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Dafni Tragaki

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*Dafni Tragaki**

MUSICAL COUNTERPUBLICS: THE DISSENSUAL SOUNDS OF YIANNIS ANGELAKAS

ABSTRACT

The article discusses the dissensual ontology of the Greek popular musician-poet-singer YiannisAngelakas and the emergence of 'counterpublics', as theorized by Michael Warner, in the regime of musical performance. It focuses upon an ethnographically-grounded discussion of the ongoing successful remediations of the song "De horas pouthena" (You don't fit anywhere), which are explored as sensibilities of disagreement disputing the 'distribution of the sensible' in Jacques Rancière's terms. "De horas pouthena" voices a self-exiled form of subjectification regulated within and against the crisis of democracy – an ontology of "not-fitting-in" materializing utopian notions of civility within the affective economies of its punk-rock aesthetics. Angelakas' musical dissensus is also discursively explored in the memory-work of his life-story relationally produced in the context of the ethnographic encounter. The discussion is further elaborated through the discussion of the song 'Airetiko' (Heretic) and the performative emergence of affective counterpublics objecting disciplinary mechanisms of subjectification in the public sphere.

Keywords: *counterpublics, dissensus, performativity, subjectification, popular song*

* Phd in Ethnomusicology, Assistant Professor, University of Thessaly, e-mail: daphnetr@otenet.gr

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Δάφνη Τραγάκη

ΜΟΥΣΙΚΕΣ ΕΝΑΛΛΑΚΤΙΚΕΣ ΔΗΜΟΣΙΟΤΗΤΕΣ (COUNTERPUBLICS): ΗΧΟΙ ΔΙΑΦΩΝΙΑΣ ΣΤΗ ΜΟΥΣΙΚΗ ΤΟΥ ΓΙΑΝΝΗ ΑΓΓΕΛΑΚΑ

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Το άρθρο διερευνά την πολιτική διαφωνία (dissensus) στη μουσική οντολογία του Γιάννη Αγγελάκα και την ανάδυση εναλλακτικών δημοσιοτήτων (counterpublics), όπως έχουν θεωρητικοποιηθεί από τον M. Warner στην επικράτεια της μουσικής επιτέλεσης. Εστιάζει σε μια εθνογραφικά θεμελιωμένη συζήτηση για τις διαχρονικά δημοφιλείς αναμεσοποιήσεις του τραγουδιού «Δε χωράς πουθενά», οι οποίες κατανοούνται ως ευ-αισθησίες εναντίωσης που αμφισβητούν τον «μερισμό του αισθητού» όπως διατυπώνεται από τον JacquesRancière. Το «Δε χωράς πουθενά» επιτελεί μια μορφή αυτό-εξόριστης υποκειμενοποίησης, η οποία διευθετείται στα πλαίσια και, ταυτόχρονα, ενάντια στην κρίση της δημοκρατίας. Πρόκειται για μία οντολογία εκτοπισμού στο «πουθενά» όπου υλοποιούνται ουτοπικές αντιλήψεις της πολιτειότητας μέσα στις συναισθηματικές οικονομίες της πανκ-ροκ αισθητικής. Η μουσική διαφωνία του Αγγελάκα διερευνάται επιπλέον μέσα από τις μνημονικές διαδικασίες και τις σχεσιακά παραγόμενες ιστορίες-ζωής στα πλαίσια της εθνογραφικής συνάντησης. Η συζήτηση ενισχύεται από την ανάλυση του τραγουδιού «Αιρετικό» και της επιτελεστικής ανάδυσης συναισθηματικών «εναλλακτικών δημοσιοτήτων» που αντιπαρατίθενται στους πειθαρχικούς μηχανισμούς υποκειμενοποίησης στη δημόσια σφαίρα.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: εναλλακτικές δημοσιότητες, διαφωνία, επιτελεστικότητα, υποκειμενοποίηση, δημοφιλές τραγούδι

