

Political theatre in times of crisis.

Case Study: Our Grand Circus, a Greek example of epic theatre.

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Foreword

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Abstract

This Thesis attempts to classify the play *Our Grand Circus*, a symbol of the Greek 7 years long dictatorship of the middle of 1970's. The economic crisis and political oppression that started in Greece in 2010 brought this play again onto the Greek stages after 40 years of absence, reminding the success it had back in the '70s. Still, though, the play remains under the vague umbrella of "political theatre". However, the *Grand Circus* had a particular impact on the oppressed audience of the '70s, something that might have triggered the directors in the beginning of the Greek crisis to restage it again.

The research question of this Thesis is in what way can we consider *Our Grand Circus* to be a Brechtian play. Furthermore, two sub questions are addressed: which dramaturgical techniques were employed by Kampanellis to contribute to the uprising of the oppressed audience and, knowing the impact the play had, what was the political potential of those techniques.

After examining Brecht's theories about epic theatre techniques, this Thesis' argumentation will be that the *Grand Circus* is an example of epic theatre. A confrontation through a dramaturgical approach between theory and play shows that the Greek playwright used Brecht's techniques for the same reasons the German dramaturge did: to provide the spectators the necessary tools to make them realise the social and political conditions they live in and subsequently revolt.

Analysing the dramaturgical techniques Kampanellis used in the *Grand Circus*, with most dominant the V-effect, non – identification, shed light to the reasons the Greek playwright chose to use the Brechtian techniques. The performances of the play in the 1970's sided, if not contributed to the revolt against the dictatorship of the Colonels. This success cost the play almost half of its text after harsh interventions by censorship.

In the first part of the Thesis, Brecht's political and epic theatre's theories are presented, in order to provide a theoretical context for the play. In the second part, are presented the historical and political conditions in which the play was written. Furthermore, the Brechtian techniques used by Kampanellis are detailed. Examples of those techniques from the play are given for a better understanding of how Kampanellis applied the theory in practice.

Concluding, Kampanellis, influenced by Brecht's dramaturgy and epic theatre's techniques, tried to contribute through theatre to a social change. He wanted to awaken his audience, as was the initial purpose of political and workers' theatre in the beginning of the last century. However, the *Grand Circus* was not a checklist of Brechtian epic theatre techniques, since the particularity of this play was the induction of sentiments, something that Brecht recognised at the end of his life.

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1. Introduction

In 2010, economic recession stroke Greece and triggered a domino of side effects that influenced almost everything in the country, resulting to social tribulation, riots, “national” depression due to high levels of unemployment for many people and impoverishment for an extended part of the Greek population.

A year later, in the theatrical field, a play that was not being performed for 40 years started to be remembered and performed again by professional and amateur theatre groups in some of the biggest cities in Greece (Athens, Thessaloniki, Kalamata and probably also in other smaller cities of the province). This play, *Our Grand Circus*, of Greek playwright Iakovos Kampanellis, was a huge success back in the 1970s and still today is considered an “emblematic” play of the 7 seven years long dictatorship in Greece (1967 – 1974).

Why was it being performed again so passionately from 2011 to 2012 in different cities, having the same success as back in the 70s? My personal interest in history and theatre along with this question triggered my curiosity to research about political theatre and its role in oppressed societies. Furthermore, my goal was to look for a connection between the 70s and today, to justify this restaging of the play. The play and its socio-historical role in the 70s was never presented academically so my research question could have possibly found an answer by studying the reasons that brought Kampanellis to write such play and the play’s impact. Finally I would have searched for similarities to the present day.

A year after since I started researching about political theatre and its role in society, Gonda Van Steen’s *Stage of Emergency* was published. This changed slightly the scope of my research since I could not claim anymore that nobody has written an analysis of the *Circus* and its impact in the Athenian society of the early 70s. Van Steen places *Our Grand Circus* in its historical context and through a thorough research analyses it based on historical data and describes its impact. I found myself in an existing discourse about the play and more in general about Greek political theatre during the 70s. This discovery was a mixed blessing since a lot of my “intuitions” that I thought would be interesting to demonstrate, were already clearly explained in the book. On the other hand, the book offered me the chance to connect to a broader discourse and focus on the non-historical aspects of the play. Having a clear analysis of the impact that the play had, left me some space in speculating about the dramaturgical techniques and their political potential used by Kampanellis.

Studying political theatre’s history and particularly Brecht’s theory and epic theatre techniques that were used to awaken the audiences, I realized that Kampanellis was moving in the same wave length. However, Kampanellis was not the only one who “imitated” the Brechtian way in Greece. Van Steen in *Stage of Emergency* provides a short analysis and contextualization of the “absolute” Brechtian play that was ever written in Greece, *The Story of Ali Retzo*, by Petros

Markaris.¹ This proved that indeed Brecht's theory and work was known and functioned as an inspiration for Greek playwrights. Van Steen also noted that *Our Grand Circus* was "too one dimensional to be Brechtian and acted with a variety of techniques on the spectators' sentiment!"² This phrase triggered me even more to argue that Kampanellis imitated creatively Brecht's epic theatre.

Those facts led me to the research question of this Thesis: in what way can we consider *Our Grand Circus* to be a Brechtian play?

In answering that, two relevant sub questions are addressed: which dramaturgical techniques were employed by Kampanellis? Secondly, knowing the impact the play had, what was the political potential of those techniques?

Taking into account that the play has been created for the Greek audience, I argued also that *Our Grand Circus* could be considered as a Greek example of epic theatre. Arguing that *Our Grand Circus* was indeed conceived using Brechtian techniques would highlight the political potential of the play and back up Van Steen who describes its impact on Greek society. The whole purpose of Brecht's political theatre, anyway, was to awaken the society and inspire it to improve people's lives. This idea would also provide a possible explanation, even though not directly addressed in the Thesis, why the play has been restaged recently, since also today there is need in Greece to wake up and act towards what most people perceive as unjust politics and economic measures.

My own analysis, therefore, is focused on the dramaturgical techniques that Kampanellis used to create a political play, which might have contributed to the uprising against the junta. In this Thesis I argued that Kampanellis leveraged Brecht's epic theatre techniques to make the *Circus* a useful tool in the hands of the spectators.

I argued why Kampanellis chose the Brechtian epic theatre techniques to send the audiences his message. Furthermore, I examined how Kampanellis used these dramaturgical techniques to contribute to the uprising of the Greeks against the military regime. By doing so I presented how Kampanellis was also inducing sentiments, strategically, episode after episode in order to create anger to the oppressed spectators of the 1970's.

The particular episodes of the Greek history that Kampanellis presents in the *Circus* are an escalation of anger and indignation about the continuous oppressions through Greek history. I argued that Kampanellis' play is not only a pure political play which is connected to the political theatre techniques of the beginning of the last century, but also a play of Brechtian epic theatre and particularly one of Brecht's late phase of experimentation, when he said that emotions were welcome, even though only as a result of rational and critical thinking.

¹ Steen, Gonda. *Stage of Emergency*. Oxford Univ Press, 2015, 250-258.

² Steen, 288.

To help this argumentation I used Van Steen's book *Stage of Emergency* and also leveraged Philip Hager's dissertation "*From the Margin to the Mainstream: The Production of Politically-engaged Theatre in Greece during the Dictatorship of the Colonels (1967-1974)*", as well as his article "*Does Contemporary Greek Theatre Exist?*", which is about the New Greek Theatre of the beginning of the 1970s. For the theoretical framework I used the book of Robert Leach "*Makers of Modern Theatre: An Introduction*" and Martin Esslin's "*Brecht, a Choice of Evils: A Critical Study of the Man, His Work, and His Opinions*", while others such as Dort's *Lecture on Brecht* could not be found in the Netherlands in a language I speak, while Loren Kruger's *Post-imperial Brecht: politics and performance, east and south* was not found either in the libraries of the two countries where I conducted my research (Greece and the Netherlands). Fortunately the books found shed light to the work of the German dramaturge and his techniques, hence the books not found did not obstruct my research.

While choosing the bibliography of this Thesis I selected some original sources, texts written by Brecht himself such as "Brecht on Theatre; The Development of an Aesthetic", and others' like Martin Esslin's "*Brecht, a Choice of Evils: A Critical Study of the Man, His Work, and His Opinions*", where there are thorough explanations about Brecht's theory and practice.

The history of the Greek dictatorship presented in Appendix 1 is not being taught in schools or written officially yet. One can learn about that period in an objective way by making his/her own research. Another obstacle in this story is that many of the people who lived and took part in the revolt against the oppressors are not only still alive but some of them also governing and active in the country's political life. It can be easily understood that whoever wrote his personal experiences provided his "own" version of the story and could not be completely objective. Still today there is a "war" between political parties and there are different "opinions" about what really happened back then in the years of the dictatorship from the Left, the Right and their variations.

My methodology consisted of gathering historical sources about the dictatorship, finding books or articles that were referring to the playwright or the play, reading the books containing the front pages of the newspapers of the late 60s and early 70s, watching videos about the dictatorship and hearing registrations of the songs of the performance of 1973 that are available in the internet and also reading electronic articles about the 7 year long dictatorship that marked a whole era in the contemporary history of Greece.

In the following chapters the reader can find the theoretical and political framework in and for which Kampanellis wrote the *Circus*. A small insight into the rest of the contemporary dramaturgy in the 70s is given in chapter 3. The *Circus* is certainly not the only example of Brechtian theatre in Greece during the 70's, but appears to be a play that combined epic theatre techniques and sentiment. In the second chapter I provide the theoretical framework of political theatre in Europe and mostly in Germany, where Brecht was shaped as a playwright and dramaturge. The dramaturgical analysis of the play is provided in the fourth chapter where I argued

that the *Circus* is an example of epic theatre. Taking as a case study the *Grand Circus* I argued that two notions that in the biggest part of his life Brecht considered contradictory, epic theatre and sentiment, can also be used complementary. Hopefully, this provides enough insights to understand how the play might have influenced the audience from a dramaturgical perspective. Furthermore, the pattern of continuous oppressions from antiquity to the present of the spectator of the *Grand Circus* and the way Kampanellis “builds” the spectator’s indignation episode after episode, might explain why the play had a similar success in 2011. Through the analysis may shine the answer to my initial inquiry, why this performance is being restaged today, even though this question has not been specifically addressed, neither is the subject of this Thesis.

2. Political Theatre and Brecht

The theoretical framework that will be used to analyse *Our Grand Circus* is mainly based on Brecht's theories about epic theatre and its techniques. In order to understand them however, it is useful to have a short and, by any means, not comprehensive description of the political theatre landscape in which Brecht started to operate. Brecht inherited the legacy of the origins of political theatre in Germany, which was mostly the worker's political theatre. Brecht started to write his own way developing and improving what was transferred as political theatre to him, while the workers' theatre was starting to fade away because of the flaws that were preventing its evolution. Brecht's political theatre, therefore, was the evolution of Workers' theatre. Hence, I consider meaningful to see in short which was the basis of Brecht's theatre on which he started to develop his own techniques. Later in this chapter the theory of Brecht's epic theatre and techniques will be presented as a theoretical framework for my argumentation that the play *Our Grand Circus* is not only political, but also an example of epic theatre.³

2.1 Workers' Political Theatre

In the beginning of the twentieth century new forms of political theatre have been developed across Europe mostly in the Soviet Union, Germany and Britain, in order to reflect the political concerns of the society. The new forms of theatrical expression were opposing the dominant stream of Naturalism. In the politically and socially turbulent years of the Interwar, Marxist philosophy was dominant and very influential for the major theatre practitioners of those times (Meyerhold, Piscator).⁴

'Naturalism was a growing awareness that the changing political contexts of Europe demanded a new form of political theatre to reflect the prescriptions of Marxism. This political reaction against Naturalism had its roots before the Great War -not only in Germany, but especially in Russia, where the theatre practices of Naturalism could no longer mirror the realities of the late-Tsarist regime. This reaction against Naturalism as a theatre form was allied to a growing commitment by certain theatre practitioners towards issues of class -and therefore Marxism'.⁵

During Interwar (the period between World War I and World War II), political theatre writers were facing censorship and persecution. Many of their efforts were lost or hidden, to be rediscovered after the end of World War II. Some examples are the collection *German Workers' Theatre* by Hoffmann, which could only be accomplished

³ As a result of the extended research I conducted in the University of Athens and all files available in the library, I found that nobody has ever characterized *Our Grand Circus* as "epic theatre", but only political, an adjective that is often found accompanying its title.

⁴ Chinna, Stephen. *Performance Recasting the Political in Theatre and beyond*. (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2003), 89.

⁵ Chinna, 86-87.

after the end of German Fascism,⁶ or the *Theatre of the Mountains* by Greek playwright G. Kotzioulas, that was published only in 1980, after the end of Greek dictatorship and almost twenty-five years after the author's death.⁷ In a similar way Brecht had to flee to United States in order not to be persecuted by the Nazis party.⁸

The origins of German political theatre and hence Brecht's "roots" were the workers' theatre. Despite the censorship it was a theatre made for workers by workers, as they perceived -in the working class and their organization- the main historical force to bring a radical social change⁹. A dominant factor, in theory and in practice, of workers' theatre was the expression of left-wing politics explicitly constructed to suggest a form of revolution, in particular the class revolution proposed by Marx.¹⁰ The goal of this form of theatre was to induce a "critical awakening" to the audience, in order to make the working class aware of its current state and consequently make it take action to address the issues of society.

Multiple dramaturgical techniques were used in the various countries (Soviet Union, Germany, Britain) where political theatre bloomed and by different practitioners to promote the revolutionary ideals, but some common denominators can be found. Firstly there was a reaction to Naturalism where theatre had to represent reality in the best possible way (the stage had to look like the most real version of what it was representing). Secondly there was the idea that theatre should have a pedagogical function in explaining to the workers theories and way of thinking. Finally, basic was the idea that theatre should facilitate social revolution.¹¹ Indeed,

'The workers' theatre movements proved that art can become an effective tool in the class struggle, that theatre can become a dynamic part of a revolutionary cultural arm of the workers' movement and its organizations, that workers can create a 'proletarian culture', a culture that serves the workers'.¹²

Particular focus was pointed at the spectator, as he was the ultimate recipient of the political message through the performance. The ideal spectator was detached and at the same time emotionally involved. Even if this sounds oxymoron, the idea was that the emotions that the spectator feels are not the ones felt by the actors on stage. And this is one of the great differences with Naturalism. The spectator has to observe the performance from his point of view and not from the actor's. The

⁶ Hoffmann, Ludwig quoted in Stourac, Richard, and Kathleen McCreery. *Theatre as a Weapon: Workers' Theatre in the Soviet Union, Germany, and Britain, 1917-1934*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986, 275.

⁷ Kotzioulas, Geōrgios. *Theatro Sta Vouna [Theatre of the Mountains]*. Athēna: Themelio, 1980.

⁸ Esslin, Martin. *Brecht, a Choice of Evils: A Critical Study of the Man, His Work, and His Opinions*. London: Methuen, 1984, 112.

⁹ Stourac, Richard, and Kathleen McCreery. *Theatre as a Weapon: Workers' Theatre in the Soviet Union, Germany, and Britain, 1917-1934*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986, XIV.

¹⁰ Chinna, 82.

¹¹ Chinna, 84.

¹² Stourac, 291.

spectator must understand that the performance does not claim to represent reality and must search for the message that the play wants to share. This message involves the spectator emotionally (e.g. with anger, astonishment) so that he can finally understand his real condition and react.¹³

However, the workers' theatre remained in an experimental phase since its main representatives "never consciously applied themselves to the problem of developing political forms for political content",¹⁴ while "the scarcity of writers producing political plays [...] in all three countries became a serious obstacle to their development".¹⁵ It has been argued that Brecht's plays ("except his very first ones") have been the first paradigm of politically engaged theatre, hence Brecht was the successor of Germany's workers' theatre.¹⁶ In the next chapter are presented the keystones of Brecht's political theatre, used later as theoretical framework of *Our Grand Circus*' analysis.

¹³ Chinna, 93.

¹⁴ Stourac, 288.

¹⁵ Stourac, 289.

¹⁶ Bentley, Eric. *The Theatre of Commitment, and Other Essays on Drama in Our Society*. New York: Atheneum, 1967, 44.

2.2 Brecht's Political Theatre

In this chapter the main theories of Brecht's political theatre are presented in order to help the reader understand the relation, argued in the analysis part, between Brecht and *Our Grand Circus*. For understanding Brecht's theories, it is important to highlight that they do not need to be seen as a monolithic framework of ideas and techniques. His theories were developed throughout his whole life and his techniques are the result of experimentations that the dramaturge carried out in the rehearsals.¹⁷ Specific focus will be given to those elements that will prove useful in the analysis of *Our Grand Circus*.

When talking about Brecht it is also important to have in mind what Leach stated in his book *Makers of Modern Theatre*, that "Brecht was fond of repeating Marx's observation: Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it".¹⁸ This is a crucial point in Brecht's dramaturgy and also a key to understand many of his plays. How can theatre change the world? Or as Leach puts it more accurately: "Could theatre not simply interpret the world, but actually help people to change it?"¹⁹

In the next subchapters the most important for the analysis of the *Grand Circus* theories of Brecht are presented. The next subchapters discuss Brecht's opposition to Naturalism (as we saw above that also the workers' theatre did) and most importantly his non identification (V-effect) theory and epic theatre techniques. It is also presented his "Lehrstück" theory about the pedagogical goal of theatre and how he thought that the ideal spectator and actor should be. These theories will be leveraged later in order to investigate how Brechtian is *Our Grand Circus*.

2.2.1 Opposition to Naturalism

Brecht was a rebel and his theatre can only be understood in the light of what he rebelled against.²⁰ By the time Brecht was born, naturalistic theatre was the widest accepted form of theatre in Europe. At the end of the twentieth century, directors like Stanislavsky proposed a new way of acting where the actor had to "become" the character he was performing, feel his emotions "as if" he was the character himself.²¹ As Leach states in his *Makers of Modern Theatre*, "Stanislavsky and Artaud worked from the inside outwards, whereas Meyerhold and Brecht worked in the contrary direction".²² This is an important detail about the way most Greek actors perform and particularly the years that the *Circus* was written. Until today and with very few exceptions of deviation, the dominant way of acting in Greece is the one Stanislavsky

¹⁷ Esslin, 108.

¹⁸ Leach, Robert. *Makers of Modern Theatre: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2004, 116.

¹⁹ Leach, 116.

²⁰ Esslin, 107.

²¹ Stanislavsky, Konstantin, and Hermine I. Popper. *Creating a Role*. New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1961.

²² Leach, 3.

proposed, even when it comes to plays of Brecht. According to Stanislavsky the stage had to represent in the most realistic way the scenes of a play: costumes had to be detailed and historically accurate, lights had to facilitate the illusion and convey the atmosphere of the play going on stage, actors behaved as if the story represented on stage was real and they were the real protagonists of the stories performed. The bodies of Stanislavskian actors suffer as if they were their characters in reality. The production of a play was focused on recreating meticulously the illusion of a real story on stage.²³

As many dramaturges of his time (Meyerhold, Piscator), Brecht was convinced that theatre should be a facilitator for social change, while at the same time having a pedagogical function. Brecht realised that naturalistic theatre, as he called "Aristotelian drama", was not able to create the basic circumstances that would guide the audience to understand the issues of their lives. He argued that the Aristotelian drama was casting a spell on the spectators, depriving them of their own emotions and thoughts, guiding them into an illusionary world that does not exist, making identify themselves with the protagonists, with their thought and their feelings. He realised that the identification with the protagonists was a key element that was undermining the real pedagogical purpose of theatre. This sort of escapisms, Brecht argued, could not make the spectators more aware of their own reality.²⁴ After assisting to such play, the audience would come out of the theatre uninstructed and unimproved. This is also important in order to understand how Brecht viewed the ideal spectator, Brecht believed that,

'Theatre had a role to play in developing the spectators' consciousness of their oppression through the events shown on the stage. [...] The spectator could be led to the correct conclusion by the evidence presented'.²⁵

Brecht was looking for a different spectator. Brecht's ideal audience was not emotionally pulled by the performance. The spectator should be rational, critical, and able to think about what was happening on stage and understand the underlying message that the performance wanted to convey. Esslin notes that Brecht's belief was that,

'By inhibiting the process of identification between the spectator and the characters, by creating a distance between them and enabling the audience to look at the action in a detached and critical spirit, familiar things, attitudes, and situation appear in a new and strange light, and create, through astonishment and wonder, a new understanding of the human situation. The great discoveries of mankind, Brecht points out, were made by men who looked at familiar things as if they had never seen them before.'²⁶

In Brecht's own words:

²³ It is useful to remember this as the antipode of Brecht. So in the second part of the Thesis, in the analysis, when something is Stanislavskian is far from Brecht's theory and practice.

