

Identity Issues in the Cypriot Theatre at the Beginning of the 21st Century

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Abstract

This paper discusses the ways in which artists experience the issue of national/cultural identity and its connection with language/the Greek Cypriot dialect mainly, during the second decade of the 21st century in Cyprus. Concepts such as hybridity and cultural identity are discussed. In the 21st century, hybridity and diversity have been largely established in culture, in the arts. Cultural difference becomes a necessary and, above all, desirable phenomenon, whose function is to break myths (national, ideological, etc.). The search for cultural identity seems to preoccupy mostly the new generation of directors, since the beginning of the second decade of our century. Many artists express their engagement with the national/cultural identity issue in two ways: either through the theme of the performances or through the use of the Greek Cypriot dialect as the language of the performance. Some productions are indicated as examples.

Keywords: identity issues, Cypriot theatre, Cypriot dialect, globalisation

In the 21st century, the era of globalisation and the ongoing migration movements, the global community experiences a deep crisis (sociopolitical, financial, and cultural). As a result, the globalised theatrical scene would be impossible not to be influenced by this crisis and therefore has had to adapt to this challenge. This phenomenon also influences the Cypriot theatrical scene. In the context of the global crisis, identity is a key issue that concerns the artists. This paper discusses the ways in which artists experience the issue of national/cultural identity and its connection with language/the Greek Cypriot dialect mainly, during the second decade of the 21st century in Cyprus, in this remote corner of the southeastern Mediterranean, and how they turn it into theatre. The dialect's ability to make such connections alone makes it a powerful tool for postcolonial writing, especially in the theatre, with which the playwright can create familiarity with the local audience. The scholars of the postcolonial theory expressed the need to review culture and art through a global society, a society which is structured on differences (class, racial, religious, etc.). By re-examining

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some ideologies and prejudices, the postcolonial theory aims to highlight another, different image of the world and modern reality. Postcolonial theory holds that decolonised people develop a postcolonial identity which is based on cultural interactions between different identities (cultural, national, and ethnic, as well as gender and class-based) which are assigned varying degrees of social power by the colonial society.

Identity as a term is broad, includes many parametres and has been understood in different ways within the social sciences. Papastergiadis points out that the construction of identity is based on the negotiation of diversity, in a process of continuous change. This diversity and constant changes form a field of different forces, which interact and create a hybrid.² The introduction of the concept of hybridity arises, on the one hand, from the need to explain how cultural identity is formed in combination with age, social class, gender, origin, nation, religion, and other groups to which one may belong.³ For this reason cultural identity itself is a hybrid.⁴ On the other hand, this hybridity is subject to movement and variation throughout people's lives through their contact with other cultural identities in their daily lives, their travels or changing their place(s) of residence.

In the 21st century, hybridity and diversity have been largely established in culture, in the arts. Multiculturalism now concerns every country and society due to the phenomenon of globalisation. Thus, cultural difference (a term introduced by Bhabha⁵) becomes a necessary and above all desirable phenomenon, whose function is to break myths (national, ideological, etc.). Cultural difference is the only ambivalent result of colonialism that is articulated in a plural form. This difference no longer constitutes the existence of an abstract concept but, among other things, constitutes a space that offers a kind of freedom to subaltern subjects, according to E. San Juan.⁶

A brief presentation of the sociopolitical context of Cyprus in which the artists operate is considered useful. In 1878, Cyprus passed from the Ottoman to the British

² Nikos Papastergiadis, *The Turbulence of Migration: Globalisation, Deterritorialization, and Hybridity* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000).

³ David Block, *Multilingual Identities in a Global City: London Stories* (Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006); David Block, *Second Language Identities* (London, Continuum, 2007).

⁴ Homi K Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1994; Chris Barker, *Cultural Studies; Theory and Practice* (London, Sage Publications, 2000).

⁵ Homi K Bhabha, 'Culture's In-Between', in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, 55.

