Thira* (Papaioannou, 1950-1955)

In general, we mostly come across picturesque images of the Greek islands, beaches, white-painted village houses with blue framed windows and doors, elderly island villagers, carefree vacations¹³. '[...] Greek landscape photography has adopted the aesthetics of the picturesque as a superficial reading that equates landscapes between them through standardized compositions and removes political and social issues from the centre of the dialogue' (Papaioannou, 2014, p.296). The saturated blue of the Aegean Sea, together with the intense summer sun, conveyed an underlying optimism lacking any political connotation, which in no way coincided with the troubled sociopolitical situation of the era. It is a propaganda attempt to remove the debate from the serious problems that lie beneath the surface of this 'picture postcard' veneer.

On the contrary to what we have seen until that period the natural environment is no more confronted with spirituality as being part of the Greek identity, but rather is seen as a means of entertainment. For the first time in Greek history, the perception of the landscape changed and was filtered through the eyes of the tourist. As a physical space, the landscape became a place for excursions and entertainment, while as an image, it became a consuming good serving the superficiality of the picturesqueness of mainstream media and advertisements and the capitalistic possessiveness of the mainstream excursionists. The aesthetics of the representation of the Greek landscape is determined by the general European development of tourism and the desire of Greece to resemble Europe. 'It is the third time, after the ruins and the bucolic landscape, that an imported gaze guides the reading of the landscape, impressing the Aegean in the collective consciousness as a national ideal that contains history, aesthetics, and growth, while at the same time relieving the perpetual perplexity of the content of the national identity' (Papaioannou, 2014, pp.294-295). This third imported gaze managed to educate the Greek audience through photography to perceive the landscape as a touristic destination (Papaioannou, 2014, p.296).

¹³ It should be noted that colour photography came late in Greece, as Kodachrome colour slides had to be developed abroad, but posting undeveloped film abroad was banned until 1956 by the Greek state to prevent leakage of unauthorised images (Stathatos, 2013, p.136). As such, we mostly see graphic colour landscapes and coloured black-and-white images in magazines and touristic campaigns. The black-and-white images of the era though follow the same aesthetics apart from the use of colour that was developed in the following decades.

d. Contemporary Greek photography

Greek photography, and landscape photography, changed again slowly and timidly after the 1970s, with the most significant steps occurring during the 1990s, when the country entered a pace of stability and growth (at least with Western standards). This change was a result of the engaging of Greek photographers with the international photographic scene. Many photographers, who had studied abroad, returned back to Greece with a clearer understanding of what was happening in the photographic art world worldwide and better engagement with the photographic language. The establishment of the Photography Department at the Technological Educational Institute of Athens in 1984; the Photographic Festival of Athens in 1986, organised by the Hellenic Photography Center that was founded in 1976; and the establishment of the first photography museum in Greece in 1986, the Museum of Photography in Thessaloniki, contributed to this.

All these supported the creation of a generation of contemporary photographers such as Costis Antoniadis, Giorgos Depollas, Nikos Panagiotopoulos, Paris Petridis, Panos Kokkinias, Nikos Markou, and others, who developed photographic projects influenced mostly by European and American practices, putting photography in a new context. The characteristic of these photographers laid on their willingness to explore the social landscape of their country, turning their eyes to the urban landscape (Stathatos, 2013, p. 140), but also to the landscape of the province with a willingness to understand and to explore contemporary life through the province. Obviously influenced by the Euroamerican postmodern photography that bloomed during that period, they had the tendency to challenge the reality of what is represented and the stereotypes of the Greek photographic images. Greek landscape photographers followed the same path trying to give their own interpretation of the landscape, challenging the hitherto stereotypes of the Greek picturesque landscapes, often with a mocking irony, such as the diptych of Giorgos Depollas (fig.2.14), or exploring and challenging the relationship of history with the landscape, such as Nikos Panagiotopoulos (fig.2.15).

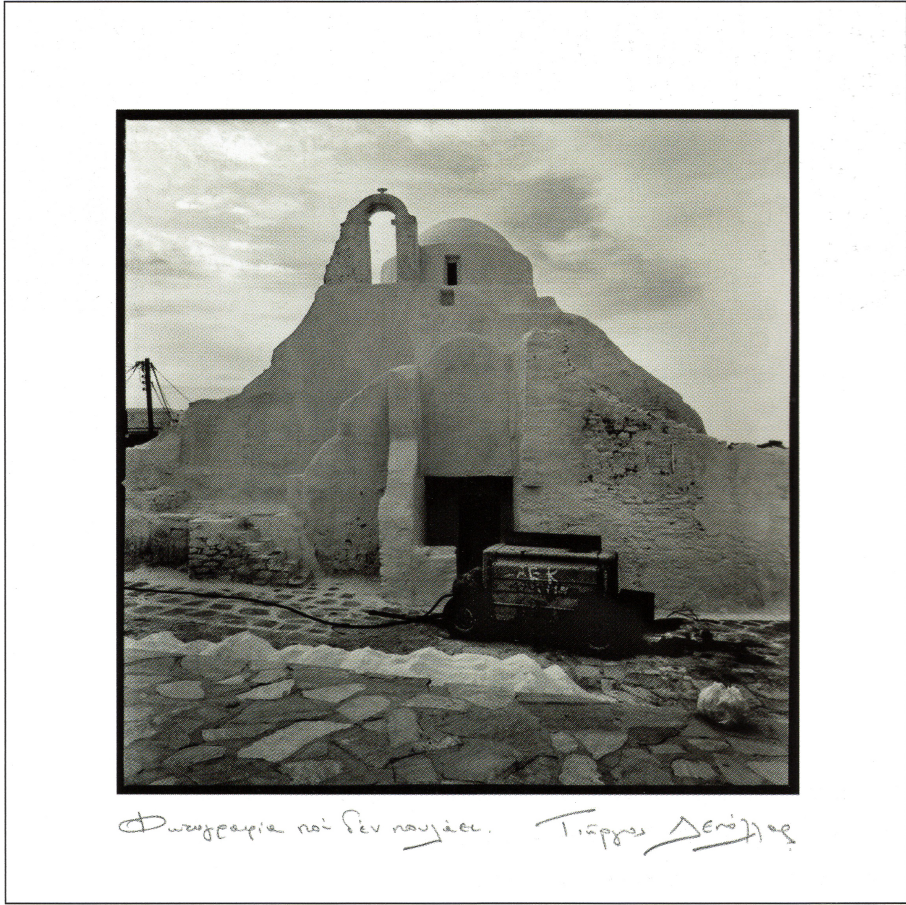


Figure 2.14 *Photograph that sells - Photograph that doesn't sell*, diptych images with handwritten captions. The colour image has the title *Photograph that sells* and the B&W *Photograph that doesn't sell* (Depollas, 1990s)



Figure 2.15 no name, from the series *Southeast Places* (Panagiotopoulos, 1990-1994)

Nikos Panagiotopoulos aims to create landscapes that do not follow the picturesque aesthetics of the previous years, but rather challenge the aesthetic, cultural, and ideological values of images in our collective subconscious (Papaioannou, 2014, p.354). In his project *Southeast Places* (Panagiotopoulos, 1990-1994) he develops a critique on Greek iconography by using the quality of a pinhole camera for a blurry and ambiguous result, while the title of the project reveals the actual place where the photographs were made. The images themselves are not able to signify the particular characteristics and identity of the place, and so they seem out of place and time, almost mythical. Thus Panagiotopoulos underscores the inevitable arbitrariness of any reference system and the way that these systems support the development of iconographic stereotypes and the formation of the collective perception of the landscape. Interestingly, however, Panagiotopoulos, who introduced the term *Western Gaze*, follows a clearly western approach in his project, as the conceptual structure of his project and the way that he uses photography to challenge the truth of existing iconography are common practices in Euroamerican contemporary postmodern photography.

Through Panagiotopoulos' project and the rest of the photographers of the era, Greek photography introduces once again a western gaze and a western reading of photography. The problem, however, in this case, is that Greek photography focuses on a critique of the picturesque iconography of the previous years and, in particular, the

iconography of tourism. Although this type of touristic imagery had an impact on the way in which images of Greece were acquired, it was addressed to mainstream consumers and related to mass culture. Greek photographers in the 1990s responded to that mainstream iconography with a postmodern Western approach that is not related to Greek culture and they avoided any connection with the aesthetic principles of Neohellenism that flourished since the 1930s in other forms of art, such as literature and poetry. Alexandra Moschovi claims that 'In Greece there was not, as for example in America, a coherent and continuous, formal, "modern" (in the sense of academic notion) tradition in which the generation of the metapolitefsi¹⁴ would be clearly opposed' (Moschovi, 2013a, p.168), as happened to other cultures at the stage of postmodernism. Thus, Greek landscape photography never went into a time of modernity, on the basis of which postmodernism could develop, which leads to the imitation of photographic techniques that remain separated from any cultural tradition.

This brings us to about the time of the Greek crisis in 2010, with in-between mostly borrowed approaches that appeared with a delay in relation to the West. The question posed socially and at a philosophical level with the crisis is whether a Western country can develop autonomously and independently in a globalized capitalist Europe, and at the same time whether it can develop an independent policy based mainly on native culture. The same question is the crisis to put on Greek photography, whether it is possible to develop a photographic stream that develops clearly from modern Greek culture and can, therefore, be described as Greek. Petsini has set a very interesting question regarding contemporary Greek photography: 'What does it mean to photograph Greece with an aesthetics that is typically German? What are the meanings of references to pictures that are in turn references to images of another culture or other reality? What do all of these secondary references ultimately offer?' (Petsini, 2013, p.278). This question, however, seems to be crucial to the history of Greek photography as a whole, since its aesthetics has always been influenced by photography in the West. Could Greek photography be inspired by its Greek culture and fulfil its aesthetic needs? If that is possible, what are the characteristics of modern Greek culture that could somehow be used in photography?

¹⁴ Metapolitefsi refers to the post 1974 era and the political change-over after the fall of the Junta (dictatorship).

2. Neohellenism in practice

As we have seen in the Introduction and in the previous section, modern Greek identity was associated with the Greek land from its very beginning, as the history of Hellenism was attached to it. With the help and support of the Philhellenists who envisioned the revival of ancient Greece, the ideology of the racial affinity between the Greek-speaking inhabitants of the geographical space of Greece and the ancient Greeks developed. That's how the first modern Greek identity was formed, and slowly the Greek land became a carrier of culture, as the ideas of Hellenism were impressed upon it. The spirituality associated with the Greek land was also seen in the first images of Greece in the 19th century, those of the ruins and the bucolic landscapes, which aimed to include in the landscape the essence of the Greek identity.

On a theoretical level, important texts that supported the spirituality of the Greek landscape as part of the Greek identity and culture were emerging by intellectuals in the late 19th century and early 20th century. An example of them is Ioannis Psycharis, a French philologist of Greek origin, who in 1888 wrote *My Journey*, where he described with nostalgia how the ideas in ancient Greece were inspired by the Attic landscape and envisaged Greece as the cultural centre of Europe. 'With respect to the soil of Greece, you, who come to such a country, the sky that you see used to be seen by the greats, the horizon that you look at with so much joy, they were looking at it every day. Inside this atmosphere, the flamboyant ideas were born, poetry and philosophy. When the valiant men climbed up on the Acropolis, they watched the same sea that you are watching now' (Psycharis, 2009, p.158). Psycharis' reflections on the Greek landscape suggest that modern Greek culture should be inspired by the Greek landscape, and when that happens, it will shine again like the ancient Greek culture.

Periklis Giannopoulos gives a more solid basis to Psycharis' nostalgic thoughts and defines what the Greek aesthetic that would distinguish Greeks from other Europeans should be. Giannopoulos in his essays *Modern Painting* (1902), *To Our Artists* (1903) and *Xenomania* (1903), argues his opposition to the idea of imitation of European aesthetics, a practice that was common to Greek artists who were willing to imitate European artists in their attempt to define their own aesthetics (Giannopoulos, 2008, p.131). Giannopoulos

argues that the failure of those practices is a consequence of the difference between the Greeks and the rest of the peoples. This difference is created by the Greek land, and particularly the Attic landscape and how it affects the Greek soul (Giannopoulos, 2008, p. 94). He also believes that 'aesthetics is born from the union of the interior and the outside world' (Giannopoulos, 2008, p.142) and considers that the human spirit is organically bound to the land from which it originates (Giannopoulos, 2008, p.142).

Giannopoulos argues that the values of Greek culture and the Greek nation, such as order, symmetry, grace, Greek wisdom, philanthropy, sympathy, and love, to list only a few, are the reflections of Greek land in the soul of Greeks (Giannopoulos, 2008, pp.99-100). This is precisely the ancient Greek relation of nature to culture, which was not expressed as a nationalistic acquired characteristic at the time of ancient Greece, but rather as the culture itself. It is precisely this relation of nature with culture that Giannopoulos seems to try to revive. He considers that aesthetics must be connected with the geography and the climate of the Greek land and that this is the common point between Greeks of the past and the present. He identifies the place of Hellenism, not as the nation that is not yet liberated, as it happened until then, but rather as the landscape of Greece (Leonti, 1998, p.148), thus giving a spirituality to the Greek landscape through the meaning that he gives to the concept of Hellenism.

Giannopoulos' aesthetic nationalism comes to unite on a theoretical level the national with the aesthetic. He advocates an idealization of the Greek natural environment and the Greek nation as such. Essentially this is the first aesthetic approach of place (Leonti, 1998, p.148), which also sets the basis for determining the aesthetic principles of Neohellenism. Although Giannopoulos opposes European practices in trying to introduce an indigenous aesthetics, as Leonti emphasizes, 'he clearly relied on a German image of Hellenism' (Leonti, 1998, p.199), which he reappropriated into a Neohellenic version. As Papaioannou argues, 'in order to establish an indigenous aesthetics he borrows elements from the German ideology of romantic nationalism and its mother-earth base, as well as from a European artistic tradition unprecedented in recent Greek history. To solve this antithesis he invokes the ancient Greek relationship with nature that formed the basis of all Greek art and architecture' (Papaioannou, 2014, p.148). In total, Giannopoulos transforms the idea of Western Hellenism developed by German Romanticism and

Philhellenism in the early 19th century in Europe into an indigenous Greek aesthetics that became the basis of Neohellenism.

As we have seen, Giannopoulos' work is evident in the photographs until the period of the world wars. Especially in the bucolic landscapes, there is an effort to unite man with the spirituality of the Greek land and this connection to become the identity of the modern Greeks. Later on, although Giannopoulos' ideas evolved into the indigenous aesthetic approach of Neohellenism, their use in photography was rather problematic. At the time of the touristic images, the ideology of the aesthetic superiority of the Greeks through the Greek land was used in a superficial way, without any deepening in the landscape. That was not the case for Greek literature however, where the landscape was used metaphorically.

At the time between the two world wars, and especially after the severe defeat of the Asia Minor Catastrophe in 1922, Greece went through a peaceful period and the desire for expansionism weakened. The focus was now on the construction of modern Greece through industrialization and urbanization in the footsteps of Western Europe. At the same time, intellectuals followed the theoretical discourse that was developed by Giannopoulos and 'proposed, or actually invented, the demand of searching for Greekness, an abstract concept that could function in terms of both contemporariness and timelessness, social and aesthetic, referring equally to refugees and natives, acting as a new unifying element of vision' (Papaioannou, 2014, p.176). Even though intellectuals of the time were not against European ideas, they consciously tried to avoid mimicking and, through the concept of Greekness, promoted the Greek specificity as a way to advance domestic art and tradition (Papaioannou, 2014, p.179).

Giannopoulos' approach together with the lack of social and political expansionism during the interwar period and the need to define the uniqueness and specificity of the nation can be said to lead aesthetically and culturally to entopia, as has been defined in the introduction. Entopia became the aesthetic principle of the dominant tendency of Neohellenic modernity. This very principle of entopia escapes from any racial aspect of Hellenism and basically comes to speak of the cultural specificity of the Greek nation, hence of Greekness. The main characteristic of entopia lies in the integration of Greek

nature into culture, both ideologically and aesthetically. Entopia has been applied in practice by many writers and poets of international reach in the 20th century. Two of these are the national poets Giorgos Seferis and Odysseas Elytis, who both won the Nobel Prize.

The Greek land is a predominant element of the aesthetic approach of both Seferis and Elytis, since, as Papaioannou argues, 'the landscape began to be treated as a diachronic symbol of Greek values' (Papaioannou, 2014, p.182). For both, the Greek landscape carries the Hellenic values, although the way that these are expressed in their poetry is different. Elytis 'places his poetry from the outset in the territory of the sublime, in the marriage of beauty and awe' (Kapsalis, 2016, p.85) and attempts to transplant the sublime into the Greek climate (Kapsalis, 2016, p.86). Seferis is not interested in the idea of the sublime that the Greek landscape creates to Elytis. He opposes a more deadpan expression that Elytis places out of Greek tradition (Kapsalis, 2016, p.95). Seferis' poetry, however, is indissolubly linked to Greekness, which, for him, seems to be a carrier of the values of Hellenism. In his poetry, Hellenism is contained in the landscape of Greece and becomes synonymous with it. As Leonti argues, 'he represented the ancient incarnation of Hellenism in the place, its entopia, as well as its perpetual displacement, its atopy, to the modern order of things' (Leonti, 1998, p.231). He talks about the nostos, the return to the natural landscape of Greece that radiates light. For Seferis, who follows the Neohellenic principle of entopia, the Greek landscape creates culture. As Leonti argues the merge of culture and nature is fundamental in Seferis work (Leonti, 1998, pp. 262-263). 'The fact that Seferis has so skilfully linked "humanity" with Greek nature suggests that post-war Neohellenism admitted an inherent connection between a particular natural landscape and a specific mode of behaviour, sensation, vision, and appreciation of things' (Leonti, 1998, pp.262-263).

Elytis, on the other hand, uses the language in a creative and lyrical way, creating new words to make every word resemble the landscape of Greece, the light, the sea, and the coastline. The Greek landscape carries a spirituality and the ethos of Greekness, thus for Elytis, these new words reappropriate the Greek ethos in the Greece of his time. For Elytis, the landscape is not just a visual representation, but the "projection of the soul of a nation on the materiality", a nation that created a "spelling" and a "grammar" within the Greek landscape before it was corrupted by the western literature of the picturesque, allowing

its meaning only “with a reduction to its spiritual ethos”¹⁵ (Papaioannou, 2014, p.300). His aim was to make the language itself bright as the Greek light and this brightness to spell the Greek world (Leonti, 1998, p.315).

Elytis’ influence on Greek society was very important even in an indirect way. He was an example of the role that literature played in the consolidation of the Aegean landscape as a national landscape model (Papaioannou, 2014, p.301). For Elytis, the sea, and consequently the landscape of the Aegean, is idealised as it reflects the Greek tradition in opposition to the mountains which he does not consider as landscape (Papaioannou, 2014, p.300). Particularly at the time after the Second World War and the civil war, when there is a general aversion to the mountains that are politically charged as signifiers of war and death, and the development of the intellectual discourse on defining Greekness, the work of Elytis comes to seek Greekness in the Aegean landscape. As described in the previous subchapter, this was also the political line of the Greek Ministry of Tourism. Within the general political context of the era, the intellectuals who assimilated the principles of entopia, moved alongside the political line of the country that was instigated by the need to redefine the Greek identity. Photography, as well as the official images of the time, however, did not succeed in producing culture, as for example Elytis did, nor to create a Greek photographic language, but only propagandistically and politically to create and communicate a mainstream image of contemporary Greece, which followed the superficial aesthetic principles of tourism.

