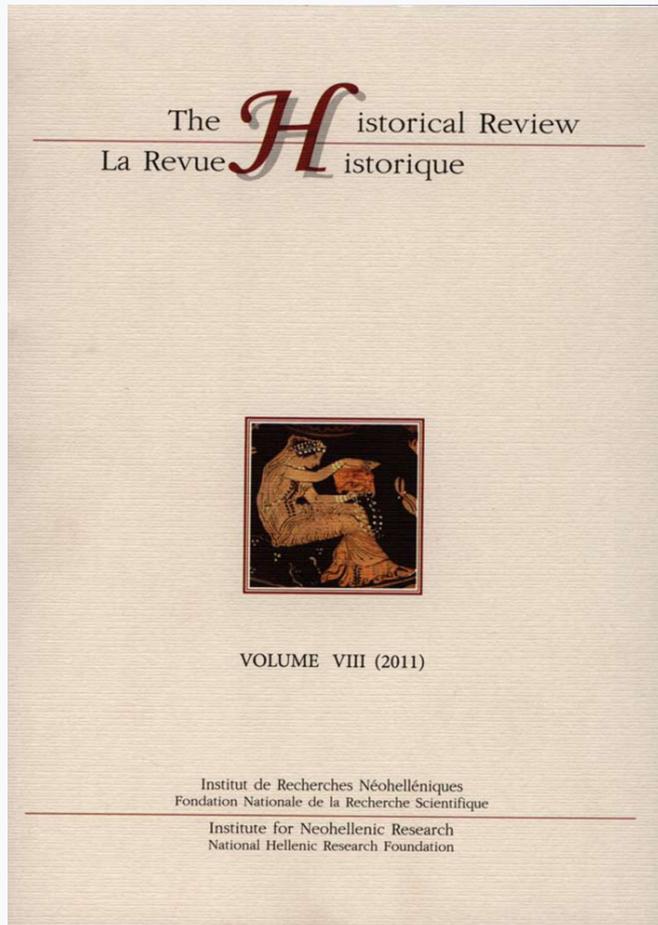


The Historical Review/La Revue Historique

Vol 8 (2011)



Nikos Kazantzakis and Travel Writing: Innovating in Poetics and Politics

Lena Arampatzidou

doi: [10.12681/hr.281](https://doi.org/10.12681/hr.281)

To cite this article:

Arampatzidou, L. (2012). Nikos Kazantzakis and Travel Writing: Innovating in Poetics and Politics. *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique*, 8, 179–208. <https://doi.org/10.12681/hr.281>

NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS AND TRAVEL WRITING:
INNOVATING IN POETICS AND POLITICS*

Lena Arampatzidou

ABSTRACT: The present article suggests that Nikos Kazantzakis in his travel writing achieves remarkable innovations both in the politics and the poetics of the travel genre. The innovation in the poetics of his travel writing consists in the generic hybridity between fiction and the travel genre, while the innovation in politics relates to its implication in racial narratives. The article does not detail the corpus of Kazantzakis' travel writings; the arguments are articulated paradigmatically based on Kazantzakis' travelogue on England, a mature travel text where innovation in both directions has been configured. The article comprises three parts where theory is combined with specific examples from Kazantzakis' travelogue on England: 1) the Introduction, where the issue of innovation is addressed; 2) the second part, Innovation in Poetics: Hybridity, where it is shown how Kazantzakis innovates in the poetics of the travel genre through certain rhetorical strategies and through translation; and 3) the third part, Innovation in Politics: Race, which discusses the dialogue of Kazantzakis' politics with race in relation to political theories from the past and the present.

Introduction

Nikos Kazantzakis (1883-1957) is famous worldwide for his novels *Zorba the Greek* (1946), for instance, or *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1951), which also met with great success as movies directed by M. Cacoyannis (1964) and M. Scorsese (1988) respectively. Until 1946, however, when *Zorba the Greek*, his first novel of maturity,¹ was published, Kazantzakis was mostly known for his travel writings. To provide an example, Professor G. P. Savvidis recognized

* I am indebted to Professor G. Kechagioglou for his strong, lasting support of my work, for broadening my view and for reading this paper, enriching it with his valuable suggestions. Words can only fail to express my heartfelt gratitude to Professor P. Bien, who virtually worked with me on the final form of the paper, offering me invaluable help in revising its theme and language by giving it his thorough, most perceptive glance. I am deeply grateful to Professor R. Beaton for taking the trouble to go through the paper in its initial form and providing me with important recommendations and remarks. Finally, my most profound thanks to Professor D. Tziovas for placing at my disposal an important part of his work to take into consideration.

¹ His first novel was *Serpent and Lily* in 1906. Unless otherwise stated, translations from Greek into English are mine.

Kazantzakis primarily as a great reporter and writer of impressive travel pieces; therefore his appreciation of Kazantzakis' work began with his travel writings.² Peter Bien also records that “by 1946, the year that *Alexis Zorbas*³ was first published in Greece, he [Kazantzakis] had already brought out the Greek editions of his travels in Spain, Italy, Egypt, Sinai, Russia, Japan, China and England”, which were “much appreciated, whereas his *Spiritual Exercises*, *The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel*, and plays were known only to a very limited coterie”.⁴ Bien's perceptive shift from Kazantzakis as a novel writer to Kazantzakis as a travel writer denotes the attention Kazantzakis' travel writing received until his first mature novel was published or, as Bien puts it, until “non-Greeks began to convince folks in Greece that they ought to pay some attention to the novels”.⁵

Acting as a correspondent for several newspapers and periodicals in Athens (namely *Νέον Άστυ*, *Ελεύθερος Λόγος*, *Ελεύθερος Τύπος*, *Αναγέννηση*, *Η Πρωΐα*, *Η Καθημερινή*, *Η Ακρόπολις*, *Νεοελληνικά Γράμματα*, *Η Νεολαία*, in chronological order of the articles' appearance), Kazantzakis transmitted his view of the world almost immediately through his articles. He later gathered these articles in volumes entitled *Ταξιδεύοντας* [Travelling] followed by the name of the country he was visiting. This period of travel writing started around 1907, when as a doctoral student Kazantzakis recorded his impressions of Paris, and ended in 1957, the year of his death, a year he contemplated elaboration of his book on China written in 1935. His main corpus of travel writing consists of articles on his journeys to the Soviet Union (twice: 1925, 1927), to Palestine, Cyprus (1926) and Spain (three times: 1926, 1932-1933, 1936), to Italy, Egypt and Sinai (1927), to Japan and China (1935), to the Peloponnese (Morea, 1937) and, last but not least, to England (1939). The lasting strength of his travel narrative can be seen in his last prose work, his fictional autobiography, *Report to Greco*, published after his death, where Kazantzakis structures major parts with recourse to previous travel narratives.

² Information coming from Kazantzakis' discussions with Professor G. P. Savvidis has been passed on to me by Professor G. Kechagioglou, to whom I am indebted. Confirmation of this information can be found in Savvidis' own words about Kazantzakis being “less of a poet and more of a encyclopaedist”; G. P. Savvidis, “‘Άξιον εστι' το ποιήμα του Ελύτη!” [“Axion esti”: Elytis' poem], *Πάνω νερά* [Waters upstream], Athens: Ermis, 1973, p. 148.

³ The novel was originally published under the title *Alexis Zorbas*.

⁴ P. Bien, *Kazantzakis: Politics of the Spirit*, Vol. II, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007, p. 16.

⁵ *Ibid.*

In this paper I will focus on Kazantzakis' travelogue on England, a text of mature travel writing, to show how he innovates in the politics and poetics of the travel genre. Kazantzakis travelled to England in 1939; his articles were written between 1939 and 1941 and were later gathered in the volume entitled *Ταξιδεύοντας. Αγγλία* [Travelling: England], which was published in 1941. Given that after his journey to England Kazantzakis would make one more journey – his last and final journey, to Japan and China in 1957 – it is understood that by the time he arrived in England he had already visited all the places he was to narrate and he had written the greater part of his travel narratives. By that time Kazantzakis had fully developed his poetics in the travel genre, and his travel narrative had reached its mature phase. His travelogue on England thus offers *par excellence* an opportunity to study how Kazantzakis challenges standard principles that define the travel genre and how he transforms that genre into a vehicle for politics, but most importantly how this vehicle of politics interfaces with race, pointing in the direction of today's politics.

Innovation in Poetics: Hybridity

Innovation constitutes Kazantzakis' crucial contribution to travel writing. Defining this innovation is the subject to be discussed. Bien suggests that, while the writer Kostas Ouranis was the one who invented travel writing, Kazantzakis was the one who established travel writing as “an art form for Greek letters”.⁶ Kazantzakis was not the first to write travelogues in Modern Greek literature. It has been established in several instances that travel narratives existed in Modern Greek writing long before the twentieth century and Kazantzakis' travelogues. Stelios Xefloudas, in the anthology *Ταξιδιωτικά* [Travel writing],⁷ presents Modern Greek travelogues that date back to the sixteenth century (e.g. by Iakovos Miloitis), and Dimitris Tziovas in his article “Indigenous Foreigners: The Greek Diaspora and Travel Writing (1880-1930)”⁸ presents a number of Modern Greek travel narratives written as early as 1880 by diaspora writers (Dimitrios Vikelas, Yiannis Psycharis and Alexandros Pallis). Although *Ελληνική ταξιδιωτική λογοτεχνία* [Greek travel literature] edited by Annita Panaretou does not distinguish between the travel genre

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁷ S. Xefloudas (ed.), *Ταξιδιωτικά* [Travel writing], Athens: Zacharopoulos, 1956.