⁶ Epifanio San Juan Jr., 'The Limits of Postcolonial Criticism: The Discourse of Edward Said', *Solidarity*, November/December 1998, available at <http://www.solidarityus.org/site/node/1781> [accessed 4 July 2023].

Dominion, which lasted until 1959, when the British Empire was forced to grant Cyprus its independence (1960), after the liberation struggle of the E.O.K.A. against the British, from 1955 to 1959. The struggle was nationally-oriented and did not present liberal or socialist elements of criticism of the existing society, which will contribute to the formation of the bipolar cultural identity of the Cypriots, which we will talk about later. This is followed by the bi-communal riots of 1963-1964 between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, which formed a key rift between the two communities. In 1974, two events took place that determined the history of the island: Greek junta, with the E.O.K.A. B' as collaborators in Cyprus, staged a coup on 15 July against the legitimate government of the country, which provided an opportunity for Turkey to invade Cyprus, on 20 July, under the pretext of protecting the Turkish Cypriots. The invasion resulted in the division of the island, with 37% of the territory illegally held by Turkey to this day, and the displacement of approximately 180,000 people. With the passage into the new millennium, the political situation of Cyprus is still the same after many failed attempts to solve the political problem. In 2004 Cyprus joined the European Union, in 2012-2013 the financial crisis broke out due to the exposure of Cypriot banks to Greek bonds and the country fell into an unfavourable economic position. Due to the political instability in the southeastern Mediterranean region, large migration flows have been directed to the island. The multicultural character, which Cyprus has always had, has been strengthened even more, resulting in the creation of a new social reality.

The search for cultural identity seems to preoccupy mostly the new generation of directors, since the beginning of the second decade of our century. Many artists express their engagement with the national/cultural identity issue in two ways: either through the theme of the performances or through the use of the Greek Cypriot dialect as the language of the performance. Some productions are indicated as examples. In 2010, One/Off theatre group presented the performance *Forget-me-not*, directed by Maria Kyriakou. The script, a product of collaborative work, was based on excerpts from poems, but also on narratives by the group members, who were discussing and improvising on different thematic cores based on the national/cultural identity issue. The performance dealt with the issue of memory and constituted a search for the identity of the Cypriots (Cypriot-Greek-European).⁷ It has been an identity search

⁷ Interview with Maria Kyriakou 30 November 2016.

of the ‘I Don’t Forget’ generation, ‘us who grew up right after the invasion and this carried a lot of guilt about talking openly and freely about the trauma.’⁸

The performance alternated its linguistic code between the modern Greek and the Greek Cypriot dialect.⁹ The phenomenon of code-switching, according to Meeuwis and Blommaert,¹⁰ should be approached from the point of view of a code, allowing a better understanding of the creeping mechanisms that make switching itself a separate system. According to this view, code-switching (Modern Greek and Cypriot dialect) is not treated as the result of mixing, but as a code in itself. In other words, the switching itself seems to serve specific functions.¹¹ Therefore, we could say that the alternation of the language code in Maria Kyriakou’s performance constitutes an ideological approach to the issue of identity. The interest observed in the issue of national/cultural identity in recent years, has been attributed by Tziovas to the general shift from ‘being’ to ‘becoming’, from monolithic certainties to fictional inventions, from singularity to diversity, and from the ontological to the imaginary. Identity is now defined as a process of identification and not as a path of discovery or awakening. Emphasis on the diaspora has promoted the hybridity of identity.¹²

Happymess (2016) was a devised theatre performance by Paravan Proactions, directed by Melita Couta and Harris Kafkarides. The dramaturgy team started working without a script, giving emphasis on the historical research, which was conducted through interviews, personal experiences, research in archives, in libraries, and documentary videos. The theme of the performance connected to the Cypriots’ identity, their history, and personal experiences; topics which the directors/creators managed to relate even to global facts concerning the Space. The performance deals with the

⁸ Antonis Georgiou, ‘Out of Necessity: Για μια γενιά έτοιμη να δηλώσει ότι είμαστε Κυπριοί’ [Out of Necessity: For a Generation ready to proclaim We Are Cypriot], *Dialogos*, available at <https://dialogos.com.cy/664023-2/> [accessed 4 July 2023].

