Heteroglossia and the defeat of regionalism in Greece

Dimitris Tziovas

Although heteroglossia is a term of Greek origin and therefore those familiar with Greek must more or less understand its meaning, I feel that I should explain what Mikhail Bakhtin, who first introduced it, meant by that term. For him all national languages are internally stratified into what he calls different "social speech types", that is to say, in his own words: "social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific sociopolitical purposes of the day, even of the hour."[1] This multiple construction of language does not imply a relationship of harmony between these different speech types, but instead a relationship of conflict. For Bakhtin the basic forces which regulate this discursive conflict are two, which he calls *centripetal* and *centrifugal*.

He refers to the tendency towards unification and centralization as "centripetal force" and to the tendency for heterology and decentralization as "centrifugal force"; the conflict of these two opposing tendencies constitutes a perpetual dialogic struggle which manifests itself more clearly in the realm of language:

> At any given moment of its evolution, language is stratified not only into linguistic dialects in the strict sense of the word (according to formal linguistic markers, especially phonetic), but also – and for us this is the essential point – into languages that are socio-ideological: languages of social groups, "professional"

---

[1] M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, Austin: University of Texas Press 1981, pp. 262-3.

> and "generic" languages, languages of generations and so forth. From this point of view, literary language itself is only one of these heteroglot languages – and in turn is also stratified into languages (generic, period-bound and others). And this stratification and heteroglossia, once realized, is not only a static invariant of linguistic life, but also what insures its dynamics: stratification and heteroglossia widen and deepen as long as language is alive and developing. Alongside the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces of language carry on their uninterrupted work; alongside verbal-ideological centralization and unification, the uninterrupted processes of decentralization and disunification go forward.[2]

In short, the centripetal forces in language seek to undermine linguistic plurality and establish a unitary language whereas the centrifugal forces resist linguistic unity.

After these preliminary remarks about heteroglossia, I must now turn my attention to the question of regionalism in Greece which has so far received little attention,[3] although it eloquently illustrates the triumph of nationalism and the ideology of the national centre. It has been subsumed under the more widely used dichotomy between centre and periphery, where the latter tends to represent more the diaspora rather than the regions. Regionalism provides us with a perspective by which we can understand the connection between nationalism, identity and the formation of a national culture as an outcome of the tension between centrifugal and centripetal forces (to return to Bakhtin's terms). Nationalism can be seen as a centripetal force while regionalism stands as its centrifugal opposition.

The conflict of these two trends can be observed as a striking feature of modern Greek history, which involves a paradox since nationalism is expressed by the centralizing state and regionalism by the concept of a non-contained nation. The fundamental problem in modern Greek history has been the establishment of

---

[2] ibid., pp. 271-2.

[3] One of the most comprehensive studies on regionalism in Greece and Cyprus is still the proceedings of the conference organized and edited by Muriel Dimen and Ernestine Friedl: "Regional variation in modern Greece and Cyprus: Toward a perspective on the ethnography of Greece", *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 268 (February 1976).

the former and its expansion in order to embrace the latter. Before the War of Independence, a Greek state was not of course in existence nor ever had been. The Greek nation, on the other hand, was geographically dispersed from Wallachia and Anatolia to the Greek communities in Europe. After the successful outcome of the Greek War of Independence and the establishment of the Greek state, the problem which emerged was the incompatibility of the state and the nation. Hence, the subsequent political, military and cultural history of Greece, at least up to 1922, can be considered as an attempt to expand the state so that it would coincide with the nation.

Since the mid-eighteenth century the Greek nation has been defined and differentiated linguistically, thus thwarting the older ecumenical community of Balkan Orthodoxy. Greek-speaking populations acquiring national consciousness through language separated themselves from the Bulgarians, the Albanians or the Vlachs, who were treated as outsiders in terms of language, although welcome to join the Greek nation eventually, provided that they adopt its language and culture. An invitation to the non-Greek-speaking Orthodox to hellenize themselves linguistically and culturally is offered by Daniel of Moschopolis in his opening remarks to a Greek-Vlach-Bulgarian-Albanian glossary published in 1802. Similar messages were sent by other Greek intellectuals, such as Neophytos Doukas, either to the Greek leaders, or to the other Balkan peoples – not, however, to all of them but to marginal and less cohesive social groups.[4] This perhaps explains why they do not talk about the assimilation of Serbs while they do talk about the assimilation of Albanians, Vlachs and Bulgarians. This tendency towards cultural and linguistic hellenization demonstrates that the Greek nation was primarily perceived as a cultural and linguistic community. In place of the religious ecumenical community that Orthodoxy had put forward, nationalism projected the individuality and the uniqueness of linguistic communities. Apart from territorial

---

[4] See Paschalis Kitromilides, "'Imagined Communities' and the origins of the National Question in the Balkans", in: Martin Blinkhorn and Thanos Veremis (edd.) *Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality*, Athens: Sage-ELIAMEP 1990, pp. 23-66.

expansion, the other main preoccupation of Greek nationalism was the social, linguistic and ideological unity associated with the convergence of state and nation. The development, therefore, of nationalism in Greece and in the Balkans presupposes and at the same time promotes linguistic homogeneity with the enforcement of one language; a process which has been continued more effectively with the formation of a powerful state.

It has often been observed that during and after the War of Independence a conflict developed between the modernizing élites of the diaspora and the local oligarchies, which after Independence resulted in the highlighting of the cleavage between a society with pre-capitalistic structures and ethos and a state transplanted from the West. Thus, since the early nineteenth century a divergence between society and state came about which resulted in the continuing mistrust of the people towards the central authorities. On the one hand, the westernized state tried to rationalize and modernize the pre-capitalist Greek society from above and, on the other hand, the latter responded by undermining the former from below. This incongruence between the westernized state and the pre-capitalist social structure often took the form of an antithesis between urban and rural culture. According to N. Diamandouros, the failure of urban culture to gain wider acceptance and authority within society suggests once again the fundamental and unbridged cleavage between the state and society as well as the resilience of regionalism and its ultimately anti-urban character.[5]

What has not been considered so far is that one of the most serious attempts to bridge the gap I have just described was by means of language and the ideal of linguistic uniformity. Perhaps the language question overshadowed this systematic attempt in Greece by giving the impression that the cleavage had become wider instead of being bridged. Nevertheless, behind the language question lurked the ideal of linguistic unity and uniformity; the disagreement simply lay in the medium: whether the homogenizing medium was to be the demotic or

---

[5] P. Nikiforos Diamandouros, "Greek political culture in transition: Historical origins, evolution, current trends", in: Richard Clogg (ed.), *Greece in the 1980s*, London: Macmillan 1983, p. 55.

katharevousa.[6] Hence, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there was a colossal but quiet attempt to bring about the hellenization and linguistic uniformity of Greek territory including all the Greek-speaking and non-Greek-speaking populations.