⁸ D. Tziovas, “Indigenous Foreigners: The Greek Diaspora and Travel Writing (1880-1930)”, in *id.* (ed.), *Greek Diaspora and Migration since 1700*, Ashgate: Farnham & Burlington, 2009, pp. 157-174.

and travel literature, does not divide travel literature into periods spanning from Homer to the twentieth century and does not follow a chronological order in the presentation of texts, it provides very early examples of travel writing that might be classified as Modern Greek in texts written by Nikolaos Messaritis (thirteenth century), Andreas Livathenos (fourteenth century), Sylvestros Syropoulos and Kananos Laskaris (fifteenth century), Arsenios, Archbishop of Elassona, Iakovos Miloitis, Nikandros Noukios (sixteenth century), etc.⁹ It is evident that the pioneering role of Kazantzakis does not relate to the initiation of travel writing but to innovation in travel writing.

Kazantzakis' paradigm specifies the innovation in travel writing as innovation in the travel genre, which is what this paper suggests and will study in his travelogue on England. Charted in the area of poetics, this generic innovation can be further identified with the genetic modification of the genre. Kazantzakis effects this genetic change by mixing genres within the travel genre, establishing hybridity as the main feature of his travel narrative. The hybrid identity of the travel genre in Kazantzakis' paradigm challenges basic rules that apply to the construction of the genre. If the genetics of the travel genre presupposes certain structures, Kazantzakis comes in to deconstruct these structures and destabilize the genre by inserting structures of another genre, namely the novel.

The distinct features that define the genetic structures of the travel genre and the novel have often been addressed in literary theory, where the line between the two genres has been drawn at the boundary separating the non-fictional from the fictional. Theorists have expounded more effectively on this distinction by focusing on the space of travel writing, where they tend to distinguish between "the genre 'travel book' or 'travelogue' (mainly known as 'travel genre') as a predominantly non-fictional genre and 'travel writing', 'travel literature' or 'literature of travel' as overall headings for fictional texts whose main theme is travel".¹⁰ Paul Theroux rephrases the distinction when he acknowledges that "the difference between travel writing and fiction is the difference between recording what the eye sees and discovering what the imagination knows".¹¹

⁹ Annita P. Panaretou (ed.), *Ελληνική ταξιδιωτική λογοτεχνία* [Greek travel literature], Vol 1: *Η μακρινή πορεία των απαρχών ως το 19ο αιώνα* [The long way from the beginnings to the nineteenth century], Athens: Epikairoitita, 1995.

¹⁰ J. Borm, "Defining Travel: On the Travel Book, Travel Writing and Terminology", in *Perspectives on Travel Writing*, ed. G. Hooper and T. Youngs, Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004, p. 19.

¹¹ P. Theroux, *The Great Railway Bazaar: By Train Through Asia* [1975], London: Penguin, 1979, quoted in Borm, "Defining Travel", p. 15.

The definition of the travel genre is formulated to a large extent by its juxtaposition to fiction, which underlines the non-fictional as the main element of its genetics. This juxtaposition stresses the travel genre's appeal to rationalism and brings out its specific characteristics that connect with scientific, journalistic or rationalistic discourse. To term some of these characteristics one can mention discursive writing¹² or the reduction of the potential for imaginative readings¹³ as opposed to the fictional characteristics of the "refusal of academic jargon and professional anthropology's modes of arguing", "the use of narrative" and "the personal implication of the author".¹⁴

This idea of generic purity is seriously challenged in Kazantzakis' travel narratives, where frequent transitions occur between the non-fictional and the fictional. Loosely observing the generic borders and allowing a free circulation of rhetorical tropes between the two divergent areas, Kazantzakis' poetics seems to be closer to Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of the complex genre¹⁵ or Hans Robert Jauss' idea of the "mixed genre",¹⁶ but it is also most likely to suspend the travel genre to Jacques Derrida's prognosis of a parasitical economy, the principle of contamination and eventually the law of impurity.¹⁷ How this poetics of hybridity functions will be explored next in his travelogue on England.

Earlier in this paper we recorded that Kazantzakis travelled as a correspondent for the Greek press and in the first place wrote his travelogues in his capacity as a reporter. Bien recalls the fact that travel writing was a "realistic" source of income for Kazantzakis, emphasizing that at the same time he achieved major accomplishments in the travel genre.¹⁸ Kazantzakis' travel writing is revealed as the unexpected trajectory from a means of living to a means of thinking or, as this paper suggests, from a non-fictional journalistic text to a fictional imaginative one. The itinerary between non-fiction and fiction can be traced in Kazantzakis' paradigm both externally and internally, both extra-textually and intra-textually. Starting from the outside

¹² Borm, "Defining Travel", p. 24.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

¹⁴ P. Aurégan, *Des récits et des hommes – Terre Humaine. Un autre regard sur les sciences de l'homme*, Paris: Nathan/Plon, 2001, quoted in Borm, "Defining Travel", p. 23.

¹⁵ M. M. Bakhtin, "The Problem of Speech Genres", *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. C. Emerson and M. Holquist, Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1986, p. 61.

¹⁶ H. R. Jauss, "Littérature médiévale et théorie des genres", in *Théorie des genres*, ed. G. Genette and T. Todorov, Paris: Seuil, 1986, p. 44.

¹⁷ J. Derrida, "The Law of Genre", *Critical Inquiry* VII/1 (1980): On Narrative, p. 59.

¹⁸ Bien, *Kazantzakis*, p. 16.

of the text and from external – extra-textual – hybridity, this paper will move to the inside of the text so as to approach internal – intra-textual – hybridity.

External hybridity may be perceived in Kazantzakis' identity both as a journalist and as a novelist. This split – or, better yet, mixed identity – between travel and novel writing generates the internal hybridity of his travel text that transgresses fixed borders between non-fiction and fiction. Kazantzakis' journey to England assumes in a way the character of a milestone between his two identities and the two genres of speech he works on, the non-fictional and the fictional. Before he went to England, Kazantzakis had completed most of his travelogues but none of his mature novels. In general we could say that his corpus of non-fictional writing was almost complete, while his corpus of fictional writing lacked a substantial part, the prose works that gained him worldwide acceptance, his novels of maturity.

It should be mentioned that before his journey to England he had published the greatest part of his non-fictional work, which, apart from his travel writings, included translations, encyclopaedia articles and essays. However, he had also completed a considerable part of his fictional writing, including (prose) poems, smaller narratives, theatrical plays, film scripts in Modern Greek and French, the philosophically oriented *Spiritual Exercises* and most importantly his verse epic *The Odyssey*, which he distinguished as his *magnum opus* and cherished above all his work. *The Odyssey* was published in 1938, and Kazantzakis travelled to England in 1939. After his journey to England he retreated from travel writing to focus on novel writing and produced the well-known novels that today's reader esteems the most. It might be alleged that, when Kazantzakis left Greece to travel to England, when he left home to enter the world, he left fiction to enter non-fiction; he left poetry and his masterpiece to enter the travel genre. In the same sense his return from England to Greece mapped the reverse transition from non-fiction to fiction or from the travel genre to the novel. This allegation fails, however, if we take into consideration the constant movement between non-fiction and fiction in Kazantzakis' creativity.

Kazantzakis' friend Pantelis Prevelakis provides us with the information that during his journey to Russia Kazantzakis longed to return and devote himself to the writing of *The Odyssey*.¹⁹ In the letters Kazantzakis sent from Russia to Prevelakis he repeatedly confesses that he is looking forward to

¹⁹ P. Prevelakis, *Ο ποιητής και το ποίημα της Οδύσσειας* [The poet and the poem of the Odyssey], Athens: Estia, 1958, p. 49.

the end of his journey in Russia so that he might go back to *The Odyssey*.²⁰ It is particularly interesting that Kazantzakis refers to his journey in Russia as his Russian “service”,²¹ a term that voices his resentment concerning the utilitarian scope of his journey. Still, while travelling within Russia and within the travel genre through his articles, Kazantzakis pledges allegiance to another genre, poetry, in gathering material for it:

I am touring Caucasus, my eyes are full again; *The Odyssey* is expanding. [...] all that I am living and watching, people, colours, desserts, rivers can only mean one thing to me: becoming *The Odyssey*. [...] I have to travel through all of Russia to collect scenes, turbulence, colours for *The Odyssey*. Otherwise my stay here does not have much of a meaning. [...] The entire essence of my journey will only fill *The Odyssey*.²²

Kazantzakis is not blocking his creativity. When he goes into Russia, when he moves into his travelogue on Russia, he takes *The Odyssey* along; he keeps an alien genre, poetry, with him. The great hope of the traveller, according to Kazantzakis, is finding at the world’s end the pictures, the scenes that express his soul and help him save and be saved.²³ These words capture for Kazantzakis the essence of a journey which transcends the utilitarian, non-fictional cause to reach to the fictional appeal. This can be held to apply generally to his travel writing and define its external hybridity: the journalist on the outside conceals the novelist inside. We have seen that, when Kazantzakis travels around Russia, when he wanders around the travel genre, he is searching for scenes, for people, for words, for the rhetoric of fiction. How he encounters fiction and achieves the internal hybridity of the genre will be studied in his travelogue on England.