²⁴ Esslin, 109.

²⁵ Chinna, 94.

²⁶ Esslin, 114.

'The dramatic theatre's spectator says: Yes I have felt like that too – Just like me – It's only natural – It'll never change – The sufferings of this man appal me, because they are inescapable – That's great art; it all seems the most obvious thing in the world – I weep when they weep, I laugh when they laugh.

The epic theatre's spectator says: I'd never have thought it – That's not the way – That's extraordinary, hardly believable – It's got to stop – The sufferings of this man appal me, because they are unnecessary – That's great art: nothing obvious in it – I laugh when they weep, I weep when they laugh'.²⁷

Brecht was not writing for the spectators that wanted "*their drama dished up for them*", calling this kind of theatre "*culinary*", because, "*the audience can safely hang its brains up in the cloakroom along with its coat*". Instead he was fond of a "*smokers' theatre*", since "*smoking is an attitude highly conducive to observation*".²⁸

Therefore, since the audience should not be drifted away by the performance and escape reality, Brecht had to invent a way in which the play would not permit such identification. Indeed Brecht found ways and techniques that prevented identification. This non-identification is usually known as V-effect.

2.2.2 Non identification, V-effect and the epic theatre

A key element of Brecht's theatre is the *non-identification* of the audience with the story performed on stage. He did not want to induce emotions to the public; instead he wanted them to think critically about their lives. If emotions were induced, the audience would not have the time or the freedom to think critically. To achieve this freedom

'The theatre must not only not attempt to create such an illusion, it must do its best to destroy in the bud any illusion of reality as it will continuously, and mischievously, tend to arise. It must therefore at all time be made apparent to the spectators that they are not witnessing real events happening before their very eyes at this very moment, but that they are sitting in a theatre, listening to an account of things which have happened in the past at a certain time in a certain place'.²⁹

To avoid identification a space needs to be created by the dramaturge between the performance and the audience. The dramaturge has to consciously do his best to create and secure this space throughout the performance, discouraging attachment, keeping the audience distanced. Brecht called this effect "*Verfremdungseffekt*", which became the "*heart of his method*".³⁰ For simplification, it is usually called the "*V-effect*". Brecht himself "*made a number of attempts to define the V-effect*". One of

²⁷ Brecht, Bertolt, and John Ed. and Tr. Willett. *Brecht on Theatre; The Development of an Aesthetic. Translation and Notes by John Willett*. London: Methuen, 1965, 71.

²⁸ Leach, 119.

²⁹ Esslin, 110.

³⁰ Leach, 118.

these was in his work *The Messingkauf Dialogues* where he wrote: “It consists in the reproduction of real-life incidents on the stage in such a way as to underline their causality and bring it to the spectator’s attention”.³¹ In another assertion of his, the V-effect was “a key to human progress”, explaining why:

‘The man who first looked with astonishment at a swinging lantern and instead of taking it for granted found it highly remarkable that it should swing, and swing in that particular way rather than any other, was brought close to understanding the phenomenon by this observation, and so to mastering it’.³²

The kind of theatre created with this distanciation in mind was named “epic theatre” by Brecht himself. When using the word “epic”, Brecht was thinking of the bards that once upon a time were travelling around ancient Greece narrating their stories. In those circumstances the goal was to tell a story that the audience would be aware that a story was told and being free to think about its meaning.³³ There was no real acting (Stanislawskian method), no realistic costumes, only the story that was being narrated to the audience.

Brecht suggested that epic theatre could only be historical because he realised that one element of identification of the audience was the suspense created when not knowing the end of a story. In this context the spectator could have been captured by the events on stage and become unable to sit back and think critically.³⁴ In fact, when narrating a historical event there are no surprises, no uncertainties and most of the time the audience knows the end of the plot before even going to the theatre. With this in mind, the spectator has more space and time to think why and most importantly how these events are presented on stage rather than being involved emotionally with the plot. Leach states: “[...] It was necessary for the play to concentrate on how things happen”. Furthermore, Lion Feuchtwanger notes: “*Brecht wanted the spectator to observe the mechanism of an event like the mechanism of a car*”.³⁵

Leach states that by the end of his life Brecht wanted to rename epic theatre “dialectical theatre, because it presented a situation dialectically for discussion and judgement [...] Brecht wanted his theatre to “historicise” the events portrayed” and Brecht’s view that “Historicising involves judging a particular social system from another system’s point of view”,³⁶ which is what Kampanellis does at the end.

Furthermore, theatre should have a pedagogical purpose, as happened in ancient Greece that people were going to theatre to be instructed. The plays that provided this instruction Brecht called them “Lehrstück”, meaning “learning plays”.

³¹ Brecht, Bertold quoted in Leach, 118.

³² Brecht, Bertold quoted in Leach, 118.

³³ Esslin, 110.

³⁴ Esslin, 113.

³⁵ Feuchtwanger Lion, quoted in Leach, 117.

³⁶ Leach, 117.

2.2.3 Lehrstück: A pedagogical shade of play

As already mentioned before, Brecht believed that theatre should also have a pedagogical purpose. He wrote a series of plays in the late 1920s and early 1930s, known as Lehrstück, (meaning “learning plays”) “deliberately created for an alternative *theatre for instruction*”. Leach notes, that “the subject of those plays is dialectics itself”.³⁷

‘Spare in form, they use a minimum of naturalistic detail, and employ songs, direct address to the audience [...] They aim to fuse content, form and function, or rather to let the contradictions between these stimulate reflection’.³⁸

Theatre should not only entertain but also provide elements for the audience to think and understand the issues of their lives. The performance has to become a sort of lecture but in order to have a lecture, two elements are needed: a lecturer and an audience.

A key element of naturalistic theatre is the fact that the audience is “hidden”. The story unfolds and the spectators are eavesdropping to what is happening on stage. The performers are not aware of the spectators and an invisible wall (the fourth wall, which is missing in order to facilitate the audience’s visibility)³⁹ separates these two realities.

Brecht wanted to tear down this fourth wall so that the relationship between performance and audience (lecturer-audience) was clear. To achieve this goal it was critical that the audience understood that the performers on stage were aware of their presence. This was easily achieved by having the actors narrating directly to the audience, as narrators or using techniques like the asides (aparté) to directly create a connection between the stage and the audience and also making direct questions to the spectators. This way the audience was teased to think more rationally about what was performed on stage. This rational thinking of the audience was the final goal of Brecht’s theatre. Earlier in his career the German dramaturge was openly against any sort of emotions, believing that rationality and detachment was the only way to convey improvement in the society. By the end of his life though he accepted the idea that some emotions were indeed beneficial to the cause as long as these emotions were the result of the rational thinking of the spectator and not induced artificially by the performance, returning back to the roots of workers’ theatre that through emotions like anger for example they were triggering the spectators in order

³⁷ Leach, 109.

³⁸ Leach, 109.

³⁹ The other three walls would be the background wall that separates the backstage from the stage, and the two walls at the sides. The “hole” (or “buca” of the stage from Italian “bocca”, which means mouth) of the fourth wall (that is missing) is only a convention for naturalistic theatre. It is actually not there for the performers of naturalistic theatre. Normally the things happening on stage concern only the protagonists of the scene that are not “aware” that somebody else is watching, hence they do not look at the spectators because for them they do not exist and for sure they do not speak to them. Same way the audience must not talk to the performers of naturalistic theatre, neither interrupt them with applause or anything else.

to react to their current political - economical state.⁴⁰

Brecht rejected “*the old idea of entertainment through emotional catharsis*”. Esslin states that the pleasure that Brecht’s theatre was giving the audience was:

‘The pleasure we feel when we discover new truths, the exhilaration we experience when we enlarge our understanding. In this scientific age Brecht wanted his audience to experience some of the exaltation felt by the scientist who has uncovered one of the mysteries of the universe’.⁴¹

But theatre shouldn’t be a sterilised environment, where audience would endure preaching with didactical scopes for a couple of hours or more, deprived of entertainment and fun. In one of his lectures in Scandinavia Brecht was questing:

‘How can theatre be both instructive and entertaining? How can it be divorced from spiritual dope traffic and turned from a home of illusions to a home of experiences? How can the unfree, ignorant man of our century [...] obtain his own theatre which will help him to master the world and himself?’⁴²

The answer according to Leach is “epic theatre”. Epic theatre would not only help to “change the world”, or “help people change it”, but it should also be “entertaining”.⁴³ As Brecht insisted “A theatre that can’t be laughed in is a theatre to be laughed at”.⁴⁴ Fun for Brecht was an inherent element of theatre. Elisabeth Hauptmann notes, “if Brecht gets no fun out of what he has created, he immediately goes and changes it.”⁴⁵ Of course, as Leach observed, “for Brecht learning was fun, dialectics was fun”.⁴⁶

However, as we will see in the analysis, fun was crucial also for Kampanellis, who combined successfully Lehrstück, dialectics and entertainment, as argued in the second part of the Thesis. But let’s see first which were those techniques that formed epic theatre and helped the distanciation of the spectator (the much wanted V-effect).

2.2.4 Epic theatre techniques

In this section the most important epic theatre techniques are being presented, that can also be found in *Our Grand Circus* as I argue in the analysis. Many dramaturgical techniques are used in Brecht’s epic theatre to ensure that the audience stays distanced from the performance on stage. The performance is free from creating suspense, building a climax. Hence the plot can be more episodic. A “montage” of scenes is created where each scene, if taken alone, preserves the

⁴⁰ Kiralyfalvi, Bela. "The Aesthetic Effect: A Search for Common Grounds Between Brecht and Lukacs." *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, 1990. Accessed June 15, 2015, 26.

⁴¹ Esslin, 112.

⁴² Brecht Bertold, quoted in Leach, 116.

⁴³ Leach, 116.

⁴⁴ Leach, 134.

⁴⁵ Hauptmann Elisabeth quoted in Leach, 120.

⁴⁶ Leach, 120.

same meaning that the play has as a whole. Esslin notes that,

‘While the “Aristotelian” drama can only be understood as a whole, the epic drama can be cut into slices, which will continue to make sense and give pleasure, like the favourite chapters of a novel that can be read by themselves’.⁴⁷

Montage however is not a Brechtian “invention”. It is a technique used successfully by the workers’ theatre movements and of course the grand Russian film director Eisenstein that used to say: “*when two pieces are placed next to each other they unavoidably form a new impression which arises as a new quality from this juxtaposition*”.⁴⁸ Or as pointed out by Stourac speaking about the workers’ political theatre:

‘Continuous jumps and dislocation of the plot expose the actual dramatic means with which the performers attempt to affect the consciousness of the spectators. The spectators are given an active role by the montage: It provides them with Marxist tools to assess the political situation they find themselves in as well as its historical context. The intercutting and juxtaposing of scenic elements and episodes demands constant alertness and associative thinking in order to make links and associations. The episodic and fragmentary structures distance the audience so that they can critically assess the content as well as the form of the dramatic argument to which they are exposed’.⁴⁹

Also non-literary elements of the production such as music or choreography retain their own independence. These elements are not used as auxiliaries of the text in order to enforce some meaning or some atmosphere. They are independent and have their own message to convey. Brecht used music during and in between scenes of the montage. Songs were used to convey the same pedagogical messages about social issues. These elements were also used to break the play’s flow thus breaking the illusion and creating a sense of ‘strange’, an “estranging” effect, as the Russians perceived the V-effect (whose “problematic” translation led to various words among European countries such as alienation, distanciation, defamiliarisation, estranging),⁵⁰ on which the spectator was invited to react and think.⁵¹ The musicians were not hidden because there was no need to fool the spectators in order to create an “atmosphere” or hide a major element of the play from their eyes.⁵² The presence of a live orchestra on stage was necessary and the music was considered as a separated item in the play. Brecht himself had called music a “striking innovation”.⁵³

Inherent parts of the music were of naturally the songs. Music and songs in between the action and dialogues is another epic theatre technique in order to achieve the V-effect. “The song is a self-contained process which makes its own

⁴⁷ Esslin, 113.

⁴⁸ Eisenstein Sergei quoted in Stourac, 291.

⁴⁹ Stourac, 291.

⁵⁰ Leach, 118.

⁵¹ Esslin, 114.

⁵² Esslin, 122.

⁵³ Leach, 128.

concrete contribution, functioning, according to Brecht, an informer, a mark”.⁵⁴ However, as Leach notes “this is only successful when the music is given its own space”.⁵⁵ The songs, like the music, were very important in order to interrupt the action and give the spectators time to think.

Very similarly to music and songs, Brecht believed that lights should not be used to create an atmosphere or a mood in the scene that would lead to an illusion. Lights should only be used to focus the attention of the spectators on the stage, helping them in seeing what was being narrated. Like the musicians, the source of light was not hidden in order to make even more evident that there was no attempt of creating a representation of the sunlight, moonlight or any other real source. If there was a night scene, the moon was being represented by a disc rather than dimming the lights.⁵⁶ There is of course a particular reason why there has to be plenty of light on the stage: “*The theatre’s brightly lit stage is particularly successful in making us look again*”. “Looking again” is a keystone in Brecht’s practice, because “*when we think we know something, usually means we are taking it for granted [...] It is to combat habit the V-effect was useful*”.⁵⁷

Being free from creating any sort of illusion also the stage designer was freed by the necessity to reproduce reality. Thus the decor did not have to reflect reality, instead always had to help the audience to be aware that something was merely staged and there were no claims of reality. Leach notes that,

‘The stage was not supposed to represent any real locality: [...] It quoted, narrated, prepared and recalled. Its sparse indication of furniture, doors, etc, was limited to objects that had a part in the play, i.e. those without which the action would have been altered or halted. [...] The settings were designed not to help the spectator, but to block him; they prevent his complete empathy, interrupt his being automatically carried away’.⁵⁸

In order to understand how all this worked I hereby quote Carl Weber who wrote for Brecht’s Berliner Ensemble performance of *Mother*:

‘The set was quoting an environment rather than representing it; there was extensive use of projections and scene titles; the small chorus, in its songs to the audience, commented on the fable and/or the actions shown on stage’.⁵⁹

Other techniques of epic theatre that were producing the much desired V-effect were the “*use of placards, the half curtain, exposing the source of lighting and the direct address to the audience*”, while “*particularly effective is when a character stops speaking and begins to sing, interrupting himself as it were*”.⁶⁰ Van Steen gathered

⁵⁴ Leach, 128.

⁵⁵ Leach, 128.

⁵⁶ Esslin, 121.

⁵⁷ Leach, 118.

⁵⁸ Leach, 124.

⁵⁹ Leach, 134.

⁶⁰ Leach, 119.

the major Brechtian epic theatre techniques in a list:⁶¹

- use of (living) placards and printed signs;
- the presentation of the stage as stage (often an open playing area);
- the use of interruptions, syncopations, and occasional flashforwards (as in film montage);
- scenes of play - acting and play within the play; the “historization” of the dramatic events (which are thus seen from a fresh, skeptical perspective);
- the dissecting of abstract images and the assemblage of documentary material;
- the structuring of the play by way of self - contained, episodic scenes often preceded by epic theatre subtitles, headings, or captions (sometimes with mythical allusions) or by the introductory comments of a narrator or storyteller. Brecht’s policy was one of “each scene for itself”, which results in Brechtian tableaux that make for a cyclical and analytic narrative rather than building up to a linear and inevitable sequence.
- self - references and direct addresses to the audience; (reflective songs out of character;
- still postures, pantomime, and nonhistorionic acting;
- the occasional casting of women in men’s roles and vice versa;
- the use of large choruses to place speeches in their socio-political context and to deliver a sense of theatre as a community event.⁶²

The majority of these techniques cited in this list, can be found in the *Grand Circus*, as argued in Chapter 4.

2.2.6 The Actors of epic theatre / The “Gestus”

In this subchapter the epic actor as Brecht had in mind the ideal actor of epic theatre is being presented. In the next chapter (the analysis of the *Grand Circus*), there are various references to the “Gestus”, but also to the Brechtian acting codes. Did the performers of *Our Grand Circus* followed Brecht’s “commands”, as Kampanellis did with the text of his play?

Brecht created as well acting codes for the ideal actor that had in mind, which would be the actor of epic theatre. His idea was that an actor should not impersonate the character he performs (the techniques that are summarized as the “Method” of Stanislavsky). The actor should be a narrator of the actions of a character at a definite time in the past. He can use his acting skills like gestures, facial expression, and tone of voice to help himself in the narration and be fully understood by the audience. Acting becomes a quoting effort rather than impersonating.⁶³

⁶¹ Van Steen, 257.

⁶² footnote in Van Steen, 257.

⁶³ Esslin, 115.

Brecht used to make the example of the eyewitness of a street accident. When such events occur people gather all together to see what happened. Someone, the eyewitness, tries to explain how the accident occurred by narrating and maybe imitating the people involved. There is no presumption of impersonation and a gestural imitation of the protagonists is only done to convey a clearer message to the audience. The eyewitness performs each one involved in the accident and the spectators can make their own opinion about what was narrated to them.⁶⁴ Brecht was fully aware of the danger of personification while acting, so in order to get a distanced spectator he realized that the actors should be distanced themselves from the characters that they perform.

'In order to produce V-effects, the actors had to discard all the means they had learnt of getting the audience to empathize with the characters they play. Not aiming to put their audience into a trance, they must not put themselves into a trance either. Their muscles must remain relaxed, because e.g. a turn of the head with tautened neck muscles will 'magically' led the spectators' gaze and even their head to turn with it, and this can only diminish any speculation or emotional response that this gesture may produce. [...] At no point the actor let himself be totally transformed into the character'.⁶⁵

Brecht observed that there were specific combinations of words, gestures, facial expressions, silences, rhythm and timing that could convey his ideas to the audience with the best results. He named this combination "Gestus" believing that it was a critical part of the play. Brecht "wanted to arrive to a Gestus so simple and expressive that it could be quoted with the same ease as a well-turned line of dialogue is quoted".⁶⁶ Brecht believed that his actors should follow specific "Gestus" while acting. These guidelines limit the interpretative freedom of the actor and, as a consequence, the danger of impersonation while maximizing the communicative capabilities of the action. Esslin notes,

'The arrangement and grouping of the actors, their manner of speaking and moving must be made to convey all the implications of this "basic Gestus" with the greatest possible expressiveness, elegance, and economy of means. It is entirely irrelevant what the scene concerned might have looked like in real life, the producer is only concerned with bringing out its social content and significance'.⁶⁷

The "Gestus" of the performers of *Our Grand Circus* is going to be investigated in the part of the analysis. But before that I would consider appropriate to contextualise the play in the social and political situation of Greece in the early 1970s, which gave "birth" to the play and is reflected into it. The *Grand Circus* is a play that was created because of the political conditions and the oppression of the junta and the play cannot be separated from the times in and for which was written. History and politics are reflected almost in each line of the *Circus*. Hence, which were those specific socio – political conditions that "commanded" the need of such play?

⁶⁴ Brecht, 123.

⁶⁵ Brecht, 193.

⁶⁶ Esslin, 119.

⁶⁷ Esslin, 120.

3. Our Grand Circus

In this chapter I would like to provide the historical context of the play as well as some context about the *Circus's* author and his life. The conditions in which Kampanellis grew up and was shaped as a creator are reflected in his work. Why does the *Grand Circus* remind so much of Brecht's epic theatre and why Kampanellis chose to imitate it? This chapter about Kampanellis' life and the historical framework of the *Circus* might shed light to the reasons why this play is so particular, unique I would say, in comparison to the rest of the plays of the modern Greek dramaturgy.