According to P. Kitromilides, what happened in Greece and elsewhere in eastern Europe in the nineteenth century "was the gradual construction of the nations by the states."[7] From its inception the basic objective of the Greek state was the overpowering of the local centrifugal tendencies and the establishment of a canonistic framework of national values with unity as the ultimate goal. This unity meant two things: first, unity in terms of time, under the notion of the historical continuity of Hellenism, a project undertaken by historians such as Paparrigopoulos; and, secondly, unity in territorial terms, which meant among other things the obliteration of linguistic and cultural heterogeneity as well as local differences. In this way the idea of the national centre is formed and various mechanisms of national homogeneity and cultural assimilation develop.

First of all, one such mechanism, as is portrayed in *Military Life in Greece* (1870), was the army, which, among other things, aimed at the hellenization of its recruits, some of whom did not have Greek as their native language, and at forging a national identity on the basis of common ideals and social experience. Another mechanism was the educational system with its spectacular expansion during the first fifty years following Independence, if we take into account that the 71 schools in 1830 had become 1,172 in 1879.[8] In this respect, the role of the newly founded University of Athens was crucial too; one of its aims was

---

[6] The lack of widely-recognized or standard Greek dictionaries (equivalent to the OED) and grammars suggests that the widespread linguistic standardization did not produce practical results, notwithstanding the language controversy, which impeded this process.

[7] Kitromilides, op. cit., p. 33. For an analysis of the ideological developments in Greece during the nineteenth century see also his study "Ἰδεολογικὰ ρεύματα καὶ πολιτικὰ αἰτήματα· προοπτικὲς ἀπὸ τὸν ἑλληνικὸ 19ο αἰώνα", in: D.G. Tsaousis (ed.), *Ὄψεις τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Κοινωνίας τοῦ 19ου αἰώνα*, Athens: Estia 1984, pp. 23-38.

[8] Kitromilides, "'Imagined Communities'", p. 37.

to prepare school-teachers who would contribute to the hellenization and the national indoctrination of populations outside the Greek kingdom. Additional evidence that the centripetal forces of the Greek state were gaining ground was the fact that the theological college at Chalki was increasingly supplanted by Athens University, the Rizaris Seminary and the Maraslis Teachers Training College as regards the training of educational personnel for the needs of the Greek communities in Asia Minor.

A third mechanism of social cohesion and state centralizing control was the judiciary. During a period when brigandage threatened law and order and defied the central authorities, the establishment of the penitentiary system and the credibility of justice, as eloquently portrayed in the novel *Thanos Vlekas* by the legal scholar and political thinker Pavlos Kalligas, was of primary importance for national unity, as well as for negating any local autonomies which potentially could lead to social unrest and anarchy

These three institutional mechanisms aimed at smoothing out social, linguistic and cultural differences within society and the strengthening of national unity. On the practical level they fostered state control and centralization, and on the ideological level this role was played by the Great Idea and its promise for a unity of autochthonous and heterochthonous Greeks within an enlarged Greek state. It should be borne in mind here that the concept of the Great Idea was introduced in 1844 by Ioannis Kolettis during a debate over the issue of autochthonous and heterochthonous members of the Greek state. Moreover, the declaration in 1833 by the Greek Church of its autocephaly from the Ecumenical Patriarchate represents another indication of the clash between the centripetal state and the centrifugal nation. The appropriation of the Church by the state was a cause for friction because it opposed the maintenance by the Patriarchate of the traditional supra-national and supra-state religious community in the Balkan area.

After the Anatolian catastrophe the Great Idea was reversed. Instead of expanding the state in order to cover the whole nation, now the nation had to be contained within the state. In other words, the centripetal force of homogeneity and unity (racial, geographical and linguistic) now gained

momentum in place of the centrifugal force of expansion which was dominant earlier. With the exchange of populations in 1923, Greece appears to be one of the most ethnically homogeneous states of Europe[9] while at the same time the systematic enforcement of a uniform national culture through a highly centralized administrative system effaced any regional peculiarities. After 1922, with the definition of the Greek borders and the integration of the refugees, nation and state converge in a kind of forced symbiosis.[10] This perhaps explains why before 1922 regionalism was allowed to manifest itself either linguistically or thematically even in literature, whereas afterwards the tendency for discipline and homogeneity prevails. One can argue that earlier literature expressed the nation and the diaspora, before it became the mouthpiece of the state and the metropolis. In turn, the allowances for heteroglossia were minimized.

In the early twentieth century a massive effort was made to achieve the linguistic unification of Greek territory, an effort closely linked with the Macedonian question. In 1916 Manolis Triantaphyllidis, in an article under the title "Our language in the schools of Macedonia", points out that "the Greek state has failed in the issue of hellenization"[11] and in the assimilation of non-native speakers, considering the fact that even near Athens there were Albanian-speaking villages. The linguistic antagonism, Triantaphyllidis says, was not reduced but intensified because of the various nationalisms; particularly in the recently liberated Macedonia, the hellenization of the non-Greek-speakers was essential (with demotic as the instrument): "The linguistic assimilation cannot be implemented except by means of the spoken language, which must be established in the schools of Macedonia and anywhere that foreign speakers exist, at least for the first four years of the elementary school."[12] He points out

---

[9] ibid., pp. 50-1.

[10] Thanos Veremis, "Introduction" in: *Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality* (see n. 4 above), p. 8.

[11] M. Triantaphyllidis, "Η γλώσσα μας στὰ σχολεῖα τῆς Μακεδονίας", *Ἅπαντα*, vol. 4, Thessaloniki: Institute of Modern Greek Studies 1963, p. 253.

[12] ibid., p. 257.

that, in spite of the government's efforts in opening schools and sending out teachers, people in a number of places in Macedonia did not speak Greek but Bulgarian; he also attempts to strengthen his case by quoting from articles by teachers and the views of other people who had first-hand experience of the situation.

The linguistic situation in Macedonia was an additional factor in speeding up the policy of the Greek state for linguistic unification through education. State intervention, however, was not limited to the area of education, but spread into other areas with the hellenization of place-names and the endorsement of new military and marine terms and trade codes[13] – an endorsement which highlights the widespread formalism of the Greek state and the anxiety about uniformity.