When he embarks for England, Kazantzakis is headed towards travel journalism but still encounters fiction. The encounter takes place on a ship while he is crossing the Channel, while he is crossing over from home to the world or from external to internal hybridity. Kazantzakis is on the ship looking around, observing so as to record his impressions in his travel text. Typically the narrator of a travelogue assumes the position of the subject that observes the object and so does Kazantzakis: as the writer of a travelogue he starts narrating by assuming a position of quasi-journalistic documentary

²⁰ *Id.* (ed.), *Τετρακόσια γράμματα του Καζαντζάκη στον Πρεβελάκη* [Four hundred letters from Kazantzakis to Prevelakis], Athens: Kazantzakis, 1965, pp. 69, 82, 90-91.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 59, 74, 96, 104.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

objectivity, the position of the subject that observes the object. Soon, however, he will move into the space of the object when he spots a young Englishman on board and engages in dialogue with him. The young Englishman constitutes part of the object for as long as the subject observes from the outside. When Kazantzakis leaves the position of the subject to interact with the object by means of a dialogue, he crosses the border between the subject and the object and becomes part of the object.

Pierre Aurégan talks about the false dichotomy between the subjective and the objective and recognizes the breaking down of this false dichotomy as the point where fiction is realized.²⁴ Roland Barthes suggests more or less the same thing in stating that an object, when we look at it, becomes a lookout in its turn and turns into an object which sees, a glance which is seen.²⁵ In this sense, when Kazantzakis is looking at England, England gives back the glance and (re)turns to the travel writer through a dialogue. This rhetorical strategy employed by Kazantzakis entails the personal implication of the author, and it is the “personal implication of the author” or the “scenic representation of the *I*” that Aurégan defines as the distinct characteristics of fiction.²⁶ Besides, extended dialogue in travelogues has been noted by David Lodge to indicate the fictional technique of scenic construction and to embed fiction in travel writing.²⁷

Along the same track Bien understands Kazantzakis’ pioneering role in the travel genre as the “nonintellectual and nonanalytic” aim of evoking people and their surroundings,²⁸ which he further identifies with the invention of people and situations.²⁹ Bien cites examples of people in Kazantzakis’ travel writings whose existence in real life is contested but whose presence in the text reinforces the articulation of his ideas.³⁰ Bien cogently suggests that Kazantzakis engages in fictional dialogues that never took place in real life, dialogues with fictional people. He gives specific examples of phrases where the voice of Kazantzakis is heard behind the person that speaks, when for instance a European friend is telling him that when the Idea is reaching for the people it “makes up her face, yields to secret embraces of love, is

²⁴ Aurégan, *Des récits et des hommes*, quoted in Borm, “Defining Travel”, p. 24.

²⁵ R. Barthes, *The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1979, p. 4.

²⁶ Aurégan, *Des récits et des hommes*, quoted in Borm, “Defining Travel”, pp. 23-24.

²⁷ D. Lodge, *The Practice of Writing: Essays, Lectures, Reviews and a Diary*, London: Secker & Warburg, 1996, p. 8.

²⁸ Bien, *Kazantzakis*, p. 17.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 20.

all belly and womb".³¹ Bien does not refer to the young Englishman of the travelogue on England, but I think he could be included in the paradigm of people Kazantzakis invents to have conversations with. Bien's argument that Kazantzakis invents people means that he introduces fictional characters in the travel genre and therefore stresses the fictional element in his travel narrative even without the use of the exact term. The presence of the young Englishman can only strengthen the argument about Kazantzakis' technique of introducing fictional people in his travel narratives.

We observed how the travel genre, which is generically defined as rational and reflecting reality, is interrupted by fictional strategies like the introduction of fictional characters that engender fictional dialogues; how the subject breaches its separating line with the object and goes into the text, connecting a real with a fictional person over a conversation; how the modalities employed in the text attribute a fictional profile to the travel genre, blending the real with the fictional, breeding fiction within the travel genre. In all these cases the travel genre is genetically modified and hybridity is established. This is how the travel genre operates in Kazantzakis' paradigm and how we understand what we termed internal hybridity, a hybrid identity that is deduced from evidence within the text. Therefore when Kazantzakis is crossing the Channel, he is crossing the borders between the travel genre and fiction, homogeneity and heterogeneity. Leaving fiction to write travelogues, he ends up breeding fiction within travelogues, creating hybridity that breeds *différance*, to use Derrida's term.³²

Internal hybridity, as the extension into the text of the external hybridity in Kazantzakis' identity as a journalist and a novelist, can be seen to encompass an ambivalent attitude towards fact and fiction or a "double stance" towards "a report on the world and an invention that parodies that report", to use Lennard Davis' words.³³ The term "factual fiction"³⁴ that Davis adopts conceptualizes the tension between "factuality" and "fictionality", which he solves based on characteristics like embodiment, recentness, the median

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³² J. Derrida, "Différance", *Margins of Philosophy*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982, pp. 1-29.

³³ L. Davis, *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983, p. 212.

³⁴ Davis focuses on the complex attitude of the narrative towards lived experience in his study of the novel. The function of the novel suggested by Davis is "masking 'science' (factuality) with the emotive or practico-social ideological function (fictionality)"; *ibid.*, p. 217.

past tense, seriality, continuity, reduction of cognitive space, voyeurism, and collapsing of subject and object.³⁵ The criteria he proposes for the distinction between fiction and fact, particularly if we take into consideration the “reduction of cognitive space” and the “collapsing of subject and object”, converge on the opinions previously presented.

We have shown earlier how the tension between fact and fiction is at the core of the internal, intra-textual hybridity in Kazantzakis’ travel narrative. There is another tension, the tension between the literal and non-literal use of language that is at the core of this rhetoric of hybridity. This interplay between the literal and non-literal becomes a most effective technique in the hands of Kazantzakis, a rhetorical strategy he activates in the field of translation. The implication of a real person, the travel writer, in dialogue with a fictional person, the young Englishman, this hybridity between fact and fiction, can be further read as the implication of a Greek narrator, that is, a foreign speaker in dialogue with an English native speaker. This is how the fictional dialogue as a rhetorical strategy enables Kazantzakis to bring together in conversation two speakers of different languages and through this communication contemplate language and race.

The dialogue between two foreigners proves particularly useful for Kazantzakis because it allows him to introduce a new mode of translation, where translation is made word for word and does not transfer the overall meaning of a sentence from one language to the other, but the meaning of each word separately. Kazantzakis’ ingenious manipulation of this rhetorical device, which operates in between the literal and the non-literal use of language, cultivates impediments to the understanding of a foreign language and constitutes one more innovation since it challenges the stereotyped use of language. Furthermore, through this device Kazantzakis effects his passage from the area of poetics to the area of politics, where the interface with language transcribes the interface with race.

To be more precise, the question “How old are you?”, used in the English language to ask about age, is reversed in Kazantzakis’ text to fit the races of the East. It is argued that the question “How old are you?” should not be used by a young race, such as the English race, but by old ones, such as the Greek race, to denote that even the age of their young children starts from a senile basis. The finding of a young child who spells his old age becomes effective due to the literal translation of the English phrase “How old are you?” into Greek: “Δεν έπρεπε η εγγλέζικη γλώσσα να ’χει την έκφραση τούτου: Πόσο

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

γέρος είσαι;’ όταν ρωτά για την ηλικία κι ενός ακόμα παιδιού & έπρεπε να την είχαμε εμείς, και τ’ ανατολίτικα παιδιά ν’ απαντούν: ‘Είμαι γέρος δυο χρονών... τριών χρονών...’” [The English language should not have the expression “How old are you?” when asking about the age even of a young child; it is us who should have it and the Eastern children should respond: “I am old two years now...three years now...”]³⁶

The translation of the phrase from English into Greek is made word for word. While the phrase in its stereotyped use in the English language brings out a meaning as a total, Kazantzakis’ translation breaks down the total to its constituent elements: the phrase to its words. The fragmentation of the phrase that Kazantzakis employs in translation deconstructs traditional aspects of language that presuppose the “totality of intention”, as Walter Benjamin puts it.³⁷ It also vindicates Benjamin’s assumption that “all individual elements of foreign languages – words, sentences, structure – are mutually exclusive”.³⁸ Kazantzakis’ translation does not only challenge the concept of language but the concept of translation itself as an act of uniform movement, a movement that transfers equal or at least equivalent meanings between languages. Since the phrase of a language is not translated with an equal phrase from another language, translation does not familiarize but instead defamiliarizes and estranges the phrase from its common use. The departure of the phrase from its common lexical usage effects the deconstruction of a stereotype, the stereotyped use of language.

The transference of an equivalent meaning from the source language to the target language³⁹ that substantially defines translation is seriously questioned in Kazantzakis’ translation, which virtually prevents access to the conventional meaning and cultivates impediments to understanding. This defiance of the sense of understanding as the “passage from form to meaning” claims in turn an alternative substance for translation, a “distinctive mode of

³⁶ N. Kazantzakis, *Ταξιδεύοντας. Αγγλία* [Travelling: England], Athens: Kazantzakis, 1969, p. 46.