At the end of chapter 3 the story of the play can be found. For a more detailed description see the appendix at the end of the Thesis.

3.1 The times

The dictatorship

The *Grand Circus* was written in 1973, the sixth year of the dictatorship of the Colonels, in which people were already fed up with the oppression and lack of freedom of speech and expression. The military regime was established against Greek people's will and it held itself in power for 7 long years of oppression, fear and tortures. In this context the leading actors and Kampanellis created the *Circus*.

Early in the morning of the 21st April 1967, people were waiting at the bus stops, but there were no buses in the horizon. Lots of tanks were out in the streets instead, waking up with their noise whoever was still asleep. The schools remained closed that day and everyone was wondering what had happened. The radio was playing military marches and Greek traditional music. A rather unwilling voice informed the listeners that from the night before a military regime were governing Greece, after having established martial law.⁶⁸

Still today it is hard to find official history for that period, free from personal memories and political views. The front pages of the Press of those times reveal more objectively the story of the establishment of the regime. (see Appendix 1)

⁶⁸ "The Colonels arrest Tzeni Karezi - MHXANH TOY XPONOY.", "Time Machine". November 16, 2013. Accessed May 25, 2015.

Censorship

Kampanellis wrote the *Grand Circus* in times that censorship and imprisonment, with heavy torturing performed in Athens and in exile, were lived on a daily basis. The actress Kitty Arseni explained to an audience of academic students what was it like to live during the dictatorship:

'What meant dictatorship in its everyday life? There were imprisoning, torturing, exiles, deprivation, capturing, but it is still difficult to transfer to you what was like. Everything was forbidden. It was forbidden to listen to the radio, it was forbidden to sing songs of forbidden composers, books were being seized⁶⁹, foreign radios were forbidden as well. The only radio in Athens was the one controlled by the junta. Among all these prohibitions a reaction had started to be born. A reaction almost physical: we need to exist nevertheless'.⁷⁰

The colonels put an end in spiritual life, artistic expression and individual freedom. Censorship was a common procedure before any text could become public. The censor, Kitty Arseni narrates, was an "inferior"⁷¹ soldier that was just cutting off the words that could imply freedom or opposition to the military regime. "*Words like dove or knife would be cut off by censorship*", says the actress.⁷² Very often the playwrights were trying to fool the censorship with hints and "half words".⁷³ Self-censorship was also in the daily program of the playwrights, who were being compared to acrobats because they had to imply things that the audience would understand but the censor would not. Authors of the very famous theatrical kind of the times, revue, were narrating "*what was left for the actors after the censorship was a big zero*".⁷⁴ But this couldn't stop them from planting the seeds of resistance and revolution in the plateau. A very famous actor of those times had said: "*Even if they dictate me what to say I don't care. A blink of the eye, a gesture, is enough to communicate with the audience*". This is how playwrights would overcome the reef of censorship. From the above one can understand that text and performance were two different things regarding a play of those times. Partly because what could be performed could not be written, and partly because what shouldn't be written would be cut off by censorship.

Theatre however, during the junta, had a very important role: to bring people together. When the public and private gathering of people was forbidden, in an attempt of the colonels to isolate people and make them suspicious with one another, theatres were the only venues where people could be close to each other and

⁶⁹ Brecht was also a "forbidden" writer: "The blacklists of October 25, 1971 and January 1974 motivate the ban on Brecht's work with the plainest of explanations: "The author is a German communist". Axelos cited in *Stage of Emergency*, Van Steen p. 263

⁷⁰ Arseni Kitty, *Round table conversation A' Συμπόσιο νεοελληνικού θεάτρου, (A' Symposium of modern Greek Theatre)*. Athens, Ellinika Grammata, 301.

⁷¹ with no particular education.

⁷² Arseni, 302.

⁷³ In Greek "half word" means a phrase or a conversation that implies something else that what is being pronounced. Somebody who says "half words" hides what he really wants to say either because he doesn't want to be direct with the other person, or in this case because of the censorship.

⁷⁴ Arseni, 302.

perform an act of resistance through laughter. “Laughter”, Arseni says, “was very harmful for the junta. And the colonels were aware about it”. The heritage of this saying has remained until today in Greek mentality,⁷⁵ while also in other countries it is a common place that through laughter big truths are being said.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Up today there are slogans written on the wall in the central neighborhood of Exarcheia (a place where traditionally intellectuals, students but also anarchists hang out) like this one: “One laugh will bury them” (meaning probably the government).

⁷⁶ In Italy, for example, there is the local saying “Ridendo e scherzando Pulcinella diceva la verità”, meaning that through laughing and joking (hence, through being a little bit crazy) one tells the truth, which is what we will see afterwards that Romiaki is doing in the *Circus*.

3.2 Greek dramaturgy during the dictatorship

Many dissertations and books have been written about the dramaturgy during the 1970s, but due to limited access to them, this chapter is based on Dr. Philip Hager's article, "*Modernity as ideological and institutional controversy of tradition in the New Greek theatre of period 1970-1973*", which summarizes Hager's research on that period. Through this article shines the situation of local Greek theatre production and theatrical life of the early 70s. The article shows that the early 70s were a turning point for the modern Greek theatre that started to leave behind the classical repertoire and create new plays, politically engaged, inspired by international theatre and mostly by theatre of the absurd and Brecht.⁷⁷

The main source of Hager's article is Giorgos Pilichos' research "Does Contemporary Greek Play exist?" which was published in the Greek newspaper "Ta Nea", in January 1970. In Pilichos' research a group of young playwrights answered the research question, explaining also the reason why the question was posed at the first place. At the question responded the young and aspiring then, but very renowned and respectable playwrights nowadays, Dimitris Kechaidis, Petros Markaris, Vassilis Ziogas, Pavlos Matesis, while also Kampanellis who was already famous, gave an answer from his own point of view. Hager has also collected a series of articles published in 1973 by Giorgos Charalambidis about the crisis of the early '70s in the Greek theatre, juxtaposing Alexis Solomos' article of 1971 who contradicts Charalambidis.

Through all the above, indicative for the production and the period articles, that Hager collected, it comes out that there was indeed a theatrical crisis in the beginning of the '70s, following the general "crisis" that the Colonels provoked in the country. The last 3 years of the dictatorship (1970-1973) were a period of economic, cultural and political crisis.

Charalambidis' explanation about the theatrical crisis was based on the problems of the established theatre (starring actors not always capable of serious acting, lack of serious / elaborated texts with social content etc) and of the failure of modernity (symbolistic, expressionistic, absurdistic plays) to attract the audience in the theatres. He considered that the alienation of the broad audience from modernity kept the established theatre alive and dominant. For Charalambidis, the theatrical crisis was the result of a general diffidence and lack of creativity in the theatrical field.⁷⁸

Kampanellis sustained that the problem of the theatrical field in Greece was "gerontocracy", which meant that the established playwrights, directors, sometimes even actors were in certain positions from which they could communicate their work to the audience. Kampanellis responded to Pilichos' research question saying that

⁷⁷ Steen, 250-251.

⁷⁸ Hager, Philip. *From the Margin to the Mainstream: The Production of Politically-engaged Theatre in Greece during the Dictatorship of the Colonels (1967-1974)*. PhD dissertation, Royal Holloway, University of London. 2008, 165.

the young dramaturgs had to diverge from the local theatrical tradition (writing revues, naturalistic dramas and light comedies) and head towards an international theatrical tradition with issues that concern an international community and not only the Greek one. Kampanellis notes the struggle in that period between old and new, local and international.

From 1970 and onwards, Hager notes, the new generation of dramaturgs applied “heretic methods of creation”.⁷⁹ By “heretic” I guess that Hager means non traditional techniques of playwrighting, mostly influenced by international plays that inspired modern Greek plays such as Skourtis’ *Nannies* (influenced from the theatre of the Absurd), Matesis’ *Plants’ Carer* and *To Elefsina* (influenced by symbolistic plays) etc.

Hager adds that the New Greek dramaturgy tried to define itself out of national theatre tradition and national identity. According to Hager the questioning of tradition and the constitutions of bourgeois theatre belonged to a general ideological context of questioning the bourgeois society, the cold war division and the nationalistic rhetoric of the junta.

In the summer of 1973 the new generations of dramaturgs, directors and actors were in the peak of their production. Legendary performances such as “*Ki esy chtenizesa!*”, “*Oh Dad what a world*”, “*Our Grand Circus*”, remained in the Greek theatre history not only because of their economic success, but also for their political engagement. Hager notes that “*these performances expressed and awakened the collective political unconscious of a broad, heterogeneous community of people*”.⁸⁰

Hager adds that due to the specific socio political conditions, the tendency for controversy that started with the new generation of dramaturgs, found correspondence to a broader audience. Through the small stages where the young makers used to work, the modern thematology conquered the central theatres of Athens. Hence, in 1973 we find one of the most sharp political plays of Greek theatre history in one of the most central theatres of Athens, theatre Athinaion.

⁷⁹ Hager, 166.

⁸⁰ Hager, 167.

3.3 The playwright

Becoming a playwright

This subchapter is about the *Circus's* author life and work. Who is the playwright that in Greece has been called the “*patriarch of modern Greek theatre*”⁸¹ by Tsatsoulis⁸², the “*mirror of our collective consciousness*”⁸³ by Georgousopoulos, “*one of the top theatre figures of the 21st century*”⁸⁴ by Pefanis, or “the most significant Greek playwright”⁸⁵ by Kalaitzi?

Kampanellis has been present in the Greek theatrical scene for more than half a century, counting from the performance of his first play in 1950 up to today⁸⁶ with a production of more than 30 theatrical plays (along with the monologues).⁸⁷

As Kampanellis used to say “*creation depends on the times and the conditions that shape the creator*”.⁸⁸ In the two previous subchapters we saw the historic - political conditions in which the author had to live and work during the two decades of 1960s and 1970s. There is, however, more in Kampanellis' personal life that shaped him to the creator he was and that might explain some similarities with Brecht's ideology and efforts to change the world through theatre.⁸⁹

Kampanellis was held captured for two years (1943-1945) in the Mauthausen Guzen concentration camp at the age of 22.⁹⁰ It has been argued that Kampanellis formed himself as an author during his stay in Mauthausen, for which he wrote the homonymous cantata. That was the place that triggered his problematization about the meaning of life and the place of the humans in the world.⁹¹ After the end of World War II, he returned to Greece where he found a country struggling to heal from that very catastrophic war and about to start another even more catastrophic in human losses.⁹² Kampanellis wanted to become an actor but only graduates from high

⁸¹ Dimitris Tsatsoulis: *Ithaka* 9, 2001, p. 19-22 «Kampanellis, the patriarch of post war Greek theatre».

⁸² Dimitris Tsatsoulis, Kostas Georgousopoulos, George Pefanis and Glykeria Kalaitzi are widely known academics in the field of theatre studies as well as theatre critics in Greece.

⁸³ Georgousopoulos, Kostas. *Θέατρο Ζ' Ιάκωβος Καμπανέλλης*. Athens: Kedros, 2010.

⁸⁴ Pefanis, George. *Νέα Εστία. Μικρό οδοιπορικό στη χώρα του Καμπανέλλη*

⁸⁵ Kalaitzi, Glykeria. *Β' Θεατρολογικό Συνέδριο (2nd Theatre Conference)*. Athens: Ellinika Grammata, Ο δραματουργός της μεταπολεμικής περιπέτειας (The dramaturg of post war adventure) Peritechnon, σελ. 19.

⁸⁶ Kalaitzi, Glykeria. *Β' Θεατρολογικό Συνέδριο (2nd Theatre Conference)*. Athens: Ellinika Grammata, Ο δραματουργός της μεταπολεμικής περιπέτειας (The dramaturg of post war adventure) Peritechnon, σελ. 19.

⁸⁷ Bakonikola Chara, *Peritechno* 2 p.47, *Το θέατρο του Ιάκωβου Καμπανέλλη*

⁸⁸ Δίφωνο σελ 48 Ιάκωβος Καμπανέλλης: Με το θάρρος της δημιουργίας του.

⁸⁹ The marxistic one.

⁹⁰ Mauthausen was a concentration camp where the Nazis were sending the captives from various countries they had conquered during World War II. It was considered one of the toughest concentration camps where the “enemies of the Third Reich” were sent. Kampanellis was sent in Mauthausen in his early 20's in 1943 and was released in 1945. (The German Occupation in Greece started in 1941 and ended in 1944).

⁹¹ Bakonikola Chara, *Peritechno* 2 p.47, *Το θέατρο του Ιάκωβου Καμπανέλλη*

⁹² The civil war (1946-1949) that followed. Also about this story it is hard to find objective facts. I will try to provide some insight –free from political views either from the left or from the

school could be accepted to the National Theatre's drama school.⁹³ Hence, he canalized his passion for theatre to the direction of playwriting.

The later sociopolitical conditions of the country in the '50s and '60s, the economic growth in Greece but also the emigration of many Greeks abroad,⁹⁴ as well as the years of dictatorship later in the '70s are depicted in his plays.⁹⁵

right, I hope- that later in the analysis will explain the basis of some episodes. After the end of World War II the communists refused to give back the weapons they were given by the state for the war, fearing probably that the British that helped the liberation would become the successive oppressors. (Not to forget however that the Cold War was about to begin and capitalists and communists wanted to divide the international pie fighting for its pieces). A very bloody 3 years civil war followed World War II that had more human losses than the 4 years German Occupation, executions, hunger and battles. After the civil war and until the end of the dictatorship in 1974 communism was illegal in Greece and the propaganda of the state characterized them as dangerous for the nation and non patriots. (Even though during World War II they had fought the same with all the rest of Greeks, while their organizations were creating severe damages to the foreign enemies).

⁹³ Kampanellis had to work from an early age and he did not graduate from High School which for those years was something common for children of poor families.

⁹⁴ Sotirchou Panagiwta, *Το μεταναστευτικό και προσφυγικό βίωμα στη νεοελληνική δραματουργία* (The migration experience in modern Greek dramaturgy) Αθήνα: Συμπαντικές Διαδρομές, 2012, 83-86.

⁹⁵ For example the well known in Greece "Courtyard of Miracles" is about the emigration and also urbanism of the 1950's and 1960's.

3.3 The play

The play is divided in 14 Episodes and an Introductory scene. In the Introductory scene the two narrators, Romios and Romiaki, a form of *pagliacci* explain to the spectators what are they about to see, while commenting also in between the scenes.⁹⁶

In Kampanellis' *Circus* the "numbers" are not performed by animals but by humans, people who had a role in the ancient and Modern Greek history. The playwright makes stops in some moments of the Greek past, but not the usual, glorious ones, that official history has recorded. The episodes of the *Circus* make part of another, less known, history of inglorious moments of Greek history.

The story⁹⁷

The first scene of the play is introductory. Two presenters – "pagliacci" (Romios and Romiaki)⁹⁸ after presenting themselves inform the audience about what is going to be presented and which will be its role in the play.⁹⁹ They say that the play runs through various eras of Greek history they will be the link between them so the spectators do not "lose" themselves between the facts and the eras. They state that their circus consists of actors¹⁰⁰ and they also tell the audience not to be afraid of the snakes - dragons that decorate the stage because they are not dangerous to spectators. (They "eat" only actors).¹⁰¹ Romios at the end of the scene informs the audience that the play is a comedy,¹⁰² adding that the spectators are not obliged to laugh because of this reason and warning that each similarity of the comedy with drama is completely casual.¹⁰³

The fourteen episodes of the play correspond to fourteen moments of Greek history from ancient to modern times (from antiquity to World War II). The play starts

⁹⁶ The Italian word for clown. I am not using the word "clown" because maybe in most people's minds a clown is dressed with flashy clothes, he has a heavy grotesque make up and a red nose. The protagonists of *Our Grand Circus* for sure are not dressed like that. However they are dressed in a poor but fancy way, while Romiaki could be characterised a "hamini" (a poor boy who lives in the streets and runs errands). Romios could be also described as compere (from the french), a role which was also used in Greece in the revue (epitheoresis: theatrical kind with satira, songs, music, dance and some dialogues, something like today's stand up comedy but with a lots of music and dance).

⁹⁷ A detailed description of the play can be found in the Appendix 2.

⁹⁸ Romios stands for "Greek" and Romiaki is the "little" Greek (a diminutive of Romios)

⁹⁹ In the first scene but also throughout the play we understand that Romios is a man who carries the collective folk wisdom, while Romiaki is a naive and ignorant (but also foxy) boy. Romios is teaching the "boy" Greek history, not the way is taught at schools but with all the frauds that are hidden from the history books.

¹⁰⁰ "They are cheaper than animals and more entertaining for humans".

¹⁰¹ Clearly a comment about the imprisonment of Karezi. This way the snakes - dictators "eat" actors.

¹⁰² "Not only because it was written that way or because we say so [...] but because it was declared as a comedy and submitted to censorship as such".

¹⁰³ Kampanellis, Iakovos. *Theatro*. 2010 ed. Athens: Kedros, 1978, 21-23.

with an episode inspired from Greek mythology. Kronos eats his children so none of them growing up can steal his authority, but his wife, Rea, spares Zeus. Rea calls her husband a “*dictator*” while the priest who along with a king and a verger characterize Rea’s act as “*profanity, revolution, alteration, anarchy*”... Kronos represents the dictator who is afraid of being stolen his authority.¹⁰⁴

The route of the *Circus* passes through different eras and moments of Greek history, depicting various oppressions from Kronos to the German Occupation. The patterns throughout the play are repeated. Local and foreign oppressors one after the other rule Greece. The next episodes are about oppressing rulers like Philip of Macedonia who wants to conquest the rest of Greece with the help of corrupted priests who would give him the “right” oracle, the Byzantine emperor Andronicus who murdered the legal emperor and took his throne and many episodes about the foreign oppressors who ruled Greece as kings after the liberation by the Ottomans in 1821.

In the following episodes are depicted the Bavarian king Otto and his court that corrupt local people and give them authority, “pseudo-aristocrats” and also captains of the revolution that are imprisoned and executed as “dangerous”, Greek people asking for constitution and the Grand Forces of the times (England, France, Austria, Russia) deciding if they were going to permit it or not, folk heroes who fought for the liberation become “statues”, in public places, after their death and after their imprisonment and execution, kings that come and go appointed by the Grand Forces that lent money for the liberation and consequently do not let the Greeks decide for their own fate.

The glories of the past (liberation by the Ottoman empire) follow corrupted politics and catastrophic wars (1897, 1922) that altogether send Greece deeper in debts and need of foreign help. Finally World War II and the German Occupation (1941-1944), the most “*schizophrenic and paranoid episode of the play*” as Romios says, opens a circle of sad consequences.¹⁰⁵ The play ends with the sound of the dram of war and Romiaki saying “*something is happening*”, reflecting people’s growing anger and will for change -and later in November 1973 the contemporary student riots. The final song of the play is: “*People, don’t bend your head any longer*”.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ For this reason, I guess, the colonels were taking preventive measures such as imprisonments and exile.

¹⁰⁵ World War II followed a civil war, communism was characterized illegal and many people were sent to exile and were executed with the excuse of “communist threat”. The military regime of 1967 continued in a more harsh way this “tradition”. The communism was legal in Greece only after the fall of the junta in 1974.

¹⁰⁶ “*People, don’t bend your head any longer, no longer spend the night in fear, the struggles you have waged do not avail you if they don’t pay off the blood that you have poured. People, don’t bend your head any longer, fear is a coward’s black fate, joy goes to him who holds on to freedom*”. The phrase “people, don’t bend your head any longer” can be heard in today’s manifestations of left wings’ parties.