Apart from the use of geography and the climate of the Greek landscape as a system of symbolism and also as a symbol of Hellenism, in this thesis, the presence of the Homeric epics in Neohellenism, namely of Odysseus’ myth, is significant. Seferis and Elytis are probably the two best examples of the reappropriation of Odysseus’ myth in Neohellenic literature. Homer again, “the first painter of the Greek soul and the Greek landscape”¹⁶, is of great importance for Neohellenic tradition. Being the first to draw directly from the sources of the Greek landscape, Homer becomes the primordial poet of Greece, ancient and contemporary, as his epic poems “seem to conceal the secrets of a prime aesthetic

¹⁵ The quotes here in Papaioannou’s quote belong to Odysseas Elytis.

¹⁶ The quote belongs to Nikolareizis, D. 1962. The Presence of Homer in New Greek Poetry.

success that has been an example to the centuries"¹⁷ (Leonti, 1998, pp.168-169). As I have described in the previous chapter, in the context of modernity, the reappropriation of classical texts is often seen as a technique by writers to express their fragmented bonds to the past, but also the use of the archetypal quests as a metaphor of their personal artistic search.

As Nikolareizis argues, Seferis' poetry moves to the 'margin of reality' and in particular 'skillfully achieves the transition from sensation to illusion, from the state of man who observes to the state of the man who dreams' (Nikolareizis, 2009, p.25). In his poetry, mythical heroes of ancient Greek history suddenly appear and the Odysseus myth is used to signify the 'idea of the endless journey' or 'of the journey that has not been done' (Nikolareizis, 2009, p.27). On one hand, Seferis uses the character of Odysseus himself to give emphasis to the triumph of man through the power of will. On the other, he also uses a less famous character of the Homeric Odyssey, Elpinoras, and creates a new myth around him in order to emphasize that the journey that is not over. Elpinoras becomes, for Seferis, a symbol of the modern humble man who has never been able to make any trip. So as we can see, Seferis uses the myth both as a direct reference to the myth and as an inspiration to create a new myth and emphasize parts of history that were not given sufficient importance.

For Seferis, Odysseus' myth is also synonymous with Hellenism, and his confrontation with the reality of modern Greece. As such the myth is transformed into a symbol of what modern Greek society did not manage to do. Seferis himself is disappointed by the Greek society of his time, declaring in 1936 that 'there is nothing more bitter than nostalgia for your home, while you are home' (Seferis, 1984, p.33), thus suggesting that the modern Greek identity is interwoven with a sense of nostalgia for Hellenism and the glorious ancient Greek history. This nostalgia was a predominant element of his poetry, and through the use of Odysseus' myth, he transforms 'the underestimated modern existence into a real nostos' (Leonti, 1998, p.262) for the light of the Greek landscape. The Greek light signifies the glory of Hellenism that for Seferis includes the 'idea of human worthiness and freedom' (Seferis, 1984, p.95).

¹⁷ The quote belongs to Nikolareizis, D. 1962. The Presence of Homer in New Greek Poetry.

3. Angelopoulos; the filmic approach of the myth in a Neohellenic context

In the context of this thesis, Angelopoulos becomes relevant for two main reasons. First of all, he uses the Neohellenic aesthetic principles of entopia, as described above, to create the appropriate metaphorical landscape in which the plot is placed, and then he uses Odysseus' myth to develop the concept of exile in modern Greek history. Unlike Elytis, whose poetry is placed around the Aegean Sea and the Greek islands, and for whom Greekness could only be described through the Aegean landscape, Angelopoulos places his perception of Greekness in the province of northern Greece bordering with Albania, (former) Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Turkey. If for Elytis the Greek mountains were not considered to be a landscape, and his decision to avoid them had to do with how they were politically charged over the period of the civil war and the world wars, Angelopoulos enters these symbolic places that have become taboo, and through darkness, rain, snow, and fog, he tries to convey an urgent need for re-creation.

'Elytis and Angelopoulos seem to inhabit different countries: the first a magical Mediterranean country full of light and the second a glum introverted country in the Balkans' (Papaioannou, 2014, p.301), explains Papaioannou, in comparing two different approaches of the landscape within the framework of the same cultural principles. As a matter of fact, 'in terms of iconography both speculations are to some extent constructions that serve the aesthetic and ideological world of their creators' (Papaioannou, 2014, p.301). Elytis prefers to see the sublime of the Aegean and the optimism of the Greek light as carriers of Greekness, with a rather positive approach, while Angelopoulos seeks Greekness in the melancholic landscapes of the province, staring at the complexity of the Greek identity through these places charged by the recent traumatic experiences of the civil war. Even though it is unusual, Angelopoulos must, in my opinion, be included in the great Greek artists of Neohellenism who use the landscape of Greece as a key element of metaphor.

The misty landscape in all of Angelopoulos' films dictates the emotional tone he wants to convey, creating an interior landscape in which a collision of tragic nature will take place, where the central character is the figure of the exile (Alberó, 2000). 'Endless leafy plains,

skeleton trees, flat and grey skies, snow, rain and mist enfold and isolate the inhabitants of this cinematic universe' (Alberó, 2000). As Alberto points out, for Angelopoulos exile is a feeling, 'a state of disharmony where the rupture between the inner and outer world is revealed, [...] is a feeling of loss' (Alberó, 2000). The subject of loss can take different symbolic meanings, depending on the plot of the film. This very rupture at a symbolic level is created through the geography and climate that isolate the characters of the film, confronting them with their own internal rupture. The inner world of Angelopoulos' characters is cut off from the outside world, as exiled, and the foggy and troubled winter landscapes, that he constructs, aesthetically create this cut-off. Angelopoulos, therefore, uses geography and climate symbolically through the principle of Neohellenic entopia. Angelopoulos, however, does not have the need to revive any Hellenic or Neohellenic glory and so he doesn't search for any kind of idealisation of Greek culture through the sublime Greek landscape. This is the main aesthetic difference between his approach on the landscape and Elytis' or other writers and poets of the 20th century that followed the same principles.



Figure 2.16 Screenshot from *Landscape in the Mist* (Angelopoulos, 1988)

An example of Angelopoulos use of nature is seen in the image above from *Landscape in the Mist* (1988), where the two children, the protagonists, who are looking for their father throughout the film, are walking towards a tree that they finally embrace as they fade in the mist of the winter rainy landscape. In this image, the metaphors are quite clear, as the

tree represents the tree of life and knowledge, a familiar symbolism in the cinematic language that was introduced by Tarkovsky¹⁸. The effort to finally reach the tree through an inhospitable environment symbolises the effort needed to conquer any knowledge. Moreover, the whole movement towards the tree represents the return to the roots and the need to discover again a new perspective for the world, full of innocence and longing for discovery.



Figure 2.17 Screenshot from *Voyage to Cythera* (Angelopoulos, 1983)

Another example comes from the last scene of *Voyage to Cythera* (1983), in which Spyros, the protagonist, who spent most of his life as a political exile, returns as an old man at the end of his life in his homeland, where he is treated as a stranger. His homeland has changed and eventually he is expelled on a raft under the gaze of his son, who doesn't seem to care. Only his wife chooses to leave with him as a reappropriation of the Homeric Penelope. Spyros is exiled for the second time in his life and the two elders move to the haze of the open sea towards the unknown; their last voyage. Here the non-existent horizons due to fog, but also the cultural significance of the sea in Greek culture as the undiscovered, again signify the same eternal demand for a quest. Moreover, the second exile of the political exile, who is no longer recognised by either side, since his homeland has been modernized for his aged beliefs, signifies that in his homeland there is no space

¹⁸ Andrei Tarkovsky (1932-1986) is a world renowned Soviet filmmaker. The image with the tree appeared in *The Sacrifice* (1986), which was Tarkovsky's last film that was shot in Sweden with many of Ingmar Bergman's regular collaborators and won four prizes at the Cannes Film Festival.

anymore for the memory or the utopia he once was dreaming of. Maybe society's indifference could be read as an effort of the post-war generation to leave behind the wounds of the civil war and move forward, but on the other hand, it is also possible to imply society's desire to hide the memory without substantial resolution of the problems that remain inactive until the next crisis that will bring them back to the surface. Finally, Spyros ends up on a raft at sea, as an "Odysseus" who was betrayed by his Ithaca and was sent back to the quest.

Both images above have references to the myth of Odysseus, which is another reason that Angelopoulos' films are very relevant for this thesis. In the first image from *Landscape in the Mist*, the return to the roots seems inspired by the return of Odysseus to his wedding bed at his palace in Ithaca, which was carved on the trunk of a living olive tree. The second image from *Voyage to Cythera*, the second exile of the protagonist on a raft, is inspired by the feeling of a stranger that Odysseus felt when he returned to Ithaca, and his desire to leave again towards the borders of the known world. The myth of Odysseus, and the Homeric epics in general, have a variety of uses in Angelopoulos' films. Initially, they are used in order to link the concept of exile to the voyage, which is also part of the themes of his films. Then there is the cultural use of the myth in order to position the filmic parallel in a Neohellenic cultural context. Finally, there is a morphological use of myth, where Angelopoulos uses Homeric techniques in his own narrative.

As Alberó argues, the work of Angelopoulos 'took the form of a cinema of exile, with characters searching for their identity or home, having as a starting point a primordial, glowing discovery: ignorance. With this ascertainment, which serves as the motivation and basis of every knowledge, the central theme of Angelopoulos' cinema is introduced: The Voyage' (Alberó, 2000). Eirini Stathi argues that in Angelopoulos films the hero is 'lost in the fictitious world of modern times, seeks a historical past, seeks something that can still make him dream' (Stathi, 2000). For Angelopoulos, the voyage is a means that leads to discovery and re-creation, a concept deeply rooted in Greek culture. The journey starts with the realisation of the hero, that he is in a state of crisis and he is exiled from reality. The heroes experience a crisis that is caused by the failure of politics and history to build the ideal world that they have been promising. This failure brings them to a state of exile. This exile, however, is not just a state of loss and grief, as it actually triggers the voyage

that feeds the hope for something new that might be discovered. The characters of Angelopoulos' films, through their voyage and the ordeals that they have confronted and managed to overcome, build their identity (Alberó, 2000), after they have managed to conquer a piece of Life and Knowledge. Any similarity with the modern Greek crisis could not, of course, be overlooked or at least the link is desirable in the context of this thesis.

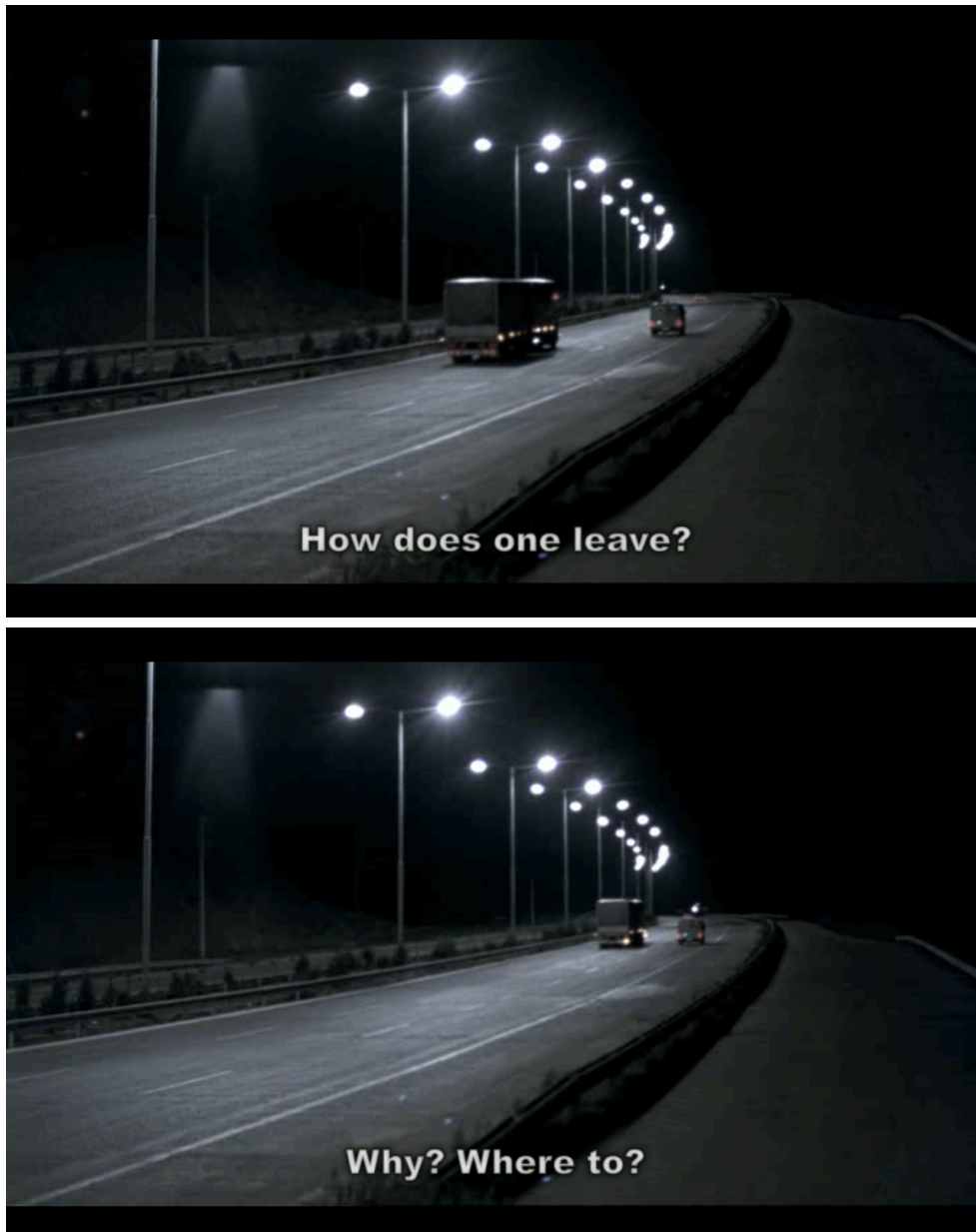


Figure 2.18 Screenshots from *The Suspended Step of the Stork* (Angelopoulos, 1991)

For Angelopoulos, the journey is not about the destination. In many of his films the journey has no end, no destination, as in the case of the two children in *Landscape in the Mist*. In others, the journey begins again after reaching the destination, as happens in *Voyage to Cythera*, where Spyros is exiled for the second time and fades out to the non-

existent horizon towards a new journey to the unknown. This concept of the voyage is clearly related to the myth of Odysseus, but perhaps not in the way that Homer recites it. The Homeric myth has a good end, as Odysseus finally manages to return to Ithaca and eventually is recognised by everyone. However, Spyros in *Voyage to Cythera* resembles a model of Odysseus that is closer to Dante's description in the *Divine Comedy*, which emphasizes the journey and the search that continue after reaching Ithaca, until the death of Odysseus at sea (Horton, 1999, p.42). The myth, as I have described in Chapter 1, is often altered to better fit the condition that Angelopoulos wants to describe, but also to represent his own effort to develop his personal perspective.

This becomes clearer in *Ulysses' Gaze* (1995), where a Greek-American filmmaker, known simply as A., who doesn't even speak his native language anymore, has lost his "gaze" and, through the voyage that he starts in search of the three long-missing reels of film by Greece's pioneering Manakia brothers, seeks to re-discover his own "gaze". The three reels that were shot in the early years of cinema were lost and probably undeveloped, and were supposed to carry the original gaze, '[a gaze] lost, [...] a gaze that seeks to come out of the darkness ... something like a birth ...' (*Ulysses' Gaze*, 1995) as it is mentioned in the dialogues of the film. Ithaca, of course, does not exist here anywhere as a geographically determined place, but it is used as a metaphorical place of anxiety for the discovery of the origin, thus the myth here has a clear metaphorical use. At the same time, the similarity of the protagonist in the film with the name A. with Angelopoulos himself is more than obvious. Angelopoulos, as a modern Greek filmmaker and citizen of modern Greece, similarly to A., feels that he has lost his own gaze that he seeks in history, memory and the cultural construction of Hellenism, using the myth of Odysseus as a vehicle. He seems to be searching for his own re-creation both socially as a citizen of modern Greece, but also creatively and aesthetically as an artist.

Besides, the use of the myth of Odysseus, which is particularly noted due to its relevance to this thesis, it is worth noting that Angelopoulos borrows elements from all periods of Greek civilization, such as Homeric epics, ancient tragedy, Neohellenic poetry, and Greek folk culture, as described in Horton's *Theo Angelopoulos: A Cinema of Contemplation* (1999). As Schütte argues (1991), 'Angelopoulos is a director who tried to combine the Greek tradition of ancient tragedies and folk comedy with European cinematic tradition.'

The dialogue with Greek culture, and Greekness, as Horton tells us, is 'a characteristic that helps his films transcend their national culture' (Horton, 1999, p.34).

Moreover, as Eades and Létoublon argue, the morphological similarities of Angelopoulos' films to the Greek oral tradition, as have been seen through Homer, are of particular interest. Ancient rhapsodies were not written, but rather they were presented orally to the audience based on a main structure (the myth). They were never presented in the same way, as it would be impossible to remember such long epic poems by heart. Variations were created that were actually customised for every audience. This created variations and reappropriations of the myth. As the director himself has argued, we can see his films as a single narrative construction that presents a central theme with a central body of ideas, just as the ancient rhapsodies have processed the myth according to the conditions and the public. (Eades & Létoublon, n.d.).

4. Photographer Paris Petridis: the metaphorical landscape in Greece

Coming back to contemporary photography, Paris Petridis is a photographer active until today with work that begins in 1998. He has worked on several themes quite different from each other and used equally different approaches. If I could classify his work in any genre, that would be the subjective documentary, meaning photography dealing with social subjects, following the language of documentary photography, but filtered through the personal perspective of the photographer. For the purposes of this study, I will deal with two published works of his, *Kath' odon* (1998) and *Notes at the Edge of the Road* (2006), which were also the subject of his PhD by published work and thus his own analysis of his work is available and his effort to bring his own work into context. This is important not only because we see his own thinking behind the making of the projects rather than someone else's interpretation, but also because we see how he chooses to contextualise his work in relation to Greek and international photography. Petridis attempts to set these two projects as a sequence and analyze them accordingly in the

context of landscape photography and particularly landscape photography in Greece, even though they are very different from each other.