³⁷ W. Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator”, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. H. Arendt, New York: Schocken Books, 1978, p. 74.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ “Transference” and “equivalence” are terms used to define translation procedures, while “word for word”, “literal” and “faithful” are terms that define translation methods according to Peter Newmark, who distinguishes between translation methods that relate to whole texts and translation procedures that are used for sentences and smaller units of language; P. Newmark, *Approaches to Translation*, Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall, 1988, pp. 81-83.

understanding” that negotiates an identity of translation as “misreading”.⁴⁰ Therefore, when Kazantzakis engages in the act of translation, he is not actually translating; instead, he is misreading and innovating by establishing a new definition of translation. In escaping the stereotyped use of language with its crystallized connotations, Kazantzakis’ literal treatment of the phrase, in other words his literal method of translation, points to a non-literal⁴¹ use of language, as we have shown in the example above. From this point on, links to the fictional use of language are easily provided. The relation of the travel genre to fiction and the question of diverse or converging genres is a matter we tested in the area of poetics.

Considering the critical function of translation, Benjamin wonders: “Translation keeps putting the hallowed growth of languages to test: how far removed is their hidden meaning from revelation, how close can it be brought by the knowledge of this remoteness?”⁴² Kazantzakis’ paradigm of translation answers Benjamin’s question. Applying the literal approach to a phrase, Kazantzakis’ translation takes it away from its given surroundings, its known context, and in this remoteness it transliterates its hidden meaning, it transliterates race – because in this case the hidden meaning behind age is race. While translation operates as a way of transition from poetics to politics, I think we are allowed to conclude that Kazantzakis does not translate between languages, he translates between races. Kazantzakis’ translation brings out the political aspect in travel writing and becomes a vehicle that introduces the issue of race into his travel narrative, suggesting its implication in politics.

The relation of translation to travel writing has been discussed by Susan Bassnett, who wonders whether the translator is “a transparent channel, a kind of glass tube through which the source language text is miraculously transformed in its passage into the target language” or if “the translator is [himself] an element in that process of transformation”.⁴³ In reply to the

⁴⁰ G. G. Harpham, “Aesthetics and the Fundamentals of Modernity”, in *Aesthetics and Ideology*, ed. G. Levine, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994, p. 134.

⁴¹ I adopt the term non-literal instead of the term metaphorical as a wiser choice after Paul de Man’s demolition of metaphor as a distinct feature of fictional language. To cite just the main point of his argument: “Between genetic movements in history and semiological relationships in language, the rhetorically self-conscious reading puts into question the authority of metaphor as a paradigm of poetic language.”; P. De Man, “Genesis and Genealogy (Nietzsche)”, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979, p. 102.

⁴² Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator”, pp. 74, 75.

⁴³ S. Bassnett, *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*, Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1993, p. 99.

question, Bassnett argues that translating as well as travelling and map-making “are not transparent activities” but “very definitely located activities, with points of origin, points of departure and destinations”.⁴⁴ All three activities, according to Bassnett, lead to the production of a text in a process that shapes and conditions attitudes to other cultures. From her standpoint, that is verified in the case of Kazantzakis, since “translators intervene in the interlingual transfer with every word they choose” and “travel writers constantly position themselves in relation to their point of origin in a culture and the context they are describing”.⁴⁵

Kazantzakis’ paradigm in which the travel writer and the translator coalesce verifies Bassnett’s view that the translator’s choices announce an act of intervention in the practice of interlingual transference and that the travel writer determines his context in relation to the point of his origin. As a translator, Kazantzakis strongly intervenes in the transference of meaning between languages, but more importantly he positions himself in terms of his origin as he transforms the translation between languages into a translation between races, the new ones and the old ones. The major subject of “constructing cultures” through travel texts is addressed by Bassnett in a discussion which concludes that “the language of East and West comes to acquire a political significance”.⁴⁶ Once more her succinct conclusion is verified in the case of Kazantzakis, whose travel writing focuses on the racial conception of the Easterner and the Westerner as he formulates their distinction by means of translation.

Innovation in Politics: Race

Kazantzakis’ journey to England might be described as an encounter with race. His confrontation with the young Englishman and the consequent dialogue he establishes with him validate the specificity of his journey within the dynamics of a racial practice. The dialogue unfolds a process that invokes the consciousness of racial identity and is perceived by Kazantzakis as a confrontation between the representative of an aged, worn-out race of the East and the representative of a young, unused race of the North. While travel constitutes the topos, the place where the conception of the self is formed, travel writing formulates the representation of the self in terms of race, that is, in relation to the other. The racial conception of the self emerges

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 103, 114.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

on the ship that crosses the Channel, where the two interlocutors meet. Their acquaintance, which continues as a dialogue along the docks of Folkestone Harbour, presents an ideology – as opposed to knowledge – of the self as a representative of his race. At the sight of the young Englishman, the narrator captures the image of himself as an Easterner while facing the Westerner as the other. The image of himself conceptualizes features of a race worn out through thousands of years in the tortured ports of the East (i.e. the Eastern Mediterranean) breathing in an air satiated with longing, an aged race carrying the burden of a long-time memory. This burden does not exempt the younger members of the race, but weighs heavily on them, bequeathing the experience of a life not lived, contracting in them the weariness of a life not yet experienced:

Κάποτε συλλογιέμαι πως εμείς που ερχόμαστε από τ' ανατολικά λιμάνια, τα πολυβασανισμένα, τα πολυδουλεμένα, που ο αγέρας τους, χιλιάδες τώρα χρόνια, είναι κορεσμένος από λαχτάρες, είμαστε σαν παμπόνηροι γέροι που πάμε στον αθώο και βάρβαρο εφηβικό βορρά και το μάτι μας είναι αχόρταγο πάντα κι αρπαχτικό, μα αλαφριά κουρασμένο και περιπαιχτικό, σα να 'ξερε τα πάντα. Γριές ό,τι κι αν κάνουν, οι ράτσες τούτες της Ανατολής, θύμησες βαριές, προαιώνιες, και στο πιο ασήμαντο ανατολίτικο παιδί μορφάζει μια ζωή που ξεπερνάει τη λιγόχρονη εμπειρία του ατόμου και πιάνει ολόκληρη τη μνήμη της ράτσας.

[Sometimes I contemplate that we who come from the Eastern ports, the highly tortured, worn-out ports whose air has been, thousands of years now, satiated with longing, we are like shrewd old men who go to the innocent and barbaric adolescent north and our eye is always greedy and voracious, but slightly tired and mocking, as if it knew everything. Old no matter what they do, these races of the East, heavy memories, dating centuries ago, and in the least important Eastern child there grimaces a life that goes beyond the short-lived experience of the individual and spreads all over the memory of the race.]⁴⁷

Coming from a cycle of races where senility cannot be cancelled, the racial identity of the East is represented as lurking against its counterpart of the North, which embodies a racial identity of juvenile innocence. Kazantzakis' confrontation with the East and the West acquires the significance of his confrontation with race. While crossing the Channel Kazantzakis is not crossing over “from nation to narration”, as the post-colonial critic Homi

⁴⁷ Kazantzakis, *Ταξιδεύοντας*. Αγγλία, p. 46.

Bhabha has taught us to read,⁴⁸ nor is he making the reverse transition from narration to nation; what is dominant in his travel narrative is not nation but race. When Bhabha decodes nation in narration he discusses the matter of narration as intertwined with notions of nation. If travel writing involves a discourse that tends from nation to narration or vice versa, to adopt the model introduced by Bhabha, Kazantzakis is sure to disrupt this sequence, since he does not involve himself in national, nationally generated narratives or the discourse on nation. Nation is not included in the rhetoric of his politics. Race is. The emphasis on race acquires a particular significance in relation to Kazantzakis' sociopolitical and literary synchrony, as we will see later in this paper, but it also achieves an excellent timing with the globalized politics of today and the preoccupation with issues of race that allows a reading based on current political theory.

Eliminating affinities with the signifier "nation", the narratives Kazantzakis employs "are traversed by a heterogeneous act of narration"⁴⁹ in their interface with the signifier "race". This shift from "nation" to "race" in Kazantzakis' case transforms Bhabha's claim, which can be rephrased as "from narration to race" or as "an interface with race", to maintain Bhabha's modality. The shift that occurs in the axis of paradigm poses the question of the equivalence between the signifiers "nation" and "race" or their connection to the signifieds, a question that might be furthered to their relation or interrelation. Discussing the relation between "race" and "nation" through their derivatives "racism" and "nationalism", the post-colonial critic Étienne Balibar perceives a "fluctuating gap" between "the representations and practices of racism and nationalism", where racism is defined as "a supplement of nationalism [...] always indispensable to its constitution [...]".⁵⁰ According to Balibar, racism operates from the inside of nationalism, obliterating heterogeneity so as to project a universalized, homogenized image on the outside. Within this framework race would be construed as a core inside nation that performs supplemental acts in the direction of a unified national entity.

Kazantzakis' narratives could verify Balibar's model in so far as that model concerns the energy released by race. The power involved in the

⁴⁸ H. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, London and New York: Routledge, 1990.

⁴⁹ S. Manning and A. Taylor, "The Nation and Cosmopolitanism: Introduction", in *Transatlantic Literary Studies: A Reader*, ed. S. Manning and A. Taylor, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007, p. 18.