As I said earlier, up to the Anatolian catastrophe the polyphony and the multifaceted character of Greece were recognised and bolstered indirectly by nationalists such as Dragoumis who drew a distinction between Hellenes and Helladikoi: "The Greeks of Greece, let us call them Helladikoi, identified in their minds the Greek state, the Greek *Kingdom*, the small *Greece*, with the Greek *nation*. They forgot the Greek nation, Romiosyni and Hellenism."[14] Dragoumis's theory about the re-establishment of an empire, together with his defence of the administrative system of the small communities, stems from the alleged incompatibility between state and nation, which he speaks of as follows: "Two trends originated from two different ideologies, one Helladic and the other Hellenic, one strictly statist and the other national and all-encompassing."[15]

The views of K.D. Karavidas, an associate of Dragoumis, on communalism suggest that there was ideological resistance to the centripetalism of the state. One of his articles, entitled "Learned tradition and Demoticism", first published in 1921 in Dragoumis's *Political Review*, later reprinted in 1945 in a pamphlet and then in the periodical *Platon* in 1961, is of

---

[13] See the introduction of E.I. Moschonas in the edition of A. Pallis, *Μπρουσός*, Athens: Ermis 1975, p. νβ.

[14] I. Dragoumis, *Ὁ Ἑλληνισμός μου καὶ οἱ Ἕλληνες, 1903-1909*, Athens 1927, p. 108.

[15] I. Dragoumis, *Ἑλληνικὸς πολιτισμός*, Athens 1927 ([1]1913), p. 108.

particular interest.[16] In this article, Karavidas singles out two theories/ideologies, as he calls them: the socialist and the hellenistic. The first is centripetal or according to him "dogmatic and canonistic", "submitting people once and for all to collective discipline", whereas the other, the hellenistic, is centrifugal, "stressing variety and non-uniformity in life". The socialist theory represents the state, the West and demoticism; the hellenistic, on the other hand, represents the community, the East and the learned tradition (not as letter but as spirit and orientation). Demoticism, according to Karavidas, must shy away from both socialism and parliamentary democracy, and look back to ancient Greece as the genuine manifestation of communal organization. Karavidas can be seen as the champion of regionalism in Greece during the inter-war period and one of the few who used the concept in a transliterated form, since there is no equivalent term in Greek and the concept is often expressed by reference to communalism (κοινοτισμός).[17]

Furthermore, the suppression of customary law in Greece can be linked to the defeat of regionalism and the increasing tendency towards standardization and centralization. Nikolaos Pantazopoulos has explored in detail this clash between local "customs" and western "law" during the early years of Independence and has illustrated the pivotal role of the Bavarian administrator and law professor Ludwig-Georg von Maurer.[18] Although von Maurer stayed in Greece barely eighteen months (2 February 1833 - 31 July 1834), he was instrumental in the suppression of communalism and customary law. The division of Greek territory into *Demoi*, for example, did not aim,

---

16 K.D. Karavidas, "Η Λογία Παράδοσις καὶ ὁ Δημοτικισμός", *Πλάτων* 13, no. 25/26 (1961) 138-64.

17 See K.D. Karavidas, *Ἀγροτικά* (1931), repr. Athens: Papazisis 1977, and "Η τοπικὴ αὐτοδιοίκησις καὶ ὁ ἰδιότυπος παρ' ἡμῖν οἰκονομικὸς ρεζιοναλισμός" (1936), reprinted in *Γεωοικονομία καὶ Κοινοτισμός*, Athens: Agricultural Bank of Greece 1980 and *Τὸ Πρόβλημα τῆς Αὐτονομίας*, Athens: Papazisis 1981.

18 See N.I. Pantazopoulos, *Georg Ludwig von Maurer. Ἡ πρὸς εὐρωπαϊκὰ πρότυπα ὁλοκληρωτικὴ στροφὴ τῆς Νεοελληνικῆς νομοθεσίας*, Thessaloniki 1968, and *Ὁ Ἑλληνικὸς Κοινοτισμὸς καὶ ἡ Νεοελληνικὴ Κοινοτικὴ Παράδοση*, Athens: Parousia 1993.

according to Pantazopoulos, at the revival of the communal ethos and support for regional independence, but at reinforcing the authority of the state and making its control over the communities more effective. The control of "custom" by "western law" was supported by von Maurer's preconception that only foreigners (especially the Germans) could teach the Greeks to be civilized.[19]

The "Europeanization" of Greek law, representing modernization and standardization, invites us to see the conflict between "law" and "custom" as a legal parallel to the linguistic controversy between *katharevousa* and demotic. M. Herzfeld, discussing the analogy, argues that "as with 'katharevousa', the 'law' is something which the villager regards as a standard set by the State."[20] In this way we return to the fundamental opposition during the nineteenth century between centripetal propensities, identified with the State, which represented modernization, Europeanization and standardization, and the centrifugal forces associated with customary law, communalism, regionalism and linguistic plurality.

During the nineteenth century, however, it is difficult to talk about or define Greek regionalism. There is more talk about sectionalism than regionalism.[21] Social cleavages and local

---

[19] John Anthony Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft in the Kingdom of Greece 1833-1843*, Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press 1968, p. 162.

[20] Michael Herzfeld, "'Law' and 'Custom': Ethnography *of* and *in* Greek National Identity", *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 3. 2 (October 1985) 176.

[21] John Petropoulos argues that sectional jealousies between Rumeliots, Peloponnesians and islanders played an important role in Greek politics after Independence. He also points to the difference between the Europeanists, who thought of statehood in terms of nationalism, centralization, bureaucracy and perhaps constitutionalism, and the indigenous elements who were satisfied with the machinery of the Ottoman state. For him the two factors which fostered sectionalism were geography and Ottoman rule, which conformed to geographical divisions: "In view of the geographical barriers of sea and mountains, it is not surprising that localism and sectionalism should have been strong. The force of nationalism in 1821 was still new, and town, village, or district still commanded primary loyalty. Traditionally, administration had conformed to geography and had intensified sectionalism. What became independent

conflicts are perceived through binary oppositions such as: autochthons and heterochthons, Helladikoi and outside Greeks, Heptanesians and Phanariots, while the Greek nation, including the diaspora, is seen as consisting of three concentric circles: the first involving the Greek peninsula, the second the Balkans and the third European cities or Asian regions with Greek populations or Greek mercantile activities.[22] Regional antagonism emerges as a result of irreconcilable economies (peasant/merchant) and the coexistence of two cultures: an official, administrative culture and a local, customary one.

However, what characterizes nineteenth-century Greece is first a sense of linguistic and cultural diversity, which many describe as anarchy, and, secondly, the increasing use of the term "national centre". As Elli Skopetea argues:

> Ἡ χρήση τέλος τῆς λ. *κέντρον* δηλώνει – καὶ ταυτόχρονα καλύπτει – τοὺς νέους συσχετισμοὺς τῶν δυνάμεων ποὺ συνεπάγεται ἡ κατάλυση τῆς χαρακτηριστικῆς γιὰ τὸν προεπαναστατικὸ ἑλληνισμὸ πολυκεντρικότητας.[23]

There are some who see the linguistic diversity during this period as a symptom of a wider political chaos, social instability and moral impropriety. This view is clearly expressed by A. Kyprianos in 1861 in the journal *Philistor*:

> Ὅλοι αἰσθάνονται τὴν χρείαν νὰ πῆξωμεν τέλος πάντων γλῶσσάν τινα, καὶ ὅλοι θλίβονται καὶ

Greece had never constituted a single unit within the Ottoman empire. Not even each of its acknowledged geographical divisions had enjoyed administrative unity. Moreover, Ottoman rule had favored sectionalism in two ways – by allowing communities and regions a large degree of autonomy and by never attempting to introduce any widespread uniformity of administration." J.A. Petropoulos, *Politics and Statecraft in the Kingdom of Greece 1833-1843*, p. 20.