1. INTRODUCTION: POPULAR SONG AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Popular songs circulating the public sphere become sonic mediations of cultural intimacies, which through the lifeworld of their circulation in time and within changing performative networks emerge as public discourses creating the world in which they attempt to circulate and "attempt to realize that world through address." (Warner, 2002, p. 422). Several years after the original release of the song "De horas pouthena" (You don't fit anywhere) by the punk-rock group Trypes in 1993, Yiannis Angelakas, the group's singer-poet, still performs it in his concerts, often at the audience's request, (re)activating its ever powerful subversiveness and (re) constituting its affective economies within diverse contexts. "De horas pouthena" (You don't fit anywhere) was the opening song of the golden album *Enia Pliromena Tragoudia* (Nine Paid Songs, Virgin, 1993),[1] an immensely popular album that included songs, which have by now become commonplaces in Greek music scenes. Its sensibilities of dissent, at once transformative within diverse historical temporalities, either sensed as crisis or not, and perennially existing despite them, manage to reconcile timelessness and timeliness. The song's ontology transcends conventional dichotomies of the musical public spheres –such as "commercial"/"alternative"– as it (re)produces and is imbued with senses of emplacement and intelligibilities of the (urban)self where the 'mainstream' becomes "alternative", while the "alternative" overlaps, at the same time, with the "mainstream".[2] "De horas pouthena"–and Angelakas' music in total– has been enthusiastically received both in the overcrowded concerts organized in support of recently emerging or resurging social movements in Greece, such as the antifascist movement or, the 'square's movement', as well as in major performative venues run by local music industries, such as the Terra-Vibe Rockwave Festival, the various annual Greek music festivals and his scheduled concerts taking place in live stages throughout the country. All the while, Angelakas' self-produced music continues to virally circulate the media sphere, from radio broadcasts to its million web performances and ongoing reproductions.[3] To that extent, it paradigmatically questions the Marxist theoretical premise –mainly developed around the notion of 'culture industry'– that commodification and mainstreaming

1. The album sold at least 40,000 copies.

2. The song was originally popularized in live concerts organized in the context of the early 1990s students' movement.

3. Angelakas' music is produced and marketed by his self-run label "All together now".

cancel the countercultural qualities of the countercultural rendering it void of subversiveness.[4] The present analysis thus follows the epistemological shift from a concern with capitalist market as an instrumental mechanism determining the production of aesthetics and 'subcultures' to a concern with the ways capitalism provides the conditions for managing and negotiating creativity and the production of critically reflexive cultural forms and agents (see Negus, 2006).

2. PERFORMATIVE DISSENSUS

Considering aesthetics as a form of political praxis, a nexus where novel political possibilities can be realized has been defining the recent re-visiting of the art/politics interrelation, mostly inspired by Jacques Rancière's post-Marxist philosophical framework elaborated in *The Politics of Aesthetics* (2004). The present exploration of the punk-rock aesthetics of "De horas pouthena" takes this vein of thought as a starting point suggesting its interpretation as the sound of a dissensus that disputes the 'distribution of the sensible', the conditions determining and controlling what is possible to apprehend through senses. They are voicing a form of Dasein ("being-there") of exclusion and exclusiveness performing a critical break with the commonsensical, a critical break developing within the process of democratic conflict. Such a punk-rock disagreement, in Rancierian terms, is inherent in its struggles to gain presence claiming a life yet to come. "De horas pouthena" thus emerges as a determined negation of the late capitalist 'distribution of the sensible' by those who are left outside, or are willing to live outside it. It suggests instead its own, punk-rock 'distribution of the sensible' performatively constituted and legitimized in the song's lyrical and musical world.

As the verse "De horas pouthena" is recurrently sung throughout the song, it becomes the placeholder of the song's world view encapsulated in the (quest)ion of the subject's social displacement, the Dasein of not-belonging. It is a cry directly addressed in the second person ('you don't fit anywhere'), as if the singer speaks to each member of its (fantastic) audience separately, and, at the same time, as if he performs a self-referential monologue addressing himself as other. Soon the verse escalates to a fu-

4. Such a polemical notion of "culture industry" has been broadly theorized by the Frankfurt-school, especially in the writings of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, and has been variously echoed in sociological studies of popular culture and media.

rious scream questioning anything that suppresses the subject's desire for self-definition, and targeting any normality that defines a confined space where the subject is impossible to 'fit in': the homeland that is corrupt (the "vile country"), the future that is hopeful (the "blind hope"), the possibility for dreamwork that is now blocked (the "dream-catcher"), love as a condition of enclosure and subjugation (the "prison hug"), the failed conviviality and the lost pleasure of symbiosis (the "tasteless humor"), the marketing of sentimentalism (the "prostituted souls"), the body now dismembered into a fractured whole (the "broken body").