⁵⁰ É. Balibar, "Racism and Nationalism", in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, ed. É. Balibar and I. Wallerstein, London: Verso, 1991, p. 54.

activity of the race, recognized by Kazantzakis, would be expected to exert on him the strong attraction that it does, inciting him to externalize race contrary to Balibar, who internalizes it when placing it inside the nation. Within Kazantzakis' politics, race is given an overarching role as opposed to the supplemental role it is assigned in Balibar's model; in Kazantzakis' politics either race takes precedence over nation or both signifiers are treated as equal. When Kazantzakis visits England, he assumes, as we have seen, the identity of the representative of an old Eastern "race", not an old Eastern "nation". Race in its historical and universal appeal proves more reliable when Kazantzakis leaves home to enter the world. When Kazantzakis leaves Greece, he is leaving behind the nation or state that captures a limited part of the race, while opening to the globe, where the greater part of race is spread. Attributing to race a wider and stronger sense than he does to nation, Kazantzakis meets the universal conception that contains nation and in this sense externalizes race, contrary to Balibar who internalizes it by considering it a part of the nation.

Kazantzakis relies on race as more intelligible in the universal context, a value that would reassure him a solid identity and a recognizable presence. The trust he places in race echoes elective affinities with his nationalistic friend Ion Dragoumis (whose pseudonym was Idas) in an earlier phase of his political theory at the beginning of the twentieth century. Around the years 1909-1910 the elective affinity grew strong as Dragoumis published his serialized novel *Σαμοθράκη* [Samothrace] at the same time and in the same periodical (*Ο Νουμάς*) in which Kazantzakis was publishing his novel *Broken Souls*. The intertextuality between *Σαμοθράκη* and Kazantzakis' work is evidenced by an article Kazantzakis addressed to the youth of Greece in 1910, in which he is in direct dialogue with Dragoumis' novel. Kazantzakis himself, in the subtitle of the article, admits to having written it inspired by the novel of his friend. Dragoumis' political theory articulated in *Σαμοθράκη*, with its strong focus on race, seems to function as a lasting intertext in Kazantzakis' politics. An explanation might be found here as to why Kazantzakis prioritizes race over nation.

A main idea in *Σαμοθράκη* is that race embodies the will to self-preserve and that the Greek identity was saved because it coiled around race. According to Dragoumis, race becomes more reliable than nation because it secures preservation even when the nation fails to do so.⁵¹ Commenting on the Greek paradigm, Dragoumis explains that since the Greeks have not always maintained their political independence, enabling them to live all

⁵¹ Idas [I. Dragoumis], "Σαμοθράκη" [Samothrace], *Ο Νουμάς* VII/359 (1909), pp. 3-5.

together in a large, independent state, they organized themselves into small communities that constituted the “cells” of race.⁵² In this way they managed to maintain autonomy or self-government even when they were politically enslaved by stronger peoples. In comprising these autonomous and self-governed cells, race secured a cohesion that resisted extinction and preserved the Greeks from total destruction.

Dragoumis extends his conception of race to the concept of egoism as the cultivation of Ego, where Ego spreads to include all the members of a race: the ancestors, the descendants, the contemporaries.⁵³ The introduction of egoism and its understanding as the cultivation of Ego echoes Maurice Barrès’ “égoïsme” and “le culte du Moi”, where egoism is linked to patriotism through an equation that treats patriotism as the equivalent of national egoism.⁵⁴ Following the equation patriotism = national egoism, it is easy to trace how Dragoumis structures the binary cosmopolitan versus patriot around his conception of race. The cosmopolitan is the weak, tired individual and cosmopolitanism is a sign of fatigue,⁵⁵ while at the other end of the spectrum the patriot represents the strength that dares search for its roots, attaches itself to them and amplifies the Ego.⁵⁶

In the article he published in 1910 to address the young people of Greece, Kazantzakis shares Dragoumis’ beliefs, emphasizing race, but most importantly follows the theoretical model that Dragoumis constructs around the conception of race. Both Kazantzakis and Dragoumis conceptualize cosmopolitanism and patriotism as different stages in the development of the individual and map routes between them as they write nation, state and race – nation as the belated consciousness of disintegration or a disjointed persona, and state as the organized community failing – owing to insecurity and lack of freedom to determine the retreat to race as the enduring biological cell that proves to be more reliable in terms of the outcome, as we have seen. Bien stresses the inadequacy of the word “race” to serve any of Kazantzakis’ or Dragoumis’ purposes, because what they are talking about is really “the Greek people”, not the distinction among white, black, yellow and red people, which is what “race” as a biological term denotes.⁵⁷ Their use of the word race

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵³ *Id.*, “Σαμοθράκη” [Samothrace], *Ο Νουμάς* VII/371 (1909), p. 3.

⁵⁴ M. Barrès, *Le culte du Moi*, Vol. I: *Sous l’œil des barbares*, Paris: Émile-Paul, 1911, p. 16.

⁵⁵ Idas [I. Dragoumis], “Σαμοθράκη” [Samothrace], *Ο Νουμάς* VIII/ 373 (1910), p. 3.

⁵⁶ *Id.*, “Σαμοθράκη” [Samothrace], *Ο Νουμάς* VII/371 (1909), p. 3.

⁵⁷ I am indebted to Professor Bien for this crucial comment.

can be seen to relate to the particularity of the Greek paradigm, which will be presented next to show that, at the beginning of the twentieth century, it was common to use the word race as equivalent to the word nation.

Kazantzakis, however, proves more systematic, as he organizes his theoretical structure around two equivalent binaries: selfishness (egoism) versus unselfishness and patriotism versus cosmopolitanism. If Dragoumis precedes Kazantzakis in bringing out the politics of the terms egoism or cosmopolitanism, Kazantzakis stabilizes the articulation of selfishness and selflessness in this political context. Cosmopolitanism and patriotism, the two main concepts around which a great part of *Σαμοθράκη* revolves, constitute the basic structural unit in Kazantzakis' article. Dwelling on the opposition between cosmopolitanism and patriotism, he defines cosmopolitanism as the opening to all countries and all races and patriotism as the entrenchment within the race. Kazantzakis echoes Dragoumis' evaluations when he denounces cosmopolitanism as weakness and decadence in order to encourage patriotism as a manner of conquest bearing the professing aura of regeneration.⁵⁸ The rhetoric Kazantzakis uses when he recognizes weakness or slavery in cosmopolitanism and racial solidarity in patriotism bears a strong resemblance to Dragoumis' rhetoric in *Σαμοθράκη*, which in turn echoes Barrès.

The discussion of cosmopolitanism and patriotism was not new; it had repeatedly preoccupied the men of letters in Greece at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, but was mostly related to nation. Kazantzakis innovates in that he relates it to race. Tziouvas elaborates on the Greek paradigm and perceptively draws the line of an "implicit" distinction between two terms that were used in Greece in connection to nation until the end of the nineteenth century, the terms "nationalism" (εθνικισμός) and "nationism" (εθνισμός). He specifically informs us that "nationalism" was used to signify a liberation or resistance movement grounded on patriotic feelings, while "nationism" signified a system of thought that operated on "a system of rarefaction", performing a process of seclusion that determined the differences of the national group from other groups and established its "otherness".⁵⁹ At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, when the discourse on race was largely diffused over Europe (from Taine to Barrès, for

⁵⁸ P. Psiloritis [N. Kazantzakis], "Για τους νέους μας (Αφορμή από τη "Σαμοθράκη" του Ίδα)" [Addressed to our youth (on the occasion of "Samothrace" by Idas), *Νέα Ζωή* [Alexandria] VI/5 (1910), pp. 234-235.

⁵⁹ D. Tziouvas, *The Nationism of the Demoticists and its Impact on their Literary Theory (1888-1930)*, Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1986, pp. 2, 3.

instance), Tziouvas notes that symbolics of blood and race were transferred to nation, developing a relationship of racism with nationalism in which the notion of race was used to distinguish a whole nation.⁶⁰ This is the period when Kazantzakis introduces the discourse on race as a textual dominant, a discourse that is in dialogue with Barrès' theory through Dragoumis' work at an earlier phase, but where at a later phase Oswald Spengler's theory on *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (1918) contributes.

The discussion of nation or race articulated as a discussion of the binary cosmopolitanism–patriotism has risen among writers in Greece ever since the late nineteenth century. Tziouvas provides us with the useful information that cosmopolitanism was confronted in two different ways. In the first one it “was considered as the adversary of patriotism, the forfeiture of national identity and peculiarity, a kind of rupture with the national umbilical cord”, and in the second one “it represented the universality of values, the transcendence of localities and a tension towards a supernational communication”.⁶¹ So far we have witnessed an example of the first type of confrontation in Kazantzakis' paradigm, which can be better understood if we give an overall view of the discussion that was enacted in the field of Modern Greek literature.

The discussion reached its peak around 1899 when Kostis Palamas addressed his article “Ἡ φαντασία καὶ ἡ πατρίς” [Imagination and homeland]⁶² to Argyris Ephtaliotis, who had reproached him by asking for “national colouring” in literature. Palamas' response argued in favour of a universal imagination claiming the creation of an art beyond national boundaries and strongly arguing that the communication with foreign literatures would not corrode creative imagination, making it lose its individuality or forfeit its national character. Palamas, sharing Paul Bourget's beliefs in cosmopolis, proposed a literature beyond the boundaries of countries, receptive of foreign affinities and energetic in the circulation of movements. It all comes together, of course, with the fact that at the very moment he was writing *The Twelve Words of the Gypsy* (1907), with its particular emphasis on universalism. One might even suppose that Palamas chose a gypsy as the leading hero of his poem in order to challenge the strict sense of homeland and to broaden

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 412, 413.