4. The Analysis

In this chapter a dramaturgical analysis of the play *Our Grand Circus* is being attempted, leveraging the theory of Brecht's epic theatre. I will argue that Kampanellis' play is a Greek version of epic theatre as the German dramaturge defined and applied it in his own plays.¹⁰⁷ Kampanellis, however, was not a director so the performance of his play was up to the director's, Kostas Kazakos', abilities and taste.¹⁰⁸ For this analysis section, the factor that is being taken into consideration the most is the text of the play, because there is no visual material of the 1973 performance available.¹⁰⁹ However, in some parts I refer to elements (that were cited by the critics of the times and therefore extracted by their reviews) of that "mythic" (for its success, courage and duration in time) performance, as an example of the application of Brecht's theory in praxis in Greece.¹¹⁰ Through the analysis shine also the facts of Greek history that are perpetual, something that makes the play easy to perform today without interventions (changing, cutting) on the text.

The work, either theoretical or dramaturgical, of Brecht was known in Greece during the 1970s. Van Steen refers in *Stage of Emergency*, that as intellectuals did throughout the world, also the left wing Greek intellectuals associated Brecht's marxistic based dramaturgical work with resistance and politicization.¹¹¹ Van Steen notes, also, that 1971 was a "peak year of Brechtian activity in Greece". It is the year that also theoretical works of the German dramaturge's were published, along with Esslin's *The Man and His Work* and other theoretical works by theatre scholars, translated by young Greek intellectuals (most famous are up today Kondilis, Markaris, Koltsidopoulou, Frangoudaki, Solomos) who were speaking the German

¹⁰⁷ Van Steen has already argued in her book *Stage of Emergency* that Petros Markaris's *The Story of Ali Retzo* is an example of epic theatre (p. 250), but nobody has expressed something similar about the *Grand Circus*.

¹⁰⁸ About the way the *Circus* was directed by Kazakos there were some objections by the critics that watched the performance and wrote their reviews in the Press of those times, with most intense the one of Kostas Georgousopoulos that criticized the staging of the performance with the aesthetics of a circus, the key actors (the two presenters mainly), the "didacticism" of the staging, the music, the scenography in a negative way. However he found "marvelous" the lyrics of the songs of the performance, noting that for the first time after Markaris' *Story of Ali Retzo*, the Brechtian way was well αξιοποιημένο. Also other critics (such as Klara and Margaritis) doubted Kazakos' way of staging. (Kampanellis p. 247-287)

¹⁰⁹ In the analysis I always refer to the (original) performance of 1973-1974. For that performance there is no available visual material in the internet (only a few excerpts), but in YouTube one can find the registration of the songs along with some prose, including the audience's reactions (laughing, applause). On the contrary, Akropol's production of the *Grand Circus* in 2010 can be found in the internet in full length.

¹¹⁰ Van Steen in her book (216) refers to a registration that the management of theatre Akropol in Athens (which produced the re-enactment of the *Circus* in 2010), handed her giving her the opportunity to estimate the extent to which the play had been cut after the second censorship, but also the applause of the audience that responds even to a butchered play which did not lose its meaning and hence, power. Unfortunately this Thesis has been written in the Netherlands, therefore there was no possibility to contact the same source of Akropol's theatre and try to see the registration of the performance of 1973 (the contemporary re-enactment can be seen in full length on youtube), nevertheless even if I were in my home country the result would have been the same since the theatre closed down this year due to debts.

¹¹¹ Steen, 258.

language and most of all shared the same antidictatorial feelings.¹¹² The press of the times was also publishing Brecht's poems and political texts up to the point that Brecht became the most popular foreign playwright in Greece during the years of the dictatorship. His plays *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Coriolanus*, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *A Man's a Man*, *The Good Person of Szechwan*, *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* and the *Life of Galileo* were being performed in Athens and Thessaloniki by respected theatrical groups and famous actors of the times, introducing Brecht's dramaturgy to the Greek audience in the beginning of the 1970s.¹¹³ However, by the end of the junta, as Gonda cites Markaris: "after the Brecht mania, a Brecht fatigue followed".¹¹⁴

As a consequence of this intense presence of Brechtian theatre and theories in Greece, the Greek dramaturges and plays of the 1970s have been influenced by Brecht's dramaturgy and theoretical writings. Greek Brechtian plays started to be presented on the Greek stages with most famous and characteristic of Brecht's theatre, the 1971 Petros Markaris' play *The Story of Ali Retzo*.¹¹⁵ Van Steen describes this play as a "definitive Brechtian moment in Greek theatre under the dictatorship, that marked a cultural as well as a theatrical breakthrough, if not a (modest) revolution".¹¹⁶

In this context, Kampanellis wrote the *Grand Circus* in 1973. Even though there are no references that say explicitly that the playwright of the *Circus* had read Brecht's theoretical work, I argue that he had been influenced by the German dramaturge. Furthermore I argue that the play *Our Grand Circus* is not only an example of epic theatre as Brecht intended it, but also triggers the spectators' critical thinking through sentiments, as Brecht acknowledged by the end of his life.¹¹⁷ In the upcoming analysis my argumentation will be presented, in comparison to Van Steen's phrase that "*Our Grand Circus was too one - dimensional to be Brechtian*".

As pointed out in the first part of this Thesis, when Brecht was writing his plays he wanted to change the world. When reading the *Grand Circus*, becomes evident that Kampanellis wanted to change, if not the world, at least Greece and more particularly Greeks and their mentality.¹¹⁸ For this reason Kampanellis puts together those particular snapshots of history that in the end of the play convey his message: The Greeks have to stop being victims of their fate blaming others for it. They have to act and take responsibility of their actions.¹¹⁹ The key actress of the play says explicitly: "*we must do something*".¹²⁰

¹¹² Steen, 258.

¹¹³ Steen, 260-262.

¹¹⁴ Steen, 2015, 264.

¹¹⁵ About the Story of Ali Retzo see Steen, 250.

¹¹⁶ Steen, 251.

¹¹⁷ Kiralyfalvi, 112.

¹¹⁸ Something that today (40 years after this performance) some Greeks still wish.

¹¹⁹ I guess the director and the theatre that decided to re-stage the *Circus* in 2010 got this message, which was well timed also 5 years ago (even today in 2015).

¹²⁰ Meaning of course a revolt against the oppression of the Colonels. In 2010 and today or in the future this phrase would have another reference. For example the "notorious" in Greece "troika" (representatives of the institutions that have lent money to Greece from 2010 up

As already mentioned, my argumentation is that the play *Our Grand Circus* is not only an example of political theatre, as labeled and remembered in Greek theatrical history, but also an example of epic theatre as well. This is why some theories of political and epic theatre have been presented at the first part of the Thesis. But how did Kampanellis use Brecht's techniques in the *Grand Circus*? How does Brecht's question: "*how can theatre change the world?*" work if we substitute the word "*theatre*" with the play "*Our Grand Circus*" and the "*world*" with the words "*Greece/Athens/the military regime*"? The question then would become: How could the *Grand Circus* change Greece/ Athens/ the military regime? And if we also consider Leach's question mentioned in the end of the first part: "*Could theatre not simply interpret the world, but actually help people to change it?*", then we would have another question: Could *Our Grand Circus* not simply interpret Greece/Athens/military regime, but actually help people to change them?

Those are questions that are not the subject of this Thesis. The extent to which this goal was achieved back in the 1970s maybe is not measurable and difficult to argue academically. History showed that the play alone did not lead to the uprising of the Polytechnic in 1973 but the growing anger of the oppressed Greeks triggered the students to occupy the universities and protest. The dictatorship of the Colonels did not fall because of Kampanellis' play.¹²¹ However this Thesis has the ambition to show which techniques of Brecht's political and epic theatre Kampanellis mobilized in order to contribute and boost the upcoming uprising.¹²² This was anyway the initial reason for writing and performing the *Circus*. As Karezi said in the play: "*We must do something*"!

In the following subchapters the relation between *Our Grand Circus* and Brecht's epic theatre theory is being investigated.

today) represent for many Greeks a foreign oppression even if the political system of the country itself called for their "help". So this phrase in the staging of 2010 brought completely different people and situations in the spectators' minds.

¹²¹ What led to the fall of the junta was the dramatic event of Turkey's invasion in Cyprus in 1974, which cost many lives of people from North Cyprus (while the survivors were forced to leave their houses and never go back until recently, only as visitors though).

¹²² In the end of the play the playwright and the key actors (through Romiaki's mouth) say "*Something's happening... Something's happening*", which are the last words of the play before the final song "*People don't bend your head any longer*". (p. 132-133)

4.1 The V-effect and the epic in “Our Grand Circus”

In this subchapter I argue that Kampanellis used most of Brecht’s epic theatre techniques in order to provide his spectators the necessary tools and make them understand their contemporary reality. Using the stories of the past, in order to get also the approval of the censors, Kampanellis was speaking about the present.¹²³ The analysis will be started by tracing the V-effect in *Our Grand Circus* in order to see how Kampanellis tried to achieve the non-identification regarding his audience.¹²⁴

Brecht was against the identification of the spectators with the key actors. Making the spectators think and feel through the characters’ thoughts and feelings was, according to Brecht, what the Aristotelian drama was creating. I remind Esslin’s observation that Brecht,

‘realised that the identification with the protagonists was a key element that was undermining the real pedagogical purpose of theatre. This sort of escapisms, he argued, could not make the audience more aware of their own reality’.¹²⁵

Since Brecht wanted his audience’s instruction and improvement after the end of the performance, he was against such techniques that would obstruct them. Therefore, he was against Naturalism. In order to avoid the identification of the audience with the characters, Brecht introduced the “*V-effect*”. As presented in the first part of the Thesis, the V-effect is the keystone of Brecht’s theory and practice. Hence, according to Brecht, there needs not to be an illusion of reality in order to achieve the audience’s critical thinking.

In the *Grand Circus* the “*illusion of reality*” is being interrupted many times and in many ways (by the presenters, their direct addresses to the audience, the songs etc), as we will see analytically in the subchapter of epic theatre techniques.

Brecht suggested that “*epic theatre could only be historical*”, since he observed that one element of identification of the audience was “*the suspense induced when not knowing the end of a story*”. This way the spectator was being captured by the action on stage and this would blur his critical thinking.¹²⁶ Without forgetting Leach who said that it was necessary for the play to concentrate on “*how things happen*”. Kampanellis does not keep the audience in suspense as well. In each episode of the play he presents moments from Greek history that supposedly

¹²³ Vassilopoulos, Christos. "Οι συνταγματάρχες συλλαμβάνουν την Τζένη Καρέζη - ΜΗΧΑΝΗ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΟΝΟΥ." ΜΗΧΑΝΗ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΟΝΟΥ. ("The Colonels arrest Tzeni Karezi – Time Machine") November 16, 2013. Accessed May 25, 2015.

¹²⁴ The *Circus*’ protagonist and director Kostas Kazakos narrated to Vassilopoulos that the actors did not make it to not identify themselves with the protagonists in certain episodes (mostly in Asia Minor one), saying that they had to put a lot of effort in order not to cry. (Vassilopoulos) Georgousopoulos writes also in his review in the 1973 that the actors chose the most “inappropriate way to act their roles: A noisy daily routine. A naturalism” (Kampanellis p. 251).

¹²⁵ Esslin, 109.

¹²⁶ Esslin, 113.

all the spectators knew how they were going to end. Kampanellis' goal as well was to make his spectators reflect on how those events happened, that in each episode was reminding the spectators' contemporary socio-political situation. Presenting past histories of oppressions, one after the other, stressed that the contemporary 1970's story of oppression was one in a series of many that repeatedly were happening in Greece from antiquity to modern times.

For example, all the spectators knew that the war of 1897 was going to end in a catastrophe for Greece (eleventh episode), but Kampanellis puts, anyway, the merchant to sell his product for healthy teeth for bright smiles after the Greek victory. This way he indicates that hopes for glory and victory were lost because the Greeks let others, the foreign king in this case, to guide the country's fate. The Greeks were deceived one more time bedazzled by the scenario of climbing up the social classes and approach the aristocracy class through war. This tendency of the modern Greeks of 1897 to become bourgeois led them to a catastrophic war, probably evident that was going to be such from the beginning. However the king needed a sport to pass his time and the Greeks headed to death willingly for ambition's sake.

There is however another explanation why Kampanellis chose a historical context to convey his messages to the audience. Censorship, as discussed in detail in chapter 3, would never let an antidictatorial play to be performed. A clever way had to be found in order to cover the real meaning of the play and have it approved by the censors. History and its products (i.e. a historical play) would certainly be approved by the admirers of Greek history, officers of the junta. Even when the military police was calling the key actors for explanations why people were applauding so much in certain lines of the play, the director and protagonist Kostas Kazakos was covering the political insinuation of the performance telling the censors that these were words of historical personalities (such as Theodoros Kolokotronis – the statue monologue), that were speaking to people of the past in the context of past events. The censors seemed incompetent to grasp the clever way the play was destructing the dictatorship of the colonels. Only when they saw the great success of the performance and the passionate reactions of the audience they suspected that something was “wrong”.¹²⁷

Hence, Brecht's view that “*understanding one system through watching another, or the present through seeing the past*”¹²⁸ seems adopted by Kampanellis who was doing it and demanded from his audience to do also. Kostas Kazakos said in a recent interview to Christos Vassilopoulos and his tv transmission “Time Machine” in 2013: “*Kampanellis was writing about the past in order to be able to speak about the present*”.¹²⁹ By doing so, however, the *Grand Circus* became somehow didactical as argued in the next subchapter called *Lehrstück*.

¹²⁷ Vassilopoulos.

¹²⁸ Leach, Robert. *Makers of Modern Theatre: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2004, 118.

¹²⁹ Vassilopoulos.

4.2 The Lehrstück Our Grand Circus

In this subchapter I argue that *Our Grand Circus* is also Lehrstück, a didactical play, which meant to instruct people. Many theatre scholars and theatre critics in Greece have characterized *Our Grand Circus* “didactical”, most of them in a negative sense though.¹³⁰ It is characteristic that Georgousopoulos considers the *Circus* too didactical, always in a negative tone.¹³¹ In this subchapter I argue that *Our Grand Circus* is indeed didactical but in the Brechtian (and not at all negative) sense, i.e. pedagogical, since Brecht’s goal was to instruct the audience also in an entertaining way, without preaching.¹³²

It is evident in the *Circus* that Kampanellis was very critical about the way history was¹³³ taught at schools¹³⁴ and with this play he provides also a suggestion on how Greek history should be “read” by people in the early ‘70s.¹³⁵ Kampanellis chooses particular parts of Greek history in order to achieve his goal: awaken, motivate, mobilize if not manipulate (as some critics suggested that he did)¹³⁶ his readers/audience. The *Grand Circus* is in many parts didactical in the negative way. The long monologue of the statue (and other smaller ones), dialogues and whole episodes, “teach”, or even preach the spectators what had been done in a wrong way in the past and what was not being done correctly in their present.

For example, in the end of the fourth episode, “The coming of King Otto”, the non corrupted captain of the revolution addresses his “metaphorical” speech to the audience, instructing them to be united:

‘Greeks stay together. They want to divide us. They didn’t come to govern with justice but with discord’.¹³⁷

The captain seemingly talks about the court of Otto and his techniques of disarming and corrupting the most brave men of those times giving them public offices and power, but indirectly refers to the colonels, the contemporary “palace” that even

¹³⁰ Georgousopoulos cited in Puchner, 454.

¹³¹ Hager, 217.

¹³² Leach, 109.

¹³³ And I would add still is being taught. This is one of the reasons I guess that explain why this play is still powerful (and understandable) even today, after 40 years. Nothing has changed in Greece’s educational system all these years anyway.

¹³⁴ In the beginning of the fourth episode through the dialogue of Romios with Romiaki, Kampanellis says that even if we are being taught history at schools we do not really learn from the mistakes of the past in order to not reproduce them. Kampanellis criticizes the conventional and superficial way that history is being taught at schools. This is something which still happens today, so also the contemporary reader/audience can understand the comment.

¹³⁵ Making the connections from the past events that decode the current political situation.

¹³⁶ Georgousopoulos says explicitly in his review on July 7, 1973: “We must not underestimate the spectators. If we left them function critically through the drama without manipulation, they would understand more than we tell them”. (Kampanellis, 249).

¹³⁷ Kampanellis, Iakovos. *Theatro*. 2010 ed. Athens: Kedros, 1978, 55. Clearly this is also a phrase that in the recent history of Greece would indicate a different subject (“they”). Also today some people in Greece think that there is a conspiracy plan (mostly those who like conspiracy plans) to divide and destruct Greece through the economic recession. Again, the play is well timed from 2010 and onwards, for other reasons than a dictatorship.

though they were the reason that the king of Greece fled in the '60's¹³⁸, they gladly took his place in "monarchy". The captain implies as well that the colonels adopted also the other, older, technique of Philip of Macedonia "διαίρει¹³⁹ και βασιλεύει" ("divide and conquer")¹⁴⁰ since they used to divide people in communists and "patriots".¹⁴¹ This is an example of Lehrstück in *Our Grand Circus*. Since the captain attempts to indicate and instruct the audience of its current situation arming their hands with knowledge.

Another example of didacticism (somehow negative this time though) in the play is the monologue of the statue. The statue, Kolokotronis, (folk hero of the revolution of 1821) in a lyrical tone at the end of the eighth episode¹⁴² addresses directly the Greeks and tells them to stop living in the glorious past and create a glorious present, getting out of the misery of the oppression of the junta. The statue says:

'If they are using us, the dead, as an example, learn to distinguish in which tricky way they do it [...] Don't leave the speculators make the dead warriors a false coin in order to sell you out. And if you really want to honour us, old men, don't look at us anymore. Our work and our times have passed and are not alike yours [...] We fought for you to have letters and bread [...] Leave our fight and look at your fight. [...] The dead with the dead and the alive with the alive [...]'¹⁴³

In the *Grand Circus* there is didacticism, direct and indirect, throughout the whole play. Kampanellis tells the audience, the modern Greeks, "*look what happened in the past, don't let it happen again, or look what happens now, do something about it*".

In Brecht's theory also, we found that some of the main characteristics of Lehrstücke plays are that they are "*spare in form, they use a minimum of naturalistic detail, and employ songs, direct address to the audience*".¹⁴⁴ Kampanellis not only instructs his audience to avoid the mistakes of the past (content), but he does it with the Brechtian techniques (form), such as the direct address to the audience (Captain, Statue), but also all the "Ladies and Gentlemen" that the protagonists say throughout the play, the songs (the majority of Kampanellis' songs are didactical in a direct or indirect way) and the dorical theatrical means.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁸ Konstantinos of the Glucksbourg family of Denmark.

¹³⁹ This is where the word "*discord*" refers to. (It means "divide")

¹⁴⁰ "Διαίρει και βασιλεύει", a phrase said by Philip of Macedonia ("divide et impera" in Latin), meaning that it is easier to rule if the one who leads spreads discord. While people are divided and focused on fighting each other, one can rule undisturbed.

¹⁴¹ Whoever was not a "patriot" (somebody supporting them in their definition of the word) was automatically a "communist" and thus an enemy of the nation and consequently imprisoned, beaten up and tortured and most of the times sent to exile.

¹⁴² Kampanellis, 92.

¹⁴³ Kampanellis, 92.

¹⁴⁴ Leach, 109.

¹⁴⁵ The theatre reviews of the times transfer in detail the way Kazakos staged the "*Circus*". There was hardly any scenography apart the two big dragons, that the protagonists call snakes, at the sides of the main stage, while the latter and its extension are completely empty. It seems that the foyer and the main entrance were more decorated than the stage

Theatre according to Brecht should not only be entertaining (which the *Grand Circus* was indeed if we take into consideration all the laughs of the audience that can be heard in the registration of the songs of the performance, but it should also provide food for thought for the spectators as long as elements in order for them to understand the issues of their lives. The performance had to be a lecture, as the statue's monologue was indeed. And as Brecht said, "*in order to have a lecture, two elements are needed: a lecturer and an audience*". The *Circus*, indeed, was not written to be read but to be performed, because there was an urgent need for its performance.¹⁴⁶ Because either the playwright and the protagonists chose to act in the particularly dangerous for free expression times of dictatorship in order to provoke the audience's critical thinking and hence, reaction.¹⁴⁷

As we will see in the next chapter, the audience of the *Grand Circus* is not hidden. The performers address their concerns, suggestions, and instructions directly to them. With the fourth wall missing, the relation lecturer-audience was as Brecht demanded.¹⁴⁸

Ending, I argue also that Kampanellis with the *Grand Circus* might have found a possible answer to Brecht's questions¹⁴⁹:

'How can theatre be both instructive and entertaining? How can it be divorced from spiritual dope traffic and turned from a home of illusions to a home of experiences? How can the unfree, ignorant man of our century [...] obtain his own theatre, which will help him to master the world and himself?'

