Comparative Literature in Greece Revisited: Ambiguities of the Past and Perspectives for the Future

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The Greek world, "both continental and insular, a foyer from where Hellenism was destined to spread over relatively large areas, according to the ebb and flow of its expansion" \(^1\) constitutes a natural and symbolic frontier in numerous ways (cultural, religious, ethnic frontier), a gateway to Eastern Europe, uniting over the ages both East and West with North and South in the Mediterranean basin.\(^2\)

Anyone who wishes to capture the essence of this hybrid society \textit{a priori} over the centuries, reverting first to the classical period, passing from the Hellenistic mirage to the transitional period of the Byzantine Empire, spanning antiquity and the Middle Ages, then turning slowly to the Ottoman peace, silent at the beginning, more turbulent at the end of the 17th century, arriving finally at the cosmopolitan target-cities which flourished until the

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20th century, will be fascinated by its polymorphism and its capacity to assimilate new elements. This alterity/diversity has always been present, the same and the different have coexisted harmoniously and, as inseparable elements, have established images of what is social. Indeed, a comparative analysis can hardly be avoided; this urge to describe, to reflect on the other can even be traced back to Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*. Parallelisms have always played a key role in the formation of classical sophistry and rhetoric. But let us leave this game of erudition aside.

*Ambiguities in Comparitiveness before the term had been coined*

If the first ambiguity lies in the nature of the Greek cultural environment itself, making it thus attractive for a comparative study, an attraction though that has for the most part gone unheeded and remained unexplored, then the second ambiguity is the surprising fact that the comparative approach in literature has often been adopted prematurely and disproportionately. On this subject, Constantine Dimaras suggested in one of his final papers prior to his death ("Viewpoints on Comparative Literature"),\(^3\) that it was thanks to Adamance Coray's Parisian circle (beginning of the 19th century) that we owe the impact of initial comparative concerns on Greek Literature, in the epistemological sense of the term. Coray and his adepts borrowed from the French Idéologues the notion of analysis in comparative study, considering it to be an integral part of Humanities (comparative history, comparative philosophy, comparative literary History).\(^4\) The first official

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4. Nasos Vayenas uses a succinct example, taken from the periodical *Hermès ho Loghios* of the year 1813; consisting of a text published in series and titled, Χαρακτήρες της παλαιάς και νεωτέρας φιλολογίας, δηλαδή της Ελληνικής, Λατινικής, Αγγλικής και Γερμανικής, μετά κριτικής παραλληλίας αυτών [The character of ancient and modern literature, that is Greek, Latin, Italian, French, English and German Literature, after a critical parallelism of them], «Η Συγκριτική Φιλολογία στήν Ελλά-
course in comparative Literature was introduced in the Ionian Academy at Corfu; it was inspired and founded by the philhellene Lord Guilford who in 1827 entrusted to Andreas Calvos, a poet and man of letters, the teaching of the Belles-lettres, that is modern literature compared to ancient literature and contemporary literature.\(^5\)

Throughout the 19th century, Modern Greek culture was compelled to define the components of its ‘national character’ (génie national), regrouping all these elements dispersed in the past and in a particularly varied space. This theoretical preoccupation in pursuit of Greekness (hellinikotita) persisted even during the first decades of the 20th century (in particular with the so-called 30s generation) and went hand in hand with modernism. In this process, the influence of Western aesthetic movements was decisive. Nevertheless, I am in complete agreement with one of my Greek colleagues, when he writes that all the great literary debates of 19th century, pleading the cause of romanticism or disapproving its excesses (Dimitrios Vernardakis, Spyridon Vasiliadis), the impact of other aesthetic movements, the dispute between Emm. Roidis with Angelos Vlachos (1877), Spyridon Zambelios’ essays on the national historiography and in particular his essays on the Popular song and the poetry of Dionyssios Solomos, possessed a powerful comparative vision.\(^6\) Even the concept of Comparative Literature (grammatology [συγκριτική γραμματολογία =synkritiki grammatologhia]), after its use with a perjorative nuance, was introduced into the Greek vocabulary at an early date, in 1860, by Iakovos Polylas in an essay on Solomos’ poetry.

As well as satisfying an extremely important ideological need, the comparative method proved to be an effective tool in demonstrating, with

\(^5\) This plan was never realised; yet Calvos had already taught, the previous year, at the Academy “the application of the philosophy in general literature”, making reference mainly to Dante’s poetry. Cf. NASOS VAYENAS, «Η Συγκριτική Φιλολογία στήν Ελλάδα ως τη γενιά του ’30», p. 42.