⁶¹ *Id.*, *Κοσμοπολίτες και αποσυνάγωγοι. Μελέτες για την ελληνική πεζογραφία και κριτική (1830-1930)* [Cosmopolitans and outcasts: studies on Greek fiction and criticism (1830-1930)], Athens: Metaichmio, 2003, pp. 11-12.

⁶² K. Palamas, “Ἡ φαντασία καὶ ἡ πατρίς” [Imagination and homeland], *Το Ἄστυ* (9-8-1899) and in *Ἄπαντα* [Complete works], Vol. II, Athens: Biris-Govostis, 1962-1969, pp. 379-388.

it to signify the world. Palamas' gypsy refuses the idea of integration in a particular country because he recognizes the world as his homeland and claims an identity as a citizen of the world; his concept of cosmopolitanism breaks down boundaries and transgresses national borders.

Such other writers as Nikolaos Episkopopoulos and Bohème [Dimitrios Hatzopoulos] were to join Palamas with articles supporting the cosmopolitan dimension of literature. Bohème emphasized the "cosmopolitan spirit" as the communication of the Greek spirit with world literature based on Goethe's *Weltliteratur*.⁶³ Nikolaos Episkopopoulos, later known in France as Nicolas Ségur, stressed the obvious in Palamas' convictions as he promoted the formation of a cosmopolitan network based on mutual exchanges between literatures.⁶⁴ Writers at this point understood cosmopolitanism in the literary sense as occasionally dealing with matters of nation. Cosmopolitanism, as a space where their opinions intersect and their expectations unite, charts a space inhabited by literature. Marked by the literary, dominant cosmopolitanism comes in to transcribe transcendentalism. The identification of literary cosmopolitanism as "literary transcendentalism"⁶⁵ constitutes a continuum meant to be ruptured in Kazantzakis' text. Usually the demand for cosmopolitanism would rest its argument within the literary field – that is, a field of transcendentalism far from political, non-literary references. What is really at stake in Palamas' and Kazantzakis' point of view is the political shift. Considering both Palamas' and Kazantzakis' enunciation of the term cosmopolitanism, one notices that Kazantzakis removes the literary dominant from the conception of cosmopolitanism to replace it with the racial dominant, charging the term with a political significance. The fact that Kazantzakis draws political meaning from terms like cosmopolitanism and patriotism should also be considered in relation to the Goudi Revolution of 1909, a correlation that might uncover his subtle will to introduce political implications.

The initiation of the signifier "race" shifts the orientation of cosmopolitanism from literature to politics and expedites a revision in the understanding of terms like cosmopolitanism and patriotism. Kazantzakis' dialogue with politics deconstructs transcendental definitions of the terms and supplies links to today's theory. Patriotism is represented by Kazantzakis in his article as an action that recycles energy between the individual and the whole of a

⁶³ Bohème [D. Hatzopoulos], "Το κοσμοπολιτικόν πνεύμα" [Cosmopolitan spirit], *Το Περιοδικό μας* II/22 (1901), pp. 293-297.

⁶⁴ N. Ep. [Nikolaos Episkopopoulos], "Αί ίππότεαι τῆς ἑλληνικῆς ψυχῆς" [The knights of the Greek soul], *Το Ἄστυ* (22-8-1899).

⁶⁵ Manning and Taylor, "The Nation and Cosmopolitanism", p. 20.

race, which bears in essence an inherent narcissism of the type Donald Pease, the post-national critic, presumes: “Patriotism named the form narcissism assumed in its passage from an individual to a state fantasy”.⁶⁶ Psychological theories, however, come to contradict this view in supporting that:

[...] although the terms patriotism and nationalism are sometimes used interchangeably in both academic and non-academic domains, [...] patriotism is simply affection for and pride in one’s nation. It may include attachment to the national ingroup and, at times, attachment to the land in which the group resides. Thus patriotism primarily involves positive affect toward one’s nation. Nationalism, in contrast, has a more cognitive focus. It involves a set of beliefs about the superiority of one’s nation compared to others and the importance of promoting the interests of one’s own nation above all others.⁶⁷

The two points of view we presented diverge in regard to the meaning of patriotism, which the first one identifies with and the second one separates from nationalism. These divergent aspects can only verify the fluidity in the perception of a term like patriotism particularly in a globalised era.

From another standpoint close to Pease’s subversive political attitude, today’s post-colonial theory is split between the national and the international character of cosmopolitanism. As argued by David Simpson:

Cosmopolitanism is neither local/national nor international, but both at once. The citizen of a town, a department, a country, is and is not a citizen of the world. Ideological pressure would continue to assert the priority of one or the other [...], but in the industrializing countries there could be no going back. Efforts to institutionalize antic cosmopolitan practices and identities would not only persist but intensify in their violence and destructiveness.⁶⁸

The term cosmopolitanism is a crucial point in the globalized discourse on heterogeneity, where it acquires its meaning in a space shared between the national and the international.

⁶⁶ D. Pease, “National Narratives, Postnational Narration”, in *Transatlantic Literary Studies: A Reader*, ed. S. Manning and A. Taylor, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007, pp. 42-43.

⁶⁷ V. Esses *et al.*, “Attitudes toward Immigrants and Immigration: The Role of National and International Identity”, in *The Social Psychology of Inclusion and Exclusion*, ed. D. Abrams *et al.*, New York: Psychology Press, 2005, pp. 320-321.

⁶⁸ D. Simpson, “The Limits of Cosmopolitanism and the Case for Translation”, in *Transatlantic Literary Studies: A Reader*, ed. Manning and Taylor, pp. 56, 57.

In conclusion, the binary cosmopolitanism–patriotism formulates a prevalent question in today’s globalized era and is frequently addressed in the field of social sciences. An entire debate was launched by Martha Nussbaum’s essay entitled “Patriotism or Cosmopolitanism?” and was hosted under the same title in the *Boston Review* (October–November 1994).⁶⁹ The above-mentioned aspects that place the terms cosmopolitanism and patriotism at the centre of today’s political theory show the well-timed political thought of Kazantzakis, who engaged in the binary cosmopolitanism–patriotism at the beginning of the twentieth century and updated his preoccupation with the subject in the 1930s, which is still present in today’s political discourse.

The politics of race in which Kazantzakis concentrates revolves largely around the theme of the barbarians. This theme had been formerly addressed by C. P. Cavafy within the framework of the movement of aestheticism or decadence, in his poem “Waiting for the Barbarians”, for instance, where the barbarians are juxtaposed to empire or the barbaric to the civilized element. Kazantzakis does not follow the same route but rather grafts the theme in the cycle delineated by Barrès and Dragoumis, where the barbarians are initially defined in contrast to the Greeks, whereas in Dragoumis’ paradigm they are basically identified with the Turks. Kazantzakis treats this juxtaposition of Greeks and barbarians as the field in which he discusses racial identities. In the article he addressed to Greek youth, he resorts to antiquity to represent

⁶⁹ Nussbaum argues that the emphasis on patriotic pride is “both morally dangerous and, ultimately, subversive of some of the worthy goals patriotism sets out to serve – for example, the goal of national unity in devotion to worthy moral ideas of justice and equality”. The ideal she proposes instead as more suitable to the situation in the contemporary world is a return to the “very old ideal of the cosmopolitan, the person whose primary allegiance is to the community of human beings in the entire world” (M. Nussbaum, “Patriotism or Cosmopolitanism?”, *Boston Review* XIX/5 (1994) [<http://www.bostonreview.net/BR19.5/nussbaum.html>], part I). Cosmopolitanism as the ideal of becoming a citizen of the world, of focusing on broader world respect or of pledging allegiance to the community of human beings is to her “a lonely business, a kind of exile – from the comfort of local truths, from the warm, nestling feeling of patriotism” (*Ibid.*, part III). Cosmopolitanism to her presupposes the reconstruction of citizenship beyond local boundaries and the security of a nation. Therefore it offers no refuge, only “reason and love of humanity” (*Ibid.*, part IV). Nussbaum has been confronted in her theory by arguments supporting either the acceptance (Anthony Appiah, “Loyalty to Humanity”) or the rejection (Immanuel Wallerstein, “Neither Patriotism, Nor Cosmopolitanism”) of both values [see <http://www.bostonreview.net/BR19.5/beacon%20articles/replies.html>], but the main idea is that she established a political debate around the terms “patriotism – cosmopolitanism”, which also seems to have preoccupied Kazantzakis decades ago.

the barbarians as the element of heterogeneous intrusion. The barbarians or “the nomads”, according to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari,⁷⁰ represent the migrating subject and are viewed in Kazantzakis’ article either as the contaminating element that has to be expelled or as the energetic, regenerating force.