Leach's answer to these questions was "epic theatre". Epic theatre would not only help to "*change the world*", or "*help people change it*", but should also be "*entertaining*"¹⁵⁰. At this point I would like to remind Brecht's phrase: "*A theatre that can't be laughed in is a theatre to be laughed at*".¹⁵¹ The audience of *Our Grand Circus* laughs many times (always based on the registration of the songs of the performance in 1973) and somebody who has read the text can also imagine in the faces of the audience the imperceptible or even bitter smile that the play creates continuously. So, one could hardly say that *Our Grand Circus* is not "entertaining", or at least humoristic.

In the following subchapter, the Brechtian epic theatre techniques that were presented in the second chapter of the Theoretical framework are going to be traced in Kampanellis' *Circus*.

itself and the only "rich" element of the performance were the flashy (at the confines of kitsch as many critics state) costumes of the actors. Kampanellis, 247-287.

¹⁴⁶ As narrated in chapter... playwright and actors wanted to contribute to the uprising of people against the military coup.

¹⁴⁷ Arseni, 304.

¹⁴⁸ Brecht Bertold, quoted in Leach, 116.

¹⁴⁹ Brecht Bertold, quoted in Leach, 116.

¹⁵⁰ Leach, 116.

¹⁵¹ Leach, 134.

4.3 *Our Grand Circus* as an example of epic theatre

In chapter two the main epic theatre techniques have been presented. In this section there is a list of them as found in Leache's *Makers of Modern Theatre* and Van Steen's *Stage of Emergency*. All these techniques were "traced" in *Our Grand Circus*. The epic theatre techniques were invented by Brecht in order to achieve the V-effect. Since the majority of Brecht's epic theatre dramaturgical techniques can be found in Kampanellis' play, in this subchapter I argue that *Our Grand Circus* is an example of epic theatre. And furthermore, since Brecht used the epic theatre techniques to awaken his audience and make it react, the same goes for Kampanellis who used the same techniques for the same reasons. Those techniques are:

- Introductory comments of a narrator / storyteller: The *Grand Circus* starts with an introductory scene where the two narrators, Romios and Romiaki, present themselves and then inform the spectators about what is going to follow. In the *Circus* the two presenters participate not only in the introductory scene but also in between the episodes, helping the spectators understand the different periods that the play wanders while in the eighth episode they co-star with the "Statue", the key actor of the episode.



Figure 1 - The narrators Romios and Romiaki with the statue of Kolokotronis, famous comic actor, Dionysis Papagiannopoulos.

- Distanciation of the audience from the action on stage. Brecht wanted to achieve at all costs (mostly on Naturalism's cost) the non identification of the audience with the characters. To do so, he realized that there must be space between the performance and the audience. I remind Leache's note that "*the dramaturg has to consciously do his best to create and secure this space throughout the performance, discouraging attachment, keeping the audience distanciated*".¹⁵² The stage of the *Circus* as shines through the reviews of the critics who attended the performance back in 1973, was as follows:¹⁵³ There was a main (Italian)¹⁵⁴ stage, which was actually the space in front of the screen of the cinema.¹⁵⁵ From the centre of the stage however a catwalk, that was separating the spectators in two groups looking one another, was leading to another, a small circular stage.



Figure 2 - In the photo we can see the main stage of the performance with the screen in the back and the singer Nikos Xylouris in the front. In the two sides there are the dragons with their threatening mouths. The extension of the main stage leads to a small circular stage on which we can see the key actors.

¹⁵² Leach, 118.

¹⁵³ However there have been critics as Georgousopoulos that found the stage "non functional", making comparisons with Mnouchkine's play *1789*, that "on the contrary the different spaces characterized and divided parallel or contemporary issues". Kampanellis p. 250

¹⁵⁴ Italian stage is the stage that is elevated, higher than the height of the spectators' front seats.

¹⁵⁵ The open air theatre where the *Circus* was performed had a spacious stage that accommodated the "crowd" of the play.

Hence, in *Our Grand Circus* the audience not only is visible, but is addressed directly from the performers on stage continuously throughout the play. In *Our Grand Circus* there are numerous direct addresses to the audience. Only at the first, introductory, scene the presenters speak directly to the audience, “*Kyries kai Kyrioi*” (ladies and gentlemen) eleven times with a direct question from Romiaki and the song included.¹⁵⁶

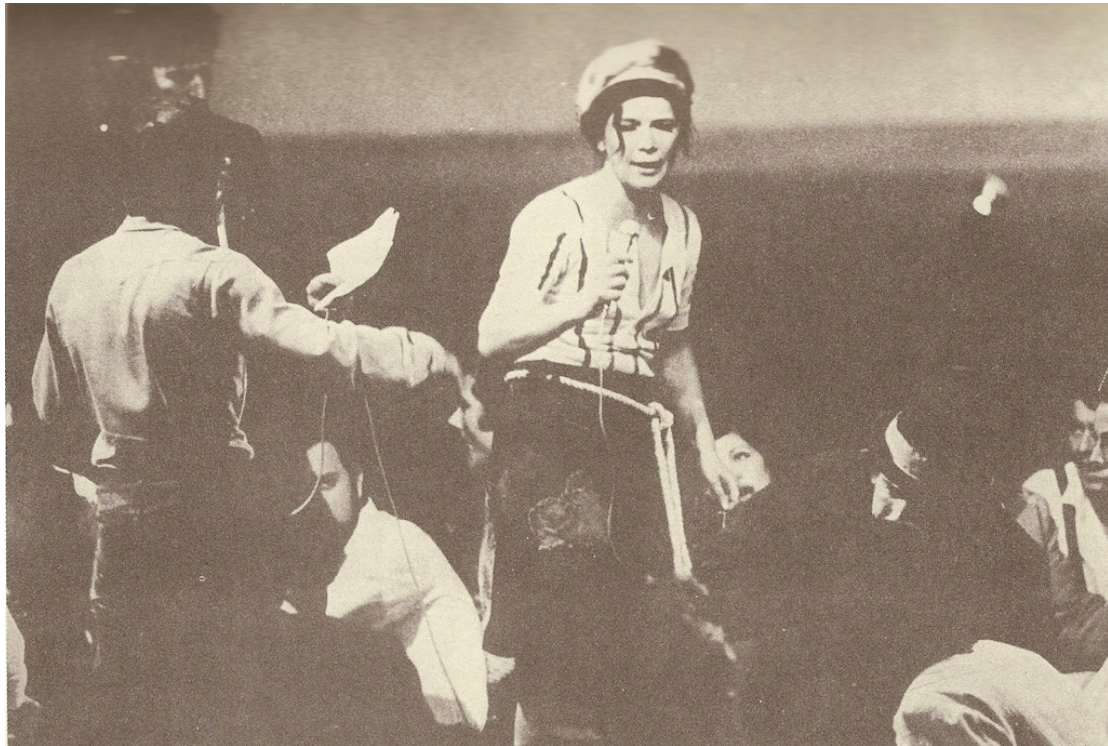


Figure 3 - Key actress performing Romiaki while she sings a song addressing it to the spectators.

Throughout the whole play thirty nine times in total the audience is being addressed directly by the performers, either as “*ladies and gentlemen*” or as direct, rhetorical, questions, while the old habit of French theatre but also Brecht’s technique the “*asides*”, (*aparté*), are used one time from Romios¹⁵⁷ and one from Romiaki¹⁵⁸.

- Presentation of stage as such: The stage of *Our Grand Circus* functions throughout the play as such: as a stage. Meaning a *palcoscenico*, an elevated platform where the performers perform. The *Circus*’s stage never claimed to be a house, a square, a palace or a battle field. The actors with their costumes and their words were transforming in each scene and each episode the stage to a different place, with different soil. In the eleventh episode, the soil was a swamp on which the aristocratic

¹⁵⁶ Kampanellis, 19-25.

¹⁵⁷ Kampanellis, 46.

¹⁵⁸ Kampanellis, 40.

lady would never step with her aristocratic toes.¹⁵⁹ In the fourth episode, “The Coming of Otto”, the main stage becomes a dance room in Otto’s palace, where the aristocrats of Otto’s court dance under the sounds of violins.¹⁶⁰ The dialogue of the captain and the secretary of the palace, who tries to corrupt the captain, takes place on the smaller stage at the same time, while the others are dancing in the palace. The *Circus*’s stage is an empty space that can be transformed into anything whenever a performer “commands” it. The stage of the *Circus* is there to serve a goal: to make the performance happen in a higher level than the spectators’ eyes, so there is visibility for everyone. Furthermore, I argue that the stage of the *Circus* even if phenomenally divides the spectators in two groups, in substance it unites them, as it makes them part of the performance. The actors perform along with the spectators that react to what they see.

I argue, also, that the way the spectators were positioned looking at each other while the actors were performing almost among them, made them part of the play. The spectators were playing the role of another crowd, the real one, towards whom all those rhetorical questions by the actors were addressed.¹⁶¹ The two stages of the theatre were dividing the spectators but in a panoramic view it looks as if the theatre embraces the audience, while the imaginary extension of the main stage, if it wasn’t elevated, would find the spectators seated “on stage”, hence, key actors of the (contemporary) play of resistance... This way the spectators are being made “conspirators” along with the creators of the performance (playwright and protagonists). If Shakespeare said “all world’s a stage” and Kampanellis that “all Greece is a Circus”, I would add that in 1973, “all Athinaion¹⁶² was as stage and all Athens¹⁶³ a Circus”, in the moment when the wild, oppressed, animals start thinking to devour their oppressor – “tamer”.

- Staging codes: Minimalism, empty stage: On the contrary to naturalistic tradition, the stage of the “Circus” is empty. Only the dragons at the two sides of the main stage can be considered as scenographic elements. In the *Circus* there is no scenography or props that refer to each era of the play. As a result, the scenographer did not have to create a fake reality on stage as he should have for a Naturalistic play. The decor did not have to reflect reality, but help, instead, the audience to be aware that something was merely staged. There were no claims of reality at all. As we saw in theory, “*the settings were designed not to help the spectator, but to block him; they prevent his complete empathy, interrupt his being*”

¹⁵⁹ Kampanellis, 56-68.

¹⁶⁰ Kampanellis, 44-55.

¹⁶¹ There were already crowd scenes in the play. The spectators were forming another crowd, the contemporary one, that was invited to act or not (based on the circumstances) like the crowds of the past.

¹⁶² The open air theatre in Patission street where the *Grand Circus* was being performed, only a few blocks from where the revolution of the Polytechnic started.

¹⁶³ In Athens were not only performed the barbarian oppressive techniques of the junta with the tortures in Bouboulinas’ office of military police and its basement, but also many people died that day of the revolt of the Polytechnic by the guns of Colonels, soldiers, operators of the junta. Athens was a tragic *Circus* where instead of throwing and catching balls there was a continuous throwing and “getting” bullets.

*automatically carried away*¹⁶⁴. In the case of *Our Grand Circus*, the stages, the main stage and its extension, are completely empty, except the two dragons, or snakes as the actors call them.

- Self references, direct addresses to the audience: Romios and Romiaki in the introductory scene refer to the dragons that, as stated in the above paragraph, are the only scenography and decoration of the stage. They refer to them as “the snakes”¹⁶⁵ indicating the Colonels that are a “threat” to anybody who is against them. Since they themselves (Romios and Romiaki) have already been in the “mouth of the wolf”,¹⁶⁶ or better “in the mouth of the snakes”.¹⁶⁷ Romiaki says explicitly that the snakes do not eat spectators but “*only actors*”, referring of course to her own arrest by the junta. Continuing her insinuation with “*fortunately we had no incident of eaten spectators*”,¹⁶⁸ meaning of course that no spectators were being arrested for watching the performance, even though attending only was a statement for the audience’s political beliefs, and this didn’t mean particularly that the spectators were all of the Left, but surely were all against the junta.

- Historicization of dramatic events: The events that take place on stage in *Our Grand Circus* have already happened, at least most of them, in reality many years before the performance.¹⁶⁹ One could claim (and indeed its creators did it in order to avoid censorship)¹⁷⁰ that the *Circus* is a historical play, if the insinuations were not so direct to the present of the early 1970s.¹⁷¹ However, also at scenes that certainly never happened, such as the monologue of the statue of Kolokotronis or the dialogue of the young couple in the “Pseudoknights”, Kampanellis gives a historical concept in order to address his problematization about his current present, covered (for censorship’s sake) with the vitrine of the past. This way the playwright could say

¹⁶⁴ Leach, 124.

¹⁶⁵ The word “snake” is still used to indicate not only the animal but also a person who is sneaky and dangerous. Clearly the hint goes to the Colonels that not only εξαπάτησαν their superior in the army and took authority by them, but also act like “snakes” destructing whoever is not with their part. (See interview of general in Mihani tou xronou site

¹⁶⁶ Greek expression. When someone is doing something very dangerous we say that he puts himself “in the mouth of the wolf”. I paraphrase the traditional saying with “in the mouth of the snakes”.

¹⁶⁷ The story of the two key actors and the problems that the play created to them are narrated in Chapter 3.

¹⁶⁸ Kampanellis, 22.

¹⁶⁹ I exclude some scenes of course that were product of Kampanellis’ imagination and were not historical facts such as the war of 1897, or the destruction of Asia Minor and the German Occupation. For example the first episode, probably did not happen in reality... The story that Kronos eats his children and his wife Rea spares Zeus that grown up takes authority from his father was a myth constructed by the ancient Greeks. Also the second episode was not an accurate historical fact but a scene that Kampanellis constructed knowing how the oracle of Delphi was functioning in ancient Greece. However the rest of the episodes presented in the *Circus* apart maybe the “Statue”, “Guillotine”, the “Pseudoknights” and of course “Karaghiozis king” were indeed inspired by historical facts that not only happened in reality but also determined the contemporary history of Greece. (war of 1897, destruction of Asia Minor, German Occupation.

¹⁷⁰ Vassilopoulos.

¹⁷¹ Vassilopoulos.

freely everything he wanted about the Colonels, replacing them with an oppressor of the past and covering contemporary political comments behind the words of historical personalities. These “tricks” would indicate the play as historical, without being so in substance. Hence, for Kampanellis’ play historicization was crucial in order to be able to arrive to the stage and be performed. However since the meaning constructed at the end would make sense for the viewer of the early 1970s despite the historicization another trick was needed also to surpass censorship. Kampanellis submitted to the censors the play with the episodes in the wrong chronological order. Moreover, many other episodes were written such way in purpose to be cut and function as safeguards for others. Such episodes were not destined to be performed at first place.¹⁷²

- The episodic plot of the “Circus”. Montage is a technique known from the early years of political theatre (particularly the Workers’ theatre as mentioned in chapters 2.1 and 2.2.4). Separate events, the episodes of the *Circus* that belong to different historical eras, connect with each other and create the meaning of the story. “A *montage of scenes is created where each scene, if taken alone, preserves the same meaning that the play has as a whole*” mentions Esslin,¹⁷³ while Van Steen adds that in Brechtian theatre important was the motto “*each scene for itself*”.¹⁷⁴

Each particular scene of the *Circus*, except the introductory one, but even this one indicates too the meaning of the play, can be performed autonomously and still maintain the key idea of the play, that Greeks were always laughing, always laughed at, or as theatre critic Chr. Agg. decoded the play in his review that “*Greece is a Circus*”.¹⁷⁵ Hence, reading/watching each scene alone, the reader/spectator realizes that there is something wrong with Greek history. Or with the Greeks. Kampanellis’ solution comes through Romios’ words that education in Greece does not work properly and people do not learn from the mistakes of the past.

I argue, however, at this point that even if Kampanellis had not put the episodes in a linear chronological order, hence starting from antiquity to arrive to the German Occupation but had mixed the episodes in a non chronological order, the meaning would have been the same and would have been maintained in the end in its total regardless a linear narration. The spectators would have been able to link the various episodes from various historical periods even if they were not in chronological order, something that would have been even more Brechtian since Van Steen notes that in epic theatre is used “*cyclical and analytical narrative and not*

¹⁷² Vassilopoulos.

¹⁷³ Esslin, 113.

¹⁷⁴ Steen, 257.

¹⁷⁵ Ch. Agg. describes in his review in June 30, 1973 in the newspaper “Hestia” that “the Circus is Greece, that everybody does so, each his way, to make Greece laugh or cry, in Greece where all Greeks, more or less, act like Kronos that eats his children. They (meaning the Greeks) themselves destruct whatever have achieved with blood and enormous sacrifices through the centuries, with their “eating each other”, their indifference, their craziness, but also with the intervention of others”. Greece is a circus. This is the main idea of the play”. Kampanellis, 267.

linear and inevitable sequence".¹⁷⁶

Furthermore, montage, famous technique from the times of Eisenstein and the workers' theatre, has another function in Kampanellis' play. This way "*the performers attempt to affect the consciousness of the spectators. The spectators are given an active role by the montage*", since they have to make connections and links themselves while seated comfortably in their seats in the dark and arrive to the intended meaning of the play. As Brecht was providing his audience with Marxist tools, Kampanellis through history was tempting the audience "*to assess the political situation they find themselves in as well as its historical context*", the same way Brecht did.

The montage of the "historical" scenes that Kampanellis chose to make in the *Grand Circus* helps the spectators to construct a message, which is also the purpose of the play. The audience has to react and revolt against the oppressors. In, almost, each episode a story of oppression is being narrated.¹⁷⁷ This pattern of continuous oppressions either from Greek or foreign oppressors is continuous throughout the play and the spectators are invited to discover it, by making connections while they watch the performance that is structured in this linear chronologically, but fragmented and episodic way.

The montage that "seams" various moments of Greek history from different ages that have same content (the pattern of oppression), contributes to the realization of the spectator / reader that there is a continuity of history repeating in Greece that at the end seems comic, nonetheless the tragic consequences that it produced in the past (wars, occupations, victims, deaths, dictatorship). This repetition is a key stone in the *Circus*. The presentation of continuity of oppressions through Greek history by Kampanellis was targeting to an uprising of the modern Greek oppressed by the junta. Or as Van Steen puts it:

'this continuous unfolding of repressive history further demystified the past and posited its performative demands for a revolution in the present. Revolutions tend to assess the past anew, and modern Greek theater was a catalyst to that process'.¹⁷⁸

- Scenes of play-acting and play within play: In the second episode, "The oracle and

¹⁷⁶ Steen, 257.

¹⁷⁷ Particularly in episodes such as the first with Kronos eating his children to maintain his authority, but also Philip of Macedonia that wants to conquer the whole Greece, the Byzantine emperor Andronikos who became actually a dictator after having stolen the legal emperor's throne, Otto, the Bavarian king who was imposed to Greece by the Great Forces of the time, the new king that led Greece to the catastrophic war of 1897, Venizelos' ambition to get back Asia Minor led to the latter's destruction with a consequence of thousand Greek people dead and lost from their families while emigrating to Greece, and finally the most painful oppression of contemporary Greek history, the Occupation by German Nazis during World War II.

¹⁷⁸ Steen, 2015, 33.