\(^6\) Ν. VAYENAS, «Η Συγκριτική Φιλολογία στήν Ελλάδα ως τη γενιά του ’30», p. 42-43.
the aid of a solid scientific argument (exploiting mainly the comparative linguistic and folklore domain), the dependency of modern times on antiquity, or even in examining contacts with Western culture, an area which was to engage almost exclusively the attention of specialists for a long period of time.

The central issue which preoccupied most then was whether to preserve cultural ties with Western Europe or to condemn these influences as harmful, presupposing above all that a comparative analysis could be made. Certainly, what contributed to this bipolarity, traces of which can be found in some important works, was on the one hand the plethora of innovations radiating at that time in European letters and which inundated peripheral Greece, and on the other, the fact that the country possessed a rich heritage spanning many centuries whose traditions it had never been able to renounce.  

In modern times, the literary explosion was subjected to Frankish and Venetian influences in certain regions (Cyprus, Crete, Ionian Islands). It was here that the post-Byzantine tradition (poetry and narration) came into contact with mainly Italian and French models, through a number of works containing vestiges of earlier morphological forms of a post-Byzantine character as well as the aesthetics of the Late Renaissance and Baroque. This current, which gave rise to a remarkable literary production, was exploited by philologists such as Constantine Sathas, whose monumental work resulted in the restoration of Cretan theatre.

However, it is interesting to note another paradox: Cretan literature was not exempt from this obsession expressed in literary criticism at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, that is integrating national character in its system of values and rejecting all supposedly foreign imitation. Some consider this part of Greek literature as a ‘servile imitation’, while others, among them the eminent philologue and comparatist Emmanouil Kriaras, inspired by his own linguistic vulgarist convictions, have insisted on the popular style of Cretan literature and

dispute the existence of a bond with the ‘conventional style’ of the Italian Renaissance.  

Among the forerunners in comparative research, the great poet and critic, Costis Palamas (1859-1943) must be included. He was heralded an intellectual leader of the ’80s generation and bequeathed to us a number of important observations on the influence exerted among Greek poets and foreigners. Nevertheless, it should be noted that for Costis Palamas, the Greek genius could only be captured by displaying a bias towards popular tradition, contempt for foreign ways and a rehabilitation of the national heritage, with particular emphasis on the Byzantine legacy. Other viewpoints of a comparative nature, such as that of Ilias Voutieridis, who was particularly active intellectually in the early decades of the 20th century, were also expressed although they were of an empirical and amateur character.

*The Birth of a Discipline: Ambiguities and Limits*

Comparative Literature appeared officially in Greece in the 1930s. The long presence of C. Th. Dimaras and the doctrines he had developed

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dominated the intellectual life of the country, moving gradually from his 'shifts of interest' towards a 'history of ideas' and later 'history of consciences', a term he coined himself. Dimaras, of his own accord pursued the French School in what was known as Literary History (histoire littéraire), and was instructed by Gustave Lanson. As one of the founders and instigators of the National Hellenic Research Foundation (NHRF), he introduced into the Centre for Neohellenic Research the instruments for comparative research when he was Director in the 1960s, through an appraisal of the major works on Modern Greek studies.

Although moderate and discrete, C. Th. Dimaras's strategy in the Foundation did produce some tangible results: the creation of research programmes of the CNR, making provisions for grants through the National Foundation for Scholarships and his appointment at the Sorbonne in the 1970s as Director of the Neohellenic Institute.

Moreover this success helped to increase his influence on later generations. The broad scope of his activities was precisely what made a striking difference while the specificity of his contribution differentiated him from other acclaimed researchers, such as Emmanouil Kriaras, Linos Politis, Stylianos Alexiou, or Alkis Anghelou, who through their works and academic positions also played a key role in comparative research in Greece. Among these literati, it was Kriaras (a student in his youth of Jean-Marie Carré and of Paul Van Tieghem at the Sorbonne and auditor of Paul Hazard at the Collège de France) who first occupied at the Aristotle University of Thessalonika a Chair created after his recommendation and which was based on the French model for 'General and Comparative Literature [of Modern Europe]'. In January 1968, the Military Junta forced him to abandon the post. Following the fall of the dictatorship, the