[22] G. Dertilis, *Κοινωνικὸς μετασχηματισμὸς καὶ στρατιωτικὴ ἐπέμβαση 1880-1909*, Athens: Exantas 1977, p. 277.

[23] Elli Skopetea, *Τὸ "Πρότυπο Βασίλειο" καὶ ἡ Μεγάλη Ἰδέα. Ὄψεις τοῦ ἐθνικοῦ προβλήματος στὴν Ἑλλάδα (1830-1880)*, Athens: Polytypo 1988, p. 72.

> βασανίζονται ὅτι ἡ ἀκαταστασία καὶ ἀκοσμία ἥτις παρατηρεῖται κατὰ τὸν πολιτικόν μας βίον, κατὰ τὰ ἤθη, κατὰ τὸν χαρακτῆρα ἐπικρατεῖ καὶ κατὰ τὴν γλῶσσαν, τὸ πρᾶγμα ἐκεῖνο δ χαρακτηρίζει ἰδίως τὸν λογικὸν ἄνθρωπον καὶ δεῖται ὑπὲρ πᾶν ἄλλο κανόνος καὶ μέτρων.[24]

But the ideal of a unified and standardized language is expressed more adamantly by Philippos Ioannou two years later in *Ethnikon Imerologion*:

> Ἐκ τῶν ῥηθέντων συνάγεται, ὅτι αἱ διάφοροι τοπικαὶ διάλεκτοι, εἰς ἃς ἡ χυδαία τῶν Ἑλλήνων γλῶσσα διαιρεῖται, δύνανται μὲν νὰ χρησιμεύσωσιν εἰς ᾄσματα δημοτικά, εἰς κωμῳδίας, εἰς μύθους καὶ διηγήματα, ὡρισμένα πρὸς διδασκαλίαν καὶ τέρψιν τοῦ ὄχλου, οὐχὶ ὅμως καὶ εἰς σπουδαίαν καὶ ὑψηλὴν ποίησιν, εἰς ἐπιστημονικὰ συγγράμματα, εἰς νομοθεσίαν, δικηγορίαν κ.τ.λ. Πᾶσαι τῶν μεγάλων καὶ πεφωτισμένων τῆς Εὐρώπης ἐθνῶν αἱ γλῶσσαι ἔχουσιν, ὡς καὶ ἡ ἡμετέρα, διαφόρους ἀδιαπλάστους διαλέκτους, ἄλλην ἐν ἄλλῃ ἐπαρχίᾳ ὑπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου λαλουμένας, ὧν γίνεται χρῆσις εἰς ᾄσματα δημοτικά, εἰς κωμωδίας κ.τ.λ. οὐδεὶς ὅμως οὐδεμίαν τῶν ῥηθεισῶν διαλέκτων μεταχειρίζεται εἰς σύνταξιν ποιήματος σπουδαίου, συγγράμματος ἐπιστημονικοῦ, ἢ ὡρισμένου εἰς χρῆσιν καὶ ὠφέλειαν τῶν παιδείας μετόχων ἢ γεγραμματισμένων· ἀλλὰ τὰ τοιαῦτα ποιήματα καὶ συγγράμματα συντάσσονται εἰς τὴν κοινὴν τοῦ ἔθνους καὶ γραμματικῶς κεκανονισμένην γλῶσσαν.[25]

> From what has already been said we may conclude that, while the various local dialects that go to make up the vulgar Greek tongue may be used for folk-songs, comedies, fables and tales, intended to edify and entertain the populace, yet they are not suitable for writing sublime poetry or scientific treatises, or for purposes of legislation or legal practice, etc. The languages of all

---

[24] A. Kyprianos, "Περὶ ἀναλογίας καὶ ἀνωμαλίας κατὰ τοὺς καθ' ἡμᾶς χρόνους", *Φιλίστωρ* 17 (15 September 1861) 207.

[25] Ph. Ioannou, "Περὶ τῆς Νεωτέρας Ἑλληνικῆς Γλώσσης", *Ἐθνικὸν Ἡμερολόγιον* 1863, p. 111.

> the great and enlightened European nations have, like our own, various half-formed dialects, spoken by the common people from one region to another, which are employed in folk-songs, comedies and so on. Yet no one resorts to any of these dialects when composing a serious poem, a scholarly tract, or anything designed for the benefit of an educated readership. On the contrary it is the aforementioned poems and learned tracts that are composed in the grammatically standardized *lingua franca* of the nation.

In the nineteenth century, we witness two conflicting trends. On the one hand, there is encouragement from the Ministry of Education or journals such as *Philistor*[26] for teachers to collect dialectal material, a tendency running parallel to the collection of folk songs; and on the other hand the volume of neologisms coined during that period represents, as Marianna Ditsa argues, among other things, the desire to compile and consolidate a homogeneous linguistic instrument for the whole nation.[27]

Before the War of Independence and for some years afterwards there was a significant tolerance towards dialects and other languages. Few were bothered by the coexistence of Greek and Albanian and most towns, even in the south, such as Nauplion, were little Babylons. Even later, Kolettis, a Kutsovlach himself, defended those who spoke Albanian and Kutsovlach. In August 1844 he contrasted Alexandros Mavrokordatos with himself in this way to Nikolaos Dragoumis:

> Δὲν ἀγνοεῖς ὅτι ὡς πρὸς τὸ σύνταγμα φρονῶ ὅ,τι καὶ ὁ Μαυροκορδάτος· ὡς καὶ αὐτός, οὕτω καὶ ἐγὼ νομίζω ὅτι, ἀφοῦ ἅπαξ ἔγινε δεκτὸν πρέπει νὰ ἐφαρμοσθῇ· διαφωνοῦμεν μόνον ὡς πρὸς τὸν τρόπον ἐφαρμογῆς. Ἐκ τῆς τελευταίας διαγωγῆς τοῦ προκατόχου μου συμπεραίνω ὅτι, διατρίψαντες καὶ οἱ δύο τόσα ἔτη εἰς

---

[26] In the first issue of *Φιλίστωρ* in 1862, on the first page, there appears a "Προτροπὴ εἰς σύνταξιν ἰδιωτικῶν τῆς νέας ἑλληνικῆς γλώσσης", that is to say an encouragement for the collection of idiomatic or regional words which will result in the enrichment of the written form of the Greek language.