The images in *Notes at the Edge of the Road* could be described as landscapes. In his first project *Kath'odon*, however, the landscape is not so obvious or the main theme doesn't seem to be the landscape. *Kath'odon* is a travelogue in northern Greece with black-and-white images following the snapshot aesthetic in the footsteps of Robert Frank's *The Americans* (1986) that was originally published in 1958. Although *Kath'odon* remains a fairly classic project in an international photographic context, for Greece it was something new. As seen earlier in this chapter, Petridis belongs to a generation of Greek photographers that were influenced by European and North-American photography and challenged the aesthetic stereotypes of Greek photography, together with the ideological clichés of Greek identity. In *Kath'odon*, Petridis does not give us references to any elements of classical beauty or historical mythological elements (Moscovi, 2009) that photography in Greece was familiar with until the previous decades with the bucolic and picturesque landscapes. He presents us with the ugliness of the Greek province rather than a desire for beautification or idealisation of the Greek landscape. Petridis' framing in many cases also breaks the embellishment through the form and adapts a snapshot aesthetic, a technique that was introduced in photography by Frank. This shift in the perception of the notion of beauty came quite late in Greece in relation to Europe and North America and, in photography, appeared by the photographers of the 1980s and 1990s that borrowed conceptual approaches from international photographers.

Working in quite the opposite direction of Greek landscape photography until then, Petridis did not look for the past, nor for the idyllic and picturesque landscapes of the Aegean sea, but sought the original form of Greece in the country's northern borders (Stathatos, 2013, p.142). During his many years of travelling in the villages of Northern Greece, Petridis tried to discover the undiscovered Greece that had not been seen, to seek the truth in the daily routine of the destitute province, and through it question the Greek perception of how Greek identity is defined. Perhaps for the first time, Greek photography deals with Greek identity no longer through stereotypes or propaganda but uses the contingency of the medium itself as a means of exploration that reveals issues of Greek identity. Greek cultural identity is no longer achieved through the symbols of the

nation as it was before but through the everyday lives of people in the province. That is why Petridis presents us with pictures that are familiar to us, but they are also so absent from the imagery that we had seen until then.

From this perspective, Petridis' work is very similar to Angelopoulos'. They both produce work in Greece in the 1990s having the voyage as their central theme and also as a platform that instigates wandering. Issues of Greekness and the Greek identity inevitably become central in their narratives. Petridis tries to comprehend Greece of the 1990s through everyday life, through his observational but also distant gaze. Angelopoulos, on the other hand, consciously brings the past to the present, uniting many historical times together in a single narrative, while using historical symbols of different times in the present, to show the impact of history on the Greek identity. Furthermore, Angelopoulos appears much more aware of issues of cultural identity, as he deliberately makes use of mythological elements from the *Odyssey* or the ancient tragedies both as a cultural reference and as narrative techniques. Their differences are to some extent comprehensible, particularly the ones that relate to the diversity of the mediums that they use. Angelopoulos, as a director, constructs landscapes and narratives, while Petridis, as a photographer, observes and builds a narrative from fragments of reality.

As I have argued in the previous subchapter, Angelopoulos' work could be characterized as a typical example of Neohellenism, mainly due to the use of geography and climatic conditions for the construction of a metaphorical landscape. Petridis, however, in *Kath' odon*, may be using geography and climatic conditions to emotionally colour the connotation of his images, but his photographic language is so similar to Frank's that any contextualisation based on Neohellenism inevitably falls into the void. The influence of Frank on Petridis' work is more than obvious. The notion of voyage as a means of wandering and reflection, the black-and-white imagery, the snapshot aesthetics, and the photographer's personal point of view are some of the common points between the two photographers. Paraphrasing Petsini's wonder about the reason for photographing Greece with an aesthetic that is typically German (Petsini, 2013, p.278) and was quoted in the previous subchapter, Petridis' work raises the question: What does it mean to photograph Greece with an aesthetic that is typically American? What are the meanings

of references to pictures that are in turn references to images of another culture or other reality?



Figure 2.19 *View from the hotel window, Butte, Montana from The Americans* (Frank, 1956)



Figure 2.20 *En Route, Macedonia, 1997 from Kath'odon* (Petridis, 1998)



Figure 2.21 Tavern, Macedonia, 1995 from *Kath'odon* (Petridis, 1998)



Figure 2.22 Bar, Las Vegas, Nevada from the series *The Americans* (Frank, 1956)

Some typical images that show how much Petridis is influenced by Frank can be seen above. Frank's iconic image *View from the hotel window - Butte, Montana* (Frank, 1986) is a clear example that positions the photographer in the image and sets the narrator of the story as the photographer himself (fig.2.19). Correspondingly, Petridis adapts the same personal approach to structure his own narrative. *Kath'odon* has several images taken through a car window, showing the perpetual motion of the voyage, but also his personal point of view (fig.2.20). Petridis presents an old man dancing in a desolate traditional café

(fig.2.21), a picture that challenges the picturesque images of traditional Greece, and he shows the destitute province in contrast to the urbanization of Greek society. This image shows one of the ways that Petridis used to look for Greekness through life in the province, just as Frank sought the real America away from the metropolitan centres (fig. 2.22). In both images, we see that a sense of loneliness and melancholy is intense, even though these spaces are imprinted in the collective memory as places of communal interaction and entertainment.



Figure 2.23 *Wedding car, Macedonia, 1997* from *Kath' odon* (Petridis, 1998)

Probably an image that is found between Petridis' *Kath' odon* and his later work is the image *Wedding, Macedonia, Greece, 1997* (fig.2.23), in which we see that the landscape itself clearly attaches meaning to the image and filters the cultural characteristics we receive from the various elements of the image. The landscape, here, is quite dramatic and this emotionally charges the image. The intensity of the grey sky is clearly enhanced, as it is framed by the tree on the left, the horizon below and the trees on the right. The low position of the horizon also emphasizes the importance of the dark clouds in the image. The weather conditions, as well as the geography itself with the dry and dead earth, become tools in the hands of Petridis. The landscape itself begins to be used metaphorically. The general atmosphere that is created by the climatic conditions charges the picture emotionally. The wedding car, perhaps carrying honeymooners to their new home, comes across a crossroad with a compulsory course on the right. But the small dirt

road to the left that is lost in the openness of the horizon seems more desirable. All this is accompanied by a deep melancholy in a desolate landscape.

The parallels with the Greek society of modern Greece in the 1990s filtered through the distant, though intense, and critical perspective of Petridis are more than obvious and the techniques used by the photographer reinforce the questions he seeks to set. This image is also a typical example that differentiates Petridis from Frank. Frank does not use the landscape metaphorically, while Petridis occasionally does. In addition, Petridis' cultural background becomes evident, as the aesthetic principles of Neohellenism can be applied to this image. This image also relates to Angelopoulos' image-making and use of climatic conditions and geography, as can be seen in the screenshot below (fig. 2.24) from the film *Voyage to Cythera* (1983). The images are very similar and seem to follow the same aesthetic principles, which, as described in the previous section, are the principles of Neohellenism.



Figure 2.24 Screenshot from *Voyage to Cythera* (Angelopoulos, 1983)

In his next work, *Notes at the Edge of the Road* (2006), Petridis uses these symbolisms of nature in a much more conceptual way. *Notes at the Edge of the Road* consists mainly of colour Greek landscapes that are developed around the road, which is used both as 'a methodological tool that facilitates as well as restricts his movements and his operational techniques within the landscape' (Petridis, 2010, p.18), as well as metaphorically, as 'it

conveys the qualities/symbolic values he attributes to it' (Petridis, 2010, p.18-19). His narrative is simple with a relatively small amount of images, without any excessiveness, and each image is accompanied by the year of its capture and the place where it was taken, though without any specific location, but rather a wider geographical region. The landscapes between them 'compound an elusive and fragmentary geography of associations/experiences/reflections' (Petridis, 2010, p.18), which also reinforces Petridis' own argument that his work as a whole presents an external reality and an inner geography (Petridis, 2010, p.18). In *Notes at the Edge of the Road*, Petridis adopts a more deadpan aesthetic in relation to *Kath' odon*, quite influenced of course by the American photographers, such as the New Topographics. Of course, Frank's influence continues to be evident, as shown by the first picture of his work (fig.2.25), which, unlike *Kath' odon*, is now the only one in the series where the photographer's presence is noticeable as it is taken from inside a moving vehicle.



Figure 2.25 *Peloponnese, 2000* from *Notes at the Edge of the Road* (Petridis, 2006)

Petridis allows his relationship with the landscape and the moment of capture to be improvised. Through this freedom, photography's contingency allows the moment of capture to determine the connotations of the image. His images are not predetermined, but they are created through the photographer's experience in the landscape at some specific but undetermined moment, which is also the moment of capture. 'The images serve as manifestations of encounters throughout my wanderings. However, as I will

argue, if the encounter with the sites is “accidental”, the photographs will be nothing but that; they are accurate and visually structured so their formal balance and symmetry becomes inherent and not noticeable as such’ (Petridis, 2010, p.17). A very good example of Petridis approach is the image *Peloponnese, 2000* (fig.2.25). The image is made through the glass of the vehicle, emphasizing the personal perspective, while the sun illuminates a piece of the road in an overall cloudy landscape. The image ‘blends together death (the capsized truck), rebirth (the blooming yellow flowers) and passage (the blurry foreground) in an expressive way (the broken sun)’ (Petridis, 2010, p.32). The mountains in the background conceal the horizon and, together with the blurry foreground, the focus is on the expressiveness of the sun. It seems like this moment becomes apocalyptic for the photographer who experiences it.

But how does this moment come to be captured in an image and how does the relationship between the landscape and the photographer bloom in that given moment? Certainly the factors are many, mainly concerning the choice of the theme and the approach. But other factors such as the photographer’s memory and cultural education are certainly just as important to the development of a distinct and inner moment that drives the photographer’s incentive to release the shutter. Someone’s perception of a landscape is indissolubly linked to the cultural background of every person, particularly when seen in a Neohellenic context. In a country where nature has been, and continues to be, a key element of metaphor, as well as the way of approaching beauty aesthetically, it would be difficult for the Petridis’ landscapes in *Notes at the Edge of the Road*, indeed more inward and mature, not to use the landscape as a means of metaphor, even unwittingly. The geography and the climatic conditions of the Greek landscape, together with the medium’s contingency, filtered through the photographer’s cultural background and his personal intentions, create the right moment for the photograph to be made.



Figure 2.26 *Epirus*, 2002 from *Notes at the Edge of the Road* (Petridis, 2006)

Petridis is willing to place his work in the international scene of landscape photography. He photographs using a photographic language that is influenced and easily recognised by international landscape photography readers. As Petsini argues, in postmodernism internationally 'the meaning of an image has nothing to do with its creation but is determined by its relationship with other images or signs' (Petsini, 2013, p.275). So we often see how images and whole projects gain meaning through their relationship with some other images that have become iconic. In Petridis' images, this relationship does not appear to evolve through a reference to the iconography of Greece, as it would be expected from a Greek photographer, but he uses references to iconic images by international European and American photographers. This shows that he avoids linking his images to the Greek iconographic heritage and also that he borrows elements from other cultures, even though his aim is to create an 'iconography of another Greece' (Petridis, 2010, p.18).

As can be seen in his analysis of the image *Epirus*, 2002 (fig.2.26) in his thesis, he chooses to compare the image and make reference to the famous images of Roger Fenton *Valley of the Shadow of Death* (1856) and of Paul Seawright *Valley* (2003). 'If Fenton's cannonballs and Seawright's artillery shells stand as metonymic substitutes for the human losses, in

fig.26 [refers to his image *Epirus, 2002*] the conflict is between man and nature and the casualties are on nature's side' (Petridis, 2010, p.39). Petridis avoids bringing any form of Greekness in his work, while at the same time he photographs the Greek landscape. In my opinion, this creates a contradiction unless he aims to photograph the landscape for the sake of the landscape itself. Even in the latter case, however, some of his images actually do have inherent cultural characteristics that make his images feel out of context if not seen in a Greek cultural context. This seems to be the problem with this particular project.

Petridis, in his effort to create something new and to criticise the existing iconography in Greece, reappropriates an existing photographic language. In *Kath'odon* this language refers to the personal documentary of Frank, and in *Notes at the Edge of the Road* the language is borrowed mostly from American landscape photography, particularly the New Topographers, although the personal aspect of Frank is still evident in his work. Both projects have indications of cultural characteristics referring to Greekness, but they are not developed by the photographer with consistency. The 'borrowed' photographic language that he chooses to use, together with his unwillingness to creatively use the cultural characteristics of the landscape, create a result that becomes difficult to interpret and certainly problematic when trying to frame it in a Greek cultural context. In an international photography context on the other hand, his work is also problematic in terms of originality in approach. For Greece though, it is quite significant, as photography seemed to be establishing channels of communication with photography worldwide, albeit late, and the photographic clichés of previous decades have deliberately been avoided. A new photographic language was introduced in Greek photography that could be further developed, even if this language is a borrowed one (Panagiotopoulos, 2013).

5. Petros Efstathiadis: Greekness in contemporary photography

Petros Efstathiadis, born in 1982 in a small village, Liparo, in the central hinterland of Greece, studied photography at University for the Creative Arts, Farnham. Efstathiadis photographs his village and, through these images, he talks about the changes that Greece goes through, while questioning notions of Greekness, reflecting on life in the

province, immigration to urban centres, modernization, and other issues of Greek identity. His work in his village has gone through various stages of development throughout the years, but always working on small series under the same theme. In 2018 the book *Liparo* was published, where the narrative includes images from all his works in *Liparo*. His personal experience of moving to England to study photography and pursue an international career, but also to return back to Greece to live and photograph in *Liparo* cannot, of course, be left unnoticed.



Figure 2.27 *Man with apples*, 2008 from the series *Series* (Efstathiadis, n.d.)

Efstathiadis' early work was a series of portraits of his fellow villagers. As Moschovi mentions, his original portraits are inspired by the family portraits of an anonymous travelling photographer in an open-air studio, which he parodies using the typological methodology and the deadpan aesthetics of contemporary portrait photography (Moschovi, 2013b, p.268). Efstathiadis places his fellow villagers in front of an artificial background, a piece of nylon hanging in the yard of a house, possibly his family house, imitating the way housewives in the village dry their laundry. He directs each sitter by positioning him in a specific way, placing at the same time various objects in the frame of a certain cultural significance and naming each image with a title that attaches an identity to the portrayed. Each image, on the first reading, parodies a condition of modern Greek society and, on a deeper reading, through the careful directing, the objects placed in the

picture and the carefully selected title, critically challenges this condition. In this way, Efstathiadis consciously places the man in the image *Man with apples*, 2008 with a deadpan expression in front of the nylon background, dressed as a groom with hanged banknotes on the lapel, a common practice in traditional village weddings until today, fenced by a layer of rotting apples (fig.2.27).



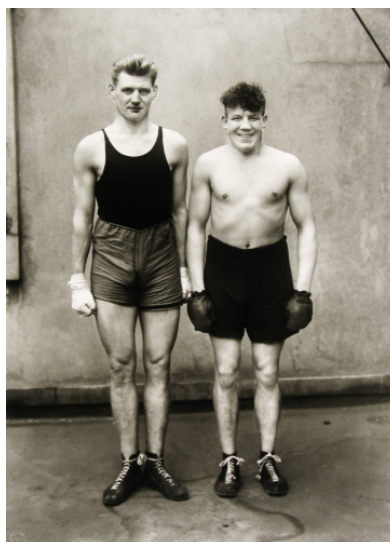
Figure 2.28 *Birthday girl*, 2008 from the series *Series* (Efstathiadis, n.d.)

Efstathiadis' influences are many. As for his approach, August Sander's typologic portraits (figs.2.30-2.32), which, through the diversity of the people depicted, managed to speak about German society as a whole, seems to have influenced Efstathiadis in the way he develops with subject matter within typology. The deadpan expressions of his sitters seem to be influenced by the awkward postures depicted in the portraits of Rineke Dijkstra. In the image *Birthday girl*, 2008 (fig.2.28), Efstathiades sets the girl standing with a similar body posture as with Dijkstra's portraits (fig.2.29), showing the girl's embarrassment at the moment of adulthood, who is now free to leave the village for studying in a city. The irony of British photographers such as Martin Parr and Anna Fox is evident in his work, together with the use of short accompanying text that emphasizes the irony, a technique particularly favoured by Fox. A typical example of the use of irony is the image *Wonder boy*, 2008 (fig.2.33), where the photographer has dressed a child as an

astronaut by wrapping him around with aluminium foil, ironically commenting on the desire of young people to leave the deserted province for another life that they do not have access to, an urbanised life that is promoted socially and politically in society.



Figure 2.29 *Kolobrzeg, Poland July-26-1992* (Dijkstra, 1992)



Figures 2.30 - 2.32 From left to right: *Pastry Cook* (Sander, 1928), *Boxers* (Sander, 1929), *The Notary* (Sander, 1924)



Figure 2.33 *Wonder boy*, 2008 from the series *Series* (Efstathiadis, n.d.)

Another interesting aspect of Efstathiadis' work is that he does not use nature symbolically. The use of light, geography and the climatic conditions are neither approached conceptually, nor affecting the reading of the image in any way. As can be seen in the three portraits above (figs.2.27, 2.28, 2.33) that were taken in the exact same place, nature has different colours in each image, and so the photos were during different seasons of the year. On the other hand, though, the objects that he uses in his frames are taken out of the collective memory of most Greeks, objects that most of us have met in our grandparents' homes. Thus, aspects of Greek culture become visible through the collective memory and the traditional Greek identity.



Figure 2.34 *Private beach*, 2011 from the series *Series* (Efstathiadis, n.d.)



Figure 2.35 *The Parthenon*, 2012 from the series *Series* (Efstathiadis, n.d.)

In his later work, Efstathiadis uses these found objects to construct objects and situations, which he then photographs and accompanies the image with a short caption that describes what the construction aims to depict. Commenting on, in a very ironic way, the picturesque images of the idyllic Greek landscapes that we have seen since the 1950s, Efstathiadis constructs a private beach in a swamp near his village, which he then

photographs (fig.2.34). The private beach signifies power and economic wealth promoted by liberal capitalists societies, which certainly comes in contrast with the despised landscape in the Greek province. In the same motive, in the image *The Parthenon*, 2012 (fig.2.35), he constructs the symbol of ancient Hellenism with found materials of his village. He aims to comment on the attempt to identify the modern Greek identity and culture with the ancient Greek, and the problematic result that this has created in Greek aesthetics. In the province, architectural constructions are often seen to resemble ancient Greek temples, creating a cheap kitsch result.



Figures 2.36 - 2.37 from left to right: *Bomb#1*, 2012 and *Bomb#6*, 2012 from the series *Bombs* (Efstathiadis, n.a.)