⁹ See Yannis Leontaris, “‘Forget-me-not’”. A Performance that did not Meet its Audience’. In A. H. Constantinou, K. Diamantakou, L. Galazis (eds.), *The Theatre in Modern and Contemporary Cyprus* (Athens: Herodotus-Theatrical Museum of Cyprus, 2020), 433–446.

¹⁰ Michael Meeuwis, Jan Blommaert, ‘A Monolectal View of Code-Switching: Layered Code-Switching among Zairians in Belgium’, in P. Auer (ed.), *Code-Switching in Conversation: Language, Interaction and Identity* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1998), 76–98.

¹¹ Georgios Georgiou, ‘Οι σύγχρονοι επικοινωνιακοί ρόλοι της Κυπριακής Διαλέκτου’ [The Modern Communicative Roles of the Cypriot Dialect], *Phileleftheros*, available at <https://www.philenews.com/politismos/article/104214/i-sigchroni-epikinoniaki-rolis-kipriakis-dialektou-2/> [accessed 4 July 2023].

¹² Dimitris Tziovas, ‘Η ανάδυση των ταυτοτήτων’ [The Emergence of Identities], *To Vima*, available at <https://www.tovima.gr/2011/11/06/opinions/i-anadysi-twn-taytotitwn/> [accessed 4 July 2023].

forgotten and unknown to many story of the moonstone¹³ and connects two breakthrough moments of the world and the Cypriot history. The date 20 July 1969 is a milestone in the history of mankind. For the first time man set foot on the Moon and brought back to earth stones from the Mare Serenitatis. On 20 July 2016, in Cyprus, Alexis (character in performance) returns after 25 years, asking for answers about the importance of his own stone. Traveling in the past, reality is confused with memory. The two stories unfold simultaneously, as we follow, at the same time, the world events of the period 1969-1974 and the personal history of Alexis.

In 2021, Fresh Target Theatre Ensemble presented the devised theatre performance *Out of Necessity*, directed by Maria Kyriakou and Maria Varnakkidou, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus. According to Kyriakou,

‘the performance attempts the search of identity, having as its starting point the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus and The Doctrine of Necessity, which came into force in 1964 with the departure of the Turkish Cypriots from government positions [...] and with the title *Out of Necessity* we give a double meaning to the subject of the performance. Firstly, this “window out of necessity” that has already become part of our identity, and secondly, our desire to get out of this Necessity’.¹⁴

The performance deals with issues such as what the constitution is and how it defines our identity. How well do we know our history and how do we perceive ourselves as citizens of a state? The performance is an attempt to understand and question the data and an attempt to rewrite the dominant narratives by the new generation. According to Bhabha, difference, ambiguity and the hybrid state are powerful tools for combating dominant discourses and structures. Hybridities are observed where national narratives and self-identifications intersect.¹⁵ The text of the performance, written in the Greek Cypriot dialect, is the product of collective work and emerged

¹³ Moonstones are the pieces of stone that were transported to earth after two American missions to the moon in 1969. A stone was divided into very small pieces which were donated by US President Nixon to all the states of the world. Two moonstones were destined for Cyprus but for various reasons did not reach their destination. One, in fact, is ignored.

¹⁴ Georgiou, ‘Out of Necessity’.

¹⁵ Homi K. Bhabha, ‘DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation’, in H. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (London, Routledge, 1990), 315.

from archival material, journalistic articles, personal narratives and experiences by the group members, as well as from theoretical and literary texts.

The use of the dialect in the Cypriot theatre until the end of the 20th and in the beginning of the 21st century was considered exclusively the playwright's choice. With the advent of the new millennium, just before the second decade of the 21st century, a trend to make a conscious choice and to use the Greek Cypriot dialect as the main language of the performance is observed, mostly among the new generation of directors. That is, performances are created where the director chooses to, a) present a play of modern Cypriot writers written entirely in the Greek Cypriot dialect, b) translate plays from classical and contemporary dramaturgy entirely or partly into the Greek Cypriot dialect, and c) devise a performance in which the dialect is used in the entire performance or in select parts of it.