Demosthenes”, Romiaki is obligated by Romios to play the role of Pythia¹⁷⁹ in order to give the right oracle.¹⁸⁰ Romios, as the head of the thiasos¹⁸¹ threatens her that if she doesn’t do what he says someone else will take her place. This “threat” convinces Romiaki that heads to the backstage to get dressed like Pythia.¹⁸² In this episode there is clearly play within play. Romiaki who normally is one of the narrators, plays the role of Pythia like students do in school skits. Through the comments of Philip’s of Macedonia¹⁸³ representatives, while Romiaki is getting dressed, Kampanellis satirizes the dictators. While they can’t find Pythia one of the representatives ask: *“Is it possible that she doesn’t want to collaborate with us?”* (This phrase alone could make people laugh because Karezi, performing Romiaki, in her real life was famous for her antidictatorial feelings and mostly after her arrest by the junta this phrase took other levels of lecture too). When the Priest responds positively to Philip’s representative, the latter commands: *“Arrest her!”* One can understand that this episode was a direct finger pointing on the dictators. When finally Pythia is found is completely wasted and forgets to give the “right” oracle dictated by the priests (another form of oppression for her, that they tell her what to say) and talks gibberish. In the end she gives an oracle that the priests transform in one that is comfortable for their “client”.¹⁸⁴

- Use of placards / printed signs: Most of the play’s placards and printed signs can be found in the seventh episode called “3d of September”.¹⁸⁵ Kampanellis writes in the director’s instructions in between the dialogues: *“A woman and two men enter with the placard 3d of September 1843. With a paint bucket they write on a white surface with big letters “Constitution”. The crowds are coming along with the singer”*. After the song that follows and some prose he continues with the instructions and writes: *“The ambassadors turn towards the people. More people have come with placards with the words “Constitution” and “Freedom” on them”*.

¹⁷⁹ Usually a virgin girl that was chewing leaves and giving the oracle after having communicated with the gods.

¹⁸⁰ As we understand from the rest of the episode the priests do not transfer god’s will anymore but get money (hence they are corrupted) to deliver the oracle that the “client” wants to hear. This was a hint for the clergy of the times that Kampanellis apparently calls “corrupted”, referring to the appointment of the junta by Archbishop ...

¹⁸¹ The theatrical group with clear chain of command. First comes the director that in most times was the key actor, then the rest of the key actors and at the end all the rest of the actors that had to do what the people high in the chain of command decided.

¹⁸² With ancient Greek tunic.

¹⁸³ As Macedonia is intended the ancient Greek region of Macedonia in Greece and not the current state of Macedonia (ex F.Y.R.O.M).

¹⁸⁴ Clearly the priests of the times were not left out of Kampanellis’ sharp satire.

¹⁸⁵ 3d of September of 1843 was the day when the Greeks gathered in front of Otto’s palace (today’s parliament) to ask for constitution since Greece was finally an independent nation. Or at least they thought so.



Figure 4 - The ambassadors deciding whether to give Greece a constitution or not.

Obviously the last two placards are insinuations for the colonels that had catalyzed the constitution, by catalysing democracy and establishing their junta, and also the word "*Freedom*" was heading to them, since Greeks were not free anymore to do, say, even feel what they wanted.¹⁸⁶ After a while, from the palace an officer rises the banner writing: "*Noisy silliness*", while the ambassadors that talk to each other turn again towards the crowd and a new banner rises: "*Silly arrogance*", an obvious hint for the Colonels.¹⁸⁷ By the end of the episode new banners are being presented. Kampanellis writes: "*From the part of the crowd new banners arise*". What follows is a "dialogue" of banners between the palace and the people. When the crowds arise a banner, another is arised by the palace as an answer. The ambassadors that stand on the small circular stage at the end of the catwalk, watch the "dialogue" that takes place on the main stage: "*The guards and the people circled the palace*". From the part of the palace the placard: "*I forgive you, go away*" arises. Gathered crowd: "*Makryiannis*¹⁸⁸ came". Palace: "*Immediate gathering of military court*".¹⁸⁹ The "dialogue" of the banners continues with the crowds' banner "*Representatives of the nation in the palace*", to get the response from the palace "*The king commands, is not commanded*". Then the crowd rises the placard that became one of the slogans

¹⁸⁶ See Chapter 3.

¹⁸⁷ The Colonels were convinced that they were saving the country, while they were actually destructing it, in political, economic, artistic and finally geopolitical level (Cyprus' invasion).

¹⁸⁸ The Greek general that organized the manifestations out of the palace in order to ask for constitution (and basic human rights). As did with many other generals that fought the Ottomans and won the Greek revolution of 1821 the palace killed Makryiannis...

¹⁸⁹ Another insinuation for the practices and the way junta stole the official authority of the government.

of the revolt against the Colonels.¹⁹⁰ “Anger of people, anger of God”.¹⁹¹

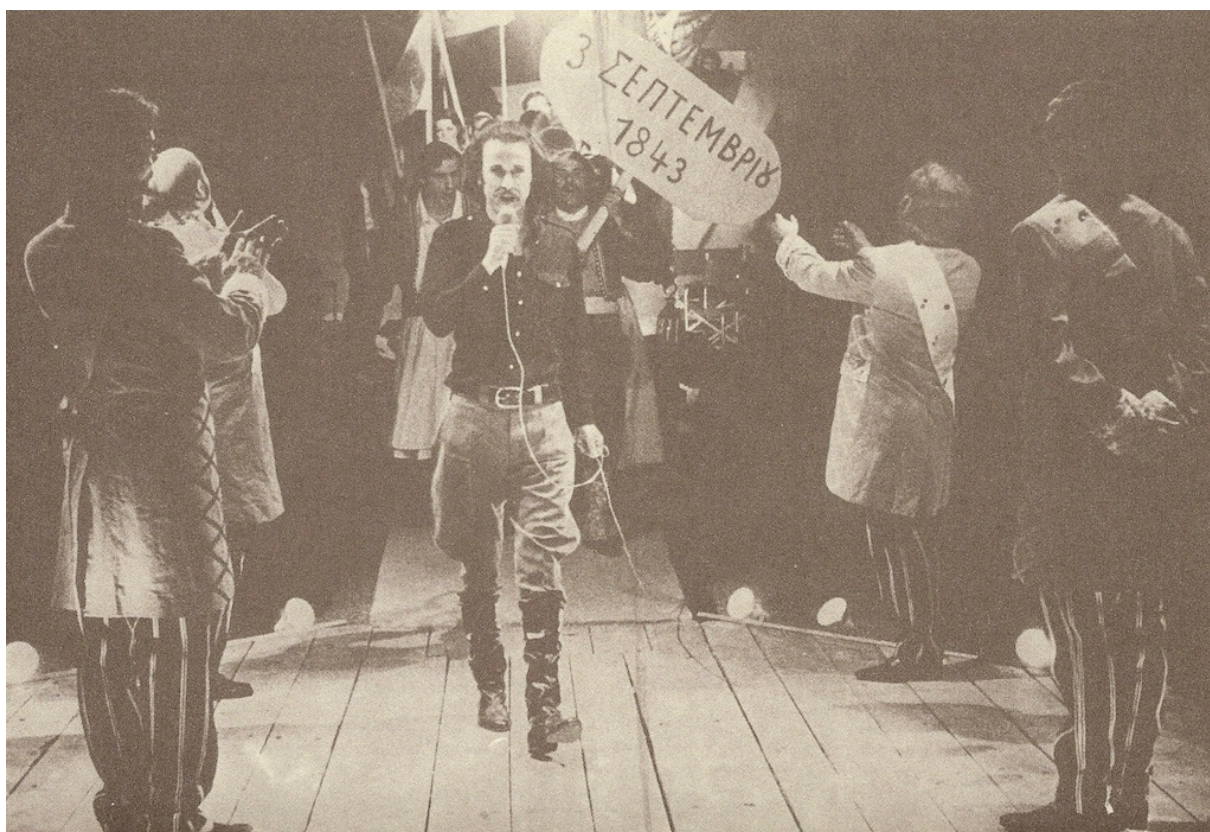


Figure 5 - A placard on which is written “3d of September 1843” from the homonym episode can be seen behind singer Nikos Xylouris.

- Large choruses that place speeches in a sociopolitical context and deliver a sense of theatre as a community event. (live orchestra on stage, crowd scenes): As described in detail in the above paragraph there were scenes of crowds that were commenting and forming the sociopolitical context of each episode. For example in the episode of “3d of September”, as already stated above, but also in other episodes the crowds are a crucial part. Almost in each song sung by the singer Xylouris there is the chorus of people behind him. In the first episode people and singer sing together the first song of the performance, alternating in verses with the two key actors.

In the fourth episode, “The coming of Otto”, the crowd is crucial as in the episode of the “3d of September” since it recreates the festive clima of the reception

¹⁹⁰ Kampanellis, 73-85.

¹⁹¹ Some of the slogans written on the placards and banners of the episode “3d of September” were used a few months later, in November 1973, in the revolt against the dictatorship of the Colonels. The most famous until today (and sometimes used in today’s manifestations too) were “Bread, Education, Freedom”, which was the main request of the student movement that started the revolution and “Anger of people (equals) anger of God” (that indicated that what was unfair for the people would result to God’s anger). The verse from the final song of the performance “People don’t bend your head any longer” is up today a basic slogan of the communistic party in the manifestations on the streets.

that the Greeks organized for the coming of the new king in Greece.¹⁹² The history that was about to come was evident from the first moment Otto stepped onto Greek ground. The aristocrats and the ones that were going to get public offices entered in the palace where the Bavarian officers started to speak German, as Kampanellis writes in his instructions. The crowd of people that had organized the festive reception was held outside.¹⁹³ After a while another crowd of well dressed women, with the European fashion of the times, form Otto's court and dance in the palace under the sounds of European music.¹⁹⁴ The crowd that has been left outside when it realizes that is not invited to the festivities in the palace leaves silently.

In the episode of the "Guillotine" the crowd is also important. In this episode the crowd is formed by the residents of a village to which the Europeans have brought a sample of "progression", the Guillotine. The mayor of the village tells the villagers that now instead of being killed with the "barbarian" technique of the Turkish sword they are going to be more elegantly decapitated if they rebel against their oppressors. Romios in the introduction of this episode refers to the Guillotine as an invention that was made by the rebels of the French Revolution in order to decapitate their kings and other current oppressors. However, the paradox in Greece, as Romios observes, is that the guillotine was used to decapitate rebels, not oppressors. In the end of the episode, the villagers sing along with Otto's officers who exhibited to them the guillotine.

I avoid to repeat the use of the crowd in the episode of "3d of September" since without its assistance this episode could not have been performed. In the episode of "Otto's runaway" the whole *thiasos*, the key actors, the singer and the crowd sing the revolutionary song that lends its music to the final song of the performance with the phrase "*People don't bend your head any longer*" included.

In the final episode of the play "Ta Epinikia" about the German Occupation the crowd represents the Greeks that are terrorized by the German invasion and the bombings. The German flag is hung in the Akropolis and people shout out of panic. At the end, a group of people re-enacts the random shootings of Greek people by masked German soldiers. The Germans shoot the people but they do not fall. They die standing up on their feet, according to Kampanellis' instructions. A tango is heard and the masked shooters take off their masks and trenches and present themselves in black tie, because, as Kampanellis says, peace and freedom belong mostly to the "*collaborators*".¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² People had gathered at the port of Nafplio, in 1833, to give a warm welcome to the king that later, taking authority when adult, he would oppress them.

¹⁹³ While a captain of the revolution welcomes Otto telling him that with the grace of God the Greeks won over the Ottomans and they were saved by the Sultan's oppression, the young king Otto was writing a letter to his father: "Dear father, I cannot describe you how grand was the enthousiasm of the people when I presented myself here. The crowd περικύκλωσε us right away in such way that the Bavarian officers were obliged to push violently the crowd".

¹⁹⁴ I call European music the Viennese walses that the court of Otto was probably dancing and as a way to distinguish it from Greek traditional music (that local people was hearing at the time).

¹⁹⁵ Kampanellis, 131.

- (reflective) songs out of character: Almost all the songs of *Our Grand Circus* are reflective. However there are some small “silly” songs that serve to indicate the silliness of those who sing it, for example the small song in the fifth episode, “*Love, what a scirup, what an evergreen plant, I wish that when I age it will welcome me still*”.¹⁹⁶ This song is sung by the two aristocrat lovers right after the male one shoots a Greek poor man that the female one had just used as a horse in order to avoid mud in her heels.

The rest of the (15) songs of the performance however are sung by the actors out of their characters, since the request was not to perform the song through their character but make people reflect upon what was sung. It is characteristic that the singer Nikos Xylouris is presented on stage as himself. By the early 70s Xylouris had combined his name with the fight against the junta in real life. He represents the crowd that stands usually behind him singing with him, as in the structure of ancient Greek tragedy.

- Still postures, pantomime, non-histrionic acting: In the *Grand Circus* there are a few tableaux vivants mainly in the crowd scenes. For example in the last episode the German soldiers “become” European diplomats again and they dance European dances of the court. Suddenly they freeze, when Romios and Romiaki appear to announce a “revolution”...

More than *tableaux vivants* however in the *Circus* there is pantomime. In “*Ottos’ coming*” the crowd re-enacts the festive reception of the Greeks in Nafplio that was the first capital city of Greece.¹⁹⁷ Throughout the whole episode the crowd pretends, with pantomime, to be the crowd of 1833 that gathered to celebrate Otto’s coming. In another scene of the same episode, women dressed in European way, wearing crinolines, dance European dances in the palace.¹⁹⁸ Kampanellis writes in his instruction at the same episode: “*The secretary tells something in the ear of the Bavarian [...] Music stops and whoever is still in the palace dances in the silence*”.¹⁹⁹ Right after the dialogue that follows, Kampanellis writes: “*The secretaries start running up and down the street as if they were programmed. They change interlocutor and start all over*”.²⁰⁰ At the end of the episode there is the pantomime of the fight between the non corruptible captain and the Bavarian officer. The captain throws the officer who dared to try to corrupt him on the ground and then goes out of the palace to say his speech (“*Greeks unite yourselves*”).²⁰¹

In the episode “3d of September” in a pantomime a woman and a man pretend sneaking in the yard of Otto’s palace in the dark in order to write the word

¹⁹⁶ Kampanellis, 68.

¹⁹⁷ Kampanellis, 48.

¹⁹⁸ Kampanellis, 50.

¹⁹⁹ Kampanellis, 53.

²⁰⁰ Kampanellis, 53.

²⁰¹ Kampanellis, 55.

“*Constitution*”.²⁰² When the officers of the palace see the word “constitution” written on the wall they bring brushes and water and in pantomime pretend that they are deleting it, without any results of course.²⁰³

In the last episode of the *Circus* that is about the German Occupation, the shooting of Greeks by German soldiers is a pantomime. Kampanellis writes:

‘The soldiers take off their masks, hoods, and dark trenches and appear with their black ties [...] They meet their dames and start dancing between the people that were just shot. Suddenly the music stops and the couples freeze in their positions. Another music is heard. Romios and Romiaki move slowly and come at the front of the main stage’.²⁰⁴

Also in the last episode, the people who were shot resurrect in a pantomimic way, when Romiaki hits the drum of war, the drum of revolution, saying “*earth hits 80 pulses, nice like from an old drum... something’s happening, something’s happening...*”²⁰⁵

- Casting of women in men’s roles and vice versa: The role of key actress Tzeni Karezi, Romiaki, would be a boy’s role. Kampanellis never explained why he created a boy’s role for the key actress who was famous as a beautiful lady. I argue that creating the role of a little boy was facilitating the key actress to back up the main actor, Romios, and through the teachings of the latter to the boy, the spectators would be instructed as well. In a way, Romiaki represents the audience that learns through Romios’ wisdom. Or maybe Kampanellis did not want to present a woman as ignorant, which would seem maybe sexist.

- The non literary elements of the performance also contribute to the epic theatre lecture of the *Circus*. Music, called by Brecht a “*striking innovation*”, and choreography are crucial to the performance of the *Grand Circus*.²⁰⁶ The lack of video recording obstacles this part of the analysis. However some information can be extracted by the reviews of the performance back in the 70s and also the registration of the songs of the performance of 1973 which is available in the internet. The music, as one can hear from the recordings, is independent enough to constitute a separate work of art. Indeed the songs of the performance were recorded with few spoken phrases around them and sold as a separate work of art, which continued to convey the meaning of the play. Hence, the songs of *Our Grand Circus* are not supplementary to the text but convey their own message. And this happened when, during the second round of censorship, Van Steen notes, half of the text of the performance was gone and the playwright had to compensate with music for the lost text.²⁰⁷ For example the song of the “Pseudoknights” narrates exactly the arrogance

²⁰² Kampanellis, 76.

²⁰³ Kampanellis, 77.

²⁰⁴ Kampanellis, 131.

²⁰⁵ Kampanellis, 132.

²⁰⁶ Leach, 128.

²⁰⁷ Steen, 217.

of modern Greeks that want to change social class and become aristocrats. This was a Greek behavior that led the country to much suffering, until recently.²⁰⁸ If it wasn't put by the playwright in the end of the eleventh episode, it could have been a separate episode by itself.²⁰⁹

As Brecht used to do, Kampanellis also used songs within and between the scenes' montage. Songs were used to convey pedagogical messages about social issues, while interrupting the action. While songs in Brecht's dramaturgy were giving the spectators time to think, some of the songs in *Our Grand Circus* the songs load emotionally the spectators. Listening to the registration of songs as the "Asia Minor" episode's song, one feels deeply moved by the way Karezi performs the song. The harmony and the voice of Nikos Xilouris creates shivers to the listener. Moreover, many of the songs, such as "Otto's runaway", function like a glue for two different episodes, "The Statue" and "Karaghiozis King". The scene that follows takes up from where the song ended.

Therefore, the songs of *Our Grand Circus* are crucial for the plot, while at the same time they are independent pieces of art. Someone who hears only the songs of the *Circus* without reading the text or watching the performance, is able to understand the style, the meaning and the purpose of the play.

According to Karl Weber's comment on a Berliner Ensemble's performance "*the small chorus, in its songs to the audience, commented on the fable and/or the actions shown on stage*"²¹⁰. The songs of "Our Grand Circus" also comment on the story like the song in the end of the eleventh episode, that comments on the previous dialogue of the young couple that craved to reach the upper social class through war.

As in Brecht's performances, the musicians of the *Circus* were not hidden since the play was not naturalistic and hence there was no need to fool the spectators and create an "atmosphere". Thus, there was no need of hiding a major element of the play (music) from the eyes of the spectators²¹¹. The presence of a live orchestra on stage was necessary for Brecht and as it proved, for Kampanellis also. The musicians of *Our Grand Circus* are eight in number, all playing a different traditional musical instrument, and exposed to the spectators' eyes. The songs are of course an inherent part of the music. Music and songs between the action and dialogues is another epic theatre technique in order to achieve the V-effect.

In the *Circus* there are at least 16 songs, while there is also instrumental music in-between the scenes without someone singing. One could say it is a musical performance even though it wasn't written as such. I remind what we saw in chapter

²⁰⁸ Part of a series of mistakes made in Greece the last decades, in my opinion, was exactly due to this mentality of social climbing. When banks started to advertise loans in television, a grand part of the country started buying everything after getting a loan. The citizens' mania of taking loans followed the state's itself with the known results... (or more correctly the state showed the "way" first). Therefore, the loans that Kampanellis refers to in the *Circus* hit a chord also to the spectators in 2010.

²⁰⁹ Kampanellis, 120-121.

²¹⁰ Leach, 134.

²¹¹ Esslin, 122.

3 that Kampanellis wrote more songs after the second round of censorship in order to compensate for almost half of the text that was cut off by the censors.