In his later work *Bombs*, Efstathiadis creates a photographic series of typological constructions of objects that resemble improvised bombs built from various old objects, materials, and things of semantic content found in his village (figs.2.36-2.37). The series was created in 2012, the first year of the Greek economic crisis, a period of intense social turmoil, where demonstrations and strikes using Molotov bombs on the streets of Athens were an almost everyday phenomenon. Every bomb comes as a reminder of the real Greece of the province that exists within us, of a Greece poor, miserable, and depressed, yet simple and innocent. The conceptual approach here reminds us of Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin's series of images of suicide bombs that are actually constructions for

the training of the Israeli Army (fig.2.38). Through these images that are part of a wider collection of simulated landscapes, buildings, and objects, used by the Israeli Defence Force for urban combat training, a new perspective on Israel begins to emerge. In a similar way, Efstathiades reveals an image of Greece that is completely different from the mainstream and picturesque image of traditional Greece that has been promoted by tourism. In a time of crisis, when modern Greece collapses, Efstathiadis comes to remind us of who we are and urge us to the need for a new Greek identity.



Figure 2.38 *Jerusalem, 31 July 2001* from the series *Chicago* (Broomberg and Chanarin, 2007)

Looking at his work as a narrative, we see how much of the problems of Greek society existed before the economic crisis and they have just become more apparent to everyone now. As Papaioannou argues, Efstathiadis' works 'criticize the urban spirit infiltrating the collective imagination, not necessarily as a place, but as a way of life, as a non-stop consumption mechanism. They also propose [...] the clear simplicity as a deeper substance of art and life, which we incomprehensibly insist on ignoring' (Papaioannou, 2017). Efstathiadis raises questions about the new ethos of Greek society in a country that through its desire to follow the urbanised western politics tends to devalue its province and its traditional culture.

At first glance, Efstathiadis' work is characterised by humour and parody, two features foreign to Greek culture. Nevertheless, they criticise the stereotypes of Greek society, putting ideas such as Greekness and modern Greek identity into consideration, making his work an important document in the debate around Greekness and Greek identity today. The aesthetic approach of his subjects is doubtful as to whether it can be integrated into a context of continuity and evolution of Neohellenism, since it is determined by his influence of contemporary international photographic practices. How would his photography be if he had developed his photographic style well before he studied in the U.K., which seems to have influenced it aesthetically to a decisive extent?

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, we have seen that Greek photography, and particularly the Greek landscape photography, evolved historically through a Western perspective that imposed its thematic interests and aesthetics based on its perception of Greece, and art in general. Since the early years of the Greek state, European travellers and Philhellenists have tried to revive the ancient Greek civilisation, by celebrating the ancient ruins and monuments through literary, painting, and photographic representations. This created the first image of modern Greece, in which modern Greek culture was interwoven with the ancient Greek. The first Greek photographers followed this trend because, besides their inability to define their own aesthetic approach to the Greek landscape and the Greek identity, there was also a commercial demand for such images from Europe. Thus, the first image of Greece was that of the ruins, which on a political level served very well to rally Greeks around the newly formed Greek identity that was based on the assumption of the racial affinity between the Greek-speaking inhabitants of the newly formed Greek state and the ancient Greeks.

The second period, with a significant change in the perception of the landscape, came mainly through the images of the Swiss photographer Fred Boissonnas, who portrayed an idealized form of Greek identity through his romantic and folklore landscapes. His bucolic images marked the iconography of Greece of the first half of the 20th century, as he was

the greatest influence of Greek photographers who imitated both his bucolic themes and his picturesque aesthetic approach. Interestingly, at the same time, the philosophy of aesthetic nationalism developed mainly by Giannopoulos, who proposed the Greek landscape as a source of inspiration for Greek aesthetics and a carrier of the Hellenic ideals.

The next aesthetic approach of the landscape comes around the 1950s, after Greece emerged from the Greek Civil War. The country, wounded by the civil war and the Second World War and nationally divided into the dipole left wing/right wing, had to reinvent its identity away from the bucolic landscapes associated with the wars. Combined with the intense post-war censorship, the images that began to appear mostly in the media, but also in the art world, were picturesque images of the Aegean islands and the beaches. The perception of the landscape shifted from being a carrier of the spirituality of Greek tradition and culture to being a potential place for consumption. At the same time, however, against the superficial approach to the Greek landscape in photography, in the field of literature, a cradle of writers had already been formed that sought for Greekness in the Greek landscape, while maintaining a critical stance against the foreign influence on the development of Greek identity. These writers and poets became the most characteristic expression of Neohellenism, the culture of modern Greece, which was never applied in photography. Towards the end of the 20th century, however, in the field of the visual arts, filmmaker Angelopoulos used the Neohellenic aesthetic principle of entopia to construct landscapes that served as the inner landscapes of the exiled characters of his films. Geography and the climatic conditions were used as a tool to construct the appropriate emotional tone of the landscape.

At the same time, in photography, there was an interest in engaging with issues of Greekness and the Greek identity, but photographers approached these notions through the imitation of the postmodern photographic approaches that appeared in Northwest Europe and America. So we see that through their work they try to challenge the traditional iconography of Greece and particularly the touristic image of Greece without being able to suggest their own photographic language. Lastly, in contemporary photography of the 21st century, Greekness is again the main topic and is approached through the western gaze albeit photographed by Greek photographers. Petridis

photographs the Greek landscape with a conceptual approach that uses references to iconic European and American landscape photographs. Any elements of Neohellenic aesthetics, though existing, are not used consistently. Efstathiadis, on the other hand, does not photograph clear landscapes, but Greekness is a key element of his work. His approach is based on irony and parody influenced by British photographers.

In conclusion, we see that there has not been developed any approach to the landscape that could be analysed in a Greek cultural context, as photography in Greece has always been influenced by Western aesthetics. On the contrary, both in literature and filmmaking there have been exceptional examples, where the landscape was used with consistency under the aesthetic principles of Neohellenism. The entopia of Neohellenism is a very fruitful aesthetic principle that could be used in photography, as geography and climatic conditions are an integral part of landscape photography.

Chapter III: Neohellenism in Photographic Practice: An Analysis of Ithacas

1. Memento Mori

The idea for this research project came consequently as a continuation of my first book project *Memento Mori* (2012) which was an autobiographical diary of the first year of my immigration to London. It is important to see some of the characteristics of this project, as they have set the foundations of my research in the field of displacement and of my photographic approach. Initially, *Memento Mori* started as a spontaneous blog that I kept for one year, where I posted an instant image and a small piece of text almost every week or when I felt the need to externalise a thought. It did not start as a project, but rather as a place where I reflected, almost therapeutically, on the strange feeling of displacement that I was feeling. Through time, and research on notions of displacement and exile, it became a place where I was forming a field of interest that is still the core of my research.

Memento Mori had quite a fragmentary approach in regards to the themes and imagery it contained. The images were both black-and-white and colour instant images made with an old instant Polaroid Land Camera. The nostalgic quality and the fragile and imperfect nature of the instant images became very important elements of the project as they conveyed an overall feeling of nostalgia and memory. They varied in their subject matter; landscapes and urban landscapes, images from airports and from inside planes and trains, vernacular images. The common element of those images was that they had an inherent melancholy and they were made at a particular moment when a thought related to the experience of displacement occurred. As discussed in the previous chapter on the occasion of the significance of the moment of capture on Petridis' work, my experience with the landscape, along with my cultural background and my reflective thoughts, create an emotionally charged moment that is imprinted on these images. That way the images

were improvised and the project developed as a research project, where my own experience was the case study of my research and the process of image making became a methodological tool of the research. The images were accompanied with text, which was usually a personal, reflective and profound thought, random in its subject, that worked together with the image in a way that the image gave substance to the text and vice versa.

A particular technique that I used in *Memento Mori* and has also appeared later on in *Ithacas* is the repetition of similar images of a particular place. Some moments that felt important for me in this voyage were translated in two or three images in a sequence, which meant that the viewer spent more time on a particular thought and the narrative time was extended. Through the frequency of the images, I was controlling the rhythm of the narrative. For example, on my travels back to Greece or back to London that usually were quite intense emotionally due to the reminder of the feeling of loss that developed together with displacement, small narratives consisting of two or three images from airports or from inside the plane. This technique allowed me to exaggerate the duration of that moment in relation to the narrative as a whole and emphasize the significance of the moment of return in the general issue of defining home or belonging to a place. An example of this can be seen in the following images.



Alpes, 17/12/2010

Being in the air you are not here or there, now or then.
You just are; over the clouds, over the mountains, where
there are no countries, no cultures, no borders, no time,
no stress, no life or death, only dreams and emotions...
You can look over the mountains for your paradise
without having to climb them first, without the fear
to become vain, because vanity doesn't exist in dreams.
You don't need to prove anything here either to others
or to yourself.



on the way home, 18/12/2010

Reality

After 3 months and 6 days I'm finally traveling back home
for Christmas. I never expected it though to feel so weird...
I am happy for seeing everything and everyone I missed,
but also feeling worried for the unexpected. Because now
I have a new routine somewhere else. Three months was
enough time to get used to a new life and now it even feels
strange to go back for only three weeks. Going back
means having to deal with the past again and think of my
initial goals, the reasons why this journey started.
It looks like a review and I hate reviews.



in the air, 17/12/2010

Here everything is more peaceful... People might call
it an illusion, but actually is my "reality."

Figure 3.1 Three sequencing images and text from *Memento Mori* (2012)

Memento Mori was presented as a handmade book that resembled a diary. As *Memento Mori* was initially a blog, the narrative was edited in real time. In the book version, nothing was altered or edited out of the narrative, not even the mistakes in the use of the English language. The spontaneity and authenticity of *Memento Mori*, its mistakes, some bad images, and some over sentimental texts were kept in and they all became part of a coherent series that reflected the process of gradually developing ideas on displacement.



Figure 3.2 Image of the handmade book *Memento Mori* (2012)

The experience of moving to London was not actually a negative one for me and certainly not as melancholic as it might appear in *Memento Mori*. On the contrary, it was a very significant and creative period of my life, and this form of self-exile allowed me to search deeper into myself and become aware of what motivated my creativity. As Said has remarked, people in exile often exaggerate their situation and feel the need to talk about it (Said, 2001). This exaggeration became the voice of the narrator of *Memento Mori*, who is not “me” as a person, but an exaggerated figure that is based on my experience. *Memento Mori*, though very personal, was a project that developed my personal style and my interests in photography. Possibly the most important element of *Memento Mori*, that defined my practice ever since, is the photographic process that develops in parallel with theoretical research as well as photographic research. Through such a process I aim to create an appropriate approach for every project that becomes an integral part of the subject itself.

2. The first edition of Ithaca

Having *Memento Mori* as a springboard, I started to work on the same subject in order to tackle the subject more thoroughly and to further develop a photographic approach that is based less on text. The initial idea was to look again at displacement and migration of Greeks in London, however this time the focus was on other people as well, instead of myself. I aimed to create a photobook with a fragmentary narrative that would combine different kinds of imagery and the design of the book would emphasize the fragmentariness of the diary. The main concept in approaching the subject was to build a storytelling method that would combine different narrative times together. In particular, a series of colour images would represent the present experience of the displaced Greeks, while black-and-white images refer to a past time. The absence of colour and the themes of the Greek landscapes that would be completely different than the urban colour images in London would make these black-and-white images work as flashbacks referring to the narrator's memory. The careful editing of these images in a narrative would create a creative dialogue, where the memory of the past together with the experience of the present would suggest the aspirations of Greeks for the future.

The narrative consisted of 5 parts, each adding a particular element to the narrative; colour urban landscape images, black-and-white instant images of Greek landscapes, large format portraits of Greek emigrants, a sequence of four colour images of a plane moving in a sublime sky, and text. The colour images are all made within the urban landscape. The narrator takes the role of the flâneur trying to quietly discover the new landscape and adapt to it. These images make reference to the present time of the narrative and also set a general sense of movement through images that indicate the photographer is in motion. Furthermore, these images are mostly without people and when people appear they work theatrically without attaching any form of personal identity to them. This absence of people strengthens the feeling of the flâneur within the city and emphasizes the foreignness of the new environment.

These urban landscapes symbolically pose questions around the artificiality of the modern metropolis and its relation to the natural environment. The use of nature, in my image making, was an idea that was not developed properly at the time of working on

Memento Mori, but later in my research it became a vital element in the symbolic system that I built, as described in the following subchapters of this chapter. The colour urban landscapes contrast the black-and-white instant photographs of Greek landscapes. The latter are working as flashbacks, emphasizing a kind of nostalgic feeling about home. Through their contrast in aesthetics and content in relation to the colour images that mainly form the narrative, the black-and-white images create connections between the preceding or succeeding images that changes the connotation of the narrative.

The portrait images are of the people who inspired a series of small internal narratives within the wider narrative of the project. My interaction with these people has built the themes for these stories and so the project widened the enquiry to the Greek community in the UK rather than my own experience of displacement, which was the case in *Memento Mori*. Even though I don't give any information about them, their point of view has been filtered through mine and transformed into the voice of the narrator in a way that the narrator is no longer me or a particular person, but rather tries to include the experiences of many. Complementary to the portrait images, short pieces of text appear alongside the images. The text is not related to the people portrayed, but its aim is to add context to the narrative in a similar way that portraits did and guide the viewer to the reading of the images through the personal perspective of the narrator who experiences displacement, while posing questions and setting ideas that are challenged through the photographs.

Finally, there is a series of four images that depicted the course of a plane in a sublime sky, which either arrived or departed. These images are not used in a sequence in the narrative, but rather interfere in the narrative, working as pauses in the flow of reading, while the course of the aeroplane functions as a shorter internal narrative in the central narrative. The plane is used as a symbol of transience in the western world and also gives the feeling of movement. The romantic sublime skies convey the migrant's nostalgic desire for voyaging. The theme of the voyage is a dominant subject in the narrative. As Kristeva argues the foreigner is 'not belonging to any place, any time, any love. A lost origin, the impossibility to take root, a rummaging memory, the present in abeyance. The space of the foreigner is a moving train, a plane in flight, the very transition that preludes stopping' (Kristeva, 1991, p.7).

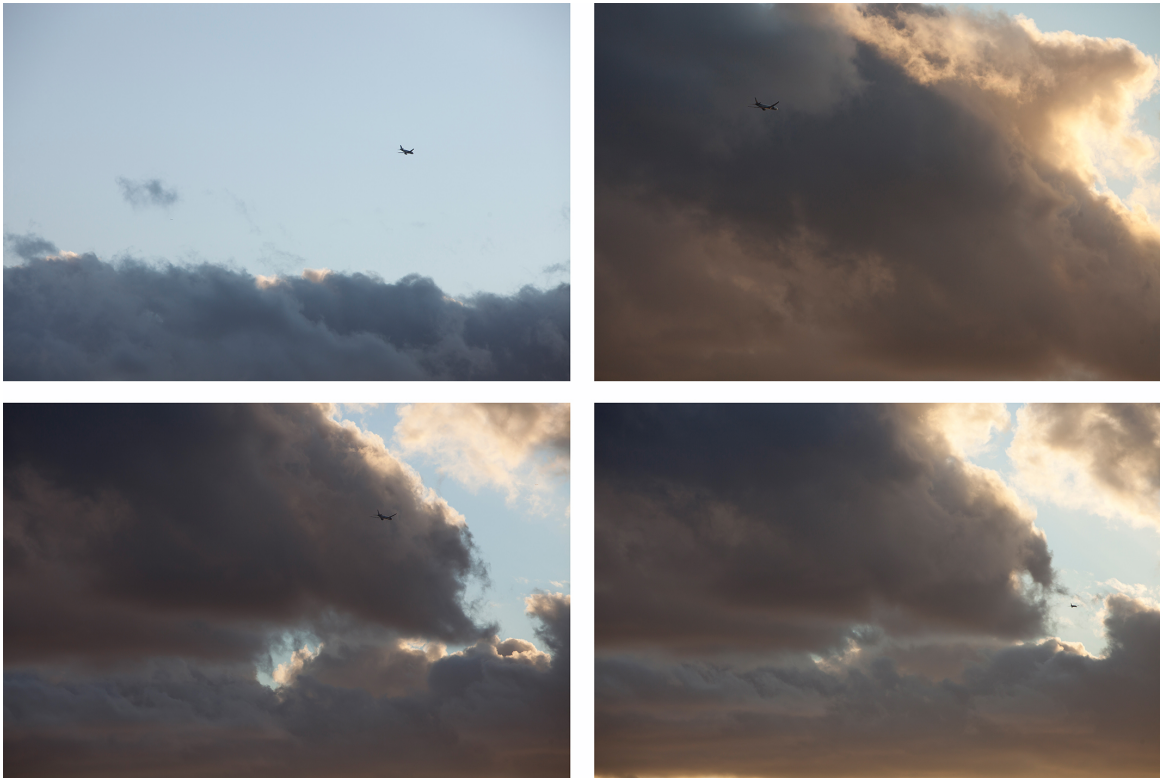


Figure 3.3 Images from the first edition of *Ithaca*

Memento Mori and *Ithaca* were printed in a similar way, bound in a grey cloth hardcover with embossed titles and were both presented in a handmade slipcase. At that stage of *Ithaca*, these two books were seen as a sequence. In *Memento Mori* I investigated the self in relation to displacement, while in *Ithaca* I looked outwards on the condition of Greek displacement. In *Ithaca* indeed the narrative started with a piece of text that was the exact same that *Memento Mori* ended with, thus making the book a continuation of the previous one. The most significant development in my work from *Memento Mori* to this first version of *Ithaca* is that in the first, ideas were mostly laid out through the use of text, while in the second, the text was significantly less, and ideas were looked for in symbols and in the relation between images. *Ithaca* widened my interest in Greek displacement, exile and Greek culture, and also laid the foundations for the photographic language that I have been developing since after returning to Greece.

3. Ithacas

Soon after the first experiment of *Ithaca*, I implemented some drastic changes in terms of the subject matter. The project was separated completely from *Memento Mori* and I widened the subject matter to include the geographical movements of Greeks as a result of the crisis as a whole (as opposed to simply looking at myself and a few other individuals' experiences). As has been described in the introduction and Chapter 1, the financial crisis instigated immigration abroad, however, there were also many Greeks who returned from abroad after spending some years away, and Greeks who left the urban centres to live in the province and the islands. The three types of migration have many common elements regarding the experience of displacement, the way in which Greek reality is perceived, and the way in which Greekness is reconsidered, and so it is interesting to be seen as a whole.

The crisis has created a condition in Greek society, where nothing is stable and secure, and so the idea of home that is often associated with boundaries, identity, and fixity (Ahmed, 1999) is challenged. This creates a general feeling of displacement, or a sense of not being fully at home, which can lead to migration, or a desire to migrate, or it can remain as a condition of displacement without any physical movement. Particularly in this project, displacement is seen through the act of migration, where displacement has a physical space of existence. The loss of home, the absence of familiarity and the feeling of foreignness in the new environment that the migrants inhabit creates a shock that forces them to define their new identity. As Sara Ahmed has discussed, the question of not being at home or leaving home is always a question of memory, of the discontinuity between past and present (Ahmed, 1999). So the new identity that they try to establish is in accordance with the memory they carry with them, whether that memory relates to the things that forced them to migrate or to an idealised conception of home, which forces them to reconsider their perception of Greekness.