The dialect frees the actors themselves, since they are asked to speak in their mother tongue, making the whole process familiar and more experiential. From the audience's point of view, the dialect, in most cases, creates the necessary intimacy between the narrative and it, so that what they see/hear directly concerns them. That is, the dialect operates as a connecting tool. It should be noted that the place of dialect in the theatre is a much-discussed issue globally. According to Doyle, the dialect is a tool of connection.¹⁶ The use of dialect in the theatre, in addition to the other dimensions it takes, is directly connected to national and cultural identity and constitutes a political statement from the point of view of directors. It is an ideological approach to the issue of national/cultural identity. The linguist Giorgos Georgiou points out that the Cypriot dialect is used in many cases as a strategy that is inextricably linked to communication conditions. The choice of words expresses an ideological position, ideological in the sense of a way of understanding the world.¹⁷ Let us remember Bakhtin, who states that 'every word betrays the ideology of the speaker' and 'every utterance is an ideology',¹⁸ as well as Friedrich, who argues that '[...] ideology is a system, or at least an amalgam of ideas, strategies, tactics, and practical symbols for promoting,

¹⁶ Maria-Elena Doyle, 'A Gesture to Indicate a Presence: Translation, Dialect and Field Day Theatre Company's Quest for an Irish Identity', in S. Simon, P. St-Pierre (eds), *Changing the Terms, Translating in the Postcolonial Era* (Ottawa, ON: University of Ottawa Press, 2000), 170.

¹⁷ Georgiou, 2017.

¹⁸ Mikhail Bakhtin, [1937-1938], in M. Holquist (ed.), *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, trans. C. Emerson, M. Holquist, Austin, 429, University of Texas Press, 1981.

maintaining, or changing a cultural order; in other words, they are political ideas in act'.¹⁹

The way of approaching the dialect in the theatre by the Cypriot directors has brought to the surface the language issue that exists in Cyprus, which is related to the simultaneous use of Greek Cypriot dialect and modern Greek.²⁰ According to Attalides,

‘the ideology of the Liberation Struggle of EOKA 1955-1959, as it was formulated, had a purely national orientation and did not present any liberal or socialist elements of criticism of the existing society or a vision of the post-liberation society. His ideals were the ideals of the nation and not the ideas of freedom as formulated by the exponents of the Enlightenment, which emphasize the value of the individual and political liberalism, or socialist ideas, which emphasize the value of social equality. It is precisely this form of ideology that will disorient Cypriot society and lead to the creation of a bipolar cultural identity of the place in relation to Greece, an element that preoccupies Cypriot society to this day. Therefore, in the period after Independence, the society of the island feels the need to define itself culturally’.²¹

According to Papadakis, ‘Greek Cypriots move between two poles regarding their cultural identity’.²² The use of the dialect allows the oscillation of the cultural consciousness of the artists to be seen, but at the same time the need to conciliate the two different ‘poles’ of identity.²³ Papadima and Kourdis argue that the use of the Greek Cypriot dialect can be characterised ‘as a resistance to the normative pressure of standard Greek, since it strengthens ethnic identity, even through the distorting lens of ideology’.²⁴

¹⁹ Paul Friedrich, ‘Language, Ideology and Political Economy’, (1989) *American Anthropologist*, 91(2), 301.

²⁰ Aspasia Papadima, Evangelos Kourdis, ‘Subtitling Mass Culture Texts in Cypriot Dialect’ in *Selected Papers of the 11th International Conference on Greek Linguistics*, (Rhodes, September 2013), 1298; Georgiou (no 11)

²¹ Michalis Attalidis, ‘Factors that Shaped Cypriot Society after Independence’, in Nicosia Municipality (ed.), *Cypriot Life and Society, Shortly Before Independence and up to 1984* (Nicosia, Nicosia Municipality Publishing, 1993), 224.