> If you don't fit inside a vile country[5]
> If a blind hope is not enough for you
> If you don't fit inside a dream-catcher
> If you don't fit inside a prison hug
>
> (Chorus)
> Then what a pity, a pity, a pity
> you're superfluous everywhere and you die everywhere
> then what a pity, a pity, a pity
> you don't fit anywhere, you don't fit anywhere
>
> If you don't fit inside a tasteless joke
> If a hard prayer is not enough for you
> If you don't fit inside a soul-brothel
> If you don't fit inside a broken body

The answer repeatedly sung in the chorus is "what a pity" – an answer cynically gesturing to a *comme-il-faut* phrase of social compassion. The chorus becomes the main stage for sarcastic dissent, as it provides the clue to all sort of "ifs" opening the preceding verses: If "you don't fit anywhere", then you, anyone, is in a state of superfluity("you're superfluous everywhere"); a state of occupying –"what a pity"– more space than that normally allowed and should be allowed. This paradoxical existence exceeding the normative limits for existing becomes problematic: both in terms of managing its own survival, since it asphyxiates by lacking the necessary space for breathing as well as, for those terms of liveability that are hegemonically regulated. Inevitably, it enters a state of excess-as-redundancy, a state in which the subject resists conforming to any normality, as it refuses to perform any existential reduction and submission, thus be-

5. Lyrics translated by the author.

coming dispensable at its own will. This intolerant to discipline and control subject is fatally condemned to a sort of social death ("you're dying") that is nonetheless proved to be an emancipatory one, since such a death can become the privileged liminal condition promising its provisional survival. Social death is thus the source of the counter-Dasein's power. Nowhere is its only available place to be.

Nowhere is also the place where those 'not-fitting-in' are becoming, in Warner's terms, a "strangerhood" here defined by the estranged singer (Warner,2002, p.417). Such performatively enacted contingencies of togetherness in the public sphere constitute Angelakas' multiple, changeable and open-ended counterpublics that exist "by virtue of being addressed" (op. cit., 414). "De horas pouthena" as a cultural form and public discourse emerges as a sort of "poetic world making" putting "at risk the concrete world that is its given condition of possibility" (op. cit.,422). Such a counterpublic of nowhere, addressed and constituted by this anthem of ultimate-not-belonging, suggests utopian notions of civility, however fragile and tentative. It is a civility performatively emerging in the absolutely displaced and fractured musical ontology that nonetheless rebels against and within the (post-)political consensus that define its liveability and subjectification. Or, against any consensus other than that of the shared utopian world –the imaginary self-organized world of those "not-fitting-in"– lived in its lyrics and sounds. It is constantly (re)materialized *in* song that becomes a modality of dealing with the aporia and the vulnerability of late liberal everydayness now and then. Foremost, it is a civility in crisis, and no less a critical civility, becoming in the grain of the singer's voice and the subversive punk-rock aesthetics and affective economies – an aesthetic regime primarily emerging in the realm of late capitalist urban milieu.

3. DECEMBER 2014: BLOCK 33

On the stage of "Block 33", one of the most popular concert venues in Thessaloniki (Northern Greece), I watch Yiannis Angelakas, dressed in his favorite blackshirt, constantly moving in a sort of improvised staggering dance, while nesting in his palms the microphone attached on a stand itself following his elaborately choreographed imbalance. His restless, back and forth, left and right steps soon to become jumps, as he is enraptured by sound, have the power to transform the enthusiastic audience into waves of moving bodies. Intoxicated with the desire to subvert –still in his fifty-four years of age at the time of writing– Angelakas' feverish movement pro-

duces his musical counter public as a movement: a forceful formation of bodies at least temporarily connected through their resistance against any stasis and stagnation in which case the movement's power to move ceases to exist. If this is a social movement-in-formation, then its primary topos of emergence is the body in music (see also Drott, 2015).[6]

Before long we are all in a constant movement. In a movement of euphoric rage –someone later described it as "methexis"[7]– raising our feasts in a gesture of demand and revolt. Both Angelakas' ecstatic performativity and our performativities are conditioned by the introductory fast double time emblematic of punk as a genre.

…
then what a pity, a pity, a pity
you don't fit anywhere, you don't fit anywhere
…

There is a looming explosiveness in those repetitive opening chords of "De horas pouthena" mediating a sense of the outrage that is about to blast. Immediately, we are taken by them. Although the song's performance in this case is discharged from the electric sonorities of Trypes as in this case it is orchestrated with acoustic guitar and *baglamas*, it sustains its power to move, to unsettle, no less because its punk-rock aesthetics are variously inscribed in our collective memory and bodies.[8] That is, the song's acoustic performance by the Angelakas 3 successfully reactivates imaginary past experiences of its punk-rock affective economies and is conditioned by their electrifying, noisy memories: the stormy drum beats, the nervousness of the bass line, the distorted, sharpened improvisations of the electric guitar – the punk-rock aesthetics of organized frenziness. The poet-singer's voice is still here, though, carrying all its histories of dissent in its grain, becoming the 'materiality of the body speaking its mother tongue' in Barthes' words (Barthes, 1977, p. 182).