This becomes clearer in the cases of people who have migrated abroad or who have returned from abroad because the sense of loss and the contrast between the two cultures is inevitably more obvious. However, for people who have migrated to the Greek province and the islands, Greekness is also perceived in a new way. Part of their decision

to move is their denouncement of the problematic fixed Greek identity that has caused the crisis. Through their self-imposed exile, the concepts of home and motherland are reconsidered in relation to the Greek landscape and the simplicity of living within the landscape. This brings them closer to more traditional forms of Greek culture that Greeks are familiar with, but are missing from contemporary urban life that has shifted towards a more globalised form of culture. In all cases, through the process of experiencing the estrangement of migration, the individuals distance themselves from their established Greek identity and redefine their new identities in relation to their new perception of Greekness.

The project, *Ithacas*, is divided into three main parts, each of which deals with a different type of migration, and a supplementary fourth part that deals solely with memory through the Greek landscape. In a sequence that they appear in the narrative, the first part (I/IV) deals with migration to a European metropolis, the second part (II/IV) with repatriation after spending a period of time abroad, the third part is a series of black-and-white landscapes that refer to memory, and finally the fourth part (IV/IV) deals with migrating to Greek islands. While all four parts are clearly separated as different sections (and different books in the final book design, as will be further elaborated later on), the narrative is seen as a whole and the three destinations of migration become sequential stops of a single voyage. The whole narrative is seen through a reappropriation of the myth of Odysseus. The use of myth allows me to break away from documentary form and to approach the subject matter through the personal/autobiographical and the fictional. The perpetual existential questions that were set originally through the myth of Odysseus, and which Odysseus was facing in his experience of the voyage, are brought to the present through the voyage of Greek migrants and the more general search for identity in modern Greece at the time of the crisis.

The reappropriation of the myth follows the new directive of Odysseus arriving in three different islands, which represent the three destinations in the modern migration of

Greeks. Initially, in the first part of the project (I/IV), he¹⁹ arrives at an unknown island, which he thinks is Ithaca that has changed over the many years of his absence. There, he will try to retrieve his identity, but in his effort to do so he will realise that this place is not the real Ithaca. The memory of his homeland that has faded over the years of his voyage will strengthen again to push him back on the return journey. In the second part (II/IV), Odysseus manages to return to Ithaca, where he realises that he feels a foreigner in his homeland. The return does not mean that he will have the same identity as before, as both the place and himself have changed. The memory of his home that gave him the courage to travel all those years is actually different from what appears in reality. This will force him to see Ithaca in a new way and redefine himself in relation to it. Finally, in the fourth part (IV/IV), Odysseus will sail again towards an unfamiliar island. Ithaca was unable to keep him back, as the need for the voyage and exploration sent him back to the search.

The connection between the myth and the narrative of *Ithacas* is achieved mainly through the title and the texts of *Ithacas*, which is also supported by the aesthetics and the content of the imagery. The title directly links the project to Odysseus' homeland, thus predisposing for a reading in relation to the ideas of the voyage and the nostos²⁰. In this context, some of the themes that appear in the project are images of the sea and the islands, as well as images that convey a sense of journey and an overall nostalgia that always accompanies the nostos. On the other hand, the use of the name Ithaca in the plural tense suggests the existence of many homes and makes the reading of the project a more general reflection on the quest for identifying home. Moreover, *Ithacas* in plural refers to the symbolic perception of the destination of each type of migration as an island,

¹⁹ In the context of this project, the narrator embodies some key characteristics of the exile and is based on a reappropriation of Odysseus' mythical figure. Yet there is no gender discrimination. As can be seen from the portraits in the narrative, where both genders appear equally, the discourse around displacement, exile, and Greek identity that is developed is relevant for all genders, perhaps in contrast to the male model of the traveller/explorer that is promoted historically from mythology to contemporary photographic practices. However, in order to make this thesis easier to read, and since Odysseus is a male name, I use male third person pronouns and possessive determiners for the narrator.

²⁰ Nostos (Ancient Greek: νόστος) is 'a homecoming or homeward journey as a literary subject or topos; specifically the return of Odysseus and the other Greek heroes of the Trojan War, as narrated especially in the *Odyssey*'. English Oxford Living Dictionaries Online. [online]. Available through: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/nostos> [Accessed 10 December 2018]. The theme of nostos isn't just about returning home physically but also about retaining certain statuses and retaining your identity upon arrival.

which, as we have seen in Chapter 2, according to Deleuze, takes the meaning of a place of re-creation.



Figure 3.4 Image from *Ithacas II/IV*

The texts in the project are divided into two types. The first, and longer, text is a descriptive piece of text of the situation of the Greek crisis in a neutral narrative tone, where the three types of migration that are developed in the project are laid down clearly. This text comes at the beginning of the narrative and is separated from it (as will be seen later on when the book design will be further elaborated), allowing the viewer from the very beginning to clarify what he/she is expected to see. The other type of text consists of 5 shorter pieces of text in a more reflective tone that follows the aesthetic of the narrative, which are incorporated in the narrative. These texts narrate the journey of Odysseus (not as it really was, but as it has been redirected for the purposes of creating a parallel journey that matches the journey of contemporary Greek migrants) and, by the use of selected keywords, they support the formation of a context that informs the reader about what to expect to see and in what context to read it. So, there are keywords used, such as “island”, “sea”, and “borders”, which, apart from being some of the themes of the imagery, also map a system of symbolism since these themes are being explored in the narrative as concepts. For example, in the very first piece of text that appears before the images, I

have written: 'Orientation in ancient Greece was based on the elements of nature and geography. The islands, the horizon, the movement of the sun, the moon and the stars were among the means by which Odysseus embarked on his return journey to Ithaca.' In this way, the horizon and the islands are set as a means of reading the images, a symbolic point that determines the way in which the subsequent images will be read. In addition, the use of ancient Greek culture through the myth of Odysseus and the deliberate use of certain keywords allows the formation of a bridge between ancient and contemporary Greek culture and supports the contextualisation of the photographic narrative in a Greek cultural context. In particular, this bridge supports reading of the contemporary images that appear in *Ithacas* in relation to the Neohellenic principle of entopia, and so the geography and climate become symbolic tools of the conditions of exile and displacement that the images are referring to. A typical example of an image that relates to the keyword "horizon" is the image below (fig.3.5) from the first part of *Ithacas* (I/IV) in the metropolis, where the lack of the horizon and the blocking of its view symbolise the difficulty of orientation and the inability of the Greeks to perceive the European metropolis as their new home.



Figure 3.5 Image from *Ithacas* I/IV

The project consists of three kinds of photographs; colour urban or non-urban landscapes, depending on which part of *Ithacas* they are, portraits, and black-and-white

instant images. As in the first version of the project that was seen in the previous subchapter, the colour images, which form the largest part and the backbone of the narrative, echo and illustrate the story of the narrator, give a sense of movement and journey, and deal with the boundaries of each “island”. Every place that Greeks reside in each part of *Ithacas* becomes an opportunity for them to redefine themselves based on the boundaries of that place, whether physically or mentally. On a metaphorical level, every new land is a new island, where its physical borders are the boundaries that each individual puts on himself. These boundaries are explored photographically, setting questions around home, identity and belonging to a place. The idea of the border is elaborated through the relationship between the natural and urban landscape or between the natural untouched landscape and the man-altered landscape. This relation changes in the three destinations of the Greek migrants together with the perception of the boundaries. In addition, the colour images adopt the Neohellenic principle of entopia and thus use the natural elements and geography symbolically to give the emotional tone of the condition of displacement as experienced in each type of migration.

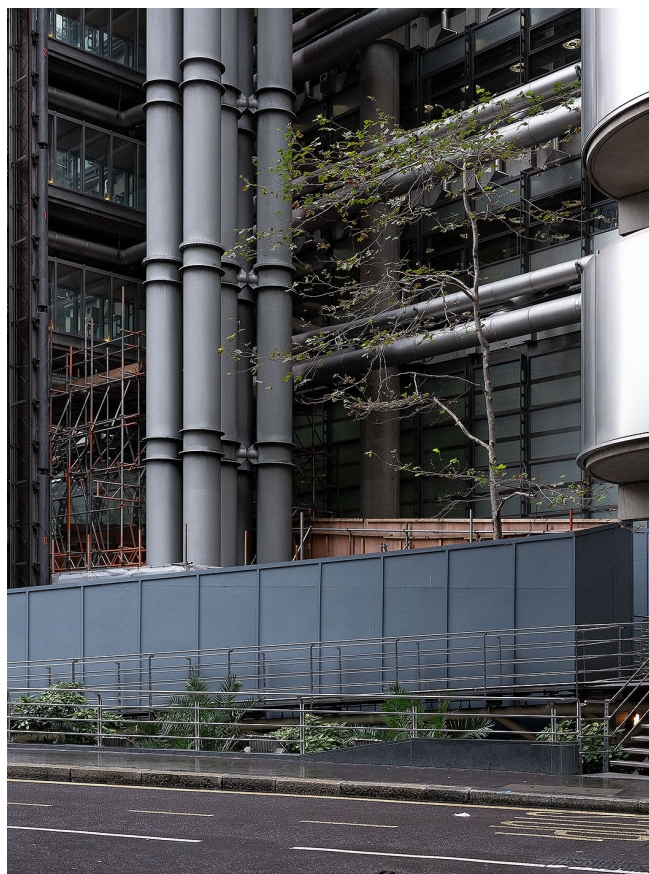


Figure 3.6 Image from *Ithacas I/IV*



Figure 3.7 Image from *Ithacas I/IV*

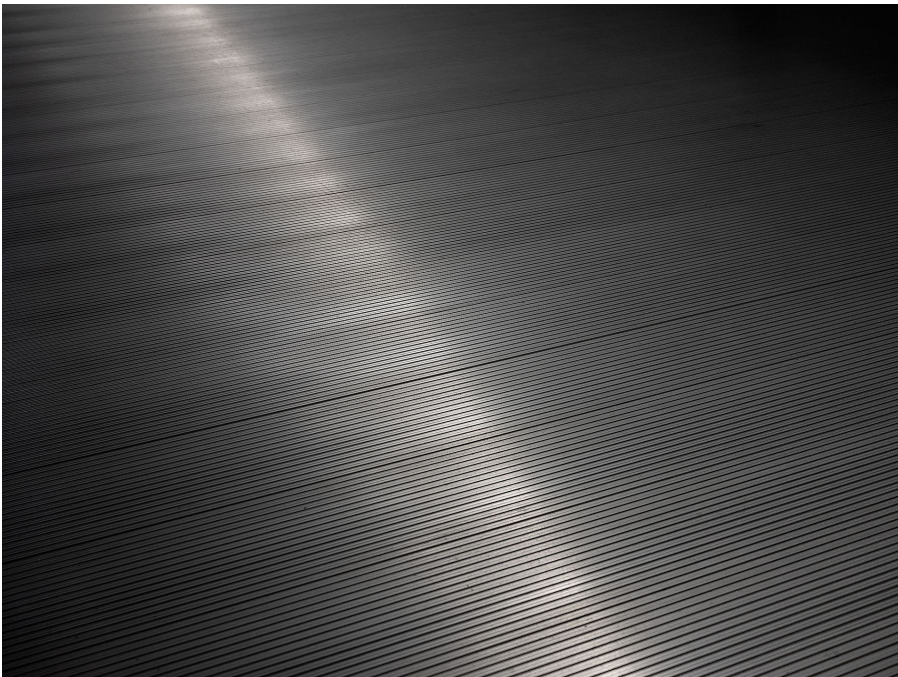


Figure 3.8 Image from *Ithacas I/IV*

In the first part of *Ithacas (I/IV)* concerned with immigration to a European metropolis, the border is inherently a contradiction between elements of the natural landscape found in the city and the artificiality of the contemporary city. A tree surrounded by fences and buildings (fig.3.6), the horizon that is violently separated from a skyscraper (fig.3.7), or a reflection of light on a metal surface (fig.3.8) are some of the images that

characteristically imply this contradiction. On the second part of the return from abroad (II/IV), the border is a process of searching for the natural landscape in the border of the city. However, the boundaries of the city are not clearly defined and the natural landscape inevitably tends to carry some signs of human intervention. Here, there are images of the actual border of the city, like the image of the buildings fading in the mist (fig.3.9), or a more abstract perception of the border, like the image of the dry branch of a tree on the dirt next to the footprint of a wheel on the ground (fig.3.10).



Figure 3.9 Image from *Ithacas II/IV*



Figure 3.10 Image from *Ithacas II/IV*

Finally, in the case of migration to the islands (IV/IV), the border inevitably has to do with the physical boundaries of the island, as well as the boundaries' alteration in relation to the changing natural phenomena. The perception of the border starts from the human presence on the natural border of the island, like the image of the road at the edge of the cliff (fig.3.11), and extends until the absence of an obvious border, such as in the misty seascape (fig.3.12). In this latter image, if a boundary needs to be defined, then this would be the inability to view the horizon due to natural phenomena. This last assumption is the exact same perception of the concept of the border that was seen in the first part of the metropolis, where the artificiality of the city hides the horizon. The difference here, however, lies in the fact that nature itself hides the horizon and blurs the borders.



Figure 3.11 Image from *Ithacas IV/IV*



Figure 3.12 Image from *Ithacas IV/IV*

Beyond the symbolic use of nature on the notion of the borders, the climatic conditions also play an important role in creating meaning in this work as they are used to define ideas and concepts concerned with the experience of migration, as opposed to simply referring literally to what is pictured within the images. As we have seen in the previous

chapter with the example of Angelopoulos' work, climatic conditions embed meaning into the images and are used to express particular moods or emotions. As such, the landscapes in *Ithacas* act as a construction that serves the direction of the project (i.e. what it is intended to mean or suggest). The use of climatic conditions and particularly the consistent choice of the conditions during image making supports the structuring of an inner landscape that is metaphorically functioning as the landscape of migration. As can be seen in the following seascape (fig.3.13), the misty atmosphere prevents viewing the sea. The seascape is creating a feeling of claustrophobia that then acts as a metaphor for the impasses faced by those who return home after years abroad.



Figure 3.13 Image from *Ithacas II/IV*

Using the same rationale, the black-and-white instant images suggest flashbacks to a different time, a time before change. Through the effective creation of distance that black-and-white allows these images appear to reference the past and to carry with them the cultural collective memory of Greeks. These images are all landscapes, lacking any obvious human intervention. In a Neohellenic context, and particularly through the use of the principle of entopia, these landscapes have references to Greekness and the traditional Greek ethos embedded in them, that has weakened in the pursuit of Westernisation. However, memory is not firmly defined but varies according to where

someone has migrated and as such the perception of Greekness varies. Notions like Greekness, Greek culture and identity are perceived in a different way by Greeks who have left than those who haven't left, and also differently by those who have returned, as they are based on a projection of the absence of things into a theoretical Greek terrain that almost reaches a new mythology (that includes the aspirations of Greeks, who have been detached from Greece in any form, for Greece, their beliefs for the essence of Greece and the Greek identity).

In the first part of immigrating abroad (I/IV), these landscapes that appear between the other images refer mainly to a nostalgic memory of the homeland. This type of memory comes in response to the intense experience of displacement and the inevitable comparison between the two cultures (the old and the new) and so these images are not delving far enough into the ideas of Greekness, but they are rather an idealised projection of the traditional Greek culture onto the landscape. In the case of the Greeks who returned (II/IV), however, this memory is not evident in everyday life, although they believed that it would be when they were still abroad, as reality is different than their conception of memory. In this second part of the work the narrative doesn't contain black-and-white instant images, as with repatriation the search for memory occurs in the present time of the narrative. The narrator is looking in his homeland for the memory of it that he had when he left and so in practice, the memory, or actually the failure of memory to meet reality, coexists in the colour landscapes.



Figures 3.14 - 3.15 B&W instant images from *Ithacas III/IV*

This failure, however, of the narrator to finally find these memories in the new reality leads him to search deeper into the roots of the collective subconscious and rediscover the memory of Greece almost as an idealised memory that ought to be brought back. The black-and-white images will appear again after the part of the return of the migrant (II/IV) in the third part of the project (III/IV), as a manifestation of the Greek cultural landscape which studies and reflects on the idea of Greekness and the traditional Greek ethos as it appears in the Greek landscape. In the narrative of *Ithacas*, these images take the role of trying to reconstruct the collective memory. In the context of the historical evolution of the perception of the notion of the landscape in Greece, as developed in the previous chapter, the black-and-white images in this part of *Ithacas* (III/IV) do not aim to form a critique of the photographic representations of the Greek landscape as many contemporary Greek photographers have done, but to develop a language based on the Neohellenic aesthetics. Thus, we observe symbols of Greek nature such as the sea and the olive tree (figs.3.14-3.15), which do not serve any form of picturesqueness and neither connect to the bucolic images of the early 20th century nor refer to Hellenism. Instead, they use the principle of entopia to exist autonomously and form a new Greek landscape language that doesn't use nature as a simple praise of the sublime beauty, but rather symbolically to approach ideas around Greek culture and identity. My approach here is very close to the use of the landscape by the writers and poets of the 1930s generation, since I use the landscape as a carrier of Greek cultural elements as they did in their poetry.

Finally, the portraits, as in the first version of *Ithaca*, are of the people who helped me to structure the inner narratives on the various aspects of the whole story. The portraits are not accompanied by any kind of information that could attach an identity to the sitters, but they are only classified by the status of the migrant. While the images remain representations of a type of people rather than portraits of individuals, there is a level of attachment between them and me, as a photographer, and a specific reason behind each photograph. Each sitter has contributed to my understanding of the different perceptions of migration and the reasons that push people to migrate. This is reflected in the different themes of the photographs that were inspired by the migrants and their experience of displacement and exile. When all of the portraits are seen together in the narrative, there is a kind of typology developed that is achieved through the similar compositions and the lack of personalised information. This way there is an emphasis to a community being

photographed and a balance between the documentary quality of the work and the personal/fictional. In any case, the role of portraits is to enhance the sense of the documentary as opposed to a purely autobiographical narrative.



Figures 3.16 - 3.17 Portraits from *Ithacas I/IV*



Figures 3.18 - 3.19 Portraits from *Ithacas II/IV*

In the first part of the work (I/IV), immigrating abroad, the people are photographed inside the city (figs.3.16-3.17), thus following the narrator's course. In the second part of the return (II/IV), they are photographed on terraces of apartment buildings within a city (figs.3.18-3.19). A terrace is a place that works as the upper border of the city, being both inside and outside the city. In the third part of migrating to islands, there is a complete absence of portraits. The people who chose to migrate to an island also chose isolation. Unlike people who immigrate to a metropolis, who tend to look for a fellowship with their compatriots, or those who have returned home, who seek to overcome the foreignness they feel through people who have similar experiences, people who move to an island choose self-exile. With this reasoning, the narrator doesn't search to engage with others, but rather to represent a personal exploration, isolation and self-exile, thus there are no portraits appearing in the narrative.



