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Lemonia Gianniri

‘Out and about’: a haptic exploration of queer and feminist archives in
post–dictatorship Greece

A thesis submitted to the Department of Psychosocial Studies, Birkbeck University of
London, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
(PhD)

I confirm that the work contained within this thesis is all my own.

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores four magazines that emerged from autonomous groups in Athens concerning politics of desire and liberation: *Amfi* (Eng: dispute, 1978–1990), *Skoupa* (Eng: broom, 1979–1981), *Kraximo* (Eng: slating 1981–1993) and *Lavrys* (Eng: double-axe, 1982–1983). By mobilizing the notion of ‘the haptic’ as a tripartite sense of touch that involves: a physical, an indexical and an affective touch (Campt,2012), this research focuses on archival stories that emerged from a haptic reading. To navigate this haptic exploration I have structured the chapters as a written weave. Chapter 1 constitutes the first part of the warp where I discuss the sociocultural context of Greece and archives as sites of death and being. In chapter 2, as the second part of the warp based on first fieldwork impressions, I place the yarns of complexities when researching social movements; language intricacies; and nodes on desiring differently. Chapter 3 (the first of the weft) focuses on *Skoupa* and women’s ongoing struggle and I claim that the task of emotional memory is a necessary endeavour that requires our attention, then, now, and still. Chapter 4 weaves in the politics of *Amfi* and what I call: Anti-seriousness mobilization tactics. I argue that this formula of social mobilizations entail creativity and imagination as forms of resistance. In chapter 5 I introduce the aspect of the ‘optic’ and visual hapticity, to argue for some threads of fluorescent refusals that I encountered while reading *Kraximo*. In chapter 6 through ‘touching stories’ found in *Lavrys* I discuss politics of love, intimacy, and difference. Chapter 7 brings impressions and tensions of the four magazines together in relation to space and Lefebvre’s concept of ‘right to the city’. Ultimately, I argue that stories of living and desiring differently from social relations of capital, inhabit an otherwise (Hartman, 2019) which illustrates everyday practices of imaginative will.

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THE WARP THREADS UPON THE LOOM:

Warp A. Responsibilities and impossibilities

Warp B. Living otherwise: an introduction not a definition

Warp C1. Conceptualizing Greece part one: queer experiences

Warp C2. Conceptualizing *metapolitefsi* and the ‘patris, thriskeia, oikogeneia’ interpellation

Warp C3. Civil war, resistance and communist partisans

Warp D. Marginality as openness?

Warp E. Queering ‘Greekness’

Warp F. Body as site of power and desire

Warp G. Archives as promise, debt, death and being

Warp H. An alert–surrender exercise on suspiciousness

Warp I. Ephemera/memory: ‘where do bars go when they close?’

Warp J. Social movements and hydra heads: An inquiry not an evaluation

Warp K. Politics of social movements and the Greek left: ‘Working class takes it up the ass too!’

Warp L. Ksekatharisma, a story of clarifications

Warp M. Translations, the incommensurable and otherwise

Warp N. A note on difference

INTRODUCTION

A weaving analogy

This exploratory work focuses on archival stories found in four magazines. *Amfi* (Eng: dispute, 1978– 1990) published by AKOE– the liberation movement of homosexuals in Greece – with the tagline: for the liberation of homosexual desire, *Skoupa* (Eng: broom, 1979 – 1981) about the women’s question, ‘*Kraximo*’ (Eng: slating 1981– 1993) a magazine of ‘revolutionary homosexual expression’ with the tagline: any and all kind of labour aiming at profit is prostitution, and *Lavrys* (Eng: double– axe, 1982– 1983) published by the *Autonomous Group of Homosexual Women*.¹ These publications emerged from groups and individuals who were mostly based in Athens. Through correspondence columns, word of mouth, particular bookshops, bars, collectives, as well as international networks of mobilization, these magazines circulated widely among the Greek– speaking audience. ‘Out and about’ these autonomous groups criticized the status quo and assembled in order to express their discontent with the current state of affairs. To account for the divergent ways in which each publication negotiates the desire to live differently and the counter– discourse produced, I dedicate a chapter to each magazine, as part of the weft.

¹ AKOE stands for ‘Apeleftherotiko Kinima Omofilofilon Ellados’. It is important to note that here I am using the term ‘homosexual’ instead of ‘gay’ as it is the term used by the specific movement and magazine of the time. Even though the term ‘gay’ and ‘homosexual’ are used interchangeably in Greece nowadays to refer to men– desiring– men I think it is important to include the terms used by AKOE as part of their political visions and struggles. Often in this project I use the terms gay/homosexual and men– desiring– men interchangeably. The tagline of the first issue in Spring 1978 was ‘for the liberation of homosexuals’. This shift is being further discussed in Chapter 4. Shifting from identities to desire. Regarding *Skoupa*, ‘for the women’s question’ is my translation of ‘Gia to gynaikeio Zitima’. Many translations of the title were considered, and I think this one from Gonda Van Steen (2002) used here is the most fitting. Chapter 3. *Kraximo*’s tagline in Greek: ‘Kathe Ergasia Me skopo to Kerdos ine Pornia’. The publisher of *Kraximo*, Paola Revenioti, is a famous artist, cinematographer, sex–worker and trailblazer in Greece. Chapter 5. Autonomous Group of Homosexual Women in Greek: *Aytonomi Omada Omofylofilon gynaikon*. The tagline of the second and third issue is Lesbian Discourse. Chapter 6. As Kavvadia notes, ‘The first issue is subtitled ‘γυναικείος λόγος και αντίλογος’, which roughly translates to ‘women’s speech and dispute’, a testimony to one of the first attempts at radicalizing lesbian experience and discourse in Greece’. For more see: <https://womenslibrary.org.uk/explore-the-library-and-archive/lgbtq-collections-online-resource/lavrys/>.

Here I use ‘out and about’ as a phrase to signify activity, motion and movement, people engaging in multiplicities of things. The four magazines in question are archives that engaged within the public sphere, realized by people going out and about organizing talks, conferences, protests, parties, fieldtrips, and some weekly meetups. These archives constitute whole worlds of contacts, connections, frictions, similarities, love, intimacy, humour, pain, intellect, hope, despair, relationalities. In addition, the phrase ‘out and about’ suggests that the politics of the groups was part of their everyday life, in the sense that ‘out and about’ signals trajectories of quotidian life both ordinary as well as political and disturbing of the status quo.

I invite the reader to engage with this thesis as one might observe a weave. Each chapter can be seen as a different part of the process of weaving from the loom’s frame to the completed piece of fabric, synthesized by all the different archival threads. A weaving handloom usually consists of a frame upon which the weaver places the yarns. The yarns that run vertically on the loom are called *the warp*. These yarns stabilize the threads that are about to be weaved in horizontally. The warp should remain steady to support the yarns that will be woven through it. The process of weaving cannot happen without the warp. It is upon the warp that the weaver runs *the weft*. The weft being the yarns that interlace the warp usually follow an interchanging pattern; if in one row the thread is going over– under the wrap, then in the next row the motion is under– over (or vice versa). Going up and down the horizontal threads interlace with the warp to create the weaving design. Ultimately, the yarns of the warp and the weft become interlocking pieces in order for the weave to be produced. What kind of different patterns might emerge if we navigate this haptic archival exploration as a weave in progress?

I use the weaving analogy as a device to structure the thesis. The introduction is assembling the loom. Assembling the loom entails not only crafting the joints of the frame but also

introducing affectively and effectively the hand that writes, that is, my hand. Here, I will introduce the haptic as the methodological approach of the project. For Camp (2012: 43), the haptic is a way of perceiving that involves a tripartite sense of touch: a physical, an indexical and an affective touch. Utilizing a vignette that traces a haptic relationality that took place in my personal archival quest, the haptic becomes the entry point to the conceptual loom of archival stories that longed for an ‘otherwise’. Following Hartman’s (2019) work in Black feminism/Black study, I take ‘otherwise’ to refer to practices of living and being differently.²

The setup of the loom (introduction) is followed by chapters one and two, as conceptual joints that constitute the warp. Chapter 1 sets out the warp in two ways. Firstly, it offers a socio-cultural historization of ongoing political struggles in Greece which inevitably affect the ways in which the autonomous groups were formulated. Secondly, in chapter one I discuss archives as sites of debt, death and being to state my reading positionality as far as archives are concerned. Chapter 2 works as the second part of the warp and addresses theoretical questions that emerged from my first fieldnotes. Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6, deal with archival stories from *Skoupa*, *Amfi*, *Kraximo* and *Lavrys* respectively, as the threads in this weaving of desiring to live and be differently. To be clear, these chapters constitute the weft. The final chapter, chapter 7, presents a concluding analytical reflection and marks the completion of this weft. As I run through the texture of the weave, in chapter 7 I also attempt to theorize the weaving rhythm of the project. Removing the weave from the loom I deliberately leave the fringes hanging; the lingering threads at the edges remain. I refuse to tidy them up, cut them or integrate them. The fringes might remain in motion as this project will inevitably end with a story. A story of the weave that is no longer placed in the loom, but it is the hands and imaginations of the reader.

² Sadiya Hartman’s work is one of the main conceptual yarns of this project and will be further discussed through this research.

The loom comb is a common tool in the craft of weaving. To put it simply, as common practice in fibres and design craft, the loom comb helps the weaver move the yarns to where they need to go (Fibers and Design, 2019). However, I choose not to use a loom comb to order the fibres and flatten the woven surface evenly. Rather, I use my hands to push the yarns in an uneven woven density. If a loom comb is a tool used to move the weft yarns into the proper place in the design, in this experiment I use my hands and their inexact qualities to weave the thesis. After all, this exploration is animated by haptic modalities. The weave will intentionally remain uneven, queer, unusual, eccentric, weaved through with different yarns. The yarns are fabricated by the scope of each collective that produced the magazines I found in the archive, by each story they shared, by my intervention and by a desire of ‘living otherwise’ (Hartman 2019). *Skoupa*, *Amfi*, *Lavrys* and *Kraximo* hosted articles, stories, lives that signalled towards ‘an otherwise’. I am not claiming that all four magazines in their totality dreamt something particularly in common. Indeed, flattening or assimilating their claims into a common project is in opposition to my intentions. If these printed artefacts have one thing in common apart from some shared geographical spaces, it is their opposition to societal categorizations as they found them.³ The aims and the desires of each artefact differ, and in the thesis, I endeavour to keep the threads differentiated through the process of weaving.

Why ‘queer’ archives?

Against this background, I want to clarify that it is *the archives* in question that I examine as ‘queer’ and ‘feminist’, rather than *the magazines* in themselves. By classifying the archives as queer rather than the magazines, I want to lift the burden of terminological taxonomies both from me and the magazines’ creators. *Skoupa* is a self-proclaimed feminist magazine,

³ The shared spaces will be further examined in chapter 7.

Lavrys is a magazine centering lesbian desire and discourse, *Kraximo* is a magazine of ‘revolutionary homosexual expression’ and with the recurrent tagline ‘any and all kind of labour aiming at profit is prostitution’, and *Amfi* is the magazine of the Greek liberation movement of homosexuals (AKOE) aiming to liberate homosexual desire.⁴

I read these archives as queer for various reasons. Firstly, these publications engaged with gender and sexuality as axes to critique the status quo and opened up spaces of connections regarding sexual desire and liberation. Clearly political yet uncommitted to any political party, these archives hoped to awake the consciousness of their readers and called their audience to action. This distinguishes these archives from other lifestyle magazines of the time that belonged to the mainstream (Zestanakis, 2017). By focusing on practices of sexual dissidence, by opposing gender norms, by raising consciousness and by writing about their embodied experiences, some of the publications’ authors formulated social claims; others hoped for inclusion practices and legislative rights; others wrote and lived for a revolution; others embraced a deliberate refusal of given sociopolitical distinctions.

Even though I offer an overview of each magazine’s aims in their dedicated chapters, the scope of my haptic exploration is not to precisely classify and evaluate the magazines’ goals. My main weaving threads will remain *the stories that touched me* in the archives in question. Thus, ‘queer’ in this project will be more of a practice, a reading position, rather than an ontological stake. In that sense I call the archives in question ‘queer’ because they use the lens of non–normative desires to critique the world.

In ‘I ‘Can’t Even Think Straight’ ‘Queer’ Theory and the Missing Sexual Revolution in Sociology’, Stein and Plummer (1994) enumerate the theoretical possibilities that queer

⁴ For the Greek translation of the taglines see footnote 1. Notably, I find the term ‘sex work’ more suitable than ‘prostitution’. However, the greek term used by *Kraximo* is *pornia* (Eng: prostitution) so I kept this translation to do justice to the original word used.

theory scholars were able to realise in academic enquiries. Invoking the work of Warner (1991), Butler (1990), Sedgwick (1990), and Parker (1991), as pioneers in queer theory, Stein and Plummer draw out four key points as an outcome of the analysis of key contributions in queer theory in the early 1990s. Stein and Plummer outline the following distinctive characteristics of queer theory as a reading position:

- 1) a conceptualization of sexuality which sees sexual power embodied in different levels of social life, expressed discursively and enforced through boundaries and binary divides;
- 2) the problematization of sexual and gender categories, and of identities in general. Identities are always on uncertain ground, entailing displacements of identification and knowing;
- 3) a rejection of civil rights strategies in favor [sic] of a politics of carnival, transgression, and parody which leads to deconstruction, decentering, revisionist readings, and an anti- assimilationist politics;
- 4) a willingness to interrogate areas which normally would not be seen as the terrain of sexuality, and to conduct queer 'readings' of ostensibly heterosexual or nonsexualized texts (Stein and Plummer 1994:182)

With these key elements in mind, it would be underhanded to unequivocally name the four magazines as 'queer'. Nonetheless, as the thesis aims to demonstrate, within these archives many people yearned for the liberation of desire, wrote, and struggled for gender non-conformity and communicated a common urge away from binary oppositions of being and relating. What is at stake here is not understanding the magazines as 'queer' but starting to touch upon 'a queering angle' as an ongoing interlacing yarn in this haptic archival exploration. Within these archives lie experiences of non- normative desire, stories of

connection, solidarity networks, calls for transgression, manifestos for the power of sexual desire, anti– assimilationist political tactics, tales of intimacy and refusal. I am therefore not naming the magazines ‘queer’ and ‘feminist’ in their totality or using these terms as fixed categorizations. Rather, I situate these archives in the warp of some queer theorists and feminist methodologies in order to weave through the stories that touched me. I argue that it is within these haptic events I present in this thesis that one can observe glimpses of an ‘otherwise’. No one publication contains these fragments of the ‘otherwise’ in its totality. Most importantly, I want to guard against any solidifying terminology of the terms ‘queer’ and ‘feminist’.