It is a voice commonly acknowledged as the soundmark of Thessaloniki's punk past and of a present constantly targeting the foreclosures of its

6. Drott commented upon the experience of solidarity at a corporeal level: "The collapse of clear-cut boundaries between self and other in the auditory space…affords participants a way of transcending themselves and becoming part of a larger, social body" (Drott 2015: 176).

7. 'Methexis' ('methexi' in modern Greek) is a term used to describe affective belonging and the transcendence of the self, in order to achieve participation to a social whole and communion based on mutuality.

8. The song was performed by the 'Angelakas 3' group featuring Stathis Arabatzis (guitar), Dinos Sadikis (baglamas) and Christos Harbilas (electronics).

existence. At first, this was the result of Angelakas' more or less strategic reluctance, or refusal, to conform to the standard (Athenian-)Greek accent, despite his yearlong involvement with the cinematic world of Nikos Nikolaidis, for instance, or his recent participation at the Tectonics Festival reading John Cage's writings at Stegi Grammaton kai Technon in Athens, and no less despite its translocations through the musician's growing mobility and popularity throughout Greece.[9]The voicing of his words have thus retained a special musicality –signified in the celebrated (western) Thessalonikian pronunciation of "l" or the hissing "s"– one that is by-now broadly valued as a rather cliché sonority of Thessaloniki-as-place. These politics of accent become manifested in the grain of Angelakas' voice "beyond (or before) the meaning of the words" (Barthes 1977, p. 181). The voice thus ensounds topographies of the city emplaced "in the encounter between a language and a voice" (op. cit., 181), at once emerging as a disembodied object complexly located at the intersection between the inner self and the outer world (see Dolar, 2006).More than being an index of topos, its registers, resonances, breaths, rests, and tensions performatively produce the city as a place, as his place, a place of dissensus mediated through and imbued with affectivities of disagreement weaved in its histories of performativities and subjectivation.[10] Or, perhaps better, the voice becomes more than a theatre of meaning and more than a fetish, an object of heterodoxy itself. It is ingrained with the disposition to claim alternative modernities, a claim that is itself a form of empowerment relationally legitimated in song. Such a sovereign voice of exceptionality nurtured within the normativities regulating its existence has the power to fuel the concert's counterpublic as the second strophe concludes: "you don't fit anywhere, you don't fit anywhere".

All the while, the punk-rock tempo running throughout the song structures our experience of performative time that is lived as an affectivity of

9. The juxtaposition "Athens / Thessaloniki" embodies the longstanding duality "centre/periphery" lingering in the Greek collective memory. It is one also remediated in diverse narrativizations of cultural practices and attitudes (food, dance, time perception, body language, etc). As at once a discursive mechanism and a cluster of aesthetics, it is intended to explain the musical worlds associated with either cities in terms of an essentialized cultural difference between "South" and "North". It is therefore entangled within a bipolar imaginary of cultural production embedded within the historicization of Thessaloniki as a locality vis-a-vis Athens as Greece's capital.

10. Thessaloniki has been a hotbed of countercultural music scenes, especially punk and rock genres, ever since the 1970s. For the so-described "Thessaloniki school" in urban popular song see Tragaki (2007).

blissful emergency, a pulsing memory of alertness. Everyone is singing along, if not screaming. Everyone knows the lyrics by heart: we "don't fit anywhere, anywhere, anywhere". It feels like I am in a protest. Instantly, Angelakas steps away from the microphone offering to the grooving multitude space for singing. He smiles to his co-performers in a gesture of performative conviviality, sharing the intensity and fervency of the audience-becoming-song. During those heterotopic moments the alternative desire for "not-fitting-in" is becoming musically realized, collectively and relationally embodied. I become part of a pilgrimage of dissent.

4. FICTIONS OF A LIFE IN DISAGREEMENT

In the course of our ethnographic encounter, Angelakas has variously outlined the subjective poetics of his exceptionality, both during long conversations –starting during the winter of 2014–, as well as through his promptness to write a few complementary notes narrating his life-story.[11] I considered those personal notes –exclusively written in the context of our encounter– as intimate modalities of narrating the self; they constitute a sort of a meta-discourse *of* and *for* the self, intended to be shared with the ethnographer.[12] They are thus strategically produced fictions of Angelakas' life inspired within the relationality of the ethnographic process. As such they provided the necessary stimuli for reflecting upon the cultural/historical nexus defining the emergence of his dissensual ontology which is performatively (re)materialized in the context of the autobiographical process. In what follows I am going to translate selected excerpts (for the purpose of the text's economy) representing his musical subjectivity through an ethnographically-inspired memory-work. Those discursively lived experiences can contribute to an intersubjective understanding of Angelakas' poetics of dissensus as a form of common sense dialogically becoming:

> "I was born and lived the first nineteen years of my life in Neapoli, a quiet, poor district in Thessaloniki. I'm talking of course about the 1960s' Neapoli, which has nothing to do with the neurotic ectoplasm made of cement that stands in its place today bearing the same name. I'm talking about a poor's paradise that was full of playgrounds, gardens, small houses, neighborhoods, communities of tired, happy and mainly

11. On Angelakas' narration of his life-story see also Tragaki (forthcoming).

12. Elsewhere I have commented upon my ethnographic experience with Angelakas (see Tragaki 2015).

> alive people who didn't care about moral and philosophical concepts such as "solidarity", "companionship", "philanthropy" [here Angelakas' discourse gestures with sarcasm towards conventional values of morality] and so on, they naturally lived all together their humanity. And we, their lucky children, unleashed in the streets, we were blossoming in the summertime while playing outside from morning 'till night, until we were exhausted, knowing well the limits of our poverty and feeling like kings when we had the chance to hold in our hands a piece of *souvlaki* or a chocolate. Sundays were festive, our parents used to rest, there was some tasty food in the kitchen and the radios used to play various popular songs, some joyful, some sorrowful, others (how strange!) that were both joyful and sorrowful. That was the first music that I've heard."

Angelakas' memories of the happily poor suburbia mediate a strong sense of social positioning (the city's west-side urban working-class) nostalgically recalled as a self-interpretative discourse on the origins of his dissenting self. Despite his awareness of being reactionary nostalgic, his anathema against the politics of "progress" and the transformations of Greek society from the post-Junta era onwards is encoded to an anathema against what he ironically described as "the modern way of life".In his own (spoken) words, "I'm also suffering by the syndrome of the poors' lost paradise".[13] The brutal collapse of this paradise of *miserables* –that is here sensed as a childhood utopia, the land of an untainted humanity consisted of proudly deprived people– due to the rapid tempo of the 1970s "urban development" is remembered with disenchantment and cynicism. Disenchantment and cynicism are defining affectivities of his music, poetry and public discourse. They are both attached to a constant sense of loss and becoming lost within the so-perceived intolerable and inescapable present of Greek modernity. Such was the story of the loss, for instance, of the beloved cousin forced to migrate to Australia, or the loss of the neighborhood here imagined as kind of Gemeinschaft (community).[14]

> "One night my father's relatives were all gathered at our home, six brothers with their families, together with my grandfather and my grandmother, to farewell my uncle, my aunt and my beloved cousin

13. On Angelakas' reactionary nostalgia see Tragaki 2015.

14. A sort of Gemeinschaft, as it was theorized by F. Tönnies in 1887. Jameson reiterated the conceptual dichotomy of Gemeischaft vs Gesellschaft ("community" vs. "society") in his globalization theory (see, for instance, Jameson 2000).

> Tasoula, who were about to leave to Australia the day after. They were singing and dancing old popular and traditional songs all night long, they were laughing, they were debating, then they were again embracing each other, they were crying, they were shouting, then again singing. In the morning we all posed (I still have the photo) with moody faces in front of the gate of the railway station. Above us there was a big sign: "LONG LIVE THE REVOLUTION OF THE 21ST OF APRIL".[15] All this happened around 1968, I was eight years old then, I knew nothing, neither about Junta, nor about democracy, I've never heard political discussions at home. All the while, the little houses in our neighborhood were gradually demolished, big blocks of flats were built, and everyone, young and old, believed, more or less, that the modern way of life that was about to come would be better for all of us. In a few years, we found ourselves caged within apartments-boxes, confined in cheap armchairs in front of the new frenziness of the TV box, Sundays became boring, the families were absorbed in their own detached microworld, the neighborhoods were vanishing, the radios used to play some populist, nerveless petty-songs, with some tasteless bouzouki-playing and naive lyrics..."

Loss thus is framed within the advent of "the modern way of living" and the culture of Junta, which Angelakas sensed as a dramatic break from the, however idealized, past manifested within a cluster of rupturing shifts in history: from the neighborhood's imagined *communitas* to the disaffected and alienated microworld of the apartments, from the warmth and conviviality of the family revelry to the heartaches of migration, from the ambiance of cordial social symbiosis to the armchair-inertia of the alienated TV-viewers, from the Tsitsanis' and Kazantzidis' sweet-sorrowful songs saturating the suburbia's blissful Sundays to the radio soundscapes of "petty" popular songs. In this way, he mediates a sort of historical imagination and memory that is determined by crucial discontinuities to blame for the dystopias of the present.[16]It is within the affective economies of aporia and embarrassment with this dystopic "urban modern" where his dissensual ontology is gradually becoming. First, through the disappointment experienced with the politics of democracy-as-deceit, the realization of the impossibility of democracy:

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15. I follow the author's original text styling.