Regarding the lights, due to the lack of a video recording, as already mentioned, it is difficult to establish how they were used and what was their purpose. The instructions of the playwright about the lights are few, however there are some instructions that make us think that lights were important in *Circus's* performance and in this case I argue that they weren't used as in Brecht's performances. While for Brecht lights should only be used to focus the attention of the spectators on the stage, helping them in seeing what was being narrated, Kampanellis uses them to create an "atmosphere". In "Asia Minor" episode Kampanellis writes in the instructions: "Under a ray of light the singer tells the following funeral song".²¹² This makes us think that the rest of the stage is in the dark and the light stresses the dramatic song that narrates the destruction of Asia Minor. In the previous episode "Ta Venizelika", Kampanellis writes: "*During the song, the figure of Venizelos passes in semi lighted stage*". What was being created there was an illusion in the semi lightened stage that the old politician Venizelos, or his figure with the dark trench and the hat, was alive again. In the statues' episode as well, the final instruction by Kampanellis for the episode is: "*Clarino²¹³ in crescento and he (the statue) dances alone for a while in the light that fades away*".²¹⁴

At this point I would argue that Kampanellis was creating willingly an atmosphere on stage in order to drag the spectators in a mood and take them away from reality, cancelling this way his other efforts of awakening them and all the above techniques that he used in order to distanciate the spectators and provoke their critical thinking. However through the emotions that he enduces to the spectators at an escalation in the last three episodes, the spectator does not loose connection with reality, on the contrary, through an intense emotional experience he realizes the injustice and consequences of wrong decisions that are being transferred from one generation to the other. Almost each event in each episode gives birth to the next. The Asia Minor destruction came from the social climbing mania and dream to be strong and rule the territory again like in antiquity that is being described in the eleventh episode. The episodes are not linked casually with one another. The Greek mentality had harmful consequences for Greece. Same way, the spectator of 2011 could link the play with his current situation. Economic recession and foreign custody were consequences of wrong management from the inside of the country, which was produced as a reaction to the junta's oppression.²¹⁵

In Brecht's performances the source of light was not hidden, to avoid representations of natural light (sun, moon etc). There had to be plenty of light on stage²¹⁶ in order to be able to "look again".²¹⁷ Looking again in the case of *Our Grand*

²¹² Kampanellis, 125.

²¹³ Greek traditional musical instrument

²¹⁴ Kampanellis, 93.

²¹⁵ I note here that these are my personal views and reflect my own interpretation of the recent events of economic recession. I do not exclude that there are probably much more reasons that led Greece to its current situation.

²¹⁶ Esslin, 121.

Circus would mean for the spectators not to take for granted something they thought they knew, Greek history in this case, and observe with attention (with the V-effect's help) the facts that could lead to a protest against oppression.

Regarding the costumes, there are few photos available as well. From what we can extract from those very few fotos, 5 or 6, we can say that the presenters' clothes look like the ones of a cabaret compere, but less flashy, while Romiaki is dressed like a poor boy of the streets.

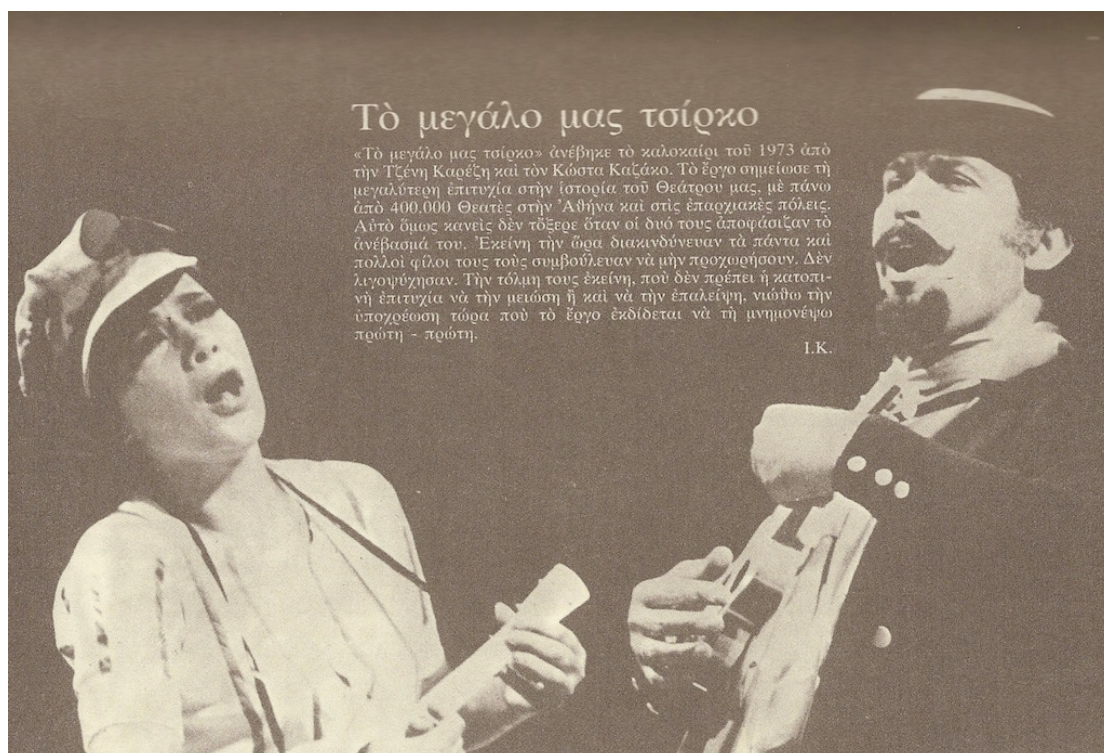


Figure 6 - The two narrators, Tzeni Karezi and Kostas Kazakos.

From the photos available we can see that the other characters wear traditional clothes of the era they come from. Even though the costumes were helping the audience to collocate the scene to a specific time in history there was no attempt to replicate the authentic costumes of each historical period with many details, since naturalism was not the request.

²¹⁷ Leach, 118.

4.4 The spectator of Our Grand Circus

As already mentioned in chapter 2, Brecht's ideal audience was different from that of the usual dramatic theatre. If *Our Grand Circus* is an example of epic theatre as argued in the previous subchapter, is also its audience different?

In naturalistic theatre the spectators are invisible, while they snoop silently into a reality that is created on stage. The *Grand Circus* as we saw is not a naturalistic play. The audience is visible and the actors, the key actors mostly, talk directly to the spectators and ask questions, even if they do not expect answers -the performance is not interactive. The audience of naturalistic theatre on the other hand, is emotionally involved and identifies itself with the characters of the play, feeling a deep connection with what happens on stage as if the spectators were on stage experiencing the situations in which the characters find themselves. As argued in the above subchapter, also in the *Circus* in some episodes Kampanellis induces emotions to the spectators. In the naturalistic theatre music, lights, scenography were also called forth by the director in order to facilitate the non identification. Until now, I have argued that Kampanellis indeed uses epic theatre techniques, even though he uses the lights in a different way than Brecht.

Brecht believed that "*theatre had a role to play in developing the spectators' consciousness of their oppression through the events shown on the stage*".²¹⁸ In the *Grand Circus* the playwright seems that he wants to make people, more, angry about the military regime and convince them to uprising. Even though Brecht's audience was not emotionally pulled by the performance, Kampanellis' audience, after understanding rationally the message presented on stage, is driven by the emotions created, by the injustices, the oppressions and the continuous repeatings of history peak of which was their current political situation.

Brecht's spectator should be able to think about what was happening on stage and understand the underlying message that the performance wanted to convey through rationality and critical thinking. Kampanellis' goal was the same, but I argue that he was driving his audience to the realisation of its conditions through rationality, but also evoking emotions of anger, indignation, sadness and bitterness that would lead to a kind of catharsis (dramatic theatre's term) if the audience decided to react to the current oppression. The common goal of the two playwrights was to provoke the critical spirit of the spectator, but they did it in a different way.

Despite Brecht's theatre final goal was the rational thinking of the audience, Kampanellis calls forth the emotions many times as argued in subchapter 4.3. This would look like a great difference between the German dramaturg and Kampanellis, but Brecht accepted the idea, by the end of his life, that some emotions were indeed beneficial to the cause as long as these emotions were the result of the rational thinking of the spectator. Even though Brecht rejected "*the old idea of entertainment through emotional catharsis*", it is well known in Greece through tradition, that

²¹⁸ Chinna, 94.

laughter is a great catharsis.²¹⁹ In the case of *Our Grand Circus*, I argue that many emotions are being created in the spectators' minds and hearts during they play but only as a result of rational thinking when the audience realizes that current Greek history, that of the 1970s, could very well be the fifteenth episode of this play. The same happens to the audience of 2011. The spectator who thinks rationally along with the route of the play, realizes that the play is about a continuity of oppressions from the ancient times to the very present. And maybe after going back home, the spectator of the *Circus* also realizes that more episodes are going to come along with the continuation of Greek history in the following centuries. The economic recession of 2010 could be the 16th episode, since the dictatorship was the 15th. An the the history goes on...

The *Circus's* spectator, therefore, watching Greece's history trajectory in the centuries might say "*It'll never change*", "*I laugh when they laugh, I weep when they weep*", as the dramatic theatre's spectator would. But he could also say "*I'd never have thought it*", "*It's got to stop*" or "*I laugh when they weep, I weep when they laugh*"²²⁰ as an epic theatre's spectator. It looks like the *Grand Circus* is like the Greece of two speeds, discussed by Kampanellis in the fifth episode. The *Circus's* spectators could be divided in dramatic and epic spectators. The play is a Greek example of epic theatre, without loosing its "hellenikotita", the dramatic escalations and naturalistic acting.

As mentioned in chapter 2, Brecht's ideal spectator was the "*smoker*", someone who observes very carefully everything. In *Our Grand Circus* the same must happen. The spectator of the *Circus* must be concentrated in every episode and construct his conclusions as the play unfolds. The key to stop the continuation of the Greek history repeating could be found among the patterns of Greek behavior through the centuries. Chinna wrote that,

'The desire for a spectator simultaneously objectively distanced and empathetically involved mirrors the similar contradiction into which Naturalism had fallen. This belief in the possibility of a simultaneous objectivity and empathy was tested by Brecht, who saw that while both poles existed, it was necessary to shift between those poles, using empathy to set up the conditions for critical objectivity -through the breaking of that empathetic identification.'²²¹

I argue, therefore, that this is the empathy and sentiments that Kampanellis calls forth more than anything in order to provoke the spectator's critical thinking, even if he complicates the things with a bigger dose of didacticism sometimes (statue's monologue etc) and manipulation of the audience's feelings (Asia Minor episode, final episode of German Occupation).

One could argue that Kampanellis with his "underlying didacticism"²²² looks more like Meyerhold who was "*deliberately manipulating the spectator to achieve the*

²¹⁹ Esslin, 112.

²²⁰ Brecht, Bertolt, and John Ed, 71.

²²¹ Chinna, 93.

²²² Chinna, 96.

galvanised reactions that he desired -through his use of slogans, songs, and massed uniformed choruses to promote revolutionary fervour".²²³ However, Kampanellis' play can fulfill its true goal, the realisation by the spectators of the oppressive reality they leave in and contribution to the uprising, only with a rational Brechtian spectator who is able to read the references to the present time, despite the fact that they are "hidden" in order to escape censorship and imprisonment.

²²³ Chinna, 93.

4.5 The Actors of Our Grand Circus

Up to this point, various similarities have been found between Brecht and Kampanellis. But are the actors of “Our Grand Circus” epic actors? I argue that in this field there are the most differences between the two playwrights. However, we must acknowledge that Kampanellis was not a director and for sure not the director of the *Grand Circus*, hence, he could not take such responsibility.²²⁴

Brecht believed that impersonating was “dangerous” for the V-effect and the necessary “distance” that should be created always between stage and audience. The spectators should not empathize with the characters of the play and mostly the actors themselves should also not empathize with the characters.²²⁵

‘Not aiming to put their audience into a trance, they must not put themselves into a trance either [...] At no point the actor let himself be totally transformed into the character.’²²⁶

And this was exactly the V-effect regarding Brecht’s ideal acting. However, as Kostas Kazakos mentions in this interview to Christos Vassilopoulos, some of the actors of *Our Grand Circus* were exactly in a “trance”, probably putting some of the spectators also in a “trance”.²²⁷ The way Karezi speaks in Asia Minor episode, as can be heard in the registration, is very far from Brecht’s demand for distanciation. Kazakos narrates that it was too difficult for the actors to continue performing in Asia Minor episode because they were too excited and moved by the tragic events that they were reviving on stage.²²⁸ While the actors were making a huge effort not to cry and stop the performance, it is very probable that some of the spectators were actually crying during this episode and maybe the last, if they had personal memories from the German Occupation.

But Brecht’s *Gestus*²²⁹ is primary in *Our Grand Circus*. It was also necessary according to Kitty Arseni’s narrations. *Gestus* was critical for the *Circus* because many things were not possible to be said or even sung, or had been cut off by censorship. In any case, the soldiers and informers of the junta were in the theatre every night writing down the parts of the performance where people were laughing and applauding.²³⁰ The actors of the *Circus* would blink an eye, or make specific gestures to transmit the meaning of what they were obliged to say in “half words”, or not say at all.²³¹

²²⁴ if not maybe for his instructions about the deeming of the lights that was creating an atmosphere and predisposing the performers to a naturalistic acting

²²⁵ A technique further known as distanciation.

²²⁶ Brecht, Bertolt, and John Ed, 193.

²²⁷ Vassilopoulos.

²²⁸ Vassilopoulos.

²²⁹ Combination of words, gestures, facial expression, silences, rhythm and timing.

²³⁰ Vassilopoulos.

²³¹ Arseni, 303.

5. Conclusions

In this Thesis I have tried to highlight Brecht's influence in Kampanelli's *Our Grand Circus*. Brecht proposed a new way of addressing the audience with social and pedagogical purposes. He was looking for a social change, awakening his audience through theatre. I believe that this side-channel propaganda technique became much more important during the times of censorship, when fighting openly the regime was too dangerous.

After providing the basic theories of Brechtian epic theatre I have presented a historical context of Greece during the 1970s. It was an important milestone to understand in which environment the play was written and performed and how the influence of Brecht facilitated the broadcasting of a political message that otherwise would have been forbidden.

In the analysis, I tried to answer my main research question: in what way can we consider *Our Grand Circus* to be a Brechtian play? This was done by first addressing the first sub question: which dramaturgical techniques were employed by Kampanellis? I argued that there were indeed many Brechtian elements mixed with some typical Greek theatre features, sentiment for example, that looks "impossible" to extract from a Greek play addressed to Greeks. In the Thesis I argued that the *Grand Circus* is an example of Brechtian epic theatre although Van Steen characterized it "too one dimensional to be Brechtian".

Secondly I addressed the second sub question: what was the political potential of those techniques? I argued that the *Grand Circus* was not only an example of epic theatre as Brecht intended it, but it was such while inducing sentiments at the same time, although Brecht had "banned" them during the biggest part of his life and experimentations. The *Grand Circus* proves that epicity and sentiments can "live together" and accomplish epic theatre's goal, which is the awakening and realization by the audience of its current social condition and possibly a contribution to its uprising.

If I had the chance in the future to continue this research I would make a comparative study between the two recent incidents of oppression in the contemporary Greek history, the one before, the other after *Metapoliteusi*. ("Metapoliteusi" were called the years that followed the dictatorship, when democracy was back again). I would compare the first 3 years of the 1970s (the final years of the junta) and the first 3 years of economic recession in Greece (2010-2013). With a first glance I find many similarities between these two periods. This research would continue Kampanellis' play in an academic level. I would suggest that the dictatorship was the 15th episode and the economic recession of 2010 the 16th episode of the *Grand Circus*. I would also like to investigate the relation between these two periods that continue Kampanellis' pattern of repetition of oppression in Greek history.

Finally, I would like to answer the following questions: Are we today in a similar "crisis" in the theatrical field as happened back in the beginning of the 70s?

What is the contemporary theatre production about? Why aren't there contemporary political plays, or at least they don't become pillars where people can turn to and find some consolation as happened in the 70s? Are TV and the media responsible for it? Are the young theatre makers of today struggling to reach the broad audiences as it happened in the early 70s? Is political theatre being produced at all today?

Through my experience as a frequent theatregoer during the last 12 years, I would say that few things happened (meaning politically engaged theatre) in the theatre life of Athens from the beginning of the recession, 2010. Of course this is not an objective statement because "fresh" work by young makers might have not arrived to my knowledge. (Most of them take place in festivals that last few days and are not really advertised). Some new groups of young people have presented their work that was politically engaged such as "The rebel of 5th October", presented in Kinitiras studio, which was about the political violence in the incidents of December 2008 in Athens. This is what makes me think of possible similarities between the early 70s or maybe late 60s (that the young makers couldn't find a way to present their work in the central theatres of Athens where famous actors of cinema were monopolizing the stages) and today.

However, it has been observed that the past few years of economic recession more people go to the theatre, even though mostly in the mainstream ones, where actors famous from television perform. The admission today costs a bit less than before the crisis, something that facilitated this boost. This is though another similarity with the 70s, only that today the theatrical kind of revue does not exist anymore and people attend mostly mainstream theatre with international repertoire.

Nonetheless, today there is a new kind of spectacle that did not exist in the 70s. Dance performances! What is more hopeful is that a grand part of dance performances that are presented in Athens is politically engaged and reflects the makers' problematization about the political – economical situation in contemporary Greece. For example Medie Mega's performance "Metapoliteusi", in 2012, was a political performance about the recent past history of Greece. Mega's solo "Transforming Me" of this year, also questions the legacy of "Metapoliteusi" on people and reflects the rapid changes that happen now in Greece. The founding of Onassis' Foundation, gave space to Greek young makers to present their work and bring them in contact with a broad audience, while it also brought a lot of international, politically engaged, makers in Athens. Lately, more and more international political performances, theatre, dance – and a combination of them, are being presented throughout the whole year so somebody doesn't have to wait the summer festivals once a year as happened some years ago.

So, is dance the new political theatre of this century?

Does history really repeats itself in Greece through the centuries, not only in politics as Kampanellis stated but also in theatre going?

Will the young makers of today (and all the groups of young performers) reach the broad audience?

Is today's mainstream theatre going to adopt the problematization of the off off (Athens) stages where young makers' work is usually performed?

Is the continuity of oppressions in Greece ever going to stop?
Will Greece stop being a “circus”?
Will Greece’s oppressors stop acting like “tamers”?

These are the questions that I would like to investigate in a future research, when the future itself will have given the answers that can’t be predicted at the moment. Hence, this is not the end of my Thesis, but the beginning of a new research!

As happens in the *Circus*, the episodes do not end before the history itself ends them in one way or another. And the history continues along with the route of people’s actions and mostly irrationalities. If the 15th episode of the Circus was the oppression by the dictatorship of the colonels (from the inside) and the 16th episode the oppression by the control of the trojka (from abroad), what is going to be the 17th episode of *Our Grand Circus*?

Ending, I am only sure about one thing: That Kampanellis was right! Greece is indeed a *Grand Circus* and being such, it will never cease to surprise us with new “numbers”, or episodes if you prefer. In a positive way from now on I hope though. But since then... who knows how many episodes are going to be performed?

To be continued... in real life!

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- ΤΟ ΒΗΜΑ

Appendix 1

In 1964 and for the first time after the civil war (1945-1949) there was a government of majority by the Prime Minister Georgios Papandreou.²³² At the same time a leftist military organization was revealed in the circles of the army with the name "ASPIDA" and rumors had it that the chief was the son of the Prime Minister, Georgios Papandreou, deputy Andreas Papandreou.



Figure 8 - KATHIMERINI 17 Feb. 1964

When the officers of "ASPIDA" got arrested²³³ and before going to trial the palace demanded from the prime minister to replace the minister of Defense.²³⁴ The

232 "Η Ένωση Κέντρου απόλυτη πλειοψηφία 170 έδρες ΕΡΕ 108 ΕΔΑ 22 έδρες." KATHIMERINI 17 Feb. 1964. Print.

233 "Υπόθεση ΑΣΠΙΔΑ στο Στρατοδικείο." ΤΟ ΒΗΜΑ 8 Jun. 1965. Print.