²² Yiannis Papadakis, ‘Greek Cypriot Narratives of History and Collective Identity: Nationalism as a Contested Process’, (1998) *American Ethnologist*, 25(2), 153.

²³ Doyle (no 16)

²⁴ Papadima, Kourdis (no 20)

The first translation of a foreign play into the Greek Cypriot dialect was the *Diary of a Madman* by Nikolai Gogol (2007) (Lexi theatre production), directed by Spyros Charalambous. The following year (2008), Paris Erotokritou translated into the dialect and presented Harold Pinter's *The Lover*, placing the play in the Cypriot reality. These performances were the beginning for translating foreign dramaturgy to the Greek Cypriot dialect, as well as for its use beyond the context we knew until then (ethnography, dramatic plays, comedies, theatrical revue, comedy sketch).

In the following years, the Cypriot dialect was used in a variety of performances as the main language. Directors and productions are mentioned indicatively; Maria Kyriakou is one of the directors who uses the dialect a lot in her performances, such as *Shopping Mall/(First Impressions + Small Confessions)*, which was presented as part of the No Body Festival (2009) and also in the performances *Forget-me-not* (2010), *Ε(ν)ομολογία* (2011), *W.C.* (2013), *Αναγέλαστα: Λογιών Λογιών Γεναίτζες* (2018). Kyriakou often connects the use of dialect in her performances with the genre of devised theatre, since dialect is the language used during the process of creating the performance. The speech has a direct and familiar character, therefore any attempt to transfer it to standard Greek changes the dynamics, as well as its reception by the audience. Also, she considers that many times the use of the dialect is imposed by the theme of the performances, which is directly connected to the Cypriot reality.²⁵

Euripides Dikaios is the most typical of the cases of directors who uses the Greek Cypriot dialect in their performances. He studies dialect as a tool in writing, directing, acting. He believes that no matter how familiar the Cypriot audience is with the standard Greek language, there will always be a key part missing from identification and communicative convergence. Dikaios translated into the Greek Cypriot dialect and directed the foreign theatrical texts: Philip Ridley's *Vincent River (X-Byron)* (2012), Harold Pinter's *The Lover (Erastis)* (2014), Kenneth Lonergan's *This is our Youth (...Our generation!)* (2015), José Triana's *Night of the Assassins* (2017). Additionally, he directed two plays by the Cypriot playwright Antonis Georgiou, written in the dialect: *La Belote* (2014) and *Ο Θεός Γιάννης* (2019), as well as three plays where the dialect is used in combination with Modern Greek or other languages (French, English, Spanish and the Turkish Cypriot dialect): *Ο Καραγκιόζης εκτός* (2011), Giorgos Neofytos' *Μπαμ!* (2015), and a play of his own, *Νυχταλούδα* (2016).

Among the cases of the new generation of directors who use the dialect as a performance language is Evita Ioannou, who translated into the Cypriot dialect and di-

²⁵ Kyriakou (no 7)

rected two foreign plays; Philip Ridley's *Dark Vanilla Jungle* monologue (2017), as well as Tennessee Williams' *The Two-Character Play* (*Κραυγή*) (2018). Also, Giorgos Kyriakou directed the performance of Dennis Kelly's *Our Teacher's a Troll* (2018), translated and adapted by himself and Niovi Charalambous.

There were also some attempts by the Theatro Skala in two foreign plays in 2019: Debbie Issit's *The Woman Who Cooked Her Man*, directed by Nikos Nikolaidis and translated into Greek Cypriot by Christos Grigoriadis, and *Fools* by Neil Simon, translated by Michalis Tterlikkas, and directed by Andreas Melekis.