Now, the term ‘archive’ is a rich theoretical term and there is much space given in this project to hopefully ponder and think around it. The reasons I employ this term to describe the artefacts in question, are multiple. As I have already stated above, by mobilising the term ‘archive’ I want to emphasize that I will focus on certain stories from the magazines in question, stories that are part of these cultural artefacts. Also, I am referring to archives as a place, since I had to visit the archives of the National Library of Greece, in order to access the material. In this project as I place the warp upon the loom I discuss the physical space of the archives and its theoretical connotations.⁵ Archival theory is an important compass in reading the stories haptically, since it adds to the complexity of researching archives and the positionality of the researcher who approaches them. I discuss these issues in ‘Warp G. Archives as promise, debt, death and being’ as I bring in the work of Foucault (1972), Derrida (1996), Trouillot (1995;1999), Arondekar (2009), Stoler (2009), Camp (2012), Harney and Moten (2013) Gossett (2014), Bost (2019) and Hartman (2019) in order to

⁵ For example see Warp H. An alert—surrender exercise on suspiciousness in Chapter 2.

examine their views on archives and weave in the yarns of this multi-layered concept.⁶ By using the term ‘archive’ I would like to invite the reader to think about the process of unbinding. If we bring the traditional term of archives to mind, most probably we would think of dusty boxes, ready to be categorized and catalogued, and perhaps also accord them a degree of ‘official’ status in the construction of a national story. In this project, I want to think of the opposite process, to view the stories as an unbinding of an archive. Thus, it is not about putting archives in order, or cataloguing, nor is it about prioritizing. It is rather about ‘freeing’ stories, touching stories and perceiving the archive as another way of knowing through a ‘touching’ of those considered at the ‘margins’ of the national. Unbinding stories with the help of the haptic touch. In the sections that follow I theorize the haptic touch as well as the ‘hand of the researcher’— the person that performs the unbinding. This tapestry of stories constitutes the weft of this archival exploration.

A touch of methodology and methodologies of touch: affective reflections on a haptic meeting

‘Haptic images are objects whose effects are structured by a tripartite sense of touch—an indexical touch, a physical touch, and an affective touch. It is a touch that suffuses both the composition of the image and our responses or relation to it. They are images touched by the subjects they capture, touched by those who view or encounter them, yet objects also that touch those who view them as well. They are objects that ‘move’ us both through our physical contact with them and through the affective investments with which we imbue them’.

(Campt 2012: 43)

⁶ Here I chose to use the names of the interlocutors rather than grouping them into categories of theoretical fields because the way I discuss their work in the chapter is like this. I employ their contributions to archival theory, and I take up the problems that they raise.

On December 2018, I was on an archival quest in my mother's house. As I was exploring my mother's vast magazine collection the room was tinted with the golden light of sunset, revealing the floating dust in her room. Amidst dozens of untended coursebooks, novels, history books and magazines, the 6th issue of *Dini* appeared, the same issue that was missing from the university collection that I previously searched.⁷ The discovery of this volume made me turn towards my mother, who was in another room, and proclaimed: 'I might have the complete series of *Dini* soon'. My pronouncement was interrupted by an intense sneezing, my bodily reaction to the dusty magazine. Right after the volume's recovery and my recovery from the allergic reaction that its presence caused, my mother's presence and voice filled the room, 'you know about this, right?' she asked handing me an old pink book that read *History of the Greek Feminist movement*. It was the first time that I laid eyes on that book – a book that is extremely useful for the current project –yet my mum took its existence almost for granted. Puzzled and excited, I took the book in my hands. The vivid psychic intensity of that moment exceeds and simultaneously establishes a temporality, as if I encounter the book anew – again and again – every time I think about this offering.

As my mother was prompting me to take the book in my hands, my heart was beating fast anticipating the promising encounter that was about to happen. 'No, of course I do not know about it!' I muttered as I grabbed the book in excitement. My mother suggested I had a look inside the pink dusty book as she exited the room. In the first blank page of the book, stood a dedication:

To Lemonia, to Litsa and to Elias,

with joy and love,

⁷ *Dini* (Eng: swirling) is a feminist journal edited by a 17-member committee that circulated from 1986 to 1991.

Skourgioti,

Athens June, '91⁸ (Figure 1)

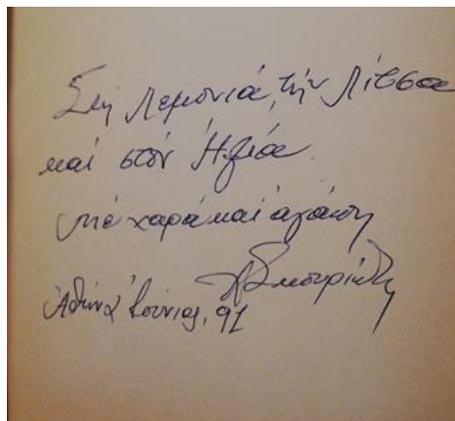


Figure 1. Dedication.

A tide of emotions, questions and perplexities overtook me, as I dwelled on the revelation of this inscription. I did not know the name of the person dedicating the book to me, and neither had I seen the book she dedicated to me and my parents before. It appeared to be a present given to us for my birth. Who was that woman that gifted the history of the Greek feminist movement to an infant of four months and her parents? Holding the book in my arms like a new-born, I walked to my room overwhelmed with the affect of its haptic touch.

I offer this entry point into this experiment because I aim to start with the hand that writes and weaves, that is, my hand. In *Image Matters: Archive, Photography, and the African Diaspora in Europe*, Campt (2012) examines two visual archives of African diaspora in Europe, one concerning mostly photographs of Black German families (1900–1945) and one regarding studio portraits of the Caribbean community in Birmingham, England (1948 and 1960). These archives of black vernacular photography hold family tales, tales of diaspora,

⁸ My translation. The names are: mine, my mother's and my father's.

community making in diaspora, racialization, sociality, belonging and unbelonging, and ‘diasporic dwelling’.⁹ The radical methodology that Campt proposes in order to attend to these visual artefacts is to read the images haptically. These photos were taken ‘not only to be seen but also *to be held*’ (Campt, 2012:17). Campt annotates sensory registers that exceed the visual and constitute images as objects that ‘move us’. According to Campt (2012) haptic images are artefacts that produce affective investments, that ‘touch us’ as we touch them. While Campt’s conceptualization of the haptic touch concerns images, here I explore how the haptic can be a mode of archival inquiry whenever the three registers of the haptic touch are simultaneously at play.

In the encounter described above, the book not only physically impelled me to spatial movement but also ‘moved’ me in the trilateral ways that Campt identifies. Taking into consideration the context of the book, women’s struggles and assertions in Greece dated back to 1887. The book is therefore crucial for the historical and cultural framing of the present research. The tactility of the book and its dusty, decrepit appearance embody the twenty–seven years of interval and preservation, until the gift finally reached its proprietor. These twenty– seven years of ‘hiding’ – but also being present— along with the sensory registers of the encounter, lead to the third affective connotation of the haptic touch. The physical and emotional contact with the book echoes the psychic and social threads that weave and manoeuvre relations through time and space, producing a resonating affect.¹⁰

⁹ For more on the interesting concept of ‘diasporing dwelling’ see Chapter 1 ‘family touches’ in *Image Matters: Archive, Photography, and the African Diaspora in Europe*, London: Duke University Press.

¹⁰ Ahmed describe ‘affect’ as a ‘sticky’ feeling, a feeling that orients towards certain choices, a feeling that attaches, ‘affect is what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connection between ideas, values, and objects’ (Ahmed, 2010: 230). On the other hand, Masumi draws a clear distinction between ‘affect’ and ‘emotion’. For Masumi (2002:28) affect is an ‘intensity’ that remains unqualified and escapes linguistic description. Deleuze and Guattari employ the term ‘affect’ to describe their concept of ‘nomadic war machine’ a machine that belongs to their project of nomadology and deterritorialisation. Deleuze and Guattari also distinguish emotion from affect and see affects as weapons, as ways, as means, as projectiles, as ‘the active discharge of emotion’ (2005:400). For Wetherell (2012) affect is a flow that can be enticing. In this project I rely on Sedgwick’s theory on affect that I develop subsequently in the current chapter. Sedgwick’s emphasis on the embodied dimensions

The haptic dimension of the archives that Camp describes, which I have introduced through my concurrent haptic meeting with the book in my mother's house, consists of a triple sensory exchange. The aptness of the book upon meeting the hand of the researcher marks a moment that simultaneously transgresses, yet presupposes, the materiality of the object and the subject involved. Establishing contact with the material and touching – both sensory and as a sense of meaning– making – its content, a *touching moment* is produced which instils an affective encounter. Moreover, by recognizing the element of 'surprise' which plays an important role in archival research, I would propose an alert– surrender approach in order to sense the haptic appearance.

To conceptualize the complex notion of affect and the proposed *alert– surrender* that is inextricable bound to textuality, I will summon a pioneer in queer theory and a key text in affect theory. In *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, Sedgwick (2002) theorizes affect as a force that moves us away from the limits of language in moments where an event exceeds language. By providing a space for the body to be re– centred in academic discourses as a crucial component of social theory, Sedgwick unseals a whole new terrain of theoretical possibilities. In the introduction of the book, Sedgwick criticizes some of the most typical mis/interpretations of Foucauldian thought implying the limits of discourse analysis as it fails to exceed the structures it criticizes and propagates the same discourses. Notably as a 'catch' of these interpretations according to Sedgwick lies a cognitive danger of 'a moralistic tautology that became increasingly incapable of recognizing itself as such' (Sedgwick 2002:12). As Frank notes on Sedgwick's theoretical takes:

For Sedgwick the danger this poses is cognitive: in limiting the varieties of interpretation that become possible to a hyper– moralized and simplified version of

of affect coupled with her critique of narrow readings of Foucault's notion of discourse is a key interlocutor to this exploratory project.

critique (the identification of a text as hegemonic or subversive), other performative possibilities and goals for criticism get lost (Frank, 2004: 513)

This haptic exploration, then, follows Sedgwick's theorizations and aspiration to open up possibilities and new configurations, rather than reproduce truth claims or 'speak for' others – an analytical operation that Spivak (1988) considered in depth and cautioned us against. This project mobilizes the affective potentialities of the haptic as a way to approach, touch and be touched by the archive. These affective potentialities present themselves in my encounter with the feminist book as my birth present, and in my body's presence as it sneezed and as it was thrilled, moved, and moving in the relational encounter with the dusty volume in handed over to me by my mother on that glowing afternoon.

In this meeting the entwined cords of transgenerational narratives, offerings, and expectations, emerge once more to reiterate the existence of the book as a gift, before its recovery. The book was there all these years, present and awaiting. It was present in my mother's values, in her paths and struggles. In her strong female friendships, in her divorce, in her devotion, in her profession, in her raising of me. 'With love and joy', this book inscribed a route before my ability to trace it and value it, constituting now as part of my archive – an archive that goes as back as my birth, and possibly before. The convoluted associations of gift– offering entail a continuity, a bond and a pledge of psychosocial interest. As tokens of love, gratitude, appreciation, relations and social obligations, gifts mandate social exchanges and economies. Mauss (1990) and Derrida (1992) theorize the act of gifting as paradoxical and perplexing entanglements of gratuity and obligations. The assumed voluntary and willing act of gift– giving is contradicted by 'obligations that have to be reciprocated' (Ungureanu, 2013: 394) constituting gift– giving as 'an imposition of a duty' (2013:403). In this paradox then, a gift becomes an impossible possibility (Ungureanu, 2013:415). In particular, the act of dedicatedly gifting *The History of the Greek Feminist*

Movement to a new mother, her husband and her infant daughter, attests, weaves and illuminates relationships, and possibly informs a life's trajectory. With the gifted artefact then a life, my life, commences with a certain weaving already unknowingly involving a (feminist) archive inscribed with my name, awaiting in my mother's bedroom dusty and reticent. This research is no longer a project on archives of detached social movements – as if it ever was – but also part of my life trajectory.

It was a while later when I paid attention to the back of the book and noticed some scribbles. I would say that they look a bit like a toddler's handwriting (Figure 2). I cannot attest if these scribbles are mine, although I was the only child in the house most of the time while growing up. The significance of this belated observation is twofold. On the one hand, it shows that I most likely have seen the book and the scribbles previously, but I did not register them as such. Campt will help me again in explaining:

the haptic is not merely a question of physical touch. It is the link between touching and feeling, as well as the multiple mediations we construct to allow or prevent our access to those affective relations. These haptic relations transpire in multiple temporalities, and the hands are only one conduit of their touches (Campt, 2017:100)

Channelling a haptic touch into a writing piece, then, requires not only the hands, the visual register, and the affective index, but also a juxtaposition of all these modalities simultaneously. On the other hand, this belated observation underlined the importance of the 'alert-surrender' approach towards the archives I was about to explore. In a way, recovering and owning this book perhaps made me grasp the handwritten scribbles belatedly but reading archives in the library would require a swifter response to that register. By theorizing an 'alert-surrender' approach to this haptic exploration, I hope to be alert to the haptic when it

occurs, yet surrender to it – as in not anticipating it in every page of the magazines in question.