Chair was given to Alkis Anghelou (1975-1984). Thus a wide circle had been drawn.\(^\text{12}\)

Before passing on another level of reflection, I feel there are two points worth bringing to one’s attention. Firstly, despite the initiatives taken by a core of few intellectuals who were active in the 30s and 40s, these works were largely contested by an academic majority who remained conservative and essentially introverted:

For me personally –Dimaras confessed– there were moments when I felt something like remorse when I saw with what coldness our established culture regarded research on foreign sources of such and such a work, foreign influences on such and such a writer. But first, we have good guides along this path – Palamas at the beginning, and for always. Second, we were young then, this branch was also young and attracted us because of its original aspect and new ideas. Our concerns and impatience seemed justified when faced with this sudden abundance, this brooding over the study and analysis of our literature and history as it was conducted by our country: we knew already from the masters we had chosen, that our culture belonged to a larger cycle, not only in terms of time, that is towards antiquity, but also of space, that is the Western World and as a result in order to perceive the meaning in our expression, it was indispensable to know about its counterparts abroad.\(^\text{13}\)

This says it all: not only the method that prevailed for decades (study of sources and influences received), but also the precise area for the scope of possible research. Apparently, two paths were deemed legitimate: that which united Modern Hellenism with ancient tradition and that which confronted Western culture. Naturally these schools of thought were inherited from the nationalist ideology of the 19th century, traces of which I have tried to reveal at the beginning of my analysis.

In retrospective, this vision lead to considerable restrictions in the comparative domain; it was an inflicted mutilation, ideologically explicable but which removed from Greek science a part of its flexibility. This

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flexibility was due to its fortunate position as a centre for different cultural practices that over the centuries had intermingled on territory under Hellenic influence.

Without wanting to underestimate a posteriori the other channels of intellectual communication, it is certain that Greek comparative science was for a long time frustrated in its right and duty to contemplate neighbouring cultural traditions or to confront them (namely Arabic, Turkish, Slavic and to a large extent Balkan), and this occurred even though Hellenic culture found itself consciously or not, in constant dialogue with them. This reasoning was the same for the other South-East European countries, which shows that the Greeks do not know their own neighbour as well as the great Western cultures, without mentioning the non-existence of studies which could have interpreted certain parallelisms generated by the essentially multicultural specificity of South-East Europe. Studies that reveal a comparative interest in India or the Far East are even scarcer, while those which show an interest in other continents are practically non-existent, with the exception of the Maghreb. This is all the more remarkable if one considers that in the last few


15. See relevant remarks made recently by other colleagues, such as VICTOR IVANOVICI, “Pour un comparatisme des Balkans”, as well as by myself “Pour une reconsideration comparative des courants esthetiques”, in Relations Greco-roumaines. Interculturalité et identité nationale. Sous la direction de P. M. KITROMILIDÈS et ANNA TABAKI / Greek Romanian Relations. Interculturalism and National Identity. Edited by P. M. KITROMILIDES and ANNA TABAKI, Institute for Neohellenic Research, The National Hellenic Research Foundation, Athens 2004, p. 105-111 and 95-104, together with useful suggestions by R. L. STANTCHEVA, “L'étude des littératures balkaniques modernes en contexte européen”, 16th International Congress on Comparative Literature (Pretoria, 13-19 August 2000), which highlighted the existence of certain parallelisms. R. Stanchéva notes with reason that “without forgetting the similar historic rhythm of Balkan cultures, the parallels have become possible due to contact with other European Literature”. That is why the recently founded (Pretoria 2000) Research Committee on Central and Southeast European Literatures of AILC/ICLA, presided by Prof. MONICA SPIRIDON, fills a gap, which will in all likelihood explore exhaustively a collective work which is both fertile and interesting.

16. Let us retain though, the case of Demetrius Galanos, a precurser in the
years we have seen a new focus on Mediterranean Studies\textsuperscript{17} and American Literature, which has also been officially incorporated into University curricula.