Enact theatre group appears in Cypriot theatre with devised theatre performances in the Greek Cypriot dialect. As members of the group, Elena Kallinikou and Marina Makris, say, refusing to identify with foreign traditions, they are looking for a new language of communication that expresses them and is connected to their particular Cypriot temperament. Through the Greek Cypriot dialect, they focus on the local reality and the creation of a modern Cypriot play that responds and converses with contemporary global dramaturgy, so as to enable its presence in festivals and stages abroad.²⁶ We observe that the Enact theatre group uses dialect as a means of resistance to the flattening tendencies of globalisation. Walter Puchner points out: 'whole languages, dialects and idioms are lost globally every year. The rescue of this cultural material is an act of resistance to irrational globalisation'.²⁷

As the members of the Enact theatre group state, they feel the need to study the function of the use of dialect in the contemporary theatrical scene:

'A dialect that is identified with Cypriot sketch and satire, was a challenge for us in how it can be applied in a modern dramaturgy. In addition, the humor that often results from the use of the Cypriot dialect was an element that we also wanted to keep. Finally, the element of self-recognition, i.e., the ability to identify with the characters on stage, through the Cypriot dialect multiplies'.²⁸

An interesting case is also Niki Marangou's *Women's Narratives*, directed by Emilios Charalambides (2016). It consists of 18 authentic stories of Cypriot women, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, who narrate their experiences in the Greek Cypriot dialect, traversing the historical and ethnographic past of Cyprus, from the

²⁶ Interview with Marina Makris, Elena Kallinikou, and Dimitris Chimonas, 30 April 2017.

²⁷ Walter Puchner, 'Idiomatic Theatre in Greece', Announcement at the *1st Panhellenic Conference Customary Happenings and Performance: Folk Culture and Intangible Cultural Heritage in Postmodernity Age*, March, 2018, 16-17.

²⁸ Makris, Kallinikou, Chimonas (no 26)

beginning of the 20th century until the opening of the barricades in 2003, in the living room of a mansion in the old neighborhood of the Ayioi Omoloyites in Nicosia, where the performance took place in natural daylight (afternoon performance).

The name of Kostas Silvestros, who directed the play *The Little Prince* (2019), could be added to the list. It is an adaptation of the novel by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry based on the translation of the book into the Greek Cypriot dialect by Iakovos Hatzipieri, and a theatrical adaptation by Andreas Nicolaidis. Silvestros says in an interview: '[...] directing a play in the Cypriot dialect requires special handling. We are not familiar with reading Cypriot dialect. The transfer of the written word to the spoken word was a special process, but also extremely enjoyable, since we discovered and tasted the beauty of our dialect and, by extension, of our country'.²⁹ Silvestros also directed Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* in the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot dialect production of Antilogos Theatre. In the performance a Greek Cypriot and a Turkish Cypriot actor were acting, each speaking in their own language. The performance was staged at the House of Cooperation in the buffer zone, between the two barricades of Ledra Palace in Nicosia. Silvestros says in an interview 'I believe that such great texts can be supported in the dialect. We have to stop being afraid', arguing at the same time that this does not mean that he has stopped being fascinated by the Greek language and its value. However, he emphasises at the same time that the use of both dialects (Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot dialect) is very important and signals something new.³⁰ Kostas Silvestros won the directing award and the actors of the performance Giorgos Kyriakou and Izel Seylani the best male role award at the Maltepe International Theatre Festival in Istanbul.

It's important to note that not only foreign plays, but also plays of the Greek dramaturgy have been translated to the dialect. Two comedies by Papathanasiou-Reppas *Skirt Shirt* and *In-laws from Tirana* are indicated as examples.

Taking into account both the reviews written about the performances, and the discussion provoked on social media on the occasion of their uploading, we conclude that the use of the dialect in the theatre causes various reactions in terms of the reception of the performances both among the audience and the critics, as well as the artists themselves. 'On the one hand there are the defenders of the dialect, who support its use in the theatre for the aforementioned reasons, and on the other hand

²⁹ Interview of Kostas Silvestros to *Phileleftheros*, 21 May 2019, available at <https://www.philenews.com/politismos/prosopa/article/702762>, [accessed 4 July 2023].