[27] Marianna Ditsa, *Νεολογία καὶ Κριτική*, Athens: Ermis 1988, p. 39.

τὴν Εὐρώπην, αὐτὸς μὲν ἐλησμόνησε τὴν Ἑλλάδα, ἐγὼ δὲ ἐδιδάχθην νὰ ἐννοῶ αὐτὴν κάλλιον ἢ πρότερον. Ὁ Μαυροκορδάτος ἐξέλαβε τὴν Ἑλλάδα Εὐρώπην καὶ ἀπόδειξις ἡ σύνταξις τοῦ ὑπουργείου τῆς 30 Μαρτίου. Εἶδες πῶς συνέταξεν αὐτό. Ἔστρεψε τὸ βλέμμα περὶ τὴν αἴθουσαν αὐτοῦ καί, ἰδὼν ἀνθρώπους φοροῦντας *βελάδας*, ὁμιλοῦντας ἀγγλικὰ καὶ γαλλικά, εἶπεν· "Ἰδοὺ τὸ ἑλληνικὸν ἔθνος καὶ κατ' αὐτὸ γεννηθήτω τὸ ὑπουργεῖον μου". Πλήν, ἀγαπητέ, τὸ ἑλληνικὸν ἔθνος δὲν εἶναι τὸ συνερχόμενον εἰς τὴν αἴθουσαν τοῦ Μαυροκορδάτου, ἀλλὰ τὸ συνερχόμενον εἰς τὴν τοῦ Κωλέττου· τὸ ἑλληνικὸν ἔθνος οὔτε *βελάδας* φορεῖ οὔτε γαλλικὰ ἢ ἀγγλικὰ ὁμιλεῖ· φορεῖ φουστανέλλας, ὁμιλεῖ ἐνίοτε καὶ ἀλβανικὰ καὶ κουτσοβλάχικα καὶ σώζει τὰ ἤθη τῆς τυραννίας, τὰ ὁποῖα δὲν θὰ ἐξαλειφθῶσι διὰ μιᾶς· διότι, ὅσον καὶ ἂν φωνάζωσιν οἱ λογιώτατοι, τὰ ἔθνη δὲν αὐτοσχεδιάζονται.[28]

You are aware that I think much the same as Mavrokordatos does about the constitution. Like him, I think that once it has been approved, it must be enacted. We differ only in respect of how this is to be done. From my predecessor's recent behaviour I conclude that, during the two years or so he spent in Europe, he forgot what Greece is. I, on the other hand, have learnt to understand it better than before. Mavrokordatos has confused Greece with Europe and the proof of this lies in the formation of his ministry of 30 March. You saw how he put this together. He let his gaze wander around the room and, seeing men in frock-coats speaking English and French, he said: "Behold the Greek nation! Let my ministry be formed accordingly." But, my dear fellow, the Greek nation does not assemble within Mavrokordatos's portals, but in the house of Kolettis. The Greek nation does not wear frock-coats, nor does it speak English or French; it wears the *foustanella*, is sometimes heard to speak Albanian, sometimes Kutsovlach, and preserves the customs (which will not be readily effaced) of its period of bondage. Because, however much the pedants may bluster, nations cannot be made up from scratch.

---

28 Nikolaos Dragoumis, *Ἱστορικαὶ Ἀναμνήσεις*, vol. II, ed. Alkis Angelou, Athens: Ermis 1973, p. 89.

The tolerance of the heteroglossia in the Greek world in the early decades of the nineteenth century is indicated by the numerous translations into *karamanlidika* (Turkish printed in Greek characters) mainly from Greek. The most striking example of such translations is an edition of Aristotle's *Physiognomonika* (a work subsequently proved not to have been written by Aristotle) published at the Patriarchal Press in Constantinople in 1819 in *karamanlidika* for the Turkish-speaking Greeks in Asia Minor. It was translated by Anastasios Karakioulaphis of Kayseri from ancient Greek into a demotic form of modern Greek and then into Turkish (ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ εἰς τὴν καθ' ἡμᾶς ὁμιλουμένην ἁπλῆν φράσιν· ἔτι δὲ εἰς τὴν Τουρκικὴν ἁπλῆν διάλεκτον) and it was offered by the translator as a small gift to the "heteroglot sons" of his "most beloved Motherland, Greece".[29] However, the remarkable linguistic and cultural diversity in the Asia Minor regions did not last very long after the orchestrated efforts from mainland Greece for the propagation of a homogeneous, centrally motivated culture. Gerasimos Augustinos sums up the growing tendency of the national centre to dominate the cultural orientation of the Greek communities outside the Kingdom.

> Finally, although the number of newspapers and printed works multiplied in the major centers of Greek population throughout the empire, these were in turn overtaken by the printed matter emanating from Greece. Books, journals, papers, and pamphlets published in the kingdom and distributed abroad to the communities increasingly overshadowed the regional significance of Greek centers in the empire after 1870. Their emphasis was on secular rather than religious matters, national rather than community concerns, and reflected an overarching, standardized culture instead of regional variations.[30]

---

[29] See also Richard Clogg, "Sense of the Past in pre-Independence Greece" in: Roland Sussex and J.C. Eade (edd.), *Culture and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Eastern Europe*, Columbus, Ohio: Slavica Publishers 1985, pp. 7-30.

[30] Gerasimos Augustinos, *The Greeks of Asia Minor: Confession, community, and ethnicity in the nineteenth century*, Kent: The Kent State University Press 1992, p. 194.

During the nineteenth century there is a growing attitude of mistrust towards the state and a reaction against the metropolis. It is not only the brigandage or various messianic movements which express this anti-state mentality, but it can be seen on a linguistic level as well. Certain words having to do with Greek institutions are deliberately misread or mispronounced, as, for example, σύνταγμα (constitution) becomes σύντριμμα, or ειρηνοδίκης becomes νεροδίκης. For the last word there is a special entry in Koumanoudis's dictionary of new words coined by the learned and it occurs in Papadiamantis's story "Θέρος-Ἔρως" (1891).[31]

Another example of this playful polemic against the bureaucratic jargon of the state is the following passage from the monologue of the illiterate Diomas in Papadiamantis's story "Ὑπηρέτρα" (1888).