Figure 3.20 from the series *Artist's portraits 1924-1928*
(Sander, 1924-1928)



Figure 3.21 *Rebecca, 2005* from *Niagara* (Soth, 2006)

All of the sitters are directed to have a neutral posture with their hands left freely down. This very natural position, together with the use of particular equipment (large format camera) that lengthens the process of photographing, strengthens the desired sense of stillness that conveys a sense of solitude that is so relevant to the condition of displacement. In a similar way to Sander's portraits of the German society of the first half of the 20th century (fig.3.20), the stillness of the portraits emphasizes the photography's quality to suspend time for a moment and as such the portraits become observational and detached, which enhances their documentary quality as well. On the contrary, to the staged portraiture of Efstathiadis of the Greek province that we saw earlier, where the sitters play a different role that works for the narrative, or Alec Soth's documentary portraits in *Sleeping by the Mississippi* (2004) and *Niagara* (2006), where each sitter is photographed in a different way in the framework of the various aspects of his projects (fig.3.21), my portraiture follows a typology that tends to homogenise the characteristics and the solitudes of the individual migrants into a community. From this perspective

these portraits are closer to the work of Sander, however, the way that the portraits are spread out in the narrative brings my approach closer to Soth's.

Keeping a balance between the western influence and a reading within a Greek cultural context, the locations of the portraits are carefully selected in a way that the natural environment, or its absence, discreetly affects the reading of the images. The position of the sitters in the frame is lowered in order to emphasize the significance of the elements of the background environment in the reading of the image and the enhancing of the feeling of solitude of the sitters. In the first part of the work (I/IV) the portraits are made in the city, where the absence of nature, mainly through the lack of sky and horizon, as well as the appearance of anthropogenic materials such as concrete, metal, and glass, emphasizes a violent alienation from nature. Based on the entopia of Neohellenism, this alienation metaphorically speaks of the personal displacement and alienation of Greek migrants. In a similar way, in the second part of the work (II/IV) the sites of the portraits are at the boundary of the urban environment (the terraces) in an effort to search for the natural environment and metaphorically to convey the state of being an insider and outsider at the same time.

All the different types of images are edited into a single narrative. The narrative, that is a dominant element of the project, is linear and follows the narrator's course, which is interrupted by the black-and-white instant images that appear as flashbacks and conflict with the preceding and succeeding colour images in the sequence. Each image in the narrative works together with its preceding and succeeding, thus creating bonds between them and also short internal narratives. For example, the relationship between the image of the seascape in the mist (fig.3.13), (that we saw earlier), and the image that precedes it makes the seascape work differently in the narrative than if it stood alone. The image of the seascape comes after the image of a trapped and frightened bird (fig.3.22) and the two images create a dialogue between them and develop meaning through operating together side-by-side in the flow of images. In the first image, the narrator observes the trapped bird and is confronted with its view, while in the second image the narrator stands in front of the misty seascape. When, however, the seascape comes after the view of the bird, the narrator becomes the frightened bird who stares at the uncanny nothingness of the misty sea, creating a sense of being trapped.



Figure 3.22 Two sequencing images from *Ithacas II/IV*

A very important element of the narrative is the way that sequencing images indicate the narrator's perception of the subject of migration. In the example of the two following images (fig.3.23), we see the same signs of a car on the ground being photographed from opposing sides, indicating, in the image on the left, someone who did not leave and in the image on the right, someone who did not return. The border in these two images is a notional border without any physical substance. The narrator, as a character who is part of the subject, determines his perception of the subject based on the direction of his gaze. Is the narrator located within the boundaries of the city looking outward, or outside with his gaze facing inward? This question becomes vital in the conceptual structure of the project and the point of view of the narrator. The sequencing of these particular images reveal a point where the narrator changes his perception of the border, a moment when he realises that he doesn't know whether he is an insider or an outsider in his home and the whole journey becomes an effort to identify his point of view in relation to his home. These two images are also an example of how image making and the narrative become part of the research process of developing ideas.



Figure 3.23 Two sequencing images from *Ithacas II/IV*

Another technique of the narrative is the use of similar images of the same place at the same moment in a sequence that creates a diptych or a triptych (figs.3.24-3.25). This particular technique has been introduced in *Memento Mori*, as seen in the previous subchapters. The use of these diptychs and triptychs functions as a pause in the flow of reading, while also extending the narrative time of a particular moment. The diptychs and triptychs are used in various parts of the narrative and create patterns that appear throughout *Ithacas*, which form a method that aims to unify visually different images under a coherent narrative and the same visual approach.

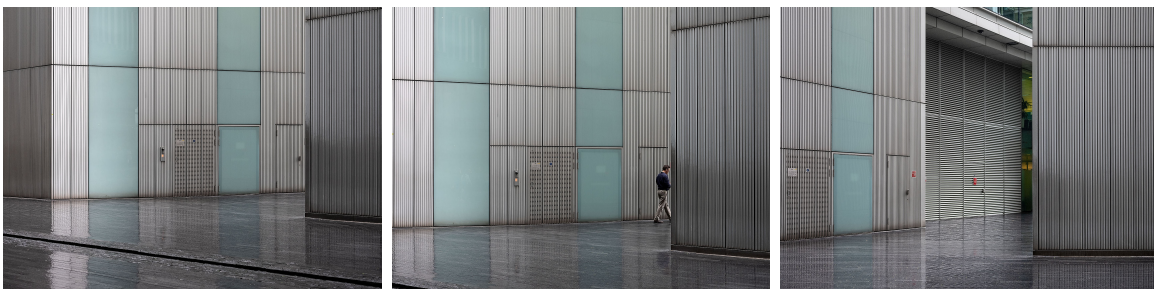


Figure 3.24 Three sequencing images from *Ithacas I/IV*

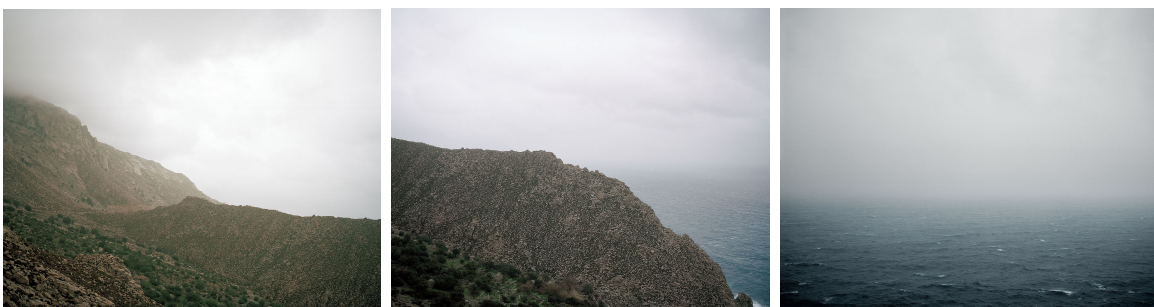


Figure 3.25 Three sequencing images from *Ithacas IV/IV*

The use of colour is also an important element of the narrative that is used with consistency throughout the project to signify meaning in the work. Most of the colour images are almost monochromatic in order to emphasize the particular use of colour. In the first part of the narrative, in the European metropolis (I/IV), the dominant colour is grey, which signifies the greyness of the city. When some other colour appears it is to either to add an element of meaning by contrasting with the general grey or to denote the artificiality of the city, as can be seen in fig.3.26 where the plant lays in front of an artificial dark grey wall creating a contrast between nature and the manmade. In the second part, of the return (II/IV), the dominant colour is yellow-brown, which is also the colour of nature when it dries out in the winter (fig.3.27), thus creating an environment of decay, where nothing blooms. In the last part of migrating to an island (IV/IV), the dominant colour is blue, an effect that is mostly created by the sea in the images, which is a colour that is highly associated with Greek culture, the sea and the meaning of the sea in Greek culture. In all cases, the dull and grey sky enhances monochromaticity, which makes it simpler for images to be read based on colour. Additionally, the dull skies create lighting conditions that do not saturate colours or add intense contrast and shadows in the image.



Figure 3.26 Image from *Ithacas I/IV*



Figures 3.27 Study of colour. Four images from *Ithacas II/IV*

Finally, the project is presented as 4 separate books in a slipcase, one for each type of migration, and an extra book of instant images (fig.3.28). Through this design, each book works autonomously for each type of migration, but also as part of a whole and a continuous journey. The design and the size are chosen in such a way in order to create a sense of intimacy between the narrator and his reader, while keeping the images as large as possible in the spreads of the books, in order to show their quality and convey a sense of the texture in the landscape. The book as the final outcome of the project is very important for various reasons. First of all, it references *The Odyssey* itself that we are familiar with, primarily as a book. The book is a very suitable medium in which to develop personal narratives, as the viewer can spend time with the images and go back and forth in the narrative. Finally, over the last decade, the book has developed as an autonomous art form, where the book is the actual artwork, presented either as a single unique object, or a limited edition, possibly handmade publication, or even in a published full print run. The importance of the book as an artform lays on the design of the object as being an integral part of the meaning of the work, the ability to present a sheer amount of

photographs in a narrative, which also affects the process of image making, and the possibility of the viewer to return to the original work whenever he or she wishes to.

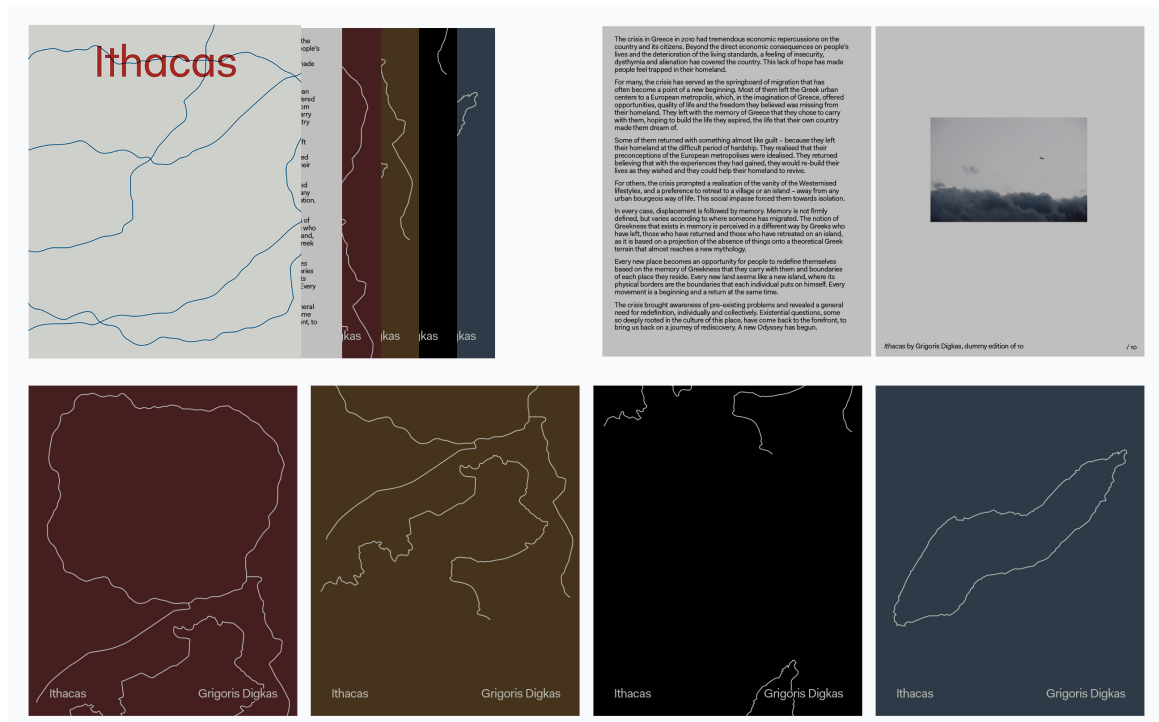


Figure 3.28 The final book design of *Ithacas*

4. The process of image making as research: experimentation and developments

The process of image making has been an integral methodological tool of this practice-based research. The experimentation with technique, with the use of light, the approach to the subject, as well as the selection of themes through which to organise the images were all part of the research process. Initially, image making was based on early research material, but, as the work moved forward, the conclusions from the photographic process informed the research throughout the project. The photographic process followed a parallel course to the journey of redefining the Greek identity, a journey towards finding the appropriate approach that is embedded in the subject. The project went through various stages until the appropriate approach that was described in the previous subchapter was found.

a. Technical issues

As far as technical issues are concerned, experimentation has to do with the type of cameras and their formats that have been used, and particularly how the choice of them gave the most suitable result in each part of the project. Having as a starting point the original concept of the project, where three kinds of images (colour landscapes, black-and-white instant images, and portraits) would be combined, the experimentations moved around the different possible formats for the colour images and the portraits. For the black-and-white images, the choices were minimal since there was only one type of black-and-white instant film still in production. For the colour images and specifically for the landscapes, small format analogue and digital 35mm cameras and medium format analogue and digital cameras were tested. For every part of the project, at the beginning of image making, the same subjects were photographed with different formats and cameras and the resulting images were evaluated.

The 35mm cameras offered agility that worked better in the first part of the project about immigrating to a metropolis, where the concept of the photographer being a flâneur in the city was being developed. The use of a 35mm analogue camera resulted in low-resolution images and its use in difficult lighting conditions, like at night or in dark pathways, was prohibitive, while the digital 35mm camera produced much sharper images and worked better in difficult lighting conditions. With the analogue medium format cameras, the images were finely detailed and sharp and the colour tones and contrast were smooth, while with the digital medium format the images were extremely sharp and contrasty and these cameras certainly produced much better results in difficult lighting conditions than the analogue.

The 35mm cameras produce images with an aspect ratio of 2:3, while the analogue medium format cameras 6:7 and the digital medium format 3:4. The 2:3 images tend to be more aggressive than the 6:7 and, together with the much higher depth of field of the small format, results in a sense that the photographer is closer to the subject. The 2:3 format was eventually rejected due to the quality of the analogue that was not adequate for the needs of the project, and also because the distance from the subject brought the narrator very much into the subject, which didn't suit the subject matter. In the first part

of immigration to a metropolis, digital medium format was finally used, as it retained a balance between the distancing from the subject and the idea of the flâneur. The very detailed image of the digital medium format, even under difficult lighting conditions and without the use of a tripod, greatly enhances the sense of texture on the surfaces and the artificiality of the city. For the second and third parts of the repatriation and the migration to an island, the 6:7 format was chosen for the quality of the image and the distancing of the photographer from the subject, which works allegorically to enhance the idea of the distancing of the narrator from his home.

For the portrait images, there was experimentation with an analogue large format camera and an analogue medium format. The idea was to enhance the feeling of stillness and slow the process of photographing so that the expression of the sitter could be controlled. This is easily achieved with the large format, which has a very shallow depth of field that separates the subject from the background and the process of shooting is also very slow. Unfortunately, there were not any photography labs available in Thessaloniki, Greece, where I was based, that could process colour negative 4x5" film. So the portraits were mostly made with a medium format camera, trying, however, to follow the slow process of photographing with a large format camera and achieve the same sense of stillness.

b. The use of light

Another element of experimentation is the use of light, which, as we have seen, is also a key element of my work, namely in the connotation of the images and the creation of the appropriate emotional tone of the narrative. Although light is an inherent feature of the medium of photography (the etymology of the word photography is writing with light), we often see in contemporary documentary photography that light is not used in a way that adds any level of meaning to the images. In Greek photography, and particularly contemporary Greek photography, there is a tendency to mimic the North American and European trends rather than develop, follow, or challenge any Greek style. Thus we observe that Greek photographers do not pay much attention to the use of light. For example in Petridis' work, if we see it as a whole, the use of light seems rather random although occasionally he uses it to add an emotional tone to a single image, and in

Efstathiadis' work, although there is a unity in the use of light, it does not somehow add any connotation to his images. This approach to light seems quite cut off from the principles of Neohellenic culture of the 20th century. In Neohellenism light as part of the natural environment was a tool of symbolism. Since, for this project, there is an interest in bringing elements of Neohellenism in contemporary photography, the use of light in such a way as to contribute to the semantics of the image according to the subject has become of great significance.

In the earlier images, from *Ithaca*, that were developed mostly in London, the use of light was not consistent. There were images with diffused light and cloudy skies, images with fog, while others with clear skies and harsher light, even if direct sunlight was avoided in all of the images. Later on, with the development of theoretical research on Neohellenic art, and particularly with the analysis of Angelopoulos' conceptual use of light, I deliberately chose to use the diffused light available on cloudy days. Further experimentation on the use of light in the Greek landscape, led to a better understanding of the qualities of light and how it changes over the different seasons of the year or the thickness of the clouds and the humidity of the atmosphere. The ways that these natural elements affect the work was significant for me in the development of the narrative.

Further to the above use of climate, another interesting element that came up through the process of photographing was the use of colour in the imagery. While laying down the images to edit them, a first impression was that the images could be categorised according to their colour (fig.3.27). The colour palette of the images can potentially affect their content, if it is used with consistency. Since most images are landscapes, the colour of the images shifts together with the colours of nature. The alternation of the seasons changes the colours of the natural environment, making it necessary to photograph during specific months of the year in order to obtain certain connotations.

All these differences, which seemed to be minor in the beginning, led to a careful and consistent sense of selection and choice making in terms of the use of light, colour, and framing. In all parts of the project there is a tendency to keep the horizon level at the lower one-third of the frame. The light is mostly cloudy, but not dramatic, apart from the fourth part of migrating to islands (IV/IV), where the skies are often dramatic, giving emphasis to

the wilderness of the sea and producing sublime seascapes. The images are all made during winter days, preferably wet and humid, when nature is in decay and the colours are not intense or saturated. Occasionally, fog appears in some of the images, as a technique that isolates the narrator from the landscape since his visibility is blocked and thus the narrative is lead to a climax, to a more personal level. Another important aspect of photography in wet winter days is the actual experience of the photographer during image making. The cold and wet weather makes the landscape look more deserted and isolated, and the experience of the photographer inevitably becomes more intense as the photographer stays more focused on the landscape since there is less interruption from noise or possibly other people.

c. The process of image making

The process of image making can be described as a process of wandering in pre-defined locations of geographical or conceptual significance, where the search for subjects and situations from a list of pre-selected and desirable subjects took place. Most of the times the location itself offered surprises and new subjects were also identified that widened the themes of the project. The process of wandering usually lasted all day or a longer period of days and was a solitary process, so that an intimate connection to the landscape could be developed without interference. However, because of the risks of many selected locations, either due to dangerous geography and weather conditions in the case of the islands, or to dodgy remote areas at the city's borders, the process took place while I was accompanied by someone else. These people were two photographers that are also familiar with my work and occasionally assisted me in the process of image making, when I was aware of potential danger in the areas I was interested in. After image making, there was the first selection of images, which were then printed and placed on a wall (fig.3.29). Then there was a long thought process, where conclusions were drawn on what was working for the subject and what was not. As a result, new ways of approaching the subject often emerged. Based on these conclusions, new locations were selected and the cycle of image making and analysis started again.