³⁰ Interview of Kostas Silvestros, 20/04/2021, available at <https://www.fractalart.gr/perimenontas-ton-gkonto-leykosia/>, [accessed 4 July 2023].

those who consider that the only language of the performance should be common modern Greek'.³¹ The critic Moleski, referring to the tendency to increasingly use the dialect as the language of the performance, talks about a 'new wave' for 'an increased local dependency' of the Cypriot theatre and a recognition of the need of the Cypriot society to use the theatre as a means of collective self-knowledge.³² Christodoulou in his article, where he attempts a summary of the theatrical production of 2016, points out that 'it was a year of self-awareness for Cypriot theatre. A year in which we watched, perhaps, more performances with a Cypriot character than any other time'. He concludes that 'without a doubt, the Cypriot theatre has passed into an era where free stages are the protagonists on the one hand, with the public's need for adaptation to the Cypriot reality now being imperative, and on the other hand the young Cypriot directors are leaving their own mark'.³³

Before we close the discussion, we have to raise a concern regarding the fate of these performances outside the borders; if such performances, which have the dialect as the main linguistic means of communication, can be performed in Greece and manage to communicate with the rest of the Greek-speaking audience that does not speak the dialect, or if they are isolated in the narrow borders of Cyprus. Moundraki, in her announcement on the subject of modern Cypriot dramaturgy, at the Theatre in Cyprus in the 21st Century conference, raised, among other issues, the issue of dialect. 'Another issue is language. Cypriot is a rather difficult dialect. The works written in Cypriot are inaccessible to the Greeks as they require a rewriting, however the imposition of the pan-Hellenic primary school on Cypriot writers is a form of violence against their free artistic expression'.³⁴ It should be noted that most of the performances that attempted to address a Greek-speaking audience outside of Cyprus preserved the dialect, while in one case a transfer to standard Greek is observed.³⁵

In conclusion, we would say that, possibly, a longer time distance will be required from the appearance of the phenomenon of the Cypriot directors' engagement with

³¹ Maria Hamali, 'Αναγέλαστα: Λογιών-λογιών Γεναίτζες', *Politis*, available at <https://parathyro.politis.com.cy/167299/article> [accessed 4 July 2023]; Maria Hamali, 'Dark Vanilla Jungle', *Politis*, available at <https://parathyro.politis.com.cy/162112/article> [accessed 4 July 2023].

³² Nona Moleski, 'The New...Wave', *Phileleftheros*, 10/7/2016.

³³ Michalis Christodoulou, *Time Out*, 28/12/16.

³⁴ Eirini Moundraki, 'The Unknown Known. Attempts to Her Approach of Cypriot Dramaturgy' at the conference *Theatre in Cyprus at 21st Century* (Athens: Home of Cyprus, 2015).

³⁵ The quote about the reception of the performances in the Greek Cypriot dialect comes from my book *Directing in Cyprus during the First Twenty Years of the 21st Century. Dramatic, Post-Dramatic Theatre and Issues of Identity*, (Athens, OTAN Publications, 2022).

the issue of cultural identity, either by having it as the subject of the performance, or by using the dialect as the language of the performance, in order to be able to draw more secure conclusions about the reasons for its appearance. In any case, however, what, perhaps, we could claim based on the present data, is that the 21st century of globalisation creates in the theatre the need to reinforce, search for, erase the old data or rewrite it, thus giving it the opportunity to prove the multiplicity of its character. Language is one of the basic tools of the theatre, a fact that is enhanced by the use of a dialect.³⁶ The search for identity by Cypriot directors from the beginning of the 21st century onwards could be an act of resistance in the context of globalisation, a means by which artists face the realities of the world. I close with Patsalides' observation that 'the more neoliberal globalisation increases the pace, the more the sense of place as a point of resistance to the era's flattening tendencies will be strengthened'.³⁷

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³⁶ See Savvas Patsalidis, 'Contemporary Theatre in a New Europe', in A. Altouva, K. Diamantakou (eds.), *Fifth Panhellenic Theatrical Conference 'Theatre and Democracy'*, vol.b, (Athens: NKUA Department of Theatrical Studies, 2018), 340, 344; Puchner (no 27)

³⁷ Patsalidis (2018).

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