16. Angelakas often addresses a polemical public discourse against the hegemonic media, most recently attacking Petros Kostopoulos, the editor of lifestyle magazines broadly popularized in the 1990s.

> "During the era of *metapolitefsi* [meaning the era following the Junta's fall in 1974] I opened my eyes and I saw at last what I suspected a year before with the Polytechnio (I had asked my father then and his response was only a "don't bother").[17] I've learned about democracy and Karamanlis who was about to bring democracy after all."

All the while, he has been conquered by a growing sense of disillusionment with the post-Junta leftist Zeitgeist bitterly experienced both within the patriarchal domestic environment and the post-Junta political song scene:

> "I found out that my father was a communist and thus that communists were not those bulky, unshaven, brutal beast-people, who were dangerous for all us, the pure Greeks and, more important, that, at last, we were going to hear the revolutionary music by some Mikis Theodorakis. That was news! Unfortunately, the first song that I've heard by Theodorakis was "Ti Romiosini Mi Tin Klais" sung by the voice of Yiorgos Dalaras.[18] I felt such a disappointment that I was about to burst into tears. Fortunately, we already used to listen to some [songs] by the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, so we already had a sense that, although nothing happens in our country, some nice things are going on out there, in the rest of the planet. Soon, we came to know Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple...It was impossible for us to follow, and even more impossible to become fascinated with, the political song of *metapolitefsi*, it sounded so filthy, self-righteous, uninspired, anti-erotic, it was the field for building the new artistic and political careers, the "socialists", who have launched the transformation of the country into a land of loan-receivers and consumers. At home things were getting worse, my parents were transformed to depressed TV-viewers, and my father often used to violently outburst against me, he didn't like that I denied KNE [the Communist Youth of Greece organization], he didn't like my long hair, he didn't like my outfit, the music that I enjoyed, and so on. The leftist patriarchal system at home (the same with that of the right [meaning of the right-wing ideology]) was unbearable. I picked up a few things and I left home leaving behind some discs and a turntable."

17. "Polytehnio" refers to the violent riots that took place in the area of the Athens Polytechnic School against the Colonels' regime.

18. The song was illegally recorded in Greece, in 1973, following its original release in Paris the same year by EMI France. Angelakas has variously attacked Dalaras' music politics in his public discourse.

Becoming a social outcast has been a defining condition for his perpetually rebellious ontology growing out in the streets, surviving day-by-day, immersing in the soundscapes of countercultural rock music that was thought to encapsulate the missing rage of the, by then politically appropriated and nationalized, political song (*politico tragoudi*) scene. His music thus originated as a voice of defiance against this scornfully described musical world soon institutionalized through its entanglement with the cultural politics of the PASOK socialist government. The "socialist years" –the era of mainstreaming radical cultural forms by neutralizing their power through strategies of cultural populism– represent another historical break in Angelakas' narration as well as an impetus for performing historical judgment. A "not-fitting-in" himself, resentful of the patriarchal home, he refused to come to terms and conform to any of the received and supposedly unquestionable values of the "family", "communism", "ideology", "society", "nation", "democracy". This long period of self-exile, the experiences of at once deprivation, longing for freedom, and the effervescent wrath, brought to life the punk poet-musician:

> "In the following years I lived in the centre of Thessaloniki in students' apartments, I used to hang out in the city's newly launched rock bars, I used to attend the impromptu organized rock gigs here and there, I used to listen to pirate tapes bought from the university campus, psychedelic rock and the beautiful 1930s rebetiko songs...Somewhere around that time punk [music] came and gave us a new force, showing us how to make our own group, to play our music, to bring forward our madness, and respond to the stupidity seizing our neohellenic society. The media and the private TV-channels of the urban upper-class have imposed upon us the obscenity, the false-glamour, the cheap folk-pop as the nation's official culture [ironic phrasing] and the people, then with full stomach at last, unconditionally surrendered to easy-living, bad taste, moral nakedness proudly watching filthy-mangas [Greek slang word: *pseftomanges*] politicians dancing together with their followers some sophisticated, fake wussy-*zeibekiko*[Greek slang word: *florozeibekiko*] full of confidence, arrogance and self-satisfaction, each dancing-turn used to cost some million Euros, however nobody then understood anything and everything was flowing "nicely". The most beautiful story of my life started within all this trash, the story of Trypes that ended twenty years later..."