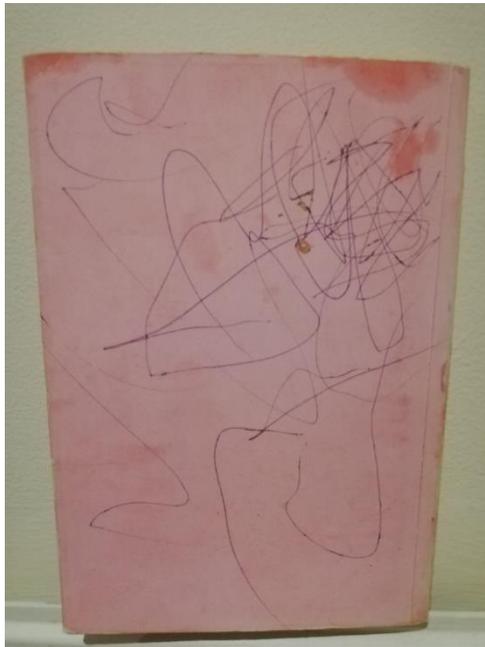


Figure 2. Toddler's handwriting, possibly my own.

The mode of 'alert–surrender' as a reading position can be also described as the over–under/under–over weaving motion that I previously described. The section that follows outlines the craft of weaving as a complex process based on tactile contact and sensibilities in order for a design to be produced. Connecting the haptic with weaving I hope to illustrate the alert–surrender aspect of my reading positionality as I delve into reading the magazines in this project.

Alert–surrender to a textual reading: connecting haptic with weaving

In the insightful book *Bauhaus Weaving Theory: From Feminine Craft to Mode of Design*, Smith (2014) examines the practice of weaving in the Bauhaus movement and beyond.¹¹ By exploring the work of women weavers and the historically feminine route of the art, Smith offers a rich theory of the importance of the craft and the women artists involved. The craft of weaving in the Bauhaus could be employed as a useful analogy here to understand the complexity and the importance of the artefact that inscribes my trajectory within the archive, as an entry point to the archives I am concerned with in my thesis. Smith (2014) focuses on Otta Berger's 'Weberei und Raumgestaltung', or 'Weaving and the Shaping of Space', where Berger discusses a 'perpetual contact' with certain textiles, an ongoing contact or meeting that has no 'temporal boundaries'. Utilizing the boundary as a starting point of the contact with a textile, in our case an artefact, this meeting becomes the starting point of constant reoccurrences and potentialities. According to Smith, the 'perpetual contact' proposes 'that one approaches the object not simply through visual, conscious perception, which leads to the recognition of textiles and objects, but also through tactile (unconscious) perception, which contributes to one's overall physical experience of an environment' (Smith 2014:101).

Likewise, I would argue that my haptic archival exploration suggests a 'perpetual contact' which exceeds the tactile but also engenders it. Through bodily and psychic involvement this process comprises the haptic touch, the texture, the context, and all the yarns at play in the warp and the weft, in order to tell archival stories as patterns of an otherwise. Nonetheless some yarns will remain lingering. The lingering yarns are more about possibilities and further becomings; they entail the possibility of a path not consciously walked before, yet a path to

¹¹ The Bauhaus art school was founded by Walter Gropius in Weimar, in 1919 and its style combine fine arts, crafts, and design favouring simplicity and practicality. As Smith (2014:15) puts it 'The Bauhaus provides the perfect setting in which to analyze the relationship between crafts and medium'.

be walked. The fraying, untied yarns are also about my network of relationalities that are entangled with the archival encounters.

Following this thread of the analogy between textiles and archival materiality illustrated in the event of the book I previously presented, the affective possibilities that Sedgwick draws are as follows:

to perceive texture is never only to ask or know What is it like? nor even just How does it impinge on *me*? Textural perception always explores two other questions as well: How did it get that way? and What could I do with it? (Sedgwick 2002:13, emphasis in the original).

Taking into account the materiality of the archive, then, with the ephemeral aspects of human life that are bound to ‘vanish’, the remnants of dust, and the importance of the haptic in order to navigate some of these language–exceeding moments, my methodological positionality is resolutely reflective and interdisciplinary, as I do not wish to embark on any project of recuperation. On the contrary, I view this research as an experimental interweaving process of affective relationalities.

Muñoz escapes the academic structure to account for ephemera as proof of queer acts with political implications. Muñoz (1996:10) describes ephemera as:

a modality of anti–rigor and anti–evidence that, far from filtering materiality out of cultural studies, reformulates and expands our understandings of materiality.

Ephemera [...] is linked to alternate modes of textuality and narrativity like memory and performance: it is all of those things that remain after a performance, a kind of evidence of what has transpired but certainly not the thing itself. It does not rest on epistemological foundations but is instead interested in following traces, glimmers, residues, and specks of things. It is important to note that ephemera is a mode of

proofing and producing arguments often worked by minoritarian culture and criticism makers.

Taking up Muñoz's proposition to try and contextualize what can be considered as affective residues from temporally bound moments, the method of the haptic also involves the ephemeral aspect of queer archives as much as, and precisely because, is concerned with archival materiality. The touch, the body, the affect, the dust, the text, the texture, the past and the present are part of archival ephemeral moments that cannot be described only by language, epistemological foundations or by the thing itself. Another way to think of the methodology of the haptic along with the possibilities revealed by the affect of texture by Sedgwick (2002), and the ephemera as evidence that Muñoz (1996) introduces, is as an embodied approach towards the touching, textual and elusive, 'to be' and 'become'.

Recognizing gifts and relations

'I didn't meet him, I recognized him', Jean Cocteau said about his relationship with Jean Marais illustrating the strong presence and impact that Marais had in Cocteau's life.¹² Similarly, the context of Moschou– Sakorrafou's book, *History of the Greek Feminist movement* that was offered as a present on the occasion of my birth by a friend of my mother's who is no longer part of her life, summons a reacquaintance and recollection, rather than an encounter with the unfamiliar, I did not meet her, I recognised her (through the book).

The presence of the book – a gift – is not so much about bequest and destiny, but about its presence yet nonappearance for all these years. This nonappearance is possibly what makes the encounter with the book so affectively charged. It is within the remembrance, the recognition deriving from this meeting – a recognition signalling my mother, a lost friend, a

¹² See the brief documentary about Cocteau's life <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4C7ZXhWEFDM> (Last accessed on 26/07/2022).

present object and ultimately my subjectivity – that the appearance of the book opens up encounters and separations that lay unmarked and unnoticed, waiting for its moment, rather than purposefully hidden. The unexpected and compelling event of the book offered as a gift suggests the vitality of the artefact as a threshold and marks its entrance into a space that calls for the extrication of the knots, intricacies and possibilities of the personal, political, and social mobilizations in Greece as they emerge in lives and objects.

Furthermore, drawing from the kind of recognition that Cocteau mentions, I see the encounter with the book as a double offering that has a direct parallel with archival work practice. The book's inscription was granted for my birth and was offered to my mother, who now presented to me, again, as a gift from her. This belated present offered to me twice, produces a place and a space between then and now, and becomes a witness which simultaneously entails and transgresses temporalities and continuities among intimate affective relations. In this twofold productive space, the tactility and materiality of the object also encompasses the dust and the sedimentation of relations that accumulated over the years leading to our meeting. I argue that it is precisely the appearance of an object that exudes associations, and which can act as a mediator between the psychic and the physical slot, that is at stake in the touch of the archive.

As Dilnot (1993:55) points out, 'objects work not only possessively, for the individual subject who owns them, but also dialogically, that is, between subjects, working at once to aid subjects materially in how they live but working also as a means of establishing concrete relations with the other'. Dilnot prompts us to reconsider the basis of interactions of subjects and things. If we reassess objects in this way, then it is possible to re-centre the importance of tactility and bodily engagement that archival work requires. All senses and fortunes align in the archival assemblage to propel the untangling of its components forward and to evoke an open-ended, potential affective 'something'.

This something that awakens within me upon the meeting with my present – both as a belated gift for my birth and an event – can be envisaged as a thread. This thread not only animates the research project, but also illuminates the politics of the haptic. As Stewart (2007:16) notes, ‘there’s a politics to being/feeling connected (or not), to impacts that are shared (or not), to energies spent worrying or scheming (or not), to affective contagion, and to all the forms of attunement and attachment’.

Affective contagions and previous archival relations

To illuminate these affective contagions, I present two archival moments from my previous work with archives, where I had the opportunity to research the personal archive of Gerald Kremenstein, a gay Jewish immigrant whose papers constituted a detailed archive of the London’s gay and lesbian scene from 1971 to 2008. In the research on the Gerald Kremenstein collection that I undertook as part of my first year of funded research training I utilized the themes of body, community and archival grain in order to organize the archival findings.¹³ The Gerald Kremenstein collection located at London Metropolitan Archives is a unique assemblage of thirty– eight files, entailing multiple documents within each, which not only depict the vibrant queer nightlife of London from 1971 to 2008 but also, due to its diversity, the collection illustrates the shifts that occurred in the community and social landscape through the years. When working with archives, one can never predict what one will find. Being prepared to be surprised is crucial while doing archival research since what might be summoned is often unexpected, or better yet, what will strike the researcher’s attention is bound to the moment. Working with the Kremenstein’s collection, I was often surprised by the amount of the unexpected ephemera that came out of the boxes, like ticket

¹³ Here I am referring to a 1+3 years UBEL– DTP ESRC Research Studentship granted by the Economic and Social Research Council, UK. This work was part of my MRes in Social Research, during the first year of the funded research training.

events, club entries, sauna cards and the information that they entailed. Each file was a surprise and from Kremenstein's trip to America in 1982 to the forty-three newspaper cuttings that hold LGBT related news in the course of 37 years, this data collection process revealed numerous findings that both exceeded and influenced my thinking. In the majority of the pamphlets, brochures, tickets, and party invitations there were handwritten dates and many 'ticks' at newspaper listings, as well as various handwritten notes marking 'attended' on the leaflets. This presence produced a strong affect within me, underlying the trace that is left, and the body implied, particularly in a collection of ephemera.

Another incident that taught me the organically messy positionality of archival research was the 'missing page'. Going through the newspaper cuttings I found a cutting from Ms London 22nd of August 1994 (p 6-7) that stated, 'let's hear it for the 'fag hag' says Amanda Muir, as more and more women join the gay club scene'. Reading the article, I noted the problematic notion of viewing subjects as accessories and simultaneously the safe space that gay clubs offered to women. However, the reading process remained unfinished, since the other half of the article was missing. Two days and five cuttings later, I found the rest of the newspaper cutting, which happened to be the beginning of the article and finally the title 'A letter from a girl like me' (p6). I was affected by this finding, as if were already familiar with this girl's experience and felt that it was now upon me to connect her story. Becoming an active part of the recreation of this article, I had to intervene in order to reunite the pages and re-construct her narrative. This lost page did not change the problematic and stereotypical content of the text, but I think demonstrates my involvement in the reassembling of the story and its impact in reading the archive.

Unravelling and going through the archive then produced an affective experience moved by the power of the 'haptic'. Considering the materiality of the archive and what Steedman (2002) calls 'material presence', this personal archive helped me to practically realize that

examining the archive involves not only the body that created the archive but also the body of the researcher. My contact with this archive also illustrated Steedman's point on the theoretical importance of dust, as a remaining, transcending part of the archive. My body reacted to the dust by sneezing and by protecting the archive from my sneezing at the same time. The discovery of the book given as a present at my birth produced an embodied reaction as well. These embodiments demonstrate, on one hand, that dust 'is about circularity, the impossibility of things disappearing, or going away, or being gone' (Steedman, 2002: 164), and my newly formed relationship with the collection and the archive, on the other.

Bearing in mind that affect can be understood as a force which occurs in the ceaseless contact of materials and haptic touches, and as something that is both with and without temporal boundaries, on the one hand, and employing the 'haptic' as a methodological approach on the other, a route is formed which functions both as a way to explore the beyond, the 'in between', and the potentialities of this psychosocial intervention. What is crucial to grasp is that the temporal boundaries which archives might both entail and exceed, concern bodies that lived, struggled, and desired in a precise time and place. The proposed haptic reading of the archives in question is a way to navigate an exploration among and within them, not with aspirations of scientific omnipotence, vindication, or recuperation. It is rather a situated reading led by the physical and affective force of the haptic touch and awareness of the certain unattainable part of the archives. However, precisely because archives entail embodiments, lives and dust, they carry responsibilities and powerful pledges that require contact, care and commitment. As Derrida (1996:27) prompts us, the question of the archive 'is a question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow'. Thus, as I undertake this haptic exploration I remain sensitive to the intricacies of archival relations.

At this point, it is crucial to reflect on my positionality and my personal relationship with the archives in question. The encounter with the book *History of the Greek Feminist movement* (Moschou– Sakorrafou, 1990) in the beginning of my research, underlines the relational aspect of this project. This project thus is based, it begins with, and it is about, relations. It is hard to pin down when my interest in these archives began, since I have been part of a network of relationalities, quite before I took the decision to research these magazines.

Here, it might be useful to give a brief statement about how I conceive ‘relations’. The psychosocial starting point for me is that relations can be thought of as simultaneously patterned by social/cultural processes and dynamics *and* experienced and lived as if individual and personal. Relations are a cauldron of social/cultural, material forces and psychic forces, whether these latter be considered the product of ‘drives’ (Freud 1989) and/or human need for relations with objects (Klein 2018); or as flows of ‘affect’ (Wetherell 2012).¹⁴ As such, relations are shaped materially via possibilities and prohibitions contained in the social/cultural and affectively, via flows of affect and/or feeling states as these unfold in given contexts, social interactions, encounters with cultural artefacts and ‘felt’ emotionally. The sneezing caused by the dust is a concrete example of this condensation of relation — past and present — since the artefacts in the archive are themselves an effect of a social-cultural practice (of collecting/preserving); my arrival into the building that starts a flow of affect carrying my feelings about history; and my anticipation and excitement about what I might find. As such my sneezing is as much a manifestation of physical ‘irritation’ caused by micro-elements of history and paper and ink called dust, together with the expression, overspilling, of my feelings.

¹⁴ For more conceptualisations on ‘affect’ see footnote 10.