The generation of C. Th. Dimaras remained firmly attached to its principles. It was unaffected by the ‘crisis in Comparative Literature’.\textsuperscript{18} The new tendencies that were to determine literary theory, structuralism and poetics made a rather belated appearance in Greece, towards the end of the 1970s and were imported by students engaged in doctoral studies in Universities outside Greece. Yorgos Kehagioglou, for example, applied the Vladimir Propp ‘morphological’ method\textsuperscript{19} in his doctoral thesis, to analyze a Byzantine and post-Byzantine text. He then proceeded with ‘experimentations’, as he called them, applying propositions put forward by Claude Bremond and A.-J. Greimas for narrative (Al. Papadiamantis) and poetic texts (A. Embiricos).\textsuperscript{20} Eratosthenis Kapsomenos was one of European context, who practised as a translator and lexicographer (Comparative Dictionary for Persian-Hindu-Arab-Greek) towards the end of the 18th - beginning of the 19th century, of Nikolaos Kephala, finally of Lorentzos Mavilis and Constantine Theotokis, Heptanesian Letters, and who were the translators of the Mahabharata at the beginning of the 20th century.


18. Dimaras followed the new tendencies in literary criticism and theory but he disapproved of them and declared his absolute loyalty to diachrony. See TABAKI, “La méthode comparatiste dans l’œuvre de C. Th. Dimaras”, p. 99-101, where there is the respective documentation.


20. YORGOS KEHAGIOULOU, «Ελληνικές τύχες της Μορφολογίας του παραμυθιού» [Greek fortunes in the ‘Morphology of the Folktale’]. Addendum to the Greek
the most important and active representatives (both in the academic context of Ioannina University and outside the university) of semiology in Greece.\(^{21}\) In the 1980s, the concepts of *intertextuality* and the *aesthetics of reception* were introduced into comparative literature but these innovations did not win many followers. Despite everything, the classic formula of the type ‘X and Y’ seemed to persist,\(^{22}\) as has been borne out by recent studies and many theses on the subject, albeit injected with a new issue.\(^{23}\)

**The Present State of Affairs and the Future**

Today, however, productivity in this area is indeed apparent at numerous levels, not only within the institutional framework itself but also in written publications where a renewed and deeper reasoning has crystallized. Moreover this has occurred even though a department or section devoted to Comparative Literature is absent, all the more surprising as academic bodies in Greece have been multiplying (the establishment of new universities in the periphery, the creation of new departments in the large universities), as have the posts for the teaching of Comparative Literature. These posts either have been created in traditional disciplines, namely the Departments of Modern Greek Literature (at the University of Athens, Thessalonika, Ioannina, more recently at the Democritus University of Komotini), and at the University of Patras or in Departments for the Study of Foreign Literature (French, English, Italian, German, Spanish etc.). Attaching Comparative

Translation of *Morphology of the Folk tale* by VLADIMIR PROPP. Translated by ARISTEA PARISSI (Kardamitsas, Athens 1987, p. 331-368).

21. See by this author, *Κώδικες και Σημασίες* [Codes and meanings], Arsenidis, Athens 1990, in which he also makes an appraisal of semiological studies in Greece.


23. In this context, among the deep roots of a traditional comparatism and tendencies towards renewal, some recent theses can be placed, such as that by ALEXANDRA SAMOUIL, *Ο θωδός του καδρέφτη. Ο André Gide και η ημερολογική μυθοπλασία στην Ελλάδα* [The depth of the mirror. André Gide and the fictional journal in Greece], University of Crete Press, Herakleion 1998.
Literature to Foreign Literature Departments has been a widespread practice and continues to be so absorbing many comparatists in the process. The usual model followed in teaching has been as follows: French and Comparative Literature, American and Comparative Literature, Spanish and Comparative Literature and so on. In some institutions, such as the University of Thessaloniki and even Athens, the courses offered also cover the theoretical aspect of Literature as well as Comparative Poetry. In addition, with the emergence of some relatively new Departments, such as a Department of Foreign Civilizations or even the more dynamic Department of Theatre Studies, Comparative Literature has been entered their curricula. Moreover, attention should be drawn to two more cases: firstly, the University of Athens whose Department of Theatre Studies offers, in addition to numerous courses on Comparative Theatre, a course on the Criticism and Theory of Literature, and secondly, the University of Patras where Stylistics, the Theory of Literature and Semiology in Dramatic texts are taught. New interests, such as translation studies, which have been housed in the Departments of Foreign Literature and Language, as well as in the Interpreting School, at the Ionian University in Corfu, offer courses in the Theory of Literature and Translation. The introduction of a sense of comparative approach in the School for Mediterranean Studies at the University of the Aegean is also significant. Finally, the integration of anthropological studies (Social, Cultural Anthropology etc.) in the University system with the establishment of independent departments (Aegean University at Mytilene, Democritus University at Komotini and Alexandroupolis, 

24. It should be noted, that following an initiative by the University of Athens (French Language and Literature Department), an Inter-university, Interdepartmental Project for Postgraduate Studies in Translation Studies, has been established as a pilot programme and whose first phase 1998-2000 was funded by the European Union.

the University of Thessaly at Volos) has created favourable conditions for the introduction of Comparative Literature courses as well as courses which focus on Cultural Studies and Women Studies.