Punk in the 1990s was, for Angelakas, the musical dissensus against the "neohellenic", understood here to be a condition of decadence: a society in

decay living an "easy" life, thirsty for profit and looking for social prestige in the world of the booming stock-market, the deepening corruption of the political system, the lifestyle aesthetics of the private television, the conspicuous consumption of *skyladiko* entertainment practices, the resurgence of nationalism, the plague of neo-orthodoxy. The condition of "not-fitting-in" thus gradually emerged within a process of terminal intolerance constituting the core of his cultural –occasionally vitriolic– critique and alternativity, an alternativity also mediated as a sort of counterhegemonic form of knowledgeable detachment from the ways things are. Angelakas' music-world is thus narrated as a niche of agonistic difference entangled within the very system in which it emerges and which it detests. As his sensibility of refusal is transformed to a symbolic counter-cultural form, that is punk-rock music, it is inevitably legitimated as a common sense of dissent and a common placed disagreement, which nonetheless is still in effect. A disagreement perennially competing for power and value in relation and against other, more or less dominant or popular, art-worlds. It is effective as an alternativity made of dissenting sensibilities diffused in the public sphere, at once fighting and winning its own struggle for legitimation in the competitive field of cultural production that emerges, in Bourdieu's terms, as "a space of position takings" (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 30).

5. HERETIC COUNTERPUBLICS

Angelakas has in various occasions attacked church authorities, such as the late archbishop Christodoulos, who became the public embodiment of neo-orthodoxy throughout the 1990s,endorsing nationalism and xenophobia in his political discourse. In support of such neo-orthodox church politics the headlines of the 'yellow' newspaper *Espresso* disapproved of Angelakas' song "Airetiko" (Heretic) released in 2005 in the title featuring its headlines: "Obscene Song for the Archbishop. Indignation from Artists and the Church. The Singer from the Group "Trypes" Characterizes Him as "Wolf" and "The Devil that Leads the Dance of the Beast" " (*Espresso*, 14.06.2005). *Espresso*'s smirching of Angelakas represents one of the rare encounters of a scandal-devourer press with a countercultural symbolic form raising challenging questions about the sort of cultural politics entangled with the public aphorism of the song. Why should a populist journal famous for gossiping media celebrities care about headlining Angelakas? After all, the song's range of success, and the artist himself, could hardly reach the sort of popular aesthetics associated with *Espresso*'s readership.

"Airetiko" juxtaposed an affective economy of resentment and anger to the sort of "national sentimentality", in Berlant's words, discursively legitimized by Greek Church authorities, exemplified in the archbishop's emotionally charged public performativity (see McCabe, 2011).

> I don't know if God is hidden[19]
> inside your nails
> but you look more like
> a hungry wolf
> and when you preach the cattle
> for the good of the nation
> devil, I see you dancing the beast's dance

The metaphor of the beast portrays the Church authority through a gesture of reversal: the alleged blessed representative of the God's logos on earth is proven to be the despicable 'beast', the creature embodying Chistianity's imaginary of absolute evil. Who is then the agent of good? Perhaps, the musical counterpublic joined together by the unveiling of the "hungry wolf", no less the artist himself. During the song's performance at the concert organized in December 2008 in support of the then feverish riots fueled by Alexis Griroropoulos' murder by a policeman, the third strophe of the song exploded to a counterpublic of mostly young people publicly protesting against state violence and the growing sense of democratic deficit spreading throughout the country:

> Who' s digging my soul's darkness and when I'm happy who's crying
> Who' s struggling to make me hate my body and when I love it who's to blame
> Who's blocking and destroys my life and when I carry on who's crying
> Who's asking me to lower my voice and if I deny it who's to blame

The chorus escalates to a delirious cry cataclysmic of questions against normative morality blocking the subject's own fulfillment through disciplinary technologies of guilt and accountability: feeling guilty for gaining pleasure, guilty for immersing in the sensualities of the body, shame for raising one's voice, for demanding despite the set limits of desire, feeling accountable for moving beyond the confined space one is supposed to occupy. A subject objecting to its own body's subordination and transforma-

19. Lyrics translated by the author.

tion to a topos of moral control negates any accountability *vis-à-vis* discursive strategies of sin such as those imposed by the institutional religious authorities. The song thus cynically reappropriates a Christian morality and imagery of good (vs. evil) here implicitly identified with the heretic counterpublic struggling against the regulatory politics of its subjectification. This is a dub-styled empire of good reclaimed and orchestrated with Afro-jazz inspired brass sections spiced with elements of rebetiko subalterity that all together constitute its source of aesthetic sovereignty.[20]