Relations are also located in the varieties of spatial and organizational forms that shape and contain our living — families/households, workplaces, universities, markets, parks, streets, buses/trams, museums, archives, and all the varieties of artefacts each of these sites contains. If relations are these complex processes of sociality at both the overarching structural level *and* the lived/experienced modes of relating in the various sites of living, they are also open to change. Changes might also derive as an effect of transformations and challenges at both structural and quotidian levels.

It is then, out of a field of relations conceived in the way just outlined, that this project took shape and was pursued by ‘me’ — a psychosocially produced subject — who would cross a portal into feminist and queer movements that existed as part of my past and present and which I would be ‘driven’ to inquire into. Through my parents, my friends, my erotes, my experiences and studies, this project was already in the making.¹⁵ I have always been interested in how desire is being mediated psychically, socially, and spatially and this archival project gave me the chance to explore these links, as a yearning for connections across time, beyond a logic of discrete ‘generations’. Furthermore, born and raised in Athens in the 90s, I experienced shifts that included global and local changes: turbulent economies, precariousness, the digital media, years of crisis, gentrification, resistance, lives lived normatively, lives lived otherwise, death.

The political landscape of Athens inevitably influenced me as a subject as well as my decision to relocate to London for an MA in Psychosocial Studies in 2015, and my subsequent life in London for seven years. All these factors provided an enriched outlook in

¹⁵ Here I use the greek term ‘erotes’, to write about the times that I have fallen in love. ‘Erotes’ is the plural of the word ‘eros/erotas’ meaning the act/state of falling in love. In Greek, this state is conceived differently from the act of ‘love/loving’ (Greek: agape). It is important to note that ‘erotes’ does not have the same meaning as ‘lovers’ and I perceive them as different categories. The term ‘erotas’ concerns psychic desire, it is something ‘felt’, yet it does not concern necessarily an act/practice. It is not semantically pre-given that an ‘erotas’ would become a ‘lover’, though often that can be the case. Erotas can be linked with some of the ways in which Lorde (1984) theorizes the different aspects of the erotic.

practical and theoretical ways in which ‘living differently’ concerned me, making this desire more conscious over the years, leading to the realisation of this project. Entering the field of Psychosocial studies from a psychology background, I was able to place various theories on the ‘psyche’ within the realm of sociopolitical bonds and historical contexts.¹⁶

What is more, living and studying abroad while never letting go of my emotional ties with Greece, I had the chance to re-think, come to terms, and further challenge ideas of ‘Greekness’. To put it another way, in chapters 1 and 2, where I place the warp of the project, I weave in my positionality in the writing through the yarns that I consider relevant to this archival exploration. Another scholar most definitely would have created a different weave with the same archival material. Notably, the concept of ‘Greekness’ is critically placed upon the warp as I uphold an anti-nationalist stand and a desire towards ‘queering Greekness’.¹⁷ I am the sole translator of the archival materials and in the ‘Warp M. Translations, the incommensurable and otherwise’ I discuss the inevitable challenges of translation practices. The original language of the stories is different from the one I write them into, in this thesis. A task that not only complicates the endeavour further, but also clarifies the importance of my positionality as a psychosocial researcher. I invite the reader to view the philosophical conundrums that I often raise in this project as part of my positionality as I weave in archival stories that touched me. As a psychosocial researcher, I chose the alert – surrender reading position as theorized in this introduction, embracing the complexity of such an endeavour. My desire to examine these archives haptically then derives from a need to explore ‘Greekness’ through past stories of people who not always, not by default, yet in relation to me, experienced sexual politics/life/desire differently (yet similar to mine). As I weave in the

¹⁶ Here I am referring to my first degree in Psychology, class of 2014, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

¹⁷ For more on Queering Greekness see Chapter 2 warp E. and the work of Apostolidou (2018).

archival material upon the loom, it becomes clear that the stories I analyse are relevant to the socio–historical present and ongoing struggles of all the rebel hearts.¹⁸

Overview of Chapters

In this haptic exploration the chapter structure can be seen as the loom. This is why in the introduction of this project, I focused on the haptic. By mobilizing Campt’s notion of the haptic, above, I have illustrated vignettes that I think show the haptic at work and the haptic as a way in to explore the archives in question. Campt’s theorization of the haptic as a three–fold touch which includes indexical, physical, and affective qualities is further built upon in the influential book *Listening to Images: An Exercise to Counterintuition*. There, Campt (2017:72) identifies the temporalities of the haptic encounter as ‘the grammar of the archive’. By employing the capacities of the haptic touch to trace the affective potentialities of identification photography of the African diaspora, Campt perceives these images as sites of ‘rupture and refusal’ (Campt, 2017:72) a kind of indication of the ‘otherwise’ lives of those captured in the photographs. Taking into consideration Campt’s invite, haptic encounters are also here part of the grammar of the archive in this written weave. Methodological implications of the haptic inevitably include a hand that weaves – mine. While I hope that the reader recognizes the haptic too, I can offer no guarantee but stories, interlocutors, and yarns of connections.

Chapters 1 and 2 constitute the warp, i.e. the yarns that I place in the loom vertically, as the base upon which the weft will be interlaced. Chapter 3,4,5 and 6 are dedicated to the different magazines that are central to this project and I carry some of the yarns that I trace to gently place them on the weft. Chapter 7, the final chapter of this experiment, ensures the capacity of the weave to be removed from the loom and placed into the world.

¹⁸ This links up with the conclusion of chapter 1, where part of the warp is placed.

Chapter 1 takes a public murder scene as a poignant example of the violence against queer subaltern subjects and conceptualizes the importance of their examination in queer and feminist Greek movements. By employing methodological strategies in the work of Spivak, Campt, Sedgwick, Arondekar and Muñoz, chapter 1 opposes gestures of recuperation in order to allow for the potentialities of affective touches in archival encounters. Considering the archive's materialities, textualities and subjecthood's ephemerality, the last part of the chapter presents scholarly archival research by Bost (2019), Steedman (2002) and Stoler (2009), to ground this project and offer a discussion of the archival embodiments that 'touch' and move us. Theorizing archives as sites of death and being, and echoing two vignettes tied to the process of my archival research that weave parts of the piece together, the chapter highlights the impacts of ephemeral affective dimensions and, as a textured piece that emerges through hapticity, becomes ultimately about rebel souls who dare to desire and live otherwise in a world that promotes their eradication.

Chapter 2 is the second part of the warp. Having set the theoretical ground in the form of yarn in the previous chapter, this one is formulated by warps that emerged from my first fieldwork impressions. This way the warp expands and the threads I place here transgress the whole project, like the previous set of warp threads. Here, I propose an alert surrender approach while reading the archives, which I argue works well with the haptic. Also, I discuss ephemera and evidence of memory, inspired by the work of Agard-Jones (2012) and Muñoz (1996). The next warp thread I place is that of social movements to argue that this research is an experiment and an inquisition and not an evaluation of the publications in question. This clarification gets amplified in the final sections of the chapter where I take the archival story of Petros to claim the incommensurable of translation, the limits of language in general. Finally, I add the thread of difference, the last one on the warp whose necessity will be revealed throughout the project.

Chapter 3 is the first one of the weft. The first magazine I weave in horizontally is the feminist magazine *Skoupa* (Eng: broom). Taking the magazine's creation and scope as a starting point various threads on women's resistance emerge in archival stories and beyond. To position *Skoupa* in the weft I offer a brief conceptualization of the women's movement in Greece and its intricacies. Also, I touch upon different types of feminism to comment on the plurality and different stakes at play. Taking water as a metaphor for perseverance, force, fluidity and vitality, I argue that women's ongoing political struggle mimics its qualities. As an example I bring in the documentary 'Girls of The Rain' (Dimitriou 2011) which maps women's accounts of resistance during the Greek Dictatorship. The final section of the chapter is dedicated to archival stories found in *Skoupa* and their influence upon me. Ultimately, I claim that the task of emotional memory requires our attention and it is a necessary endeavour, then, now and still.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to *Amfi*. The chapter starts with *Amfi*'s scope on liberation. To account for the wayward public accumulated by *Amfi* I bring in Warner's (2002) theory of publics and counterpublics and Hartman's (2019) take on waywardness. My main argument in this chapter is a particular formula of social mobilizations that I observe while reading *Amfi*, that I name 'Anti-seriousness' mobilization tactics. To ground my argument I employ the work of Hall (2017) and Gramsci's 'common sense' to later discuss how queer acts challenge it (Halberstam 2011). To distinguish 'Anti-seriousness' mobilization tactics from mere humour, I touch upon theories of joke and humor (Billig 2005; Kuipers 2006; Ridanpää 2014). The second part of this chapter is an illustration of my argument based on archival stories of *Amfi*.

Chapter 5 engages with *Kraximo* (Eng: slating) and my relation to it. I offer the scope of the magazine, its critical stance, and its dedication to politics of desire and resistance. I argue that while reading this archive I sensed a fluorescent quality in the threads mobilized, introducing

a fourth register of the haptic, that of the visual. Part of the chapter then concerns in grounding my argument in relation to ‘visual hapticality’. In this journey my main interlocutors are scholars like Rubin; Campt; Barthes; Marks; Hall; Evans; Deleuze; Guattari; Benjamin; Taussig; Conty. Ultimately, by fluorescent I mean that as reading in haptic and ‘alert–surrender’ mode I sensed some luminous haptic registers of refusal. theorizing these threads as fluorescent I try to signal the differing part of *Kraximo* in the weft. This does not mean that all the other yarns from all the weft and warp have the same colour nor that it is in my remit to define the colours of the weave. It is rather a medium to express– as much as possible– the affective imprint and its variations. As ever, the second part of the chapter includes archival stories from *Kraximo* which I claim carry something phosphoric as they enter this exploratory weave.

In chapter 6 I explore the archive of *Lavrys* (1982–1983). Through my haptic reading, threads of love, intimacy and difference emerge in a bundle of stories. Discussing lesbian desire and compulsory heterosexuality I mobilize the work of Rich in dialogue with Rubin. Utilizing an article of *Lavrys* as a starting point, I argue that this publication requires, asks, anticipate for ‘touch’, *aggigma*, making the haptic a touch in suspense. The work of Kantsa (2010), Lorde (1984) and Lewis (2017) are employed here to account for difference, presence, and the importance of positionality as key elements to feminist political struggle. The chapter ends with a particular story from the archive, a love letter and simultaneously a diary of Vaggelio’s lover time in prison.

Chapter 7 completes this project by placing the weave outside the loom and into the city as political space. Having always in mind the haptic as the methodological tool which simultaneously permits a bodily touch (physical), an indexical touch (of content) and an affective touch (of relations and connections), the stories I have included in this thesis are those that touched me haptically. In chapter 5, I argued for a fourth dimension of the haptic,

that of the involvement of the eye, ‘the visual’, to account for certain fluorescent trends that I noticed in *Kraximo*. In this final chapter I employ the theory of *rhythmanalysis* of Lefebvre to tighten the combinations of haptic relationalities that emerged upon weaving. I argue for the never–ending flow of social movements and discuss the work of Oliver and Myers (2003). The second part of the chapter focuses on Lefebvre’s representational space, right to difference and the possibilities of everydayness. I claim that these concepts exude from the archives in question. Fitting to an ending of a haptic exploration such as this one, the project finishes with an archival story.

The question of anonymity and pseudonyms is a recurrent ethical question for researchers. Many scholars consider that naming adds the credibility of ethnographic ‘truth’ (McGranahan 2021; Weiss 2021), while others emphasize the importance of names as a means towards the recognition of research participants’ role in knowledge production (Shneiderman 2021). By the same token, others consider pseudonyms as ‘anti–citation’, that is, a practice that is not giving credit where it is due (Weiss 2021). One thing is certain, choosing to name research contributors (with pseudonym or not) should be an informed choice of the researcher. For example, it is clear that in many cases research participants might choose full anonymity because they do not feel safe to have their identity disclosed. In these circumstances, in my view full anonymity should be respected. For this project, I have chosen to keep the names as I found them in the archives. However, many of the contributors are already anonymous or use a pseudonym. My aim was not to trace them down for credibility or affirmation. In my view, the magazines’ contributors – no matter their names –participated in something collective. Likewise, those who used names are included in this project as I encountered in the publications.¹⁹ By locating archives as places of life, death, imaginations, debt, and

¹⁹ For a discussion of the challenges inherent in protecting anonymity when renaming research interlocutors see Posocco (2014). For more on Ethical choices regarding anonymity and pseudonyms see McGranahan (2021) *The Truths of Anonymity: Ethnographic Credibility and the Problem with Pseudonyms in Rethinking*

power, I am aware of the absence and presence they entail. Often contributors of the magazines wished to remain anonymous or used pseudonyms, there is not a define way of knowing which is which, and I argue that this should remain unclear. Whenever I find names within the magazines, I preserve it as such. Similarly, when the people involved in the magazine choose to remain anonymous or use pseudonyms I follow their usage. By employing the methodology of ‘the haptic’, I obtain an ethnographic sensibility applied to the archives.

I conducted the biggest part of my research at the *National Library of Greece* based at the *Stavros Niarchos Foundation and Cultural Center* (SNFCC). The fieldwork happened in stages, starting from September 2019 to September 2021. Elsewhere I discuss how the COVID–19 pandemic affected my research, arguing that the haptic touch could still appear, despite the restricted physical sensoria (Gianniri, 2021). The location of my fieldwork is further discussed in chapter 2 as the first fieldwork notes emerge.

Haptic limitations: embracing chaos

As with any methodology, the haptic does not come without limitations. The main difficulty that I saw while leading a haptic exploration, was trying to keep the pattern both ‘under weaving’ and ‘possible’. Here, the analogy of the weaving process can help us again. In particular, it is not often clear to the observer – or even the weaver at times – what the final design of the weave might look like, and it was not clear to me when I delved into the archives. Structuring and exploring often do not go together, but since this is meant to be first and foremost a thesis, organizing it in legible ways is the least one can do. By employing the process of weaving I am trying to account for different parts in different ways. Chapters 1 and 2, as the warp, are steady parts that underpin the project, as a structuring background

Pseudonyms in Ethnography. <https://americanethnologist.org/features/collections/rethinking-pseudonyms-in-ethnography>.

where space is made for the yarns of the weft in chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6, where the worlds found in the magazines are woven through.