The barbaric obsession haunts Kazantzakis all the way to England. His first encounter when he gets ashore was with the six tides of conquerors that shook England⁷¹ throughout its history. When Kazantzakis gets off the ship and faces England, he instantly animates the succession of the six hordes that also landed there centuries ago: the Mediterraneans, the Gaels, the Romans, the Saxons, the Vikings and the Normans. The Freudian concept of the “uncanny”, the haunted, can be seen to operate here. The “uncanny” has been understood to stand for the “hidden and secret that has become visible”⁷² or to stipulate that “the lands we pass through are haunted even if the ghosts do not always manifest themselves directly”.⁷³ Kazantzakis vindicates Freud’s theory of the haunted with the efficient exercise of his glance in retrospect. When he looks at England, Kazantzakis sees – or rather seizes – the place filled with ghosts, figures and actions from the past; he virtually empties England of its present history and fills it with the past.

Kazantzakis’ glance reviews the place as he revives it in his own semantics, the semantics of race. The racial identity of England is sought wave by wave in this six-fold, primarily barbaric invasion. In reviewing the place, Kazantzakis is reviewing time, constructing a space in which he is joining intensities, the six tides of invasion, in tracing identities. The six tides of invasion that overwhelm Kazantzakis upon his arrival in England strike him as a first wave in the comprehension of race. The second wave will strike him during his confrontation with the barbaric, juvenile north in the face of a

⁷⁰ G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *Nomadology: The War Machine*, New York: Semiotext(e), 1986.

⁷¹ When the article was first published it was entitled “Ταξιδεύοντας...οι εξ έως τώρα εισβολές στην Αγγλία” [Travelling...the six invasions in England so far], *Η Καθημερινή* (26-7-1940 – 28-7-1940). When the article was incorporated in his book *Ταξιδεύοντας. Αγγλία* with the rest of his articles on England, it appeared under the title “Τα έξι κύματα, οι κατακτητές” [The six tides, the conquerors].

⁷² H. Cixous, “Fiction and its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud’s *Das Unheimliche* (‘The ‘Uncanny’),” *New Literary History* VII/3 (1976): Thinking in the Arts, Sciences, and Literature, p. 530.

⁷³ D. Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991, p. 12.

young Englishman. The dialogue with him aims at tracing the young man's origin in one of the barbarian races that still in this second wave inhabit Kazantzakis' thought: "[...] κοίταξα το νεαρό σύντροφό μου και προσπαθούσα να βρω ποια από όλες τις ράτσες κυριάρχησε μέσα του. Σάξονας; Νορμανδός; Κέλτης; Βίκινγκ; [...] Είστε Βίκινγκ, είπα στο σύντροφό μου, σαν να 'θελα να τον βοηθήσω να ξεδιαλύνει μέσα του τα ιστορικά του. Είστε Βίκινγκ, δεν είστε Σάξονας." [(...) I was looking at my young companion and was trying to find out which one of all the races prevailed in him. A Saxon? A Norman? A Gael? A Viking? (...) You are a Viking, I told my companion, as if I wanted to help him unravel his historical dealings inside him. You are a Viking, you are not a Saxon.]⁷⁴

The Saxon is recognized in another racial representative of England, Shakespeare. As a reader just as much as a writer, Kazantzakis engages in the narratives of race. An entire chapter in the travel book on England, comprising the six articles that were originally written (16 September to 21 October 1940), is devoted to Shakespeare. Kazantzakis reads Shakespeare's work in extensive passages in which he senses that "opening Shakespeare you instantly open the door of a menagerie: howling and screaming, violent gestures, an impetus that can't and won't be restrained, a primitive power that enjoys its freedom".⁷⁵ Kazantzakis feels that Shakespeare's work releases a "fierce Elizabethan beast" that still resides in contemporary Englishmen, although "imprisoned behind the iron bars of Victorian dignity".⁷⁶ Kazantzakis' reference to the "impetus" that flows unrestrained clearly echoes Bergson's *élan vital* that determined Kazantzakis' philosophy throughout his life. On the other hand, the primitive power and the beast that releases it recall another determinant of his philosophy, Nietzsche's theory of the Superhuman.

Kazantzakis' declared attraction to Nietzsche's theory justifies the presence of a chapter on Nietzsche in his travelogue on England, despite the fact that the acquaintance of the Greek writer with the work of the German philosopher had been made in Paris almost 30 years before. Kazantzakis does not surprise us when he expounds on Nietzsche's philosophy in the chapter on Nietzsche; he surprises us when he expounds on Nietzsche's philosophy in the chapter on Shakespeare. In suggesting that Shakespeare would be the one to represent humanity in front of God, Kazantzakis is obviously assuming that his reading brings out Shakespeare in all his heroes. He even admits to

⁷⁴ Kazantzakis, *Ταξιδεύοντας. Αγγλία*, p. 49.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

recognizing Shakespeare's face behind the different faces and different names of his heroes. His assumption seems to fail though. Reading behind the faces of Shakespeare's heroes, Kazantzakis is not discovering Shakespeare, he is discovering Nietzsche. The struggle of Shakespeare's heroes between matter and spirit, a central theme in Kazantzakis' poetics, the recurring references to philosophical systems of the East, but most of all the homogeneous emergence of Shakespeare's persona from all his heroes along with the fact that every hero is in essence a Nietzschean character, shows that Kazantzakis is reading Shakespeare's work in the Nietzschean context; additionally it shows that Kazantzakis' approach to Shakespeare's characters voices his own philosophical system and that in Shakespeare's work he is projecting the reflection of his own poetics.

The representation of Shakespeare as the chain-bound Saxon beast that releases its energy in its descendants recurs in another dialogue Kazantzakis establishes according to his favourite technique: with an unidentified English author in London. Kazantzakis wonders if this contemporary Englishman could identify with souls as divergent as Shakespeare's heroes. His interlocutor's reply asserts Shakespeare's appeal to contemporary Englishmen, which goes beyond race and language to meet with the power of the Saxon beast: "Κανένας δεν μπορεί να καταλάβει και να λαχταρήσει τον Σαίξπηρ όσο ο σημερινός Εγγλέζος. Όχι γιατί είναι από τη ράτσα μας και μιλάει τη γλώσσα μας' παρά γιατί την ώρα που τον ακούμε, νιώθουμε, επιτέλους, να ξαμολύνεται μέσα μας το αλυσσοδεμένο σαξονικό θηρίο και να μουγκρίζει λεύτερα." [Nobody can understand and long for Shakespeare more than the contemporary Englishman. Not because he comes from our race and speaks our language; but because when we are listening to him, we feel, at last, the chain bound Saxon beast let loose within us and moan freely.]⁷⁷

The prevalence of the Saxon element in British racial identity acquires a particular significance because it underlines the Germanic element in the British race and therefore relates more easily to the theory of the German philosopher Nietzsche. The emphasis on the Saxon element might also be a subtle reference to the Germans, who are included in this cycle of kinship. The finding of Saxon dominance proves useful to Kazantzakis in its interconnection with the historical instance of his visit to England: the bombings of London in 1939. While still in the walls of the city and during a bombing attack, Kazantzakis' narrator turns to the sky and, watching the flight of the German aeroplanes, he foretells the passage from degeneration

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

to regeneration: “Δεν είναι πια παρακμή η εποχή μας [...] & είναι ακμή από τεράστιες δυνάμεις, βάρβαρες μπορεί, μα έτσι αρχινούν πάντα οι πολιτισμοί.” [Our era is no more a decadence [...]; it is a peak of huge powers, barbaric maybe, but this is how civilizations always start.]⁷⁸

The fact that Kazantzakis is witnessing the bombings of London but still fails to see the wrongdoing in them evinces his strong attraction to Fascism and Nazism in the 1930s, which has already been established and elaborated by Bien.⁷⁹ At this point the interaction of Kazantzakis’ poetics with racism departs from the abstract sense of the preoccupation with race in order to conceptualize the evaluation of the races. The narrator refers to the forces in the sky as “barbaric” just as he did when he clarified that Shakespeare was considered a barbarian, a monster without a head and tail in “the pseudo-classical era”, the era of the cold adjective, the moderate phrase, the severed trace.⁸⁰ If the conceptualization of race is mediated through perceptions of the barbaric, it can only be anticipated that the empire as the opposite pole of the barbarians will also be involved in the thematic and the rhetoric of race. Within this framework, Shakespeare, who has been considered a barbarian, is also being considered the avatar of empire in the words of an English pensioner who cites Carlyle; a dialogue with Kazantzakis’ narrator in his favourite style is in process again: “Ω, Εγγλέζοι, τι προτιμάτε να δώσετε: την Ινδική Αυτοκρατορία ή τον Σαίξπηρ; [...] Δεν μας μέλει αν έχουμε ή αν δεν έχουμε Ινδική Αυτοκρατορία & χωρίς τον Σαίξπηρ όμως δεν μπορούμε να ζήσουμε.” [Englishmen, what do you prefer to concede: the Indian Empire or Shakespeare? [...] We don’t care if we have an Indian Empire or not; but we can’t live without Shakespeare.]⁸¹ When Shakespeare is compared to the empire, he is recognized as its alternate; he therefore becomes the empire. The barbarian is now becoming the empire by abolishing the separating line between them. Another hybridity is being achieved in Kazantzakis’ context that brings together what might be understood as opposite texts in politics. Shakespeare’s paradigm shows that when Kazantzakis is reading literature, he is reading race; furthermore he is reading the empire. The thematic of race is mediated through the rhetoric of empire. When he is viewing the upcoming German empire in the sky, Kazantzakis’ narrator is in London – a global capital or the very centre of another empire, the British Empire.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

⁷⁹ “Kazantzakis’ Attraction to Fascism and Nazism in the 1930’s” is the title of the first chapter in Vol. II of Bien, *Kazantzakis*, pp. 1-15.