In the context of the 2008 "Concert for Alexis" in Thessaloniki, which I happened to attend, the song was performed in front of an outraged multitude of young people shouting the well-known protest slogans "Batsoi, Gourounia, Dolofonoi" (Cops, Pigs, Murderers) –"Ellas Ellinon Astynomikon / Roufianon Dolofonon kai Vasaniston" (Greece of Greek Policemen / Snitches, Murderers and Torturers) broadly used in the anarchist and radical left political scenes. The massive sounding body of protesters reached its climax a few minutes before Angelakas and his band stepped on stage.The slogans were hatefully addressing the source of the evil in this case: the state and its institutional technologies of control, the policemen. In the midst of the audience's cries, Angelakas sat in front of the microphone holding an acoustic guitar with what appeared to be a rather skeptical expression addressing the agitated public with a soft speech tone. Evidently, he was worried about their reactions. Several days ago the city centre had been transformed to a battlefield. Armed police forces had been brutally fighting against the riotous groups of young people mainly targeting banks and department stores. "Guys, we've been saying those slogans for years now." Instantly, the hundreds-people multitude went silent. "It is about time to do something more essential."

He paused for a while, trying to remain calm though still intuitively sensing a sort of unpredictable insurgency in the audience. A few applauding comments were heard. He went on finishing his sentence keeping a rather tranquil tone of address: "Beyond slogans. I would prefer that your wrath becomes more a sort of consciousness, persistent presence in the streets, so as to manage transforming this circus to a country...I devote the song to our bishop Anthimos who is lately presented as a protector of state property and of banks". Bishop Anthimos, a proponent of neo-orthodoxy too, had denounced the 2008 rioting youth as "foreign agents" menacing the country in an attempt to associate the revolts with "dark" political forc-

20. The song was included in the album *Apo 'Do kai Pano* (All together now, 2005).

es. Soon, Angelakas' words were met with cries of approval and whistles. And the performance of "Airetiko" started. Played in the overcrowded event organized at the central square of YMCA, its infidel sounds were at once resisting the politics of neo-orthodoxy, and, perhaps, of any orthodoxy, questioning established tropes of voicing dissent and manifesting senses of suffocating injustice born within the crisis of democracy. The last verse of the second strophe was instantly transformed to a political slogan at once saturating and claiming the public sphere: "Devil, get away from me, you're hiding God!". The hundreds of protesters emerged as the heretic counterpublic that was further negotiated and regulated within Angelakas' dissensual sounds and their sustainable energy to inspire and orchestrate utopias, old and new. Either as commonplaced exceptionalities or as alternative commonplaces these timely and timeless musical utopias are defining sensibilities of the self lived in the public sphere.

6. POST-SCRIPTUM. DISSENSUS IN SONG

The counterpublics of "De horas pouthena" and "Airetiko", among other songs, are enacted in performativities of disjuncture vis-à-vis disciplinary sensibilities also legitimated in the public sphere, which are purposed to regulate the social and the self. They provide open-ended spaces for dissensual co-presence and the possibility for what Warner termed, a "relation among strangers" defined by its temporalities of circulation (Warner,2002, p. 417). All the while, the brief exploration of the ways dissensus is staged in Angelakas' musical and narrative worlds brings forward the problematics of the art/politics interface as a problematics departing from the pedagogical logic of art – one considering art to be an ideologically contextualized medium that conveys a message purposed to cause certain effects (see Rancière,2010, p. 136). It rather highlights the ways popular music forms an aesthetic regime for political subjectivation (in this case, the poetics of a "not-fitting-in", or of a "heretic" ontology)and for the production of civility becoming in the disposition for disrupting the normative mechanisms of consensus, or the "police order", in Rancière's terms. Popular song is thus exemplified here both as an aesthetic medium for performative, affected disagreement –a counterpublic– and a contingency for subverting what is given and justified as sensible and feasible, a subversion materialized primarily in sound. It is an empowering conflict-site for redistributing knowledge and truths or, for satisfying, at least, the claim to do so. To that extent, it corresponds to Rancière's understanding of the "aesthetic" as one that "designates the sus-

pension of every determinate relation correlating the production of art forms and a specific social function" (Rancière, 2010, p. 138). Such an aesthetic rupture defines the poetics of dissensus residing at the heart of Angelakas' music politics, an activity that "reframes the given by inventing new ways of making sense of the sensible, new configurations between the visible and the invisible, and between the audible and the inaudible, new distributions of space and time – in short, new bodily capacities", thus creating "a new form of dissensual commonsense" (Rancière, op.cit., p.139).

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