The weft ultimately is about archival stories, queer stories in the archives, stories of connection, calls to transgression, being and relating differently. The final chapter is what remains when the weaving is over: what kind of relations are produced, what kind of tensions, what kind of space is created, what is gone, what is yet to be imagined. If the structure of this project seems hard to follow, the challenge lies in structuring the stories of the haptic touch as an already woven thing. A simultaneous presence of physical, indexical and affective registers, which the method of the haptic implies, favours motion and ‘moving’ instead of fix interpretive formats. However, hopefully the structure of the loom can hold the weaving as a process of perpetual contact, with different parts, threads, and colours. The ‘alerted and surrendered’ positionality that opens to modalities of the haptic touch, further complicated the structure of the project. How can I structure this weave into words that can be legible, but also remain open to the autonomous imaginings of the reader? Ultimately, can anyone else see the wefts of ‘otherwise’ that are being produced? These questions are beyond my capacity to offer definitive answers and remain open. Dedicating separate chapters for each magazine opens a space to explore their stories in more depth. Now, perhaps one reader might recognize each chapter as a separate weft, another might see the connections, one might lose some threads and yearn for others. All this comes with what touches each one of us, differently. If a thread seems lost, one has to let it be. One might see it again in the end, another one might not. However, the thread is still there, interwoven, in the fabric of the weave. A colourful uneven composition of touching stories from the archives. Queer practices of relating, experiences, love, pain, politics of desire, refusal, opposition; are all there for us to feel.

CHAPTER 1

Death and being in Greek topologies, queer theories and the archive

‘Be damn careful or be carefully damned’: a murder case

On September 21st 2018, Zak Kostopoulos was murdered in the centre of Athens in public view. Kostopoulos, a queer activist, an antifascist, a writer, a drag queen (Zakie Oh) was beaten to death by three men. The police were present and complicit. Framed for a robbery which was in fact never attempted, Kostopoulos’ murder was followed by a conflagration of lies and media misinformation in an attempt to cover up the case and frame Kostopoulos as an intoxicated robber, as if this would somehow pardon the murderous act. However, due to video recordings of the brutal attack on the one hand, and Kostopoulos’ considerable fame on the other, the case received vast media coverage. After an autopsy, toxicological tests, interviews and a number of protest rallies, the culprits were charged with murder and a trial is ongoing.

Kostopoulos’ murder is a harrowing example of the violence which serves and preserves the sanctification of the figure of the ‘family–man’ whose murderous capacities can be exonerated by the status quo. The figure of the ‘family–man’ circulates in public discourse as that one who is ‘above–board’, since he falls in the conservative tripartite schema of Greek identifications ‘motherland–religion–family’. This chant, which will be analysed later in this chapter (see the section Warp C), already offers useful information on the framing of Kostopoulos’ murder by mainstream Greek media. The property and business of the ‘family–man’ was threatened and the businessman did all that he could to protect it.

The threat is no other than Kostopoulos' otherness and outspoken self who always dared to be who he/she/they were, even if that meant being recurrently at the receiving end of homophobic abuse.²⁰

Kostopoulos, in an interview three years prior to the murder, when asked about the support of the LGBT community, highlighted the problems with the 'be careful' rhetoric: 'Be careful of what? Of not being myself? What does it mean? Not to be provocative? Not to be me? If that is the case, I cannot be careful. I refuse to!' (Kamani & Kostopoulos 2017, my translation)

This stated defiance to comply with normativity and lead a 'just so' life might be what made Kostopoulos a prolific writer, performer, and public speaker. The daring question though is: what if Kostopoulos wasn't famous? What if this horrendous public murder case was about an alleged robber who was killed because of his 'being otherwise'? Kostopoulos' murderer is still widely regarded as a 'hearth and home' father and business owner that defended his property at any cost (FreedomNews, 2018). This coverage of events makes Kostopoulos the victim in an unfortunate set of circumstances. In the era of 'hearth and home' murders and *homines sacri*, how can one propose and defend modalities of existing otherwise?²¹

To put it in another way, Kostopoulos' murder case is one more site of the ways in which neo-liberal modes of governance operate. In Kostopoulos' case, policies and socialities that require CCTV footage to prove the lynching prior to calling it murder, turn the killing of

²⁰ Here I am using all three pronouns because Kostopoulos used interchangeably 'he' and 'she' in Greek. Due to language disparities I have also added 'they' in English. However, I am not in a position to assume anything else except the limits of (descriptive) language.

²¹ Here I am thinking with Agamben (1998) 'If today there is no longer any clear figure of the sacred man, it is perhaps because we are all virtually *homines sacri*' in *Homo Sacer. Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, 115. and Sadiya Hartman's book 'Wayward lives, beautiful experiences: intimate histories of social upheaval' (2019) New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

queer life into a spectacle.²² By the same token, cases of people's evictions and homelessness become increasingly common, especially in countries where people seek refuge to.²³

Now, it is not that the killing of subalterns is a new phenomenon — volumes of history books can attest to that. What I think is important to note here, is the newly available assimilation policies at play. Attesting to these social arrangements is part of the warp before we move on to examine the sociocultural context within which the magazines were produced (in this chapter) and then the framework of the magazines in the next chapters. Here, I have in mind the notion of 'homonormativity' that Duggan introduces. The politics of homonormativity permit categories of homosexual relationships recognized and praised by the state. Duggan (2002:179) describes homonormativity as:

A politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption.

The homonormative citizen, by adhering to politics of dominant state narratives – and only then – can be recognized as a subject who is being 'careful' and thus a legitimate civilian. Although there is nothing 'queer' about homonormativity, the arch enemy of such politics is still queer lives, lives lived in opposition. Consequently, this tactic reproduces the rhetoric of normativity and targets those who do not set aside any political force of their non-heterosexuality in order to be contiguous to society and to traditional conservative values.

²² For more see the Forensic architecture case: the killing of Zak Kostopoulos. Accessible here: <https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/the-killing-of-zak-kostopoulos>.

²³ See articles: 'Refugee eviction causes fury in Greece' in Aljazeera <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/09/refugee-eviction-fury-greece-190927121649806.html> 'Continued evictions and tragedy in Calais' in <https://refugeerights.org.uk/2019/03/26/continued-evictions-and-tragedy-in-calais/> Also 'Stop Lock-change evictions, say no to street homelessness' in http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/news_and_events/news/3468_stop_lock-change_evictions_say_no_to_street_homelessness.

Resisting the bait of assimilation comes with a warning: ‘be damn careful or be carefully damned’.

In Athens pride 2019, which I was able to attend, Kostopoulos’ friends and lovers went on stage to celebrate Zak’s life and writings. During the moment of silence for Zak’s memory the only thing one could hear was the shuddering sobs of the crowd, our bodies ever resisting silence. ‘Pride 2019 will close the same way it did last year, with Zakie Oh’, said Zak’s brother before leaving the stage to a video–wall of Zakie Oh’s closing performance back in 2018. I find this gesture, that is, the replay of Zakie’s performance but also the act of ‘bringing’ Zak on stage again, crucial not only as a tribute to Kostopoulos’ memory but also as a reminder for the attendees of Kostopoulos’ presence in the absence. The archival footage of Zakie Oh dancing and singing one more time in the most central and crowded square of Athens, Syntagma Square, fifteen minutes away from the location where Kostopoulos was murdered, and with the audience simultaneously crying, laughing, and dancing, was a transcending moment. Within this moment of mourning and remembrance and presencing (Lewis, 2017) the loss of Zak was painfully present. Kostopoulos, Zak, Zakie oh, and all the other possible qualities and denominations that made Zak unique are an example of the multiplicities that comprise one’s life and experiences. Between societal structures of family and institutions, the public eye, the artistic and political outlets of drag performance and the intimacies of friendships and lovers Zak was being and becoming Zakie oh, Zak Kostopoulos and Zak again. It is important to clarify that some of these facets of human life are ephemerally bound and cannot be fully contained by any archive. This admission is crucial and strategically important when engaging with archives of queer desire and social claims.

Taking the site of Kostopoulos public murder in the centre of daytime Athens as the first yarn, the warp already begins to shape. In the sections that follow the rest of the warp is being placed in the room vertically. All these theories and positionalities will remain at play, often

in the background, as I weave in them horizontally the stories from the magazines in the chapters to come.

Warp A. Responsibilities and impossibilities

Heather Love (2007) offers a captivating approach to the necessity of accounting for loss and grief that entrench queer beings throughout history. Love stresses the importance of focusing on the past, rather than just celebrating the superficial neoliberal progress of gay and lesbian rights which leads to homonormativity and assimilation. Focusing on the power of negative affects that concern queer subjects such as shame and loss, Love (2007:21) notes:

The effort to recapture the past is doomed from the start. To reconstruct the past, we build on ruins; to bring it to life, we chase after the fugitive dead. Bad enough if you want to tell the story of a conquering race, but to remember history's losers is worse, for the loss that swallows the dead absorbs these others into an even more profound obscurity.

The 'profound obscurity' that shadows queer history then should be considered as we focus on the past and the fragmented ruins that remain. The preoccupation with the past is not about a fixation on restoration or a nostalgia of encompassing the 'lost pieces', but it is rather about pieces of loss, death, life, and love. 'The difficulty of reaching the dead will not keep us from trying' Love (2007:21) prompts us. At the same time, it is important to realize that the certain 'impossibility' which follows archival research and prevents recuperation not only *is* but *should be*. Echoing the influential work of the feminist and postcolonial scholar Gayatri Spivak (1988; 1987), who emphasized the impossibility of subaltern subjects in colonial India to speak (for themselves) within a colonial or nationalist discourse, the present research will not attempt to 'speak for' or retrieve unmarred subjects from the archival process. What this project engages with is performing a psychosocial intervention that seeks to explore how

social beings dared to desire and lived ‘otherwise’. Calling this endeavour, a psychosocial one underlines a critical engagement with the intricacies and multifaceted features that constitute a subject as such, in the psychic and social realms (Lewis, 2009). Most importantly, it recognizes my personal involvement in this haptic exploration. A textural and textual experiment as the one happening here inevitably requires my weaving hand as well as my reading positionalities towards the archive.

Spivak’s well-known conclusion that ‘the subaltern has no history and cannot speak’ (Spivak 1988: 287) in the context of colonial production, is a fundamental statement to bear in mind while researching lives, events and longings led by subjects who are considered socially and historically subordinate. However, we should not forget the colonial context that Spivak describes and surely the case of Greece is greatly different from that. In this respect, I am not making a claim then that Greek subjects ‘cannot speak or have no history’, but rather, that subalternities living in Greece– whose desires do not adhere to, or better yet, oppose the dominant patriarchal structures– have ‘no history’ and cannot speak or be heard. They are rather being ‘spoken for’ publicly usually in derogatory terms, or their struggles are being strategically silenced and ignored (Christofilou, 2019).²⁴ One eerie example of how subalterns’ existence is up for debate and being jeopardized constantly is the poll that Tatiana Stefanidou posed on Greek television two days after Kostopoulos’ murder by the jewellery shop ‘family–man’ owner. Stefanidou asked the viewers: ‘Do you agree with the jeweller’s actions?’²⁵ It should go without saying that a killing of a person should not be debatable. Yet, we still need to say it. Within this absurd paradox, it is ‘impossible’ for subalterns to speak, yet it is crucial to not be silenced. Following the tools that the notion of Derridean

²⁴ For example see article: Gay-rights activists lament the acquittal of a homophobic Greek bishop in <https://www.economist.com/erasmus/2018/03/16/gay-rights-activists-lament-the-acquittal-of-a-homophobic-greek-bishop>.

²⁵ See article in Greek, Tatiana’s Poll on Skai TV about the lynching of Zak Kostopoulos <https://tvxs.gr/news/ellada/gkalop-tatianas-skai-gia-epepe-na-lintsaristei-o-zak-kostopoylos>.

deconstruction offers, where a critical approach to reading a text is performed as a way to contextualize the relationship between language and meaning production, Spivak (1988:201) sees the greatest gift of deconstruction as its ability to ‘question the authority of the investigating subject without paralysing him, persistently transforming conditions of impossibility into possibility’.²⁶

No televised performance of Zakie Oh can ‘bring’ Zak back. Similarly, the archive can contain traces of lives and events that can be greatly affective, but archives are also evidence of that which is forever lost and cannot be traced back. To put it in another way, this warp thread places the topologies produced there where the ephemeral meets and touches the material as potentialities for being otherwise.

Warp B. Living otherwise: an introduction not a definition

In thinking about the radical practice of living *otherwise* an important companion for my work is the American feminist and cultural history scholar Sadiya Hartman. In Hartman’s book *Wayward Lives Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval* (2019) we come across intimate histories of black women in the cusp of the twentieth century. The book is an invitation to recognize young black women as ‘radical thinkers who tirelessly imagined other ways to live and never failed to consider how the world might be otherwise’ (Hartman, 2019:xvii). In presenting stories found in the ‘life–worlds’ of young black women in New York during that time, Hartman shares stories of open subterfuge and Hartman’s careful work shows how these young black women became ungovernable through everyday practices of intimacy and desire.

²⁶ A method first described in Derrida’s *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak) but is recurrent in all Derridean theory.

Hartman's archival experiment transfuses a desire to be 'otherwise' through lived experience. The lives that young black women led in Hartman's book refuse the social script available to them. Living with a desire of insurgences towards an 'otherwise'. Hartman's work can be crucial in recognizing the radical beauty of these lives as 'a transfiguration of the given'(2019: 33). Within the lives that Hartman narrates, the normative standards and the ways of being and doing they evince and legitimise, were just refused.

I return to Hartman's ground-breaking work later in this chapter (see the section 'Warp G. Archives as promise, debt, death and being'). Here I introduce the concept of an 'otherwise' rather than a concrete definition. Notably, Hartman will be a valuable interlocutor in this project since the warp yarn of 'the otherwise' crosses all the stands of the weft and ties the stories in the magazines together. Eschewing strict definitions, the otherwise is what you want it to be since it refuses normative constructions of legitimacy and value. What I want it to be. I hope that through my haptic exploration the archival stories 'speak of this' otherwise more eloquently and freely than I can in this chapter.