Figure. 3.29 Editing process

The sites to be photographed were chosen based on the mapping of the areas before the visit to the place. In the case of the metropolis, areas with skyscrapers, metal and glass buildings, and sites that gave signs of artificiality were identified. In early stages, areas with a natural landscape within the city, such as parks and rivers, were also looked for, but these images were eventually rejected as the narrative became more consistent on the lack of nature and the natural environment. In the earlier stages, there were also quite a few personal images, like the image below illustrating the sun that illuminates an empty wall over a bed (fig.3.30). These images were eventually taken out as they gave the narrative a more personal look than the desired one, disorienting the project from its documentary quality and making it look like an autobiographical documentary of a person experiencing displacement with an intense level of sentimentality. The final images that were selected are quite dark and there is a sense of motion and searching without a destination within the urban labyrinth. The selected images are characterised by the lack of horizons and the absence of sky, giving a sense of disorientation, which works symbolically for the condition of immigrating to a European metropolis and facing a new environment where nothing is as aspired before moving there.



Figure 3.30 Image from the early drafts of *Ithacas*

In the second part of repatriation (II/IV), there was a lot of questioning on how the idea of returning could be developed through the landscape, whether that would be urban or natural. Initially, there was experimentation with images in the city, but they did not convey the concept of foreignness when repatriating, possibly because the city where someone returns doesn't offer possibilities for exploration as everything feels familiar. Returning from abroad is an experience that carries an awkward feeling, where everything feels so familiar, yet inside that familiarity you feel unfamiliar. This concept of not being able to fully return has been developed by many theorists like Ahmed, who argues (1999) that 'it is impossible to return to a place that was lived as home, precisely because the home is not exterior to a self, but implicated in it. The movements of selves between places that come to be inhabited as home involve the discontinuities of personal biographies and wrinkles in the skin.' This idea of not being able to fully return became central in the development of this part of the project and it perceives repatriation as a condition where there is a realisation that searching for a new identity is never-ending.

Using this rationale, in practice the idea of the border of the city was developed as an allegorical space of belonging and not belonging in the city at the same time, a place of being simultaneously an insider and an outsider of homeland and Greek culture. Literally, the border of the city is an area degraded and deserted, where the city ceases to have the structure that it has inside its borders, while at the same time the signs of human

interventions are obvious. Furthermore, the edge of the city is a place that often seems mysterious, as objects and constructions can be found that their use or reason for existing is not obvious. Most importantly, however, the border of the city is a place where the manmade structure ends and the natural environment begins. So the physical space of the city's borders became a symbol of the space of repatriation. It signifies an intermediate state of belonging as it is a part of arrival and departure at the same time.



Figures 3.31 - 3.32 Images from the early drafts of *Ithacas II/IV*

The images that appeared at the earlier stages of image making were mostly representations of the border as a physical limit, a dividing line or object. As it can be seen in the images above (figs.3.31-3.32), the fences are literal boundaries that block further passage. These images of boundaries build a language that talks about the limitations that people who have returned feel and a kind of entrapment that they feel inside their homeland. However, this type of representation, though quite symbolic, is constrained in its own literalism and doesn't allow the poetics of the landscape to become a platform that supports the exploration of more complex and abstract ideas like the foreignness that people who return experience, loneliness and the sense of cultural imprisonment. Thus, images were developed where the boundary is not defined in a literal way, but it is suggested through an allegorical strategy. In that case, the physical boundary, which is the place where the photographs were made, is presented as an allegory of feeling unable to belong to home (fig.3.33) or as a projection of the desire of not belonging (fig.3.34).



Figure 3.33 Image from *Ithacas II/IV*



Figure 3.34 Image from *Ithacas II/IV*

In this second part or repatriating (II/IV), there is also experimentation with symbols that were used in the first part of *Ithacas* of immigrating abroad (I/IV), particularly in the black-and-white instant images. These symbols that are inspired by Neohellenic culture and often appeared in literature of the 20th century, like birds, olive trees, and seas, were used in this first part to reference Greek collective memory, as previously described. At the second part of repatriation, the same symbols re-appeared through colour images of the present, showing that with the return the search for memory continued, however, it didn't have the idealised form that it had in the black-and-white images of the first part. Initially, there was an effort for these images to almost be re-created in Greece in colour using a medium format camera, as can be seen in the colour image below with the birds (fig.3.36) that tries to mimic the black-and-white image of the birds (fig.3.35) that appears in the first part of the project (I/IV). However, the connection with the symbol was chosen to be on a more abstract basis like in the image of the trapped bird (fig.3.37). The symbols used earlier in the project reappear not as a reference to previous images, but the symbolic use of certain themes is reappropriated to the desired meaning of each part.



Figure 3.35 B&W instant image from *Ithacas I/IV*



Figure 3.36 Image from the early drafts of *Ithacas II/IV*



Figure 3.37 Image from *Ithacas II/IV*

Finally, the last part of the body of work, concerned with internal migration to islands (IV/IV) was shot towards the end of the project and after many technical decisions had already been taken. Issues like the use of formats and the framing were already solved and the overarching conceptual approach of the project had been formed (to a great extent). The use of light, colour, and climate conditions were predetermined based on the findings of the practical experimentation and the theoretical research (so far). However, there was still some space for experimentation, particularly in relation to the notion of the border and how it would be approached in this part of the project, that was still to be explored.

The interest, in this case, is in the self-imposed exile that people choose for themselves in times of the crisis with their decision to renounce their urban lifestyles in favour of a moderate and physically difficult life on an island. The reasons for this decision are more or less obvious, like the economic crisis, the impasse, and the depression that Greek people have experienced. Most important, however, is the frustration of westernised lifestyles that tend to promote consumption and greediness. In Greece, these westernised lifestyles have proven to be totally catastrophic and led to the realisation of the impossibility of being autonomous either as a community or an individual in this globalised capitalism. The global economy seems to be above people's desires or the country's desire and for people it seems impossible to cause a change. Thus, the decision to retreat to the island is a highly political act and attests the desire to separate oneself from this global condition and to try to feel independent and live autonomously. The relation of this act to nature is vital as it symbolises the desire to start anew and form an identity from the basic elements of existence. The coastline of the island is essentially the physical limit of the island that encloses the space of the self-exiled. The island as a space is determined in relation to the outside, which in the case of the island is the sea. In a Greek cultural context, the sea has the meaning of the unknown and the undiscovered knowledge that is still to be explored. So the notion of the border becomes a dialogue between self-exile and the desire to communicate with the unexplored, the unimagined, the untamed, and the unknown.

Based on this thinking, the themes that would be searched for were predetermined. Roads, seascapes, and the coastline were among the dominant themes. There was also a great interest in the perimetric road of the island as the last manmade construction on the

island that has a constant dialogue with the outside space of the island, as well as images of the island from above that could give the impression of the island's finitude. I decided that the images, from this section, should convey a sense of isolation and confinement, where the physical limit would be constantly evident. Most of the photographs were made on two islands, Ikaria and Ithaca, both of which were chosen for specific reasons. Ikaria is a medium-sized island, rugged and unruly, with a wild imposing geography and a steep mountain. It is not that big though, so its perimeter easily gives the sense of the island and isolation. It is also considered to be an alternative free-spirited place, which many young people choose as a place of retreat. Ithaca, although very different in terms of geography from Ikaria, was chosen for symbolic reasons as it is argued to be the mythical home of Odysseus.

Interestingly, through the process of image making it was discovered that the perception of the horizon changes according to the climatic conditions. Nature decides when the residents of the island will be able to see the horizon or how far they will be able to reach with their eyes. The narrator, moving along the coastline, searches for the meaning and the limitations of his choice, reflecting on what he may have missed from his previous life and is fascinated by the unexplored view of the sea. As can be seen in the study of seascapes below (fig.3.38), it is the weather that determines whether the horizon can be seen or not. In some pictures the sea is wilder and inaccessible, even prohibitive. In other cases, it may be more welcoming and hypnotic. The study of the seascapes became a very interesting study for this project, as it proves how minor changes in the climatic conditions can drastically change the connotations of the image.



Figure 3.38 Study of seascapes. Six experimental images from *Ithacas IV/IV*

The geography of Ithaca, in particular, offers the opportunity to have a bird's-eye view of parts of the island. This point of view was very different from the images that were produced in Ikaria and raised another very interesting question about the narrator's position. Through this view of the island the narrator seems to be observing the island where he is exiled and so he seems to be detached from his life and the narrative (figs. 3.39-3.40). This position reminds quite a lot of the perspective of German Romanticism

and the famous painting *The Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog* by Caspar David Friedrich (fig. 3.41). German Romanticism and the revival of ancient Greece were two factors that contributed to the Greek Revolution and thus became very important for the creation of the first Modern Greek culture. The influence of German Romanticism on Greek ideology for the creation of Neohellenic culture, and particularly the racial aestheticism, was very important and so a reference to this would be particularly significant for the theorisation of my work. The importance of such a reference, however, was questioned, as the connotations of such images altered the perspective of the narrator from being part of the story to being a narrator outside the story and the landscape became a romantic contemplation rather than a visual exploration of the landscape and its embedded culture. These images were not selected, resulting in a more coherent point of view of the narrator.



Figures 3.39 - 3.40 Two images experimenting with bird's-eye views of the island for *Ithacas IV/IV*



Figure 3.41 *The Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog* (Friedrich, 1818)

Another area of exploration on the island of Ithaca was the search for the residues of the ancient myth. Similar work has been done in the past by Fred Boissonnas, who at the beginning of the 20th century searched all of the locations of Odysseus' journey, photographing the signs that resembled Homer's descriptions. Having as a guide the images of Boissonnas, the same sites were searched for in order to be photographed, together with images that could reference the myth and symbols that are depicted in the *Odyssey*, such as the olive, small creeks, and caves. Images like these can be seen below (figs.3.42-3.45). These images aimed to have signs of a human presence without depicting any people. This way an intense sense of absence would be conveyed. This approach, however, weakened the consistency of the photographic language that was developed throughout the project and proved to be distracting from the subject of internal migration. The aim was not to recreate the myth by searching for its symbols but to reconstruct the myth using symbols developed for this particular project. The importance of this method, however, was not so much in the findings of the research, but

rather in the process of searching that incited me to keep on exploring and photographing.



Figures 3.42 - 3.45 Four images experimenting with referencing the myth of Odysseus for *Ithacas IV/IV*



Figures 3.46 - 3.47 B&W instant images from *Ithacas III/IV*



Figures 3.48 - 3.49 B&W instant images from *Ithacas III/IV*

This last method of creating images with a reference to the myth was also used as a method for creating the black-and-white instant images. For many of these images I was seeking for landscapes that conveyed a sense of the presence of the narrator in the image, implying that the narrator is the shipwrecked Odysseus, or a modern version of him, who gazes at the sea with nostalgia for all of his voyages and dreaming of embarking again on a new journey on the sea (figs.3.46-3.47). In some other images, the presence of the narrator is not so obvious, mostly due to the lack of ground in the composition, but the same sense of nostalgia for the voyage and the desire to explore is conveyed (figs. 3.48-3.49). The qualities of the instant photograph, as a very fragile and unique object, together with the use of black-and-white that creates a distancing from the subject and a cut off from reality, reinforced the sense of nostalgia. Nostalgia is a condition of the past, of remembering something that was lived, and thus refers to memory. In contrast to the rest of work that is in colour, these images/objects (that are also reproduced in the book with a shadow to emphasize their quality as an object) seem to be a collection of images from another era, even though they were made for the purposes of the project. These images, apart from the direct reference to the myth, are used to narrate the memory of Greece that people who have migrated chose to keep with them. Thus I was seeking for images that reminded the representations of the landscape that we are familiar within the framework of Neohellenic culture. As such symbols appear that have been introduced with consistency mostly in Neohellenic literature of the 20th century, like the olive tree and the sea. (figs.3.50-3.52). These symbols have often become clichés in contemporary Greek culture, but on the other hand, they have never been approached in photography,

at least not in any context other than photographing the picturesque and the bucolic Greek landscape. For this project, they are searched for and photographed in a way that breaks the picturesque iconographic tradition, in order to try and bring back the specificities of Greek culture that have been abandoned in the contemporary globalised culture that has been introduced in Greece.



Figures 3.50 - 3.52 B&W instant images from *Ithacas III/IV*

d. Experimentation with presentation

The project has been through various stages until it reached the final stage of the book. At the beginning of the project the idea of an exhibition in parallel with the book was considered. The work was decomposed into its morphological elements related to the use of different formats and different types of images. In an effort to separate one of the narrative times of the whole narrative and create an autonomous narrative, the black-and-white images were seen separately. The original images were framed in wooden box frames with proportions that reminded the proportions of a book page or spread and were exhibited in a gallery space on a white shelf leaning on the wall. The whole presentation looked fragile, referencing and emphasizing the qualities of the instant images. The box frame also strengthened the value of the instant image as an object. Together with the frames, an early book version of *Ithaca* was also presented as an object on a plinth. This exhibition (figs.3.53-3.54) attempted to create a narrative for the memory of the Greeks who have immigrated to a European metropolis. Although quite small in size it managed to convey the nostalgia of the work, but its fragmentation could not convey all the levels of meaning of the work.



Figures 3.53 - 3.54 Views from the exhibited work *Ithaca* as part of the exhibition Time - Place - Space, Research student exhibition, James Hockey and Foyer Galleries, 13-20 April 2013

Another experiment that was done was the design of a concertina book (figs.3.35-3.36) that combined a dual role of the book, both as an art book and an exhibition. The book was made while setting up the third chapter of the book about Greeks who moved to islands. The concertina came out of the body of the book and could be set up as an exhibition, as can be seen in the following images (figs.3.35-3.36). The concertina unfolded like a big wall, a boundary that the viewer was staring at while standing outside of it. The notion of the border that the images were dealing with took shape in the design and presentation of the work. This book design was a very fruitful experiment that started to give a physicality to the body of work, while keeping the book format. The problem, however, with this presentation is that although for this part of the project about

migrating to an island the concertina was working very well, the rest of the work couldn't be approached in a similar way as, even if the narrative is linear, the geographical zones of the images in the other parts of the project are not about a clearly defined border/line. So this idea was finally abandoned.



Figures 3.55 - 3.56 Views of the dummy concertina that was created as an experimentation with book design of *Ithacas IV/IV*

Finally, in order to ensure consistency in the development of the book, I decided that the book should be developed either as a book with four separate chapters, where each of the three chapters would refer to a category of migration and the fourth one would contain the black-and-white instant images with reference to memory, or as four volumes within a slipcase. In the first case, the narrative would be linear, so the narrator would follow a specific course and the reader would be dictated to read the story in this particular sequence. This would reinforce the idea of a continuous journey. Reading the books in another order, however, can create interesting links and the interpretation of the work can potentially become more open. So it was finally preferred to develop a design with four separate volumes in a single slipcase with a design to unite the four separate stories (fig. 3.58). The order of the volumes is denoted by a number on the spine of each volume but also inside on the flap, so the reader can always know the “correct” order, but he/she is free to mix the reading of the volumes and make connections between them.

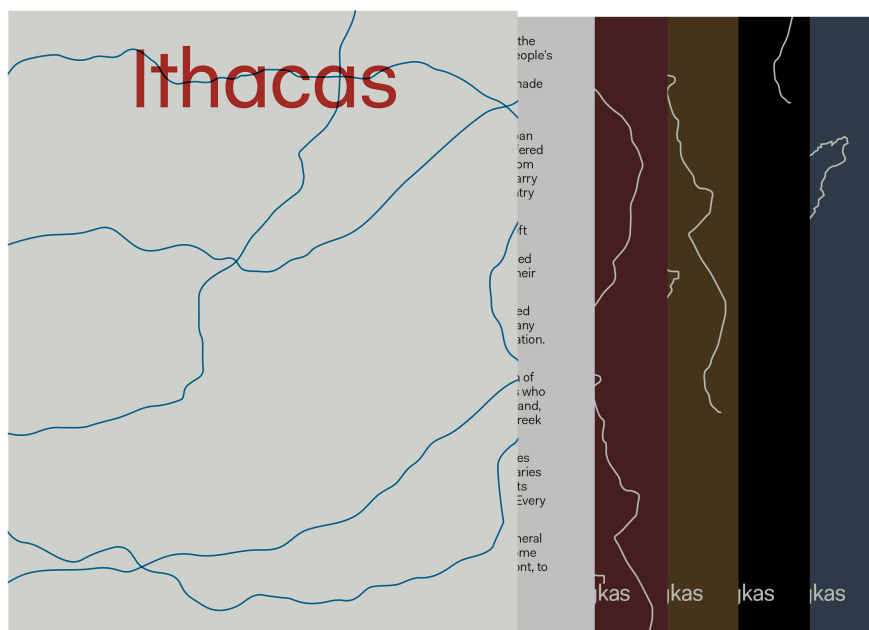


Figure 3.57 The final book design of *Ithacas*

The basic idea of designing the covers, made in collaboration with the designers *Loose Joints Ltd.*, is that each volume will have a map design on the cover (fig.3.58), referring to the destination of migration, and the slipcase (fig.3.57) will have a new map that is a layering of these other maps, mixing the destinations and creating a kind of meta-place of all geographies co-existing. In this way, the idea of the voyage is communicated as a key

element of the project, together with the idea of mythology and fiction. In the first volume (I/IV), the map refers to the London ring road, the boundary that encloses the main urban part of the metropolis. This map at its bottom is mixed with the map of Thessaloniki, which becomes the main map in the second volume. In the second volume (II/IV), the map refers to my homeland Thessaloniki, where the images of the second part were made, and specifically consists of the line of the coastline and the line of the outer ring road, two lines that form the border between the interior of the city and the exterior. On its top side, this map is merged with the London map, part of which continues to the edge of the book. Linking these two maps implies that each destination is linked to the place of departure and so the present is related to the past. In the fourth volume (IV/IV), the map is the coastline of an island, that of Ikaria, which is the limit of the space chosen by the people who migrated there to self-exile. Here, there is no link to any other map, thus enhancing the choice of cut off and isolation. Finally, in the third volume (III/IV) that contains the narration of memory with the black-and-white instant images, there is no map in the centre of the cover, but towards the edges of the book there are pieces of all the other maps indicating that the book is a narrative of memory.