> Ἐνίοτε, ἐλλείψει ὁμιλητοῦ, διηγεῖτο τὰ παράπονά του εἰς τοὺς ἀνέμους καὶ εἰς τὰ κύματα:
>
> – Πῆγα δὰ καὶ στὴν Ἀθήνα, σ' ἐκεῖνο τὸ *Ἱππομαχικό*, καὶ μοὔδωκαν, λέει, δύο *σφάκελα*, νὰ τὰ πάω στὸ Σοκομεῖο, νὰ παρουσιασθῶ στὴ Πιτροπή· πῆγα καὶ στὴν Πιτροπή, ὁ ἕνας ὁ γιατρὸς μὲ ηὗρε γερό, ἄλλος σακάτη, κι αὐτοὶ δὲν ἤξευραν ... ὕστερα γύρισα στὸ ὑπουργεῖο καὶ μοῦ εἶπαν, "σύρε στὸ σπίτι σου, κ' ἐμεῖς θὰ σοῦ στείλωμε τὴ σύνταξή σου". Σηκώνομαι, φεύγω, ἔρχομαι δῶ, περιμένω, περνάει ἕνας μήνας, ἔρχονται τὰ χαρτιὰ στὸ λιμεναρχεῖο, νὰ πάω, λέει, πίσω στὴν Ἀθήνα, ἔχουν ἀνάγκη νὰ μὲ ξαναϊδοῦν. Σηκώνω τριάντα δραχμὲς ἀπὸ ἕνα γείτονα, γιατὶ δὲν εἶχα νὰ πάρω τὸ *σωτήριο* γιὰ τὸ βαπόρι, γυρίζω πίσω στὴν Ἀθήνα χειμῶνα καιρό, δέκα μέρες μὲ παίδευαν νὰ μὲ στέλνουν ἀπὸ τὸ ὑπουργεῖο στὸ *Ἱππομαχικό*, κι ἀπ' τὸ *Ἱππομαχικὸ* στὸ Σοκομεῖο, ὕστερα μοῦ λένε "πάαινε, καὶ θὰ βγῇ ἡ ἀπόφαση". Σηκώνομαι, φεύγω, γυρίζω στὸ σπίτι μου, καρτερῶ ... εἶδες ἐσὺ σύνταξη; (ἀπηυθύνετο πρὸς ὑποτιθέμενον ἀκροατήν), ἄλλο τόσο κ'

---

[31] S. A. Koumanoudis, *Συναγωγὴ Νέων Λέξεων*, Athens: Ermis 1980, p. 694 and A. Papadiamantis, "Θέρος-Ἔρως", *Ἅπαντα*, vol. 2, ed. N.D. Triantaphyllopoulos, Athens: Domos 1982, p.186.

ἐγώ. Ἐπῆρα κ' ἐγὼ τὴν *Πηρέτρα* καὶ πασκίζω νὰ βγάλω τὸ ψωμί μου.[32]

The corrupted terms are printed in italics and are used here to underline the distance between the state and the ordinary citizen. At the same time this corruption and its connotations (Απομαχικό – Ιππομαχικό – άλογο, φάκελο – σφάκελο – φάσκελο, εισιτήριο – σωτήριο – σωτηρία) have ironic undertones, giving the monologue of the character dialogic dimension and transforming it into a kind of hidden polemic of the poor peasant against the state. Moreover, Papadiamantis in "Χαλασοχώρηδες" refers to a sort of false language (ψευτική), considering it the only weapon the peasants have with which to confront political and social pressures.[33] He says that the peasant practises this sort of spurious jargon twice a week in the various courts, trying to cope with the bureaucratic administration which he simply does not understand. Papadiamantis here and elsewhere points to the linguistic gap that existed between the illiterate villagers on the one hand, and the civil servants or the politicians on the other, and shows how the villagers tried to bridge it, often with comic effects.

The defeat of regionalism in Greece becomes clearer if one examines the developments in Greek literature, and more specifically the language of Greek prose, since the early nineteenth century.[34] Up to 1930 regional identity and local dialects tend to manifest themselves more freely in literary texts than is the case after 1930. During the last century in comedies such as *Korakistika* (1811-13) by Iakovakis Rizos Neroulos or, later, *Vavylonia* (1836) by Vyzantios, different characters represent various local dialects and are named after them: Chiot, Cretan, Albanian, Epirot, Anatolian, Cypriot.[35] Vyzantios in his preface maintains that what prompted him to

---

[32] A. Papadiamantis, "Ὑπηρέτρα", ibid., p. 98.

[33] A. Papadiamantis, " Οἱ Χαλασοχώρηδες", ibid., p. 418.

[34] In Greek literature the relationship between regionalism and metropolitanism/urbanism is often subsumed under the question of the interplay between folk/popular (λαϊκό) and learned (λόγιο) trends, which could be misleading if we identify the regional with the folk/popular.

[35] M. Hourmouzis's comedy *Ὁ Τυχοδιώκτης* (1835) also contains elements of heteroglossia.

write *Vavylonia* was "the pitiful state to which the Greek language has been debased"; in spite of this corrective pronouncement, what is, however, implied in this comedy is the latent conflict between the official and the unofficial, periphery and metropolis, centrifugal and centripetal forces, westernized centralizing authority and oriental undisciplined Romiosyni.

Another indication of the above oppositions can be found in the prose fiction (*ethographia*) of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There, one can distinguish clearly the educated narrator, who speaks the standard Athenian *katharevousa*, or a simplified version of it, and the peasant characters, who are often portrayed using their local idiom or accent. This heteroglossia tends to disappear in the 1930s, perhaps as a result of the shifting emphasis from the periphery and the nation to the metropolis and the state – a process which I sketched out earlier, and which is reflected in the novel of the '30s, representing a strong indication of how closely literature mirrors political and social changes. Heteroglossia in the novel of this period is almost non-existent, with the exception of Myrivilis and novelists, rather marginal at the time, such as Axioti and Skarimbas. Only after the Second World War does heteroglossia surface again in Greek fiction, but for different reasons which I do not have the time to discuss here.

It should be noted here that during the interwar period, and particularly after the population exchange in 1923, the question of minorities (Jews, Slavo-Macedonians etc.) is stirred up, fostered by disputes between Old Greece and the New Lands. Anti-Venizelists, for reasons of political expediency, tended to defend the minorities against the modern, liberal, and national state sought by the Venizelists, which aspired to control, assimilate and neutralize the religious and ethnic minorities. Hence during this period the anti-Venizelists together with the Communists – each group for different reasons – favoured and sheltered ethnic and regional particularisms, in contrast to Venizelism, which emerged as the champion of neutralization and assimilation.[36] The fact that most of the prose writers who

---

[36] See George Th. Mavrokordatos, *Stillborn Republic: Social coalitions and party strategies in Greece, 1922-1936*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1983, pp. 226-302.

emerged after 1930 (Terzakis, Petsalis-Diomidis, Karagatsis, Theotokas, Prevelakis) tend to be Venizelos sympathizers, might explain their desire for linguistic standardization and their movement away from any localisms and idiomatisms.