Hartman's formulation informs my approach to the stories, interviews, desires of being and living otherwise as they emerge in the archives. Utilizing the motion of weaving, I invite the reader to follow the various theoretical threads that will emerge in order to knit a conceptual and methodological approach for an engagement with the archive, which will hopefully not only constitute this project, but it will also make it novel and engaging.

Warp C1. Conceptualizing Greece part one: queer experiences

The experiences of feminist and LGBT collectives in Greece in the 20th century have been partially documented (Kyriakos 2017; Mais 2015; Papanikolaou 2013; Riedel 2005) and many have conducted research specifically about queer experiences in modern Greece (Yannakopoulos 2016; Eleftheriadis 2015; Papanikolaou 2014; Kansta 2012; Dendrinis 2008).

In *Conceptualizations and Practices of Feminism: from Metapolitefsi Onwards*, Vaiou and Psarra (2018) note the inadequate tracing of the feminist along with the queer movement in Greece, while anti-feminist and discriminatory rhetorics of the era are well documented. Taking into consideration the sociopolitical climate in Greece and the structural homophobia present through the public sphere – such as the military (Dendrinis,2008) – and the numerous hate crimes that remain officially undocumented, scholars' claims for further and in – depth research of the complexities of 'daring to be otherwise' in Greece are very relevant. However, this project is not a historiography of the movements in question. Rather, what this psychosocial project aims to explore are the relationalities and stories of 'living otherwise' that emerge from a haptic archival exploration.

It is important to note that as a psychosocial endeavour, this research will adopt a critical approach to the archives and the concepts in question in order to intervene and challenge dominant narratives of being and belonging in Greece. Papanikolaou, a prolific scholar regarding queer identities in Greece, highlights that while even the thought of an historiographical mapping of the feminist and LGBT movements is important, it should not be the only way of approaching such discourses when theorizing queer history in Greece. Notably, Papanikolaou (2018:174) argues that a critical analysis involving past queer and feminist movements of Greece should also mean:

finding ways to underline the reasons it is not (and should not be taken as) a unidirectional itinerary of liberation. It also means finding the ways to show the (not always unproblematic) intersection of the LGBTQI+ movement with the antiracist and the feminist movements.

According to *The Social Situation Concerning Homophobia and Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation in Greece*, a report that each member state of the European Union had to conduct in 2009:

There are no official or scientific quantitative data available on hate crime in Greece. Nor are there data on the character of hate crime. No registration of hate crime is performed by police or other public authorities (FRA,2009:5).

First of all, it is crucial to note that the report fails to define ‘hate crime’ in a specific way, even though it sets to describe homophobia and discrimination as per its title. The last section of the report is on ‘Good Practice’ and, following a review of legislation, it concludes that ‘No good practices have been identified in Greece’ (FRA, 2009:12). Similarly, no official records or quantitative data on hate crimes on the grounds of sexual orientation are available, a predicament that clearly does not mean that hate crimes do not happen in Greece or that police brutality is absent. On the contrary, the police in Greece are usually actively engaged with hate crimes, as Kostopoulos’ murder in 2018 (Kolasa–Sikiaridi, 2018) and the recent homophobic attack on Nikos Sofianos and his partner by police officers (e–kathimerini, 2019) show. This report published only a year after the murder of the teenager Grigoropoulos by a police officer which initiated the riots of December 2008 in Athens (BBC News, 2010), offers a rather superficial and partial ‘official’ account. The official status of the report is highlighted here only to foreground all the ‘unofficial’ hate crimes and the abuse of power that state officials perform daily on queer and non – conforming subjects in Greece. Considering the austerity and the rise of the alt – right in the years following the report, ‘otherness’ in Greece became even more the target of abuse and abjection. Eleftheriadis (2015) performs a discourse analysis of cultural production of various queer collectives in Athens and Thessaloniki to examine the ways in which these groups create autonomous discursive platforms in the era of austerity. As Eleftheriadis (2015: 1046) underlines:

with the rise of Golden Dawn as an institutional political force and the ‘fascization’ of the society, homosexuals tend to return to their position as the ‘others’ in a more violent

and visible way than before. Non – heteronormative subjects become the ‘shame’ of the nation, as they are discursively excluded from it.

Although this is key to understanding current queer collectives and mobilizations in Greece, I argue that non – heteronormative subjects in Greece never ceased to be the ‘shame’ of the nation – from the centralized power point of view – and it is vital to carry this thread in the analysis of their desire to be otherwise as they lived, loved, and protested in the years 1978–1993. The claim that austerity is the main reason that otherness in Greece is under attack overlooks, I think, the violence that systematic cis –heteropatriarchal structures of the state and institutions impose in order to reinforce values that restrain and oppress.²⁷

To better contextualize the sociocultural context in which *Amfi*, *Skoupa*, *Kraximo* and *Lavrys* emerged and circulated the two sections that follow examine the ‘patris, thriskeia, oikogeneia’ interpellation as a chant that describes ‘Greekness’ (Apostolidou 2018) through the years of *metapolitefsi*, of the Civil War. This section on Greek historiography and its social resonances will hopefully form a strong part of the warp in order to contextualise and clarify the tensions that the autonomous groups often had with leftist circles and Greek intellectuals.

Warp C2. Conceptualizing *metapolitefsi* and the ‘patris, thriskeia, oikogeneia’ interpellation

The autonomous groups of *Amfi*, *Skoupa*, *Kraximo* and *Lavrys* emerged in the 70s and early 80s. This period is often described by Greek scholars as ‘*metapolitefsi*’, signifying the end of the dictatorship of the colonels. The era of *metapolitefsi* accommodated many sociopolitical transitions within the modern Greek state. Post – dictatorship Greece can also be described as the Third Hellenic Republic since the term *metapolitefsi* usually refers to the early years of

²⁷ Here I am referring to cis–heteropatriarchy as a sociopolitical system where cis–heterosexual males are the ruling class and have authority which allows for systematic oppression and discrimination of other genders sexualities and classes. I am using the term ‘cis’ as an idiom for gender normative or gender conforming individuals, used currently in Greece and beyond.

the newly re – established state. The reorganization of political life during *metapolitefsi* led to the legitimization of the Greek communist party (KKE), to multiparty democracy, and to popularizing the belated influences of the unrests of May 1968 in France. At the same time, the *metapolitefsi* era for many students who fought to overthrow the regime, as well as for some people of the extra – parliamentary Left, fell short of their expectations for radical systemic changes (Kassimeris, 2005). Notably, after the fall of junta, the return of Konstantinos Karamanlis, who had been the Prime Minister from 1955–1963, was considered by many as a signal towards the previous state of affairs.²⁸ In the years of *metapolitefsi*, the right–wing party of Karamanlis’ *The National Radical Union* (1955– 1967) was re–named *New Democracy*. While disillusionment overwhelmed many combatants who fought against the regime, *metapolitefsi* saw the rise of social movements not only in Athens but also in other cities of Greece. Thus, the term *metapolitefsi* is mobilized here as a timeframe that signifies the end of the dictatorship and marks the re–introduction of democratic party politics in Greece.

It was during that era that the Gay liberation front of Greece – AKOE – was composed.²⁹ Mais’ (2015) historiographical account on the formation of the Homosexual Liberation Movement of Greece (AKOE), notes the affiliations and experiences of AKOE’s founders with other gay liberation movements in France and Italy (Fuori!). These connections were mostly formulated while AKOE members went to study in these countries (Mais, 2015). Under the conservative Greek dogma of ‘Motherland – Religion – Family’ (Greek: *patris*,

²⁸ For more on the topic see: Kornetis, K 2013, *Children of the Dictatorship: Student Resistance, Cultural Politics and the 'Long 1960s' in Greece*, Berghahn Books, Incorporated, New York, NY. Available from: ProQuest Ebook Central. In the section *Metapolitefsi* and beyond Kornetis analyses interviews with people who participated in student’s resistance during the dictatorship. For the return of Karamanlis Dafermos declares: ‘So much blood, so many sacrifices, so many struggles, in order to have Karamanlis back?’ From that point onward, I fell into a long depression, very long depression (Dafermos, interview)’ p.309.

²⁹ For more on the composition of AKOE see Theodorakopoulos’ Kaiadas (2004) Athens: Polyxromos Planitis and ‘Amfi and Liberation’ (2005) Athens: Polyxromos Planitis. Also, in chapter 7 I discuss Theodorakopoulos writings in relation to AKOE and liberation.

thriskia, oikogenia) as Mais emphasizes, the worst ‘disgrace’ that could happen to a nationalist or ‘petty bourgeoisie’ family of the time was a ‘communist – atheist – homosexual’ son, let alone all three in one (Mais, 2015:18). This excommunication triptych can give a glimpse into the predominant ideology of the conservative Greek family structure. By all means, the chant ‘*patris, thriskia, oikogenia*’ does not apply to every household’s values. However, the excommunication triptych that is considered its opposite, still describes the mainstream sociopolitical framing of the Greece state, since ‘nationalism’, ‘religion’ and ‘family’ are still considered three dominant identification pillars in the discursive production of modern Greek subjects. This of course does not mean that all subjects formulated in Greece follow this three – dimensional rhetoric. It rather means that every subject raised in Greece is called to identify in accordance with, in acceptance of, in opposition to or in defiance of these three dominant ideologies and their combinations. A fitting concept to understand this process is that of ‘interpellation’ as described by the French Marxist thinker Althusser. Althusser identified certain ideological state apparatuses such as the church, the school, the family, the media, etc. whose role is to sustain and reproduce ideas and codes that reinforce the ideological domination of the state. It is through *interpellation* according to Althusser that a person is being read as a subject.³⁰

In the case of Greece, the educational system is deeply connected to the Christian Orthodox Church and religion, as revealed by the name of the government department responsible for the educational system: *The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs*. Thus, national education in Greece already interpellates subjects in relation to nation and religion.

Notions of ‘family’, ‘education’, ‘religion’, and ‘nation’ as socially constructed markers organized under a ‘motherland’ is of course not unique to the case of Greece. For example, in

³⁰ For more on ideological state apparatuses see Louis Althusser (2001). ‘Ideology, and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)’ in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. New York and London: Monthly Review Press.

the collection *Forming Nation, Framing Welfare*, the authors take up the case of the UK and the British empire to discuss the ways in which social categories of gender, class, ‘race’ and religion have arranged structural relations in the UK nation – state over two centuries, and to examine how these social markers can be orchestrated by the nation – state as generators of ‘social problems’.³¹ In Chapter one, Hall (1998) historicizes the processes of establishing ‘proper’ families fit ‘for nation and empire’, a task that required monitoring and social interventions. Similarly, in Chapter six ‘Families of Meaning: Contemporary Discourses of the Family’ Lentell records the changes in family structures in contemporary Britain and presents media discourses around family to trace the emergence of ‘familial ideology’ an ideology that ‘sees the family as central, natural, even basic to life itself’ (Lentell,1998: 290). Taken into consideration that social welfare is structured in relation to constructing and preserving social conditions and relations that sustain a nation then the ideological apparatuses of family, education, religion are always historically and socially produced. Or how Bhabha (1990:297) puts it ‘the people are the historical 'objects' of a nationalist pedagogy’.³²

At the same time, since the magazines in question were produced in Greece, it is worth outlining this sociocultural context further, before delving into a haptic exploration of these archives. This will not only help with presenting the context within which the archives were composed, but can also be the base upon which to build the queer and feminist critiques that they offer. If in Greece then conformity with the ideals of ‘motherland/nation’, ‘religion’ and ‘family’ is encouraged by the ideological state apparatuses such as the school, mainstream

³¹ in the last decade of the 20th century, as Lewis (1998) argues in the book’s introduction, issues around family forms; education; unemployment; ‘ethnic’ and ‘cultural minorities’ are identified by the UK nation–state as sites: ‘where the erosion of traditional roles and relationships manifested itself most forcefully, thus making them social problems. For example, increased diversity in family and household forms—such as lone mothers, rising divorce rates, cohabiting heterosexual couples, and openly gay and lesbian households—and changes in the roles and responsibilities of men and women, adults and children within families, were seen as indicative of, and responsible for, the demise of traditional structures of authority. These issues had both a *symbolic* and an *institutional* significance as the meanings attached to these changes were reflected in, and influenced, the policies and practices of welfare agencies (Lewis, 1998:1, emphasis on the original).

³² I touch more on Bhabha’s theory in the next chapter, when discussing the warp of translation, the incommensurable and an otherwise.

media, family, government etc., one could ask: *which* nation? *Which* religion? *Which* family? It is precisely the fact that to some the answers to these questions might seem obvious that animates the significance of the critiques offered by *Skoupa*, *Amfi*, *Lavrys* and *Kraximo*. Disregarding, resisting, or refusing some of the ideological affirmations of the ‘Greek nation’, i.e. the ‘heteronormative reproductive family’ and the ‘dogma of the Christian Orthodox Church’, these publications claimed social spaces of contention and creation. Whilst questioning further notions such as ‘nation’, ‘religion’ and ‘family’ is not the aim of this project, it is important to keep in mind all the categories that emerge when one also asks: *what kind?* What kind of nation; what kind of religion; what kind of family? In sum, it is crucial to keep interrogating the above triptych for various reasons.

First and foremost, because the answers to the above posed questions referring to the chant, are ‘meant to be’ unilateral and presupposed by the ‘social body’ of the nation. Here I mobilize the term ‘social body’ to describe the social construction of a nation’s population in the way that Lewis (1998:8) frames it as:

the ways in which [...] diverse groupings are *imagined* as unified, homogeneous and without any tensions and contestations. Thus it refers to the ways in which ‘the nation’s people’ are constructed *as if* there are no points of antagonism between diverse social groups. The inequalities of power, and in access to resources, are masked by the representation of the population as a ‘social body’(emphasis in the original).