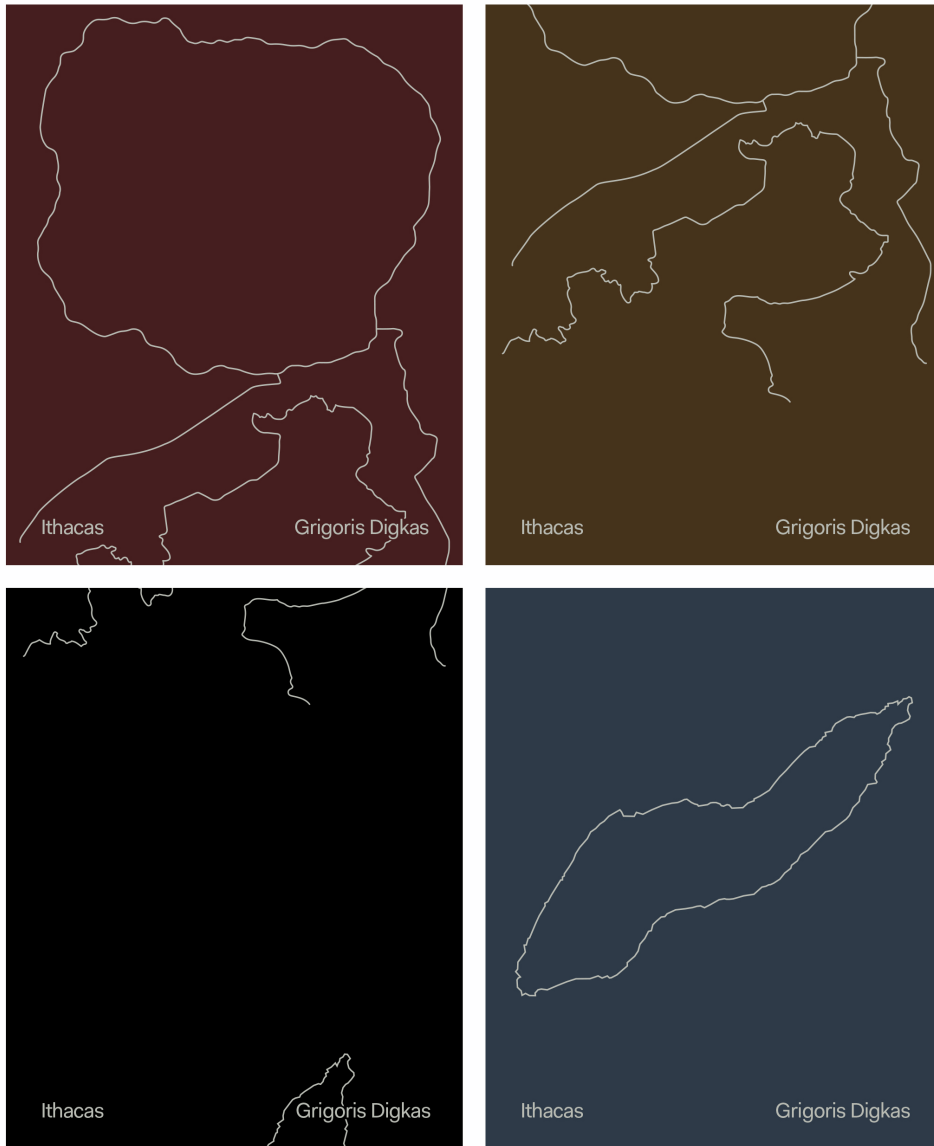


Figure 3.58 The four volumes of *Ithacas*. Top left: Volume I/IV. Top right: Volume II/IV. Bottom left: Volume III/IV. Bottom right: Volume IV/IV

The four volumes have a dimension of 22x27 cm, a dimension that is a balance in size, between a small book that gives a more intimate feeling to the reader and a larger book where images are printed to a larger size revealing more details. An important factor in selecting the size of the book is the reproduction of the instant images in their actual size, finding a balance inside the page without being cramped in the page or small in relation to the size of the white page. The texts of the book that are related to the myth of Odysseus are found on the flaps of each volume (fig.3.60), thus embracing the narration without being confused with it. The central text of the book, where the situation of the Greek crisis and the different types of migration that the project deals with are described, is printed on a separate paper inside the slipcase in a way that it does not actively become

part of the narrative, but allows the reader to read it at any moment in combination with any volume (fig.3.59). The font used throughout the book is a very clear and utilitarian sans serif font that does not interfere with the content of the narrative. The font size of the text on the flaps is quite large in a way that it accompanies and contextualises reading the images without, however, suggesting that this text is by the narrator of the photographic narrative.



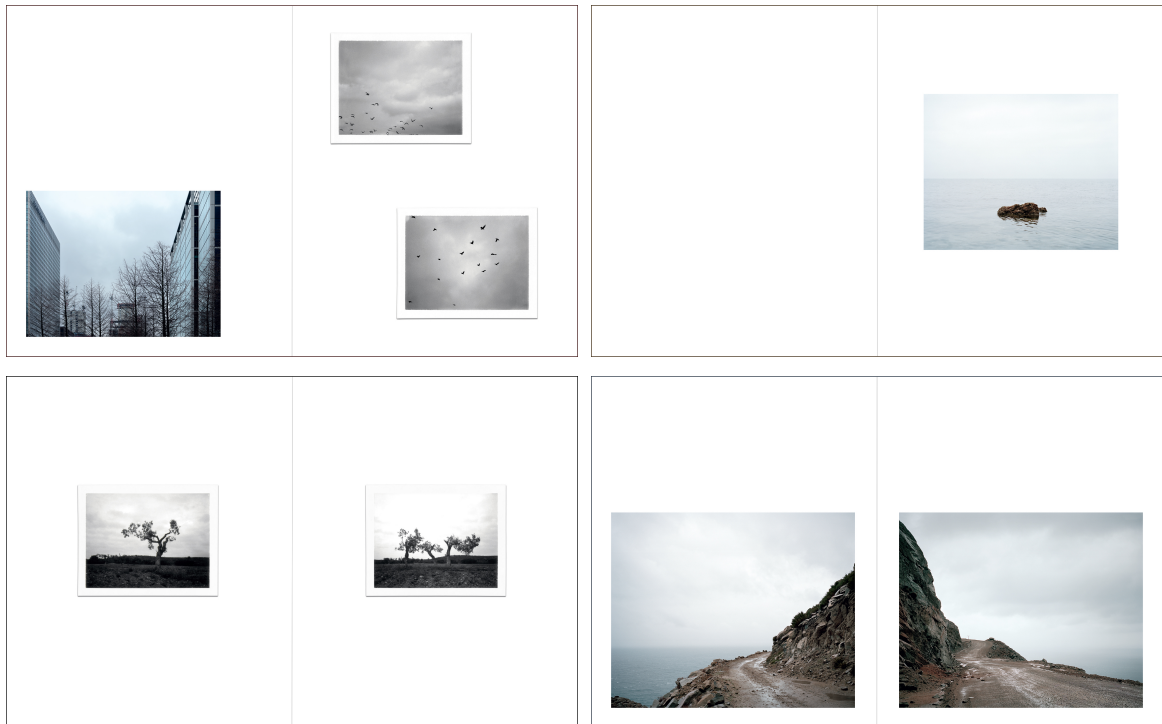
Figure 3.59 The insert page (front and back) of *Ithacas* that contains the introductory text



Figure 3.60 Volume IV/IV of *Ithacas*. On top is the cover of the volume and on bottom is the first page and the printed text on the flap of the cover

Finally, the design of the interiors of each volume follows a general design direction where the images have different sizes and are placed in different positions on the spreads (figs. 3.61-3.64). This design direction enhances the sense of movement and the unexpected exploration of the voyage as well since the viewer does not know what to expect on the next page. More specifically, in the first volume (fig.3.61) concerning migration into the maze of the metropolis, the layout is a bit more experimental, it moves a lot, to highlight the shifts in space and time and the general disorientation in the metropolis. In the second volume (fig.3.62), the layouts become more formal to emphasize the more subtle inner exploration and rediscovery of the narrator. In the third volume (fig.3.63) with the

black-and-white instant images, the layouts are simple and basic with one or two images per spread. This makes this part of the project look more like a catalogue. Finally, the fourth volume (fig.3.64) of migrating to an island is very close to the second volume. The layouts are quite formal and rigid and the images tend to be bigger in size to highlight the absoluteness of nature.



Figures 3.61 Spreads from the four volumes of Ithacas. Top left: Volume I/IV. Top right: Volume II/IV. Bottom left: Volume III/IV. Bottom right: Volume IV/IV

Conclusion

The Greek crisis in 2010 was not only economic, and it revealed deeper political and cultural problems that pre-existed, as well as a confused Greek identity. With the outbreak of the crisis, the need to change course and redefine the Greek identity as a way out of it became evident. Among its many impacts was forcing Greeks towards migration. Greeks were mainly moving abroad towards European metropolises, while others repatriated after spending some years abroad, and also few Greeks moved away from the urban centres to Greek islands. Migration flows can be a case study of the general issue of redefining the Greek identity as a way out of the crisis, as the process of redefining one's identity is an integral part of migration. The condition of migration creates a fracture between the pre-existing identity and the new one that migrants are trying to define, offering those who experience it the double perception as an insider and an outsider simultaneously in both cultures and identities. Thus, in the process of redefining their identity, Greek neo-migrants, as external observers, can better identify the elements of Greekness that must be preserved.

In this thesis, two key thematic axes were presented. The first thematic axis involves the creation of migratory flows of Greeks incited by the outbreak of the economic crisis of 2010. The second thematic axis analyses the lack of photographic production and critical thinking about photography, and particularly landscape photography, within an autonomous Greek cultural context. These two themes are combined to answer the question raised at a level of representation of these migratory flows; which would be the appropriate way of representing such a subject taking under consideration the cultural specificities? The answer that I have suggested is to integrate the process of redefining a Greek identity, that is inherent in the condition of Greek migration as a way of a personal and collective re-creation, into the actual process of searching for a new photographic language. In a similar way to Greek neo-migrants trying to redefine their identity through

their decision to migrate, preserving the memory and various aspects of Greekness as a resource in their new beginning, my photographic approach seeks elements of Greek culture and the Greek specificity that could build a photographic language that could be part of a historical evolution of Greek culture rather than a fragmentary imitation of the dominant international photographic trends.

Based on this rationale, migration was analysed as a state of redefinition of the Greek identity individually and collectively. The three migratory situations studied are immigration to a European metropolis, return from abroad and migration from urban centres to a remote Greek island. Although each type of migration is different from another in terms of the reasons behind it, the experience of it has common features in each case. The feeling of displacement and the perception of migration as a form of exile are dominant in all cases, as well as certain characteristics that are developed due to the experience of exile. These features are a connecting link between the various types of migration and create a common perspective on how migrants perceive each and every new place they reside, thus transforming migration into a common journey of rediscovery and redefining identity.

Moving on to the level of representation, the narrative that I have proposed becomes part of the subject itself through the narrator who is experiencing exile, instead of a more neutral narrative from the perspective of an observer. An important characteristic of those experiencing a crisis is their need to narrate it, and so building the narrative from the first person came as a necessity. From ancient Greek culture, the myth, as a form of allegory, was used to understand complex concepts and emotions that are difficult to describe and define. In the contemporary Greek crisis, where its complexity makes it difficult to comprehend, the need to narrate the crisis can come through the creation of a new myth. So I have based the structure of my narrative on the reappropriation of Odysseus' myth, as this myth is part of Greek culture, but at the same time it is known worldwide, as it has been used many times in the history of art as an allegory for identity issues of the time. Furthermore, an important element of this particular myth is that it is about a journey and moreover a journey on the sea. The sea, that holds a symbolic position in Greek culture, is also an important element of my narrative either with its absence in the case of

immigration abroad, where the sea appears only as a memory, or with its full presence in the case of migration on an island, where it declares the self-constraint.

Another significant element in the way that I have created the new myth came from Deleuze's essay *Desert Islands*. As we have seen, the metaphoric use of the islands as a point of re-creation was a key aspect of my narrative, as Greek migrants are seeking this re-creation in every place they move to. Using this rationale, I have given a new directive to Odysseus' journey. Odysseus stops on three islands, each of which represents one of the types of migration that I have studied. Every island has its own physical borders, which in each case Odysseus chooses as the limits of the new place he resides and the way he frames himself according to them defines his new identity.

This is how I have built the basic structure of the narrative, which acts as an allegory for the general search for identity at the time of the crisis, as well as links the narrative with Greek culture. But how can this narrative acquire photographic features and create a photographic approach that is integrated into Greek culture? Since my aim was to be able to analyse the photographic series in a Greek cultural context, images should have aesthetic elements and symbolisms that could potentially allow this. However, as has been argued, Greek photography hasn't managed to create an artistic movement or even integrate itself into a historical development of Greek art. So I could not look for these aesthetic elements and symbolisms in Greek photography.

As we have seen in Chapter 2, Greek photography historically appears to be determined by the Northwest European perception of photography, but also by the European conception of the Greek identity itself. Thus photography never evolved autonomously by serving some Greek aesthetics of Neohellenism as it did in other forms of art, and mainly in literature. On the contrary, it follows what Panagiotopoulos calls the 'Western Gaze', the Western European and North American photographic styles. In contemporary photography and in the context of postmodernism, a critique of pre-existing Greek iconography appears in photographic practice. However, the photographic approaches developed by Greek photographers continue to imitate Northwest European and North American photographic approaches instead of creating an independent perspective. A similar pattern is also followed in critical thinking on photography in Greece, which has

not been able to propose or support a Greek approach in photography (and has developed with delay in relation to Northwest Europe). This particular point, together with the delayed development of institutions for photography in Greece, affects the developments in Greek photography. Even the imitation of international photographic approaches arrives late in Greece in relation to the West, and moreover at a point when international photography has already developed further. So almost every project that appears in the Greek photographic scene is either not innovative or outdated, and cannot be analysed in a Greek cultural context.

Trying to confront the clearly problematic Greek photographic scene, I searched for Greek cultural characteristics in a historical period where it acquired some solid features that broadly allowed its acceptance both on a Greek and an international level. This period is of the 1930s-1950s when Greek poets and writers brought into practice the theoretical quests of Greek aesthetics determined on the basis of its inspiration from the Greek landscape. These theories, relying on the ancient Greek connection of nature and society, used the Greek geography and climate as a metaphor for the representation of Greekness and issues of Greek identity. This is how the principle of entopia developed in practice, which became the basic aesthetic principle of Neohellenism. The main representatives of entopia were the poets and writers of the 1930s, whose influence on culture is important to this day, despite the shift towards an international globalised culture. For them, the landscape became a tool of symbolism either by attaching a spirituality to it that referred to the spirituality of Greek culture in the case of Seferis or as a morphological tool in creating words inspired by the geography of Greece in the case of Elytis.

Although the use of entopia in photography is expectable, since its relationship to the landscape is obvious, it was not used consciously and systematically, either in photographic production or in critical analysis. Any examples that might be found are probably random. It is also paradoxical that in film making there is the excellent example of Angelopoulos, who uses the Greek landscape and the climatic conditions to compose a metaphoric landscape of the inner world of the characters of his films. Even though in cinema there is a strong and clear use of entopia, in photography nothing similar has been attempted. Paris Petridis, whose work was analysed in Chapter 2, has occasionally used the landscape and the climatic conditions as a means of generating meaning,

however, this does not happen systematically. Petros Efstathiadis, although he is deeply engaged in the subject of Greekness, does not use any elements of Greek culture in his work. Based on this rationale, I tried to integrate entopia in photography, thus completing the narrative that I have structured by attaching the characteristics of Greek culture in the images.



Figures c.1 - c.2 Images from *Ithacas II/IV*

A key feature of entopia that I have applied in *Ithacas* is the deliberate use of the climatic conditions both during image making and also during the process of editing the images and sequencing the images in the narrative. The choice of suitable weather conditions and cloudy skies, as well as the lowered horizons to emphasize the skies, create an emotionally charged and melancholic landscape that works metaphorically as the emotional landscape of the exiles (figs.c.1-c.2). Occasionally, as for example in the fourth part of *Ithacas* (IV/IV), there is a climax in the narrative created by variations in the weather conditions with the use of rain, thus stressing the emotional and social isolation in the condition of the self-exile (fig.c.3). In addition, the choice of winter as the main season of image making resulted in nature being at a stage of decaying, making the landscapes appear more inhospitable and alienated, which also supported the construction of a metaphoric landscape of the condition of exile.



Figure c.3 Image from Ithacas IV/IV

The themes of the photographs that make up the narrative mainly deal with a border, the border of the place/island that Odysseus chooses to reside, based on the new directive that I have given to Odysseus' journey. The principle of entopia is also applied here, as the notion of the border is conveyed as the border of the man-made and natural untouched environment. Thus, the representation of the borders is achieved through a metaphor rather than a literal depiction of a physical border. Finally, in the black-and-white images, the images are landscapes without any obvious human intervention and in this way I approach a condition where the untouched natural environment comes to represent memory in its idealised form. This idealised memory carries the values of Greek culture that are inherent in the Greek identity and that Greek migrants try to preserve and reinvent.

Contribution to knowledge

This research is the only practice-based research on the migration flows of Greeks incited by the crisis. On a theoretical level, there is published research of the Greek brain drain

and the consequences that this can bring to the country in the long run. Since the beginning of the crisis to date, there have also been several references to the issue of the immigration of Greeks in the media, accompanied by interviews of people experiencing displacement. Often these articles are accompanied by portraits, but these images offer nothing more than a simple illustration in the context of photojournalism. On a practical level, there is also no comprehensive photographic work on the immigration of Greeks, except perhaps Dimitris Tsoumplekas' *Texas* (2014), where he deals with his repatriation in 2010 and the changes in his home environment after the outbreak of the crisis.

Tsoumplekas photographs the changes due to the crisis as a series of details of disordered life, revealing the confusion that he has faced. His focus is on the changes that he has observed and how foreign things appear. However, his focus is not on the experience of displacement but rather on the changes in Greek society and his familiar background due to the crisis. My work *Ithacas* is possibly the only project available that studies the experience of immigration as a whole on a theoretical and practical basis, emphasizing the search for identity as a way out of it.

Theoretically, this research links the theory of exile and displacement with Greek migration and tries to describe the experience from the perspective of people who have migrated. Migration of Europeans within the Western world is often seen as a privilege in the context of cosmopolitanism, and so visual representation of such issues is scarce. However, the experience of displacement does not cease to be painful for those who experience it, and what might appear as a privilege, is accompanied by loss and the forced redefinition of one's identity.

In practice, I have created an original narrative that uses elements of Greek culture for the first time in Greek photography and I have constructed a system of symbolism inspired by the aesthetic principles of Neohellenism. This creates a narrative that is incorporated into the particular cultural features of the experience of Greek migration and becomes part of it. Thus this work can be read in the context of Greek culture both theoretically and practically on a photographic level.

Seeing my work completed, there are visible similarities to Western photography. At first sight, this is perhaps expected, since the creation and development of photographic art

has taken place within the Western world or through its influence. It is difficult to answer the extent to which it is feasible for someone not familiar with Greek culture to read the narrative in a Greek cultural context, especially because it is up to the reader to allow himself or herself to understand the system of symbolism that I have created. This is a general problem of modern times where homogeneity around an international culture weakens the cultural characteristics of each culture. In a careful analysis, however, the introductory texts in *Ithacas* reveal the system of symbolism that I have created and so the work can be comprehended by anyone who is willing to give some extra effort. For someone who is familiar with Greek culture, the work can be more easily understood and contextualised and the various meanings could even be perceived by people who are not familiar with photography since the influences from Greek culture are not related to photography.

In total, this practice-based research highlights that there are possible ways to develop issues of Greek interest in a way that is embedded in the subject itself. It also demonstrates that Greek culture offers many elements that have been unexploited by photography and so the development of photography in a Greek context offers many possibilities for further investigation. To do this, however, there must be a collective interest in the reinvention of Greek photography by photographers, academics, critics, and curators. Photographers should work with dedication on developing a new language, studying both Greek culture and understanding the pathologies of Greek photography. Institutions, on the other hand, should encourage the development of photography in such a direction. This research offers possibilities for further study and analysis by researchers and academics of Greek photography and Greek culture and I hope it could be useful for developing further research.

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