Notwithstanding this evident growth in institutional structures, it would be interesting to examine the actual research areas with which the comparatist community in Greece is preoccupied. It appears that, apart from the multitude of different methods being used, there has been a shift in time, a new chronological focus. Whereas in the past, the 20th century was the culminating point and constituted the main study for the majority of new research projects and doctoral theses, at present the 18th and 19th centuries are being re-evaluated and revised. Not only have time barriers become more flexible but we can also see new orientations. We have the beginnings of a serious attempt to study the relations with Arabic Literature, for example (in particular by Yorgos Kehagioglou) or even the unusual path that translation in South Eastern Europe has taken. Hitherto, unknown literary genres are being examined, such as personal or autobiographical

26. An interesting example is provided by the thesis submitted by Theocharoula Niftanidou, Georges Perec et Nikos-Gabriel Pentzikis: Une poétique du minimal (January 2000, Paris III - Sorbonne Nouvelle, under the supervision of Prof. Jean Bessière).

27. I would like to restrict myself to a succinct example, provided by Miltos Pechlivanos, a follower of Hans Robert Jauss, who examined in his thesis the Eκδοχές της γεωτερικότητας στην κοινωνία του Γένους: Νικόλαος Μαυροκορδάτος-Ιωάννης Μοι- διόδαξ-Αδαμάντιος Κοραίς [Aspects of Modernity in the Society of Ghenos: Nikolaos Mavrokordatos, Iossipos Moisiodax, Adamantios Korais], Thessaloniki 1999. For a background three 'gardens' are either real or fictitious, the phanariot garden of Mavrokordatos, the 'newtonien' garden, the fictitious garden of Moisiodax and finally the Parisian garden of the Tuileries where Coray would often walk, the author tries to reinstate in comparative terms the debate between the old and the modern in Greek culture during the age of the Enlightenment (first half of the 18th century - early decades of the 19th century).

28. I would like to refer to my own study, "Identité et diversité culturelle: Le mouvement des traductions dans le Sud-Est de l'Europe (XVIIIe siècle - début du XIXe)", Σύγκριση/Comparaison, 9 (1998), p. 71-91, which also looks retrospectively at the issue.
There is likewise a tendency to move more systematically towards issues of comparative aesthetics; several researchers (both senior and junior) have orientated their research towards narratology, the study of genres (in particular the novel and the short story), issues in poetry (poems in prose or pure poetry), or towards the literary myth. Domains formerly neglected, such as Children’s literature or Women’s literature, are now developing rapidly. Research on the theme of otherness, the image of the other, has flourished without though overlooking more theoretical issues or failing to review the intellectual background of their authors, as has been the case with some more recent works.


30. I would like to mention in the context of translation the work of Franz K. Stanzel, Theorie des Erzählens by Kyriaki Chrysomalli-Henrich (University Studio Press, Thessaloniki 1999). Mrs Chrysomalli-Henrich, who lives and writes in Germany, examines narratological issues in her own research.


32. I would like to mention in this context the thesis of Agori Grekou, Η καθαρή ποίηση στην Ελλάδα από τον Σολωμό στον Σεφέρη [Pure Poetry in Greece from Solomos to Seferis], Alexandria Publishers, Athens 2000.

33. I will restrict myself to two examples: Z. I. Siaflekis, Η εύθραυστη αλήθεια. Εισαγωγή στη δεορία του λογοτεχνικού μύθου [The Fragile Truth. Introduction the theory of the literary myth] Gutenberg, Athens 1994. Also, Angelica Marie Koumanoudis, Le mythe de Pan dans la littérature grecque et française des XIXe et XXe siècles, a thesis which was vivaed in February 2000 at Paris IV-Sorbonne (under the supervision of Pierre Brunel).