Following Lewis (1998), the politics of *Amfi*, *Skoupa*, *Kraximo* and *Lavrys* are sites that disrupt any presumptive homogeneity of the social body. By the same token, their antagonism to ideas of uniformity of the social body does not constitute the social groups that formulated the magazines as homogenous. In the chapters that follow tensions, particular politics and desires will be unravelled through haptic encounters with the archive.

Secondly, the extent that the social body is formulated in relation to the interpellations of the triptych in the case study of Greece illuminates this triptych as the order according to which the presumed opposite is constructed, that which Mais (2015) describes as the offspring of ‘disrepute’. Interestingly here the description becomes rather specific: ‘a communist – atheist – homosexual son’. In this ‘aphorism’ the more abstract concepts of ‘nation’, ‘religion’ and ‘family’ instantly and with specificity outline what is considered a threat to dominant ideological formulations of the state.

To better understand how deep the water of the chant ‘*patris, thriskia, oikogenia*’ runs in Greek societal structures, it is useful to look further back in recent Greek historiography during and after the time of the Civil War (1946–1949). It is important to take the aftermath of the Civil War into account for two main reasons. Firstly, starting from this tripartite traditional dogma we can imagine who a ‘nightmarish offspring’ might be for the petit-bourgeois family, as Mais (2015) frames it. At the same time, one might imagine some of the dreams of such offsprings being *in opposition* to said values. While I believe that these desiring dreams are neither quantifiably unilateral, nor is it my intent to qualitatively categorize them, I am interested in exploring archival stories of living and being differently.

By briefly touching on the Civil War, its consequences and the *metapolitefsi* era I wish to offer a synopsis of the Greek resistance mostly crewed by Marxists, communists and partisans. It was in the post – dictatorship era, during *metapolitefsi*, that the multifaceted ideological positionalities within the resistance were legitimized one – sidedly as ‘national resistance’ by Papandreou, the Prime Minister and leader of PASOK (*Panhellenic Socialist Movement*) at the time.³³ Understanding these kinds of intricacies will be a helpful thread in

³³ For a carefully crafted ethnography on the complexities of reading the Greek Civil War, memory and the recognition of a ‘nationalized’ Resistance from PASOK see chapter 4 ‘Reading (Civil) War, the Historical Novel, and the Left’ in Papailias’ *Genres of Recollection: Archival Poetics and Modern Greece*. As Papailias (2005:141) puts it: ‘Only with the end of the dictatorship in 1974 and more importantly the official recognition of the Resistance by the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) party, which came to power in a landslide

order to grasp the tense relationship that the magazines had with the field of institutional politics in the chapters to come.³⁴ If this section of the warp seems to move away from the central focus, we can bring to mind again the wood frame of the loom, adjusting the focus before proceeding to the weave.

Warp C3. Civil War, resistance and communist partisans

Many scholars have offered a historiography of the Greek Civil War and the events that followed (Goulter, 2014; Panourgia 2009; Marantzidis & Antoniou, 2004; Iliou, 1999; Mazower, 1993,1995). After the defeat of the democratic army of Greece (Δ.Ε.Σ./DES) by the Greek government army the tension between the Greek state and the communist party of Greece (KKE) did not abate.³⁵

Since delving deeper into the historiography of the time could constitute another thesis on its own, for the sake of this project's introduction I want to draw our attention to the following key points. Firstly, how the hostile climate towards leftists and communists and the patriotic undercurrent of 'motherland – religion – family' translated to KKE's agenda, and secondly the homogenization of Greek resistance in the time of *metapolitefsi*.³⁶ This sociopolitical terrain illustrates how the magazines in question had to push for a space, to oppose dominant ideologies, to 'queer' up the discussion in the public sphere not only by sterilized theorizing but mostly by living, communicating and writing.

election victory in 1981, would the ideological blockages to writing the history of this period finally start to loosen [...] the Resistance—whitewashed, 'nationalized,' and disconnected from the history of the Greek Communist Party—would become essential to legitimizing socialist rule'.

³⁴ With the term 'institutional politics' here I mean political parties not only of the Right but also of the Left.

³⁵ DES was the font of the Communist Party of Greece during Civil War. For more on the conflicts in Greece after the end of the World War II see Mazower (2000) 'The Cold War And The Appropriation Of Memory: Greece after liberation' in *The Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and Its Aftermath*. Here, Mazower (2000:225) poignantly maps out the 'nationalist bravado' that followed the Greek Civil War where state officials attempted to silence or disregard the role of Marxist ideology in Greek resistance

³⁶ KKE are the Initials for the Communist Party of Greece.

In *Dangerous Citizens: The Greek Left and the Terror of the State*, Panourgia (2009) argues that the denomination of ‘dangerous citizen’ has been attributed to Greek leftists by the Greek state during the 20th and 21st centuries. Panourgia underlines the making of the ‘dangerous person’ by the sovereign as that who ‘becomes accountable for the collapse of political categories, right where the political sphere of engagement meets the demands of social and cultural order’ (Panourgia, 2009: 8). Hence, a layout of the Left as a ‘threat’ to the state, not only allows for Greek government(s) over the years to detain and torture leftists in exile, prisons and concentration camps, but also – as Panourgia’s ethnographic work outlines – illustrates how the categorization of ‘the Left’ shifts, depending on governmental agendas. Notably, as Panourgia (2009) emphasises, even though the category of the ‘dangerous citizen’ might historically be attributed to leftist ideas in Greece, it cannot be clearly defined:

At times all ‘Leftists’ were counted in with the ‘Communists,’ who were counted in with the ‘labor unionists,’ who were counted in with the ‘anarchists,’ all ascriptions used by the state in the process of legislating their persecution, although occasionally a flicker of differentiation would accompany the desire that ‘our’ people not ‘really’ be Communists, as oftentimes happened when people on the Right would draw a distinction between the ‘Communists’ and the ‘Leftists’. (Panourgia, 2009:15)

Taking Panourgia’s argument into consideration, the definition of ‘the Left’ in the context of Greece becomes already threaded with further statutory implications and terrorizing practices of the state. In the ‘eye’ of the state officials’ different ideologies occupy the term depending on political subjects who oppose governmental guidelines on each occasion. Here, I find two things important upon placing the thread of political struggle and the Greek Civil War. First, this yarn of the warp relates to the *patris – thriskia – oikogenia* interpellation which instantly could describe someone who inhabits the geographical space of Greece but does not abide to the above ideological triptych as ‘a dangerous citizen’. Secondly, in the case of the Greek Civil

War, Panourgia's point on the different meanings of 'leftists' can be a good way in understanding partisans fights and heterogeneity in the field of resistance. Notably, in the era of *metapolitefsi* as I will argue in this part of the warp, these differentiations were disregarded by the state which attempted to present a unified and uncomplicated version of two sides of the Civil War. The reason I am invoking Panourgia's work here is not to firmly describe what a 'dangerous' or 'non – dangerous' citizen is. Equally important, any binary theorization of 'citizenship' is not the aim of this project. With the help of Panourgia's theorization of 'dangerous citizen' as a non – fixed societal grouping, I am placing in the loom two more threads. On the one hand, by mobilizing the category of 'dangerous person' as ever – expanding (by the conceptualization of the sovereign) we can ponder on the ways in which queer archival stories pertinent to this research, can be perceived as 'troubling' artefacts towards nationalist narratives. On the other hand, Panourgia's reading of the Greek Civil War as a period of conflict not so clearly defined or finite, adds in the warp the aspect of the terrorizing nation – state which targets non – conforming ideologies at will.³⁷

Vervenioti (2016) presents the experiences and dispositions of women who participated in the Greek resistance, most of them as members of the National Liberation Front (EAM) organized not only by the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) but also other leftist and partisan groups. As Vervenioti (2016:106) writes:

After their defeat, EAM/KKE activists lived for decades in an utterly hostile environment. They could not criticize their own leadership, nor even mention a comrade's petty failings, since this might be considered as harming the movement—in the words of the time, 'putting water into the mill of reaction.' Hence these fighters tried to preserve a perfectly unified image of themselves, an increasingly idealized memory constructed largely inside prisons

³⁷ Another example to conceive the label of the 'dangerous citizen' as shifting depending on centralized power is the case of Greek Dictatorship. During that time as Panourgia notes: 'Under the junta 'democrats' inhabited the zone of danger heretofore occupied by Leftists, Communists, and world peace activists. 'Democratically minded' citizens thus expanded the category of the dangerous citizen (Panourgia, 2009:136).

or in exile, which became the memory of their youth and bravery. This even today constitutes the ‘official’ memory of the Left.

Taking into consideration that KKE was deemed illegal the above quote of Vervenioti amplifies the unfavourable climate towards EAM/KKE activists. Meanwhile the quotation marks in the word ‘official’ of course signify the complex task of recording ‘unofficial’ testimonies from the side of oppositional political struggle.³⁸ Fear, discredit, and persecution were imminent, ‘all these women had lived for years with the fear of having their resistance activity detected and had tried to wipe out its traces. They were forced, many times in their lives, to repudiate their past. For them, the firing squad had aimed straight at their memories’ (Vervenioti, 2016:106). This archival haptic exploration opposes the narrative that official memory is by far the only memory, and hopefully this project is a testament of many other life paths, connections, and resistances. Linking here is a nudge towards questioning the state’s decisions as the women of *Skoupa*, members of AKOE, *Kraximo*, *Lavrys* did.

Vervenioti’s piece is part of the collection *After the War Was Over: reconstructing the family, nation, and state in Greece, 1943– 1960* (Mazower, ed, 2016) where the authors map out the consequences of the WWII, urbanization, chronicles of violence and resistance.

Inevitably in post – WWII, we once more come across the complex relation between the triad *motherland – religion – family* and communist ideology in the context of Greece. In particular, in the fieldwork ‘The Civil War in Evrytania’ Sakkas’ (2016) examines how a group of villages located in the county of Evrytania in central Greece experienced the conflict.³⁹ Here, Sakkas presents social norms and pre, during and post–war living conditions

³⁸ For more on the intricacies of collective memory of these years see the ethnographic work of Van Boeschoten, Riki (1997). *Unruly Years: Collective Memory and History in Ziaka, Grevena [1900–1950]*. Athens: Plethron. (Greek title: Anapoda chronia: Syllogiki mnimi kai istoria sto Ziaka Grevenon (1900–1950). Also, Papailias, P. (2005) *Genres of Recollection: Archival Poetics and Modern Greece*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

³⁹ Sakkas’ paper can be found in Chapter nine in *After the War Was Over: reconstructing the family, nation, and state in Greece, 1943 – 1960* (Mazower, ed, 2016) The villages of Evrytania Sakkas’ focuses on are: Klitsos, Fourni, Agios Haralambos, Agia Triada, Domiani, Petralona, Hohlia and Vraha.

in this geographical area. Sakkas highlights how EAM/ELAS gained prestige also partially from not – contradicting institutions such as the church and family, ‘even the communists within EAM were reluctant to go along with their clear – cut Marxist slogans and risk leaving the peasantry in isolation and their alliance strategy in tatters’ (Sakkas, 2016 p.193). The following quote from Karathanos – a communist participant in the resistance at Evrytania – that I encountered in Sakkas’ – paper can be illustrative of the intricacies that unfold resistance:

What many of us in the resistance wanted,’ remarks Dimitris Karathanos, a lawyer now living in Athens and one of the few communists in Agia Triada before the war, ‘was not the abolition of Orthodoxy or the dissolution of the traditional family, but *laokratia* [People’s Rule] founded on the values of egalitarianism and solidarity and the principles of direct popular participation and social justice. (Sakkas, 2016:192)

From Karathanos’ testimony it seems that *laokratia* in this context is not necessarily linked to church abolition or to the dismantling of traditional family structures.⁴⁰ The construct of patriotism being supported by the ideological axes of ‘motherland – religion – family’ is fuelled by their univocal semantics and unambiguous inferences. Linking patriotism to religion (Mouzelis 1978; Stavrakakis 2002), perceiving orthodoxy in Greece more as ‘a ‘way of life’ rather as an attachment to metaphysical beliefs’ (Chrysoloras, 2004: 3) and understanding the institution of family as a pillar that caters both motherland and church, one can imagine how infiltrating the ideological schematic circle of *patris, thriskia, oikogenia* can be, even to those who become militant against one or all three of these normative societal codes.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Later on the paper Sakkas analyses the practical dilemma of KKE regarding patriotism as national unity versus ideology as people’s self-government p.193.

⁴¹ As Chrysoloras (2004:3) puts it: ‘Unlike what happens in other European countries, being a communist, atheist, or agnostic does not preclude someone from attending Church celebrations in Greece’. For more on the turbulent relationship among Orthodox church and Anagnostopoulou, S. (2000) ‘The Historicity of the ‘National Role’’ of the Church of Greece: Nation Hellenic or Hellenic–Orthodox?’ in Karagiorgas Foundation, *Structures and Relations of Power in Contemporary Greece*:7.

After the electoral victory of PASOK in the 1981 elections, during *metapolitefsi*, the Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou recognized EAM/ELAS resistance as ‘national resistance’ and granted amnesty to former *andartes* who lived in exile.⁴² The call of amnesty however had a clear nationalist and racialized base. As Mazower (2000:228) explains ‘former *andartes* were only allowed back to Greece if they declared themselves ‘Greek by race’ [*ellines to genos*]’. This declaration excluded Slavic – speaking populations in norther parts of Greece that had joined the resistance (Mazower, 2000). Similarly, recognizing and memorializing a ‘national EAM’, as a nationalist homogenous font also led to airbrushing the Marxist political connotations out of the picture (Mazower 2000; Papailias 2005). I want to echo Boeschoten’s argument that identifying a homogenized national liberation struggle, strips of sociopolitical differences and ultimately caps a boiling pot. In Boeschoten’s words:

the kind of consensual public history that has emerged from this process presents the war period as a ‘national liberation struggle,’ glossing over social and ethnic cleavages, the social message of EAM, and the entire Civil War. The ‘national reconciliation’ that is emerging from this form of ‘useful history’ can only be a very superficial one (Mazower 2016:140)

Mazower sees PASOK’s strategic move as a way to combine anticapitalism with anticommunism in their political agenda:

With the Left worn out by decades of repression and the Right shocked and defensive in the wake of the junta, the path was open for reconciliation. This form of reconciliation, however, smoothed away the memories of social division and skated over equally dark areas of ethnic complexity (Mazower, 2000: 229).