The question of heteroglossia ties in with the question of individual and religious rights and the recognition of minorities in Greece, both reflecting the Greek conception of the relationship between the individual and the nation/state. Historically, the ideology of Greek identity has been based on the organic nature of society and the individual's subordination to a superior whole, which is the state as embodiment of the nation. This subordination of the individual to the state/nation, which in turn can justify violation or restriction of individual rights, can be explained by Greece's adherence to eastern spiritualism and Orthodoxy rather than western rationalism and liberal political philosophy. The dominant ideology in Greece privileged organic social units such as the extended family and the nation, not the autonomous individual. While in the West industrial capitalism and political practice treated individualism and individual rights as their fundamental principles, in Greece, as Adamantia Pollis claims, there is a conceptual and ideological denial of individual autonomy.[37] The persistence of this denial was assisted in the early twentieth century by legal positivism, imported from Germany, which tended to "reconcile" individual rights with the primacy of the state and resulted in the suppression of the plurality of sub-identities and the rights of religious minorities. Such religious intolerance stems from the long-standing Church-state interdependence which aims at preserving and reinforcing the holistic and transcendental definition of the Greek *ethnos*. Greekness, and in turn the Greek nation, is conceived as something pure and homogeneous, therefore non-Greeks are not – and

---

[37] Adamantia Pollis, "Greek National Identity: Religious minorities, rights, and European norms", *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 10.2 (October 1992) 171-95. Mark Mazower also describes Greek political culture as "highly resistant to notions of multi-culturalism and reluctant to protect individual liberties which go against prevailing views of 'Greekness'" (Mark Mazower, "Classic errors in the Balkans", *The Guardian*, 12 April 1994).

cannot be – members of the nation nor are they entitled to any rights enjoyed by the proper members, i.e. Greek-speaking Orthodox Christians. As Pollis puts it:

> The challenge to Greek national identity, to the *éthnos*, does not stem primarily from the recent migrants, however, but from the denial of the prior existence of ethnic minorities within Greece's borders. Since Greekness is an integral, transcendent entity, non-Greeks are not – and cannot be – members of the *éthnos*; hence, philosophically, they are not entitled to those rights that are available to members of the Greek *éthnos*. As a consequence, the indigenous ethnic minorities have been marginalized. [...] Beginning with the founding of modern Greece, the conceptualization of the Greek *éthnos* as coterminous with the Greek state rejects, except for historic religious minorities, the existence of other ethnicities within its boundaries. In light of this official and legal denial of identities other than Greek, evidence of diverse languages and/or cultures has been suppressed and/or attributed to the nefarious machinations of Greece's neighbors.[38]

One can extend my argument even further and apply it to the relationship between Greece and Cyprus. For example, the recent debate regarding the proper name of Greek-Cypriot literature is symptomatic of the wider tension between Greek centripetal and Cypriot centrifugal tendencies. Those who argue that Cypriot literature is part of Greek literature, and therefore must be named accordingly, are champions of the ideology of the national centre. Those who emphasize the Cypriot character of the island's literature represent the distant echo of suppressed Greek regionalism and the continuation of an earlier resistance of a dynamic periphery towards a stifling centralizing metropolis, as witnessed in the Greek world.[39]

---

[38] ibid., p. 189.

[39] One of the leading contemporary Cypriot poets, Kyriakos Charalambidis, identifies the centripetal forces as hellenochristian and the centrifugal as Cypriot consciousness: "Σ' αυτό τον τόπο μεγαλώνουμε μέσ' από μια σειρά κεντρομόλων και φυγόκεντρων δυνάμεων. Οι κεντρομόλες: ελληνοχριστιανισμός. Οι φυγόκεντρες: κυπριακή συνείδηση." See: "Κυπροσυλλαβίζοντας", *Αντί*, no. 236 (8 July 1983) 53. For an overview of the various approaches towards Cypriot literature and relevant bibliography see Giorgos Kechagioglou,

Another interesting comparison which can be drawn in this case is Ireland, in order to show how monoglossia and heteroglossia change historically and how literary language reflects their tension. In early twentieth-century Ireland, English as a monoglossic language attempted to silence Irish aspirations for an independent national identity. The strongest literary reaction to this forced monoglossia came from Joyce, whose texts answered linguistic colonialism with absolute heteroglossia.[40]

Regionalism in Greece does not take the form of "unfulfilled" nationalism, as in the case of regions in Spain and elsewhere; it instead represents resistance to the state's centre from peripheral areas.[41] Regionalism is almost coterminous with ethnicity, and its defeat in Greece to some extent originates from, and reflects, the redefinition of ethnicity as nationality by the state. Often ethnic identity or local cultures are appropriated by nationalism or national culture, and there is a common practice of subsuming ethnicity under nationality.

The clash in Greece between regionalism and the metropolitan nation-state represents a wider conflict between traditionalism and modernization. Regionalism is associated with a pre-industrial, agrarian society whereas nationalism is identified with modernization and industrialization. As Ernest Gellner claims, "the roots of nationalism in the distinctive structural requirements of industrial society are very deep indeed."[42] As soon as the bond of an individual with the traditional local community weakens, his identification with a larger group which transcends the narrow boundaries of a cultural locality becomes necessary. Hence, nationalism, as

---

"Contemporary Cypriot literature and the 'frame' of Modern Greek literature: a provincial, local, marginal, peripheral, independent, autonomous, self-sufficient or self-determined literature?", *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 2.2 (1992) 240-55.

[40] Tony Crowley, "Bakhtin and the history of the language", in: Ken Hirschkop and David Shepherd (edd.) *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, Manchester: Manchester University Press 1989, pp. 68-90.

[41] Peter Alter, *Nationalism*, trans. Stuart McKinnon-Evans, London: Edward Arnold 1989, p. 135.

[42] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell 1983, p. 35.

Gellner points out, represents the imposition of a high culture on society in place of low local cultures.

> It is the establishment of an anonymous, impersonal society, with mutually substitutable atomized individuals, held together above all by a shared culture of this kind, in place of a previous complex structure of local groups, sustained by folk cultures reproduced locally and idiosyncratically by the micro-groups themselves. That is what *really* happens.[43]

What Gellner seems to imply is that nationalism outmanoeuvres regionalism usually in the name of a putative folk culture. Although it constantly refers to, and draws its symbolism from, the healthy and pristine life of the peasants, the *laos*, the *narod* or the *Volk*, nationalism's ideal is a centralized high culture with a deceptive celebration of the local folk styles and dialects. Folk culture is ossified and monumentalized by the nationalists who passionately support it, as in the case of Greek *laographia*, but their centralizing drive leads them to the suppression of regionalism. In this respect, nationalism and regionalism can be seen as opposing trends in the construction and organization of human communities. The former appears as a modernizing trend linked with industrial development whereas the latter seems attached to the past and the rural communities.

If nationalism represents in effect a break-away from pre-modern, rural and essentially oriental social structures, then certain Greek literary trends such as *ethographia* can be seen more as manifestations of regionalism rather than of nationalism, as has often been claimed. *Ethographia* represents a resistance to the centralization and modernization promised by the metropolis, and it is from this perspective that most of the late nineteenth-century literary narratives should be examined, as Artemis Leontis suggests:

> It is against this current of centralization, an economic as much as a cultural one, that artists and intellectuals fought when they asserted the centrality of the local village in their literary utopias. Their narratives placed at the heart of the national terrain a fictional peasant simplicity rather than the urban

[43] ibid., p. 57.