34. Anna Tabaki, «Η Συγκριτική Φιλολογία στην Ελλάδα: ένας σημερινός απολογισμός», p. 26, 32.


36. See, for example, Lisy Tsirimokou, Εσωτερική ταχύτητα. Δοκίμια για τη λογοτε-
Theatre studies have today taken a new turn in the academic milieu giving rise to many comparative theatre applications (semiological approaches, theory of aesthetics and reception - Jauss, the study of the notions of theatre as a spectacle and mass media, sex/gender, colour, re-examination of the ancient tragedy using 20th century theories, reconsideration of theatre translation in the light of contemporary trends).

As a form of epilogue, I will say a few words on translation, the child prodigy of classical Comparative Literature. At the centre of intercultural relations, translation has followed a dynamic course within the context of Greek comparatism and continues to evolve. As a versatile entity, many research teams are engaged in the study of translation and translation theory, covering a wide range of issues and converging interests, from the history of the theory of translation to Translation

χνία [Internal Speed. Essays on literature] Agra, Athens 2000, the whole of the work sketches the comparative trajectory of the author during the 20 years of her university career.


40. Among others, Savas Patsalidis, (Εν)τάσεις και (Δια)στάσεις. Η Ελληνική Τραγωδία και η θεωρία του Εικοστού αιώνα [Tensions/Tendencies and Dissensions/Attitudes. Greek Tragedy and 20th century Theory], Gutenberg Publishers, Athens 1997.

studies (Centre for Neohellenic Research at the FNRS, Centre for Literary Translation at the French Institute of Athens, an active group from which the ‘National Centre for Literary Translation’ (EKEMEL) was later founded under the auspices of the National Book Centre etc.).

We can therefore conclude without exaggeration that the ambiguities of the past are slowly disappearing and there are perspectives that seem to hold promise for the future as regards Comparative Literature in Greece.

The Risks of Globalisation

While a favourable climate is being created in the domain of Greek comparative studies, the crucial question is on the direction that it will eventually take? Will globalisation bring together all of these disparate elements and to what extent? Will it, or even should it, determine the present and future of Comparative Literature in Greece?

At the beginning of my analysis, I stressed within reason the frontier position of the Hellenic culture as well as its ancient character. In this respect, there are two parameters worth mentioning and which are undoubtedly at the origin of an intrinsic peculiarity.

Firstly, let us return to the frontier position: it seems to me that at the moment, the idea of cultural corridors which was formerly explored in a diachronic study on South-Eastern Europe is highly pertinent in view of the multiculturalism that is rapidly sweeping in waves across Greek territory, transforming from one day to the next everyday life, as well as collective imagination, and shaping thus Greek literary fiction. Greece is in the grips of a crisis in cultural values, and is surrounded by a polymorphism that has at times overhauled with a certain aggression the traditional way of life, and has as a result influenced considerably the Greek way of thinking. Coming to terms with this otherness/diversity is henceforth an urgent need. The study of literature, in this case Greek Comparative Literature, is not only affected by globalisation, which provides almost infinite access to a global society of infinite information,

but it makes it vulnerable to numerous encroachments as there were discussed at length during the Pretoria 2000 Congress of the AILC/ICLA. One such encroachment that is extremely visible in Greece has been the phenomenon of multiculturalism in an acute form. Frontier encroachments between European countries (North-South), between Balkan countries but also between continents (East-West), is, according to my opinion, today the major issue concerning the Greek case, as opposed to the problems common throughout the world (that is in developed countries), imposed by the media and information technology.

It is, therefore, necessary that Greek comparative science, given the vast scope of issues it encompasses, abandons its former stagnation. It must become involved in all types of literary interactions, acquaint itself better with its Mediterranean and South-Eastern neighbours as well as the literary peculiarities created by contemporary social and cultural practices. As for the second parameter concerning the ancient character of the Hellenic civilization, it is evidently not just a cheap antidote or a cliché. “In taking the road to Troizina”, 43 we should concede to the notion of heritage, its own dynamism and freedom, a critical dimension, a fresh and new approach which preserves its own flavour.

We must also bear in mind that in this heady acquisition of knowledge without limits, leading to comparative practices almost without evident restrictions, it is also constructive as well as indispensable to re-establish our ties with the past, to look at its comparative study, enriching thus profoundly our vision of reality. As well as using new theoretical instruments, a visit to the past will enhance our vigilance towards a monstrous unifying globalisation, capable of sweeping away national traditions and causing them to disappear. By gaining awareness of the richness of Pandora’s Box and the essentially multicultural nature of today’s society, we can then take note of the different literary layers in time and space, and Comparative Literature in Greece could secure the present and build its future for the new millenium.

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