⁸⁰ Kazantzakis, *Ταξιδεύοντας*. Αγγλία, p. 266.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 265.

The racial representation is transferred to another historical circumstance, the era of the empire. Kazantzakis' rhetoric of empire is pivoted around the poem "If" by Rudyard Kipling, who is mentioned as "the poet of the race" (ο ποιητής της ράτσας)⁸² and extolled as "the great poet of Imperialism" (ο μεγάλος ποιητής του Ιμπεριαλισμού).⁸³

Αν μπορείς να κρατάς νηφάλιο το κεφάλι σου, τη στιγμή που όλοι γύρα σου τα 'χουν χαμένα... Αν μπορείς να 'χεις εμπιστοσύνη στον εαυτό σου, τη στιγμή που όλοι χάσαν την εμπιστοσύνη τους... Αν μπορείς να περιμένεις με πείσμα, χωρίς να κουράζεσαι... Αν σε μισούν, και συ δε μισείς κανένα... Αν ονειρεύεσαι ή στοχάζεσαι και δε γίνεσαι δούλος εσύ στα ονειροπολήματά σου και στους στοχασμούς... Αν μήτε φίλος μήτε οχτρός μπορεί να σε πληγώσει... Αν, κάθε στιγμή, ό,τι έχεις μπορείς να το παίξεις κορώνα-γράμματα... Αν και τα 60 δευτερόλεπτα κάθε λεφτού τα γιομώνεις αξία – τότε η γη αλάκερη με τ' αγαθά της είναι δική σου κι είσαι αληθινός άντρας και γιος δικός μου!

[If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs... If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you... If you can wait and not be tired by waiting... Or, being hated, don't give way to hating... If you can dream – and not make dreams your master; If you can think – and not make thoughts your aim;... If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;... If you can make one heap of all your winnings and risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss... If you can fill the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds' worth of distance run – Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it, and – which is more – you'll be a Man, my son!]⁸⁴

The poem "If" is characterized as a "rigorous manly song" (αυστηρό αντρικό τραγούδι) and is embedded in the chapter entitled "The White Man's Duty", a title paraphrasing the title of another poem by Kipling ("The White Man's Burden", 1899) about which we are informed that:

[...] written in the midst of Britain's own South Africa campaign, Kipling's poem was published in *The Times* of London with the subtitle "The United States and the Philippine Islands". The United States had entered its war with Spain the previous year and had just gained control of the Philippines with Admiral Dewey's victory at Manila. Kipling's poem is in this respect a ringing call for America to assume the same responsibilities embodied in British colonial rule. In his critical biography, Angus Wilson writes that Kipling saw the

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

American victory as an opportunity “to replace the old worn-out colonial mercantile world of Spain and Portugal...with an Anglo-Saxon Imperial mission that would be wide-thinking and modern”.⁸⁵

The “white man’s burden” was established “as a metaphor for the civilising mission”⁸⁶ and functioned as an open invitation to artists active within what would later be called colonial or post-colonial thinking. An interesting example is John Buchan, who in his novel *Prester John* (1910) transforms “the white man’s burden” into “the white man’s duty”,⁸⁷ just as Kazantzakis would do 29 years later. The difference is that Buchan records a movement from the civilized West to uncivilized Africa. The transition from centre to periphery is seen as a geopolitical condition that arranges associations between the centre or the civilized and the periphery or the uncivilized, the barbaric. Within the colonial and post-colonial approach the barbaric stereotype has always functioned at the borders or the outskirts of empire, the aesthetes and decadents of the late nineteenth century being part of the paradigm.

Kazantzakis reverses the stereotype and resists being read within the colonial or post-colonial discourse as he localizes the barbarians in the heart of empire, most specifically within a global capital, London. From Athens to London Kazantzakis maps a route from the periphery to the centre, which according to his words transcribes a route from the old and tired to the young and strong. It is worth noticing, however, that in Kazantzakis’ text the young and strong encompasses both the barbarian and the imperial. The post-aestheticist Kazantzakis, the meta-aesthete who has had his share of decadence, has now recovered in the rhetoric of strength, transgressing boundaries, reconciling conflicting elements, showing his deconstructive power. Pease argues that “postnational narratives might be understood either to constitute belated accommodations to global capital or to narrate forms of resistance”.⁸⁸ Kazantzakis’ narratives articulating the post-national – as a concession of the national to the racial – unsettle both assumptions in reaffirming both of them.

Kazantzakis’ efforts to clarify aspects of racial identities finally uncover efforts to recognize and appropriate his own identity. Two years before he went to England he toured the Peloponnese, where cultural manifestations

⁸⁵ D. Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism: Travel Writing and Imperial Administration*, Durham, SC, and London: Duke University Press, 1993, p. 113.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 111-112.

⁸⁸ Pease, “National Narratives, Postnational Narration”, p. 39.

functioned as racial parameters. Kazantzakis was divided there between the two aspects of his race, the Western and the Eastern,⁸⁹ described in an article entitled “The Doubly-born Modern Greek Culture”, initially published in 1946 and later incorporated as the last chapter in his travelogue on the Morea under the title “Problems in Modern Greek Civilization”. The title refers to the Byzantine epic hero Digenes, who was doubly-born of a Greek mother and an Eastern father and becomes for Kazantzakis the symbolic hero of the race in representing Modern Greek civilization, which is doubly-born in the reverse manner, of a Greek father and an Eastern mother.⁹⁰ While the Greek father functions as a metaphor for Reason, which originates in Ancient Greek thought and establishes Western civilization, the Eastern mother functions as a metaphor for Passion, which originates in the Byzantine East. This concept of the double origin of Modern Greek culture conjoining the two metaphors will recur as the pattern on which *Zorba the Greek* would be structured, revealing a genetic relation between the travelogue and the novel. The issue of this doubly-born civilization raises the question of age, foretelling a question that is heard two years later in his travelogue on England, highlighting another genetic relation, this time between the travelogue on the Peloponnese and that on England: “And we can’t say we are an old, aged race. We are new, the blood is still pounding, a must in ferment.”⁹¹ The feeling of belonging to an aged race changes into the feeling of belonging to a renewed race, a feeling underlined by the ambiguous yet ubiquitous consciousness of the Eastern character of the race.

Kazantzakis’ racial consciousness – not fully developed but enacted within cultural and political narratives – forms a text within the Greek context of this period. Going to England, Kazantzakis wrote a text that leaves the familiar to move to a foreign context. On deterritorialization his text embraces the particularities of the heterogeneous text as a machine organized to interconnect. Kazantzakis organizes his narratives as a text machine or a war machine of barbarians who enter to capture sight of the empire. His quest to discover England ends in discovering himself. The representation of England is finally deciphered as the representation of himself. In this way the journey originally defined as the territory of discovering the other becomes the territory of discovering the self.

⁸⁹ N. Kazantzakis, *Ταξιδεύοντας, Ιταλία-Αίγυπτος-Σινά-Ιερουσαλήμ-Κύπρος-ο Μοριάς* [Travelling: Italy-Egypt-Sinai-Jerusalem-Cyprus-Morea], Athens: Kazantzakis, 1961, p. 325.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

As Nietzsche, Kazantzakis' most exacting mentor, would state "We don't know ourselves, we knowledgeable people – we are personally ignorant about ourselves. [...] For us this law holds for all eternity: 'Each man is furthest from himself' – where we ourselves are concerned, we are not 'knowledgeable people'..."⁹² Nietzsche's statement about people being searchers of knowledge but not in the least searchers of themselves and about man being the furthest stranger to himself extends to Barthes' view about man himself being the only one not to know his own glance⁹³ and recaptures Socrates' "Γνώθι σεαυτόν" [Know thyself], a dictum highlighted in Kazantzakis' narratives.

As an overall conclusion, it would appear that Kazantzakis does not look at England, he reads England or, to use Barthes' words, he enters a riddle so as to solve, to possess it.⁹⁴ We have seen Barthes concentrating his semiotic vision on the Eiffel Tower and enunciating on the object that "when it is visited and looked at, it becomes a lookout in its turn, an object which sees, a glance which is seen".⁹⁵ The Tower is perceived by Barthes to transcend the separation of seeing and being seen and to achieve a circulation between the two functions, attracting meanings that never become finite and fixed.⁹⁶ In this respect visiting the monument does not mean restoring contact with something historically sacred but with "a new nature, that of human space"; in this sense the Tower signifies not culture but rather "an immediate consumption of a humanity made natural by that glance which transforms it into space".⁹⁷ And Kazantzakis' journey to England fulfils the perspective adopted by Barthes. We have seen how England returns Kazantzakis' glance, becomes his lookout and how the visitor, by looking back at the subject, deconstructs its function as an object. Through this glance, England escapes stereotyped cultural representations and becomes the space that transforms humanity. Kazantzakis' visit to England in turn escapes the identity of a cultural study and becomes the space of a journey to humanity.

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

⁹² F. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals: A Polemical Tract*, Arlington, VA: Richer Resources Publications, 2009, p. 2.

⁹³ Barthes, *The Eiffel Tower*, p. 4.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 5.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.