> capital that stood at the focal point of state geographies. The literary village served as a topos of a shared past, a rhetorical and geographical site of return. This topos reactivated a cultural inheritance that was premodern rather than classical and re-identified autochthony with the devout Orthodox or Muslim peasant rather than Greek philosophers and ancient Pharaohs or their modern European claimants.[44]

Accordingly, one could venture a generalization by saying that regionalism defines autochthony in pre-modern, local, heteroglossic and religious terms; nationalism, on the other hand, promotes modernization, classicism, centralization and in turn monoglossia. Surely the opposition is not so clear-cut, since one might argue that nationalist ideology propelled the narrative (re)turn to the region. But again this assertion is not entirely true either. It was not nationalism that forced Vizyenos, Papadiamantis, Kondylakis or Theotokis to write about their own regions; after all the *ethographoi* were more interested in regional particularity than the national character as a whole.

As far as regionalism is concerned, Greece and England are characteristic but altogether different cases. In an article entitled "Re: Locations – From Bradford to Brighton", Jenny Bourne Taylor describes her relocation in the late 1980s as a cultural studies lecturer from Bradford to Sussex University (based a few miles outside Brighton). According to Taylor, the two places visually and climatically represent the opposite poles of Englishness: "Bradford seems all depth, with its sombre half-tones, its myths of authenticity, its memories of modernity and heavy industry. Brighton seems all surface – a town whose base is leisure; the celebration of the superstructural and the superficial."[45]

What she is trying to say by referring to the two cultural stereotypes of the North/South divide as well as to the crumbling of the Soviet Union and the break-up of Yugoslavia is

---

[44] Artemis Leontis, "The Diaspora of the Novel", *Diaspora* 2.1 (Spring 1992) 136.

[45] Jenny Bourne Taylor, "Re: Locations – From Bradford to Brighton ", *New Formations*, no. 17 (Summer 1992) 94. For the revival of literary regionalism in Britain see the article of D.J. Taylor, "The new literary map of Britain", *The Sunday Times*, 8 May 1994.

that "national identity can be read as an extension of regionalism but also as a break with it."[46] The nation and its identity depend on, and are formed by, both external and internal differences, borderlines differentiating it from other nations but also borderlines *within* its boundaries. Following this line of argument, one could treat England as a good example of a country where regionalism contributes to national identity, which in turn can be seen as its extension, and Greece as an example of the opposite trend, in which regionalism is stifled and national identity represents a break with it. Under the cultural and administrative dominance of Athens, Greece has destroyed its regional cultural identities and any attempts at revival smack of touristic and folkloristic artificiality.[47]

What we are currently witnessing, particularly in Europe, is the "erosion of the 'centred' nationalisms of the west European nation-state and the strengthening of both transnational relations *and* local identities."[48] By awakening "local" allegiances and identities, globalisation seems to lead to regionalism and to the confinement of the traditional nationalism of a central state. What will perhaps survive of this type of nationalism is its metaphysics. As G. Jusdanis argues, nationalism with its tales of progress, self-fulfilment and destiny "allows modern individuals to deny their mortality in the face of change [...] to forget contingency, to ignore that

---

[46] ibid., p. 87.

[47] The rivalry between Athens and Thessaloniki after 1930 can be seen as a symptom of the resistance of the regions towards the metropolis. The following editorial comment from the periodical *Μακεδονικὲς Ἡμέρες* in 1937 is indicative of the tension: "Ἡ Θεσσαλονίκη δὲν ἔχει τὴν ἀθηναϊκὴ παράδοση. Εἶναι ἔξω ἀπὸ τὸν κύκλο τοῦ ἀθηναϊκοῦ ἐπηρεασμοῦ. Καὶ γι' αὐτὸ εἶναι ἀντικλασσική. Καὶ γι' αὐτὸ δὲν ἀπόκτησε τὴ συνήθεια νὰ τιμᾶ τὴν κάθε φίρμα τῆς Ἀθήνας. Εἶναι καινούργια, εἶναι ἀνήσυχη. Δὲν ἀναπτύσσεται στὰ καθιερωμένα." *Μακεδονικὲς Ἡμέρες* nos. 11-12 (Nov.-Dec. 1937) 269. The fact that almost all the post-war Greek governments talked endlessly about decentralization and that there was even a programmme on Greek television called "Athens is not the whole Greece" constitutes further evidence for the abiding centralizing trend in Greece.

[48] Stuart Hall, "Our mongrel selves", *New Statesman*, 19 June 1992, p. 6.

they are part of history, that their story is one among many and certainly not the greatest."[49]

The question which arises here is whether the widespread revival of regionalism and the discussion about the Europe of the regions will have any impact on Greece. I believe not, because Greece has ingeniously combined, over the last two centuries, statism and nationalism in order to achieve cultural and linguistic homogeneity, and it seems that she has done it rather successfully.[50] The fate of regionalism in Greece, as I have attempted to outline above, suggests that it might be better to talk about the "triumph of the state" instead of the "triumph of the nation", to borrow R. Just's title to a recent article.[51] It seems that the suppression of regionalism in Greece provides an unusual looking-glass for examining both the interaction of statism and nationalism, and the crucial role of linguistic uniformity in forging national identity and achieving social cohesion. National culture in Greece since the early nineteenth century has aspired to conceal historical ruptures, ethnic impurities and linguistic hybridities and has achieved that by projecting seamless continuities and imposing cultural monoglossia. Finally, what emerges from the above is that the key to building

---

[49] Gregory Jusdanis, *Belated Modernity and aesthetic culture: Inventing national literature*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1991, p. 165.

[50] I am not suggesting that nationalism succeeded in silencing the voices of regionalism entirely or irrevocably. The existence of so many regional associations in Athens, which often act as pressure groups for regional problems or needs due to their relative proximity to the central authorities or the festivities they regularly organize, testifies that regionalism survives in a nostalgic, almost folkloristic, form as a cultural phenomenon of the metropolis and not of the regions themselves, retaining, however, something of its earlier political force by constantly reminding the central authorities of the existence and needs of the remote regions. Furthermore, it is interesting to observe how a Greek person reawakens their regional accent and dialect when they move back to their home area, even briefly, and revert back to a standard accent once they leave the area.

[51] Roger Just, "Triumph of the Ethnos", in: Elizabeth Tonkin, Maryon McDonald and Malcolm Chapman (edd.), *History and Ethnicity*, London: Routledge 1989, pp. 71-88.

up a challenge-proof national identity does indeed lie as much in inventing a common past as in defeating regionalism and heteroglossia.

University of Birmingham