234 "Διαφωνία Βασιλιά-Πρωθυπουργού για το Υπουργείο Άμυνας." ΤΟ ΒΗΜΑ 15 Jul. 1965. Print.

king wanted to appoint a person of his trust. The Prime Minister, Georgios Papandreou, did not accept the request of the king (Konstantinos B') and became minister of Defence himself.²³⁵ In this context the palace started to destruct the government. Within a year (1966) after many members of the government were abandoning in groups the party of Georgios Papandreou, "Enosis Kentrou", which was a coalition of parties – a lot of small parties together, three different governments were formed that only the third had the majority of the parliament, destined to lead to the elections of May 1967.²³⁶



Figure 9 - TO BHEMA 8 Jun. 1965

One month before the elections, in the 21st of April of 1967, inferior officers, the colonels, formed the junta and appointed themselves as the government of the country.²³⁷ They arrested all the superior officers, generals and politicians (former prime minister Georgios Papandreou and his son Andreas Papandreou included).²³⁸

²³⁵ "Αναλαμβάνει ο ίδιος ο Πρωθυπουργός το Υπουργείο Άμυνας." TO BHEMA 1 Jun. 1965. Print.

²³⁶ These three governments were Nova's government in July 1965, Tsirimokos' government in September 1965 and Stefanopoulos' government which fell in 13 April 1966. This information comes from the newspaper TO BHEMA and its frontpages from July 1965 to April 1966.

²³⁷ "Νέα Κυβέρνηση με πρωθυπουργό τον Κωνσταντίνο Κόλλια και Αντιπρόεδρο τον Στρατηγό Γρηγόριο Σπανιδάκη. Μεταξύ των Υπουργών οι Γεώργιος Παπαδόπουλος, Νικόλαος Μακαρέζος και Στυλιανός Πατακός." TO BHEMA 22 Apr. 1967. Print.

²³⁸ "The Colonels arrest Tzeni Karezi - ΜΗΧΑΝΗ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΟΝΟΥ." TIME MACHINE. November 16, 2013. Accessed May 25, 2015.

The king was left in his position but with no real power.²³⁹ Konstantinos however tried to act after a while against the colonels and form his own government with superior generals. This movement of his finished before it started since the colonels were well informed. After the failure of his movement the king left the country.²⁴⁰ The colonels were the only governors of Greece.



Figure 10- TO BHEMA 14 Dec. 1967

Appendix 2

An analytical summary of the play episode by episode

The first scene of the play is introductory. The two presenters – pagliacci (Romios and Romiaki)²⁴¹ after presenting themselves inform the audience about what is going to be presented and which will be its role in the play.²⁴² The play runs through various

²³⁹ Traditionally the king of Greece (appointed by foreign countries that had lent money to Greece) had enough power, even more than the prime minister (who was legally elected by Greek people). Hence, the political system of the times was called crowned democracy.

²⁴⁰ "Η Αντεπανάσταση του Βασιλιά απέτυχε. Νέος Αντιβασιλέας ο Στρατηγός Γεώργιος Ζωϊτάκης." TO BHEMA 14 Dec. 1967. Print.

²⁴¹ Romios stands for "Greek" and Romiaki is the "little" Greek (a diminutive of Romios)

²⁴² In the first scene but also throughout the play we understand that Romios is a man who carries the collective folk wisdom, while Romiaki is a naive and ignorant (but also foxy) boy. Romios is teaching the "boy" Greek history, not the way is taught at schools but with all the frauds that are hidden from the history books.

eras of Greek history and the two presenters are the link between them so the spectators do not “lose” themselves between the facts and the eras. They state that their circus consists of actors²⁴³ and they also tell the audience not to be afraid of the snakes - dragons that decorate the stage because they are not dangerous to spectators. (They “eat” only actors).²⁴⁴ Romiaki tells in advance the audience that the performance is full of songs because it is a play that wanted to “*entertain itself*”. Romios is adding that “*the play has freedoms that everyday life hasn’t*” and both say that something which cannot be told, can be sung.²⁴⁵ The male presenter (Romios) at the end of the scene informs the audience that the play is a comedy,²⁴⁶ adding that the spectators are not obliged to laugh because of this reason and warning that each similarity of the comedy with drama is completely casual. The performance begins with a song.²⁴⁷

The fourteen episodes of the play correspond to fourteen moments of Greek history from ancient to modern times (from antiquity to World War II). The play starts with an episode inspired from Greek mythology. Kronos uses to eat his children so none of them steals authority from him, but his wife, Rea, spares Zeus. Rea is calling her husband a “*dictator*” while the priest who along with a king and a verger narrate this story comment that what Rea did is “*profanity, revolution, alteration, anarchy*”... Kronos represents the dictator who is afraid of being stolen his authority.²⁴⁸ (The first oppression in Greek history comes already from mythology).²⁴⁹

The second and third episode take place at the oracle of Delphi and Constantinople. Representatives of Philip of Macedonia visit Delphi in order to get an oracle about the imperialistic war that are planning to do against the rest of Greece.²⁵⁰ At the end of this comic episode they get “Apollo’s” approval to proceed.²⁵¹ The priests of the oracle, who submit to the powerful king of Macedonia, send a message to Philip that “*with ethics and guns (we) will eliminate all kinds of anarchists*”.²⁵² Beyond the comic elements of this scene, the hints against the military regime are spread and explicit.²⁵³ (Philip of Macedonia would be one of the first oppressors in Greek history).

²⁴³ “*They are cheaper than animals and more entertaining for humans*”.

²⁴⁴ The protagonists were incarcerated because of their courage to stage a performance which was against the military regime. Actress and protagonist Tzeni Karezi (Romiaki) was imprisoned for a whole month. This way the snakes - dictators “eat” actors.

²⁴⁵ “*Because a song is a confab gone mad and when even song is not enough we start dancing because dance is a re-song which re-went mad*”.

²⁴⁶ “*Not only because it was written that way or because we say so [...] but because it was declared as a comedy and submitted to censorship as such*”.

²⁴⁷ Kambanellis, 21-23.

²⁴⁸ For this reason, I guess, the colonels were taking preventive measures such as imprisonments and exile.

²⁴⁹ Kambanellis, 26-29.

²⁵⁰ Against the rest of Greece’s will of course.

²⁵¹ Through the corrupted by authority priests.

²⁵² This is a very explicit comment about the dictators who were always claiming that they were the guardians of ethics and for the names of ethics they would even use their guns (which they did). Of course whoever was against them was being called an anarchist and was put away in jail or exile or even completely out.

²⁵³ Kambanellis, 30-38.

The third episode is about the Byzantine emperor Andronicus, who first murdered the legal emperor and then took his place. While Romios narrates the story, Romiaki keeps repeating (throughout the whole episode) that *“this sounds familiar”*... The two presenters make comments on the story of Andronikos that resemble an indictment on the junta. A beggar who asks for money while praising the emperor, interrupts their conversation. He says that since Andronikos took authority, the nation became wealthy and its people happy.²⁵⁴ Of course, all the monologue is ironic and a direct comment to the dictators that were making similar discourses.²⁵⁵ (Andronikos was another oppressor in the Byzantine history).²⁵⁶

The next episodes (fourth to seventh) are about the liberation of Greece by the Ottoman empire (1821) and the coming of the Bavarian king Otto.²⁵⁷ Romios narrates what happened then.²⁵⁸ The fourth episode is sharply ironic in a great extent. For example Romiaki comment about the coming of the Bavarian king of Greece: *“Great! Now we are going to have our own king so we are not dependent by the foreigners!”*. The fourth episode ends with the speech of one of the captains of the war who was not bought by the court saying: *“Greeks stay together. They want to divide us. They didn’t come to govern with justice but with discord. [...] They gave us weapons to liberate ourselves but now that we did they don’t want us free. They afraid of us free. What do they have in mind?”*. This episode is implying not only that the Greeks in 1970’s do not have a government that they chose themselves, but also comments on the Greek education system and its way of teaching history. In this episode there are scenes of crowd and detailed stage directions by the playwright.²⁵⁹ (The oppression here comes from abroad)

The fifth episode is a comment on how Greeks felt betrayed by the governing of Otto. It satirises also the Greece of “two speeds”²⁶⁰ and contrasts that were formed during that time (1832 – 1862). The mud in the streets and the ballrooms of the court, the violin (used in European dances) and the klarino (traditional Greek instrument used in Greek traditional dances), the “civilized” Europeans and the “barbarian” Greeks, the “aristocrats” Greeks and the “peasants” Greeks are some of the contrasts presented in this episode.²⁶¹

²⁵⁴ *“Trade, agriculture, arts, everything blossoms”*.

²⁵⁵ They were usually claiming that before their dictatorship there was chaos and they put everything in order and good shape.

²⁵⁶ Kambanellis, 39-43.

²⁵⁷ A “gift” by the Great Forces of the times -England, France, Russia, Austria- who financed the war against the Turks.

²⁵⁸ After the Ottoman Occupation Greece got an Austrian king (1832) who organized the nation according to European standards. The most glorious fighters and captains of the war were put to jail or were left to die in the streets without any compensation because they were considered dangerous to the court as men of war. The rest of the fighters that did not care to be bought by the court along with wealthy Greeks coming from abroad took public offices and most of the land of the newly established Greek state.

²⁵⁹ Kambanellis, 44-55.

²⁶⁰ An expression still used today to define the difference between the “Eastern” (with eastern characteristics inherited by the Ottoman empire such as indolence) and “Western” (with progress, technology, alertness) Greece.

²⁶¹ Kambanellis, 56-68.

The sixth episode is dedicated to the execution machine “guillotine”, which the new rulers of Greece imported. The guillotine is “touring” in the Greek province and one of the presidents of a small community is praising this invention stressing how “civilized” (since it comes from Europe) it is compared to the Ottoman killing techniques. Half of this episode is a song.²⁶²

The seventh episode is about the first constitution of Greece that people demanded in the revolution of the 3d of September which gradually ended with the end of governing and exile of Otto. As Romios “teaches” Romiaki, the Greeks made a constitution, but the foreign authorities never took it into consideration. Kambanellis puts the ambassadors of the four Great Forces (who define themselves as cosmocratores, capitalists, plotters, intriguers), to decide about the Greek constitution.²⁶³ The seventh episode is full of songs by the ambassadors and the crowd which is demanding constitution and bursts on stage with banners and placards “reviving” the manifestation out of the palace of Otto.²⁶⁴ The plotting of the ambassadors and the manifestation take place at the same time on the two stages of the theatre.²⁶⁵

The eighth episode is called “The statue” and refers to the statue of one of the greatest warriors of the revolution against the Ottomans, Theodoros Kolokotronis²⁶⁶. In this scene only three persons perform: the statue, Romios and Romiaki. In their conversation the statue of Kolokotronis who comes back to life narrates in detail what was happening the times around the revolution of September the 3rd and the demand of the first constitution, but also comments on the current political situation of Greece (of the ‘70s).²⁶⁷ In a long monologue the statue is trying to “wake up” the Greeks of 1970’s telling them to forget the old glories and start a new fight for their freedom. (“*Go ahead and forget of us*”).²⁶⁸ The scene ends with the

²⁶² Kambanellis, 69-72.

²⁶³ “*England: Should they have a constitution or not? Why should they have it while they didn’t have it? [...] France: If they have it without having it? Austria: If they have it but in reality they don’t? France: They will be happy to have it, while we will know that they don’t have it. The only way to not have it is that they let them have it. Russia: Like whatever they have. Is what we let them have*”.

²⁶⁴ Today’s parliament on Syntagma –which means constitution in Greek- square named after the revolution of the 3d September 1843.

²⁶⁵ Kambanellis, 73-85.

²⁶⁶ He was imprisoned in 1833 by the regency of Otto (while was an adolescent) to be liberated later by Otto himself. The statue of Kolokotronis on his horse exists until today outside the old parliament in Athens.

²⁶⁷ “*You are going to loose the constitution [...] Why do you think that they stopped celebrating the 3d of September! They are taking it there slowly*”.

²⁶⁸ The monologue of the statue meant to awake the Greeks while the dictators were trying to hypnotize them with the glory of the revolution in 1821 and the glorious past of the ancient Greeks. I believe that with their delusional discourses but also with the mass spectacles that were organizing every year with the parades of soldiers, dressed like ancient Greeks, representing battles of Alexander the Great, or Greeks against the Persians and other glorious battles of ancient Greek history, the colonels wanted to distract the attention of people from what was happening in their present and make them live in the past where war and weapons were part of Greeks’ everyday life, trying to legalize maybe that way their governing with the weapons, as a continuity of the Greek history. I argue that the statue’s monologue is criticizing exactly this practice of the junta.

statue dancing an old traditional dance.²⁶⁹

The ninth episode is entirely a song about Otto leaving Greece. The song has a non negligible sentimental load while it narrates that the history is going to be repeated again.²⁷⁰ As a verse says: "*Freedom is in auction*" (again).²⁷¹ The last strophe of the song is the following: "*People, don't bend your head any longer, no longer spend the night in fear, the struggles you have waged do not avail you if they don't pay off the blood that you have poured. People, don't bend your head any longer, fear is a coward's black fate, joy goes to him who holds on to freedom*".²⁷² (The oppressor has left, but the allies are already searching for a substitute)

In the tenth episode, Otto has left the country and Greece is a "kingdom" without a king. They are all searching who the next king is going to be. And finally they find him. It is going to be Karagiozis!²⁷³ The famous characters of the shadow theatre of Karagiozis meet on stage (the actors are dressed like the famous puppets) and try to propose themselves as the next king. Kampanellis satirizes the, many, Greeks who want to become prime ministers, the ways that things in politics are being done in Greece and the Greeks who always disagree. After many disagreements, they agree to "elect" Karagiozis as king. They knock his door and announce their decision to him. When Karagiozis asks who decided it they respond: "*This time people chose with their hearts*" and Karagiozis comments "*So, we are going to have dictatorship!*" Sharp comments about dictatorship are spread in this episode,²⁷⁴ but also about how life works in Greece for the rich and for the poor. Sharp are also the comments about foreign politics. When the Turkish authority (Velingkas) arrests Karagiozis for being a rebel, tells the others: "*Find pasha (king) in Europe. He has to be European not yours [...]*"²⁷⁵

²⁶⁹ Kambanellis, 86-93.

²⁷⁰ As decided by the Great Forces, the next king of Greece was from Denmark.

²⁷¹ Kambanellis, 94-95.

²⁷² Steen, 214.

²⁷³ Karagiozis is a puppet of shadow theatre very famous in Greece. His origins were from Morocco or Turkey but became a very popular spectacle in Greece and exists until today. Karagiozis is a character that represents the Greek who was a slave during the Ottoman Occupation (1453-1821). As natural he is always hungry, afraid of the Ottoman authority and recruits all his intelligence and craft in order to provide food for himself and his family. He is usually dreaming of bread awake and even if he knows how to do a thousand professions (Karagiozis astronaut, Karagiozis senator) at the end always gets beaten and laughed at. Sometimes he also represents someone who is lazy to go to work and wants things done "by themselves" without making any effort. The shadow theatre of Karagiozis was usually a satirical spectacle for adults where very sharp critique was pronounced about politics and politicians. Today survives as a traditional spectacle for children, having lost its strength of doing politics. Karagiozis though remains a very humoristic spectacle and is a character that makes people laugh. In modern Greek Karagiozis became a synonym of "ridiculous" and a very deprecatory characterization for whom it refers to. In modern Greece when we want to say to someone that is not serious we are calling him "Karagiozis".

²⁷⁴ "*Today you get out of your house and you don't know how are going to turn back! Minister, prime minister?*"

²⁷⁵ Kambanellis, 96-108.

The eleventh episode is about the war of 1897.²⁷⁶ Greece lost the war and this was an economic disaster for the country. In this context a young married couple is having a conversation while the husband is at his tailor's making new uniforms for the war. The Greek bourgeoisie is being born and the wife daydreams to gain a better social position through the war and end up working in the court of the new king. In the humoristic dialogue of the couple the megalomania of the neon-Greeks is being satirized while the wife is trying very hard to find a noble relative in the family of the husband (who were for generations fishermen). The dialogue is often interrupted by an itinerant salesman who advertises a product for healthy teeth. He invites people to try his product because there is no shame trying anyway.²⁷⁷ The episode ends with a song that narrates the chronicle of the war which was a disaster. Many lives and many drachmas were lost and the foreign bankers are glad that will give new loans to the Greek state.²⁷⁸ The song asks: "*How are we going to pay back the loans without disturbing them?*".²⁷⁹ (A catastrophic war -the new king's initiative).

In the short twelfth episode Romios comments on the history of the 19th century. While it started gloriously with the revolution of 1821 and the liberation of Greece, it ended ingloriously with losing the war of 1897. Romios stresses that the damage is always paid by the people of low income.²⁸⁰ A song follows that connects the next episode with this one.²⁸¹

Also in the motif of the modern Greek "imperialistic" wars, in the thirteenth episode, another disastrous war follows that of 1897. Greece invaded Asia Minor in order to get back the once Greek lands that Alexander the Great had conquered. Another disastrous war of modern Greek history was performed in 1922²⁸². The episode is mostly a very long emotional song for the disaster of Asia Minor.²⁸³ Along with the song for the lost lands and the lost souls, immigration reports of the Red Cross are heard. (People that search for family members to reunite their families). The episode ends with an emotional escalation while the song narrates the Asia Minor Catastrophe.²⁸⁴ (A catastrophic war -for vote collection)

The last episode of "Our Grand Circus" is about the German Occupation in Greece (1941-1944) during World War II. The most "*schizophrenic and paranoid episode of the play*" as Romios states. More and more people imprisoned and killed.

²⁷⁶ This war was a great failure for the Greeks who tried to get back the North of today's Greece with the new king leading the troops. The war of 1897 remained in history as the "unfortunate war of '97.

²⁷⁷ "*Others are not ashamed for much worse!*"

²⁷⁸ Kambanellis, 109-121.

²⁷⁹ Kampanellis in this song says that the war of 1897 created new loans for the Greek nation on top of the unaffordable loans that were still to be paid from the revolution of 1821.

²⁸⁰ "*a warlike operetta with very expensive ticket –especially on the balcony*".

²⁸¹ Kambanellis, 122-123.

²⁸² The Greeks who were living there peacefully along with the Turks for centuries were the victims of that war. Another great loss of human lives and an economic disaster. Another opportunity for foreign interests to intrude the Greek state.

²⁸³ Many cities in Asia Minor were burnt by the Turks and thousands of families were torn apart while trying to escape from the fire and go to Greece by boats.

²⁸⁴ Kambanellis, 124-127.

Romios sets free an incarcerated. People are afraid and chased, Romiaki as well.²⁸⁵ A representation of an execution (of Greeks by German soldiers) takes place on stage. But the executed people remain standing. Romiaki informs the audience that the play is about to end. However says that the actors do not want the spectators to leave the theatre with bitterness.²⁸⁶ Romios is telling the audience that they called “*madness as an assistant*” otherwise they wouldn’t have made it. He further says that they were all afraid with the public “dialogue” they were going to begin, but they wanted the audience to not leave the theatre indifferent.²⁸⁷ In the end Romiaki says: “*The dragon²⁸⁸ is still there and he will be there also tomorrow and the day after. He is waiting (for blood). [...] But something is happening... Something is happening...*” The play ends with the strophe from the song of Otto’s run away, “*People, don’t bend your head any longer*”.²⁸⁹

Romiaki says, ironically, in the beginning that since the play is a historical comedy, the actors will have to be very funny in order to reflect the truth.²⁹⁰ Of course history is also tragic since many people have died in the wars. At the end of the play Romiaki is also says that life is “*this way*”,²⁹¹ funny and comic but also bitter and tragic.

²⁸⁵ Rebels and communists were causing damages to the enemy (Germans) to help the liberation.

²⁸⁶ Because “*this is how it happens in our lives and in our place [...] The soil will spring up again!*” (giving hope to the oppressed Greeks of 1973).

²⁸⁷ *To disagree, to find mistakes, to get mad but not leave indifferent*”.

²⁸⁸ The protagonist indicates the snakes that decorate the stage. They are snake – dragons like the one that Alexander the Great or Saint George killed.

²⁸⁹ “*People, don’t bend your head any longer, no longer spend the night in fear, the struggles you have waged do not avail you if they don’t pay off the blood that you have poured. People, don’t bend your head any longer, fear is a coward’s black fate, joy goes to him who holds on to freedom*”.

²⁹⁰ Kambanellis, 22.

²⁹¹ Kambanellis, 132.