⁴² Andartes is a Greek word to describe communist guerrilla fighters.

Ultimately, as Papailias poignantly puts it: ‘the Resistance—whitewashed, ‘nationalized,’ and disconnected from the history of the Greek Communist Party—would become essential to legitimizing socialist rule’ (Papailias 2005:141).

This thesis is not a place of evaluation of the ruling of PASOK. However, the post – dictatorship reconciliation moves publicizing a ‘national resistance’ can be an interesting entry point in the context of Greece. This project is not about reconciliation; it is about keeping the terrain bumpy, the surface ungrained, the texture of the weave uneven. What is more, in this short and greatly incomplete take on turbulent Greek politics and events, I hope that I have set out a frame where the tensions between the magazines and the status quo can be understood. Notably, these archives register Marxist critiques, feminist critiques, disillusionment – or hope for some of the interlocutors –with PASOK, adversities with the left, as well as nation, religion, and family.

Now, I am not claiming that *Amfi*, *Skoupa*, *Lavrys* and *Kraximo* have a particular stake over the Greek resistance *per se*. What I foreground are the ways in which nation/motherland, religion, and family affect Greek subjectivities and living in Greece, and how the four magazines in one way or another form part of an oppositional political struggle. As can be seen, the terrain of the third Hellenic republic remains gritty and textured and this project is against smoothing its surface. On the contrary, thinking of a weaved fabric of stories, this thesis is an attempt to follow threads and make connections with different textures and qualities.

Warp D. Marginality as openness

Loukas Theodorakopoulos, one of the leading figures of AKOE, in *Amfi kai Apeleftherosi* (Eng: *Amfi* and liberation, 2005) notes that the aim of the group was not to create a closed elitist organization of famous artists or an aristocratic guild of homosexuals. It was rather an act to form a movement congruent with the working class and its interests, reaching out to alienated

homosexuals all over Greece.⁴³ For Theodorakopoulos, the aim to liberate homosexual desire while offering an anti – elitist anti – capitalist critique was a combination that inevitably put AKOE in societal margins. Theodorakopoulos in *Amfi kai Apeleftherosi* sees the *margin* as a political and ideological space in opposition with centralized power and the ruling ideology. Theodorakopoulos identifies the ideological and political space of the margin – which social movements occupy – as ‘the only space that today promises and strikes for a better world, a better tomorrow’.⁴⁴ While the language Theodorakopoulos uses is no surprise in social claims that strive for ‘a better world’, here I want to focus on the possibility of the margin as a space for something ‘different’. I do not intend to present this project as a promise for a better tomorrow; but as an exploration of what might emerge through textual and textural stories as encountered in archives assembled by people who refused the world as they found it. Hopefully, by shifting the linguistic weight from superior and superlative wor(l)ds to potentially different taxonomies dissimilar to established categories of being, this thesis can be more of an imaginative journey.

By all means the concept of the margin might not always signify a literal place. Yet, I would argue that it is almost always more ideologically whimsical than arguments which affirm existing centralized societal conditions. The inspiring work of the black feminist scholar and social critic, bell hooks, can help us understand the way I mobilize marginality here as a space for ongoing oppositional political struggle. In *Choosing The Margin As a Space Of Radical Openness* hooks reads marginality as a place of resistance for oppressed, colonized and exploited people. According to hooks, marginality is both a difficult and a necessary position for those who wish to resist. Hooks theorizes this argument through her lived experience as a black scholar in the predominately white academia. Choosing marginality as a place of

⁴³ Here I would like to mention Andreas Velissaropoulos as another important figure of AKOE and *Amfi*.

⁴⁴ For more see ‘a short history of AKOE’ in Theodorakopoulos’ (2005) *Amfi and Apeleutherosi*, p.56 (in Greek).

resistance is related but should not be equated with being marginalized and silenced. For hooks *consciousness* of this positionality plays a key part in order to perceive marginality as a space of resistance and radical possibility. Hooks acknowledges marginality as a site of deprivation too; it is precisely this point that deems this locality as a place of defiance, of resisting conceptually moving towards centralized loci of power. For hooks, there lies greater creativity and power in the margins, because the margins offer vantage points in the antagonistic struggle. Thus, when hooks refers to marginality, it is about a marginality one hopes to hold onto:

not [...] a marginality one wishes to lose – to give up or surrender as part of moving into the centre but rather as a site one stays in, clings to even because it nourishes one’s capacity to resist. It offers to one the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternative, new worlds (hooks, 1989: 20)

Inevitably lived experiences dictate one’s desire for creativity, imagination, open –endedness, that is, lived experiences generate what Sadiya Hartman calls an ‘otherwise’. In this research, I cannot make the claim that all the people behind the archives in question hoped for the same magnitudes of difference, or that they all embraced any anarchic potentialities of the margin as a space to imagining an otherwise. Such a claim would be careless and discrepant with the exploratory nature of this project. By providing individual chapters for the magazines, I aim to make space for an in–depth exploration of their scopes, stories, and relations in this haptic journey – the ways in which they gestured toward difference as a future premised on otherwise becoming in the present and did so because and despite of the tensions within which they operated.

The reason I brought together here the interpellation strategies of the Greek state with the potentiality of marginality as Theodorakopoulos and hook theorise, is to draw attention to some of the tensions within which these magazines emerged. From the banal nationalist chant ‘motherland – religion – family’ to the specific figure of ‘discredit’ in the face of a gay

communist non-believer son, such a social outcast could be crucial in the ongoing oppositional struggle.

Furthermore, the parameter of gender is also present in the aphorism ‘communist – atheist – homosexual son’. In particular, the absence of the figure of the daughter even from the ‘shameful’ child narrative, is a precedent of Greek daughters being situated already in ‘other’ categories. Lived experiences that diverge from the cis-heteropatriarchal ideal of a reproductive heterosexual male are rebuked by state structures in Greece – and beyond – to such an extent that are often even unregistered in linguistic aphorism, especially in gendered languages such as Greek. Yet, communist, atheist, lesbian daughters organized, resisted, and ‘annoyed’ the status quo too. And still do.

So far, I have demonstrated how embedded interpellating notions of religion and family are within the fabric of Greek society. To such an extent that it is not only the fact that there is one ‘type’ of *religion* or *family* being presupposed by the slogan; but also, that we are summoned as readers who understand the specific types of categorizations as presupposed.

The task here is again not simple. An invitation to queer up notions such as *family*, *religion* and *nation* can be the first challenge in this project and this would require keeping in mind on the one hand that such concepts when invoked in the Greek context usually signify the ‘Christian orthodox church’, ‘the Greek state’ and ‘heteropatriarchal family’ and on the other hand that there are potentially multiple meanings describing these notions perhaps as many as the subjects interpellated by them. Albeit a queer historiography is not the aim of this exploratory work, I believe that it is important to hold a critical stance against the banal chant: *patris, thriskia, oikogenia*. Especially when delving into archives of same-sex desire, feminist critiques and oppositional political struggle.

Warp E. Queering ‘Greekness’

With this in mind, other Greek scholars have also challenged the canon by queering up heteronormative takes of national identities. Apostolidou (2018) in *Queering the Motherland: Male same – sex desire and the Greek nation* explores disclosure experiences of men – desiring–men in Greece. For Apostolidou the ways in which queer and gay subjectivities are being negotiated in terms of desire and disclosure practices is to some extent informed by the three aforementioned pillars of ‘Greekness’ (*Ellinikotita*). The social codes of *motherland, family and religion* that constitute an ‘ideal Greekness’ urge, ‘the Greek man – desiring – man [...] in the name of safeguarding the Motherland, not to act upon his desire and to conform to the value code of ideal Greekness’ (Apostolidou, 2018:15). Clashing with these specific ideals, gay and queer sons in Greece who choose disclosure demonstrate the ways in which the rigidity of these codes can be mitigated.⁴⁵ Most importantly in Apostolidou’s argument the following is central: ‘the widespread assumption that ‘there is no coming out in Greece’ is untangled with the fact that there is indeed no closet either’ (Apostolidou, 2018:363). The view of a more fluidly distributed sexuality echoes the story of Petros who writes a letter of *clarification* to his mother regarding his sexuality, that I will examine in the next chapter. Probably the globalized discourse of ‘coming out’ might not be unilateral in the Greek context.

Papanikolaou (2014) in *Made just like me’: The homosexual Cavafy and the poetics of sexuality* discusses how Cavafy’s scholars usually either pathologize the poet’s sexuality or desexualize him and his work, albeit Cavafy is one of the most sensual poets.

In other words, propagating Greek national identity through the ill – formed dogma of ‘family, religion, motherland’ affects the discursive language of sexual desire and dissidence.

⁴⁵ For more on the three conceptual pillars of Greekness from a queer anthropological perspective see Apostolidou’s (2018) Part III chapter 6. Family, Chapter7. Religion, Chapter 8. Motherland in *Queering the Motherland: Male same–sex desire and the Greek nation*.

The other part of this contextualization is the idea of a marginality as hooks imagines it. It is important to point out that marginality here is used as a frame, as part of the context – skeleton within which the magazines were produced. At odds with the banal chant, at odds with the Right, at times at odds with the Left, at odds with the state of affairs, maintaining the openness of the margins. Again, not in the same extent and not in the same ways. These are points that will be further examined in the chapters that follow. The circulation of *Amfi*, *Skoupa*, *Kraximo* and *Lavrys* all over Greece brought people together, sparked actions and discussions, contained tensions and relations, whole worlds. Before delving into these worlds, it is crucial to remember that the present project is against any *univocal* semantics of nation, religion, and family and hopefully through the archival stories included here the reader can imagine why.

Warp F. Body as a site of power and desire in the archives

From ancient Greek philosophy and religion to medicine, biology, and biotechnology the body has been the main site of exercising power, control, but also lust and desire.⁴⁶ The ways in which bodies act as a place and a space of desire in these movements in question, is another thread that I need to place in the warp, in order to formulate a geopolitically informed and sociocultural account of the desire for sexual and gender emancipation. In this particular research the focus lies on non – normative desire and the modalities that bodies navigate it.

The radical French philosopher and social thinker Michel Foucault wrote many books concerning social control over the body and the various ways that power regulates within all societal structures. Particularly, Foucault (1979) introduces the concept of docile bodies where subjects become obedient under the discipline and punish of social institutions such as prisons,

⁴⁶ Regarding the ancient Greek Philosophy I am referring to Plato's dualism. See Coleen P. Zoller, P.C (2019) 'Plato and the Body: Reconsidering Socratic Asceticism'. State University of New York Press. For more on biology and biotechnology See Tratnik, P. (2017) *Conquest of Body: Biopower with Biotechnology* and Van der Zaag, C.A. (2018) *Materialities of Sex in a Time of HIV*.

schools and the military. Moreover, Foucault (2009) offers a rich history of the social aspects of ‘madness’ and demonstrates how bodies under medicine and psychiatry become regulated and restrained. By theorizing how surveillance culture and social institutions exercise power and discipline to govern the body, Foucault helps us contextualize the body as a product of social control, making then bodies which resisted dominant discourses of subjectivity and normativity quite important examples of nonconformity. In the second volume of *History of Sexuality: The use of pleasure* Foucault (1990) performs a historiography of desire from ancient Greece to the times of modernity and skilfully presents how the principle of pleasure became a set of categorizations, rules and etiquettes. In the book’s introduction Foucault contemplating on the purpose of this ‘philosophical exercise’ writes: ‘the object was to learn to what extent the effort to think one’s own history can free thought from what it silently thinks, and so enable it to think differently’ (Foucault, 1990:9). Taking up a similar challenge then we set to explore embodiments that might offer a terrain where contemplations of desire and claims can be thought differently. Notably, as Danaher (2000:145) in *Understanding Foucault* highlights:

Foucault would not reject modern sexuality because it was coercive. In some ways it certainly is coercive; it also provides us with techniques for living. Where Foucault takes issue with modern sexuality is in its power to constrain us from acting, from explaining and exploring ourselves in alternative fashions.

A focus on the embodied experiences of those who participated in social movements, resisted heteropatriarchal ideologies and attempted to reclaim their bodies and desires, I think is a way of exploring ourselves in alternative fashions. From the feminist slogans of the 80’s ‘our bodies, ourselves’ and the ‘my body, my choice’ campaign for abortion rights, to the changing mapping topologies of cruising in Athens as presented by Papanikolaou (2014) and Yannakopoulos (2016) emerge different queer desiring bodies who draw and design paths

outsides of normative modalities and participate in different social economies of lust and claims.⁴⁷

As I have previously mentioned, theoretical tensions are expected within the archive, and I consider them crucial in order to aim to a deeper understanding of the intricacies, limitations, and possibilities of daring to be otherwise. A highly influential figure in queer theory, Sedgwick (1991) notes that even though homosexuality was removed from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM – the ‘bible’ guiding psychiatric clinical practice) back in 1973 the majority of clinicians in the US still approach it with the ‘relatively unchallenged aegis of a culture’s desire that gay people *not be*’ (Sedgwick, 1991:26, emphasis on the original). Sedgwick reviews books of revisionist analysts and practitioners to conclude that, on the one hand, it is almost exclusively the male homosexual that is being discussed and, on the other hand, that clinicians ascribe a ‘healthy’ homosexual one that is already an adult and acts masculine (Sedgwick, 1991:19). Even though Sedgwick’s piece was written in 1991, attributing ‘shame’ to femininity or silencing experiences of lesbians are still quite relevant cultural and clinical practices in Greece and beyond and Sedgwick’s (1991:26) claim that ‘there is no unthreatened, unthreatening theoretical home for a concept of gay and lesbian origins’ is painfully pertinent to the Greek sociopolitical context. Now, this is not a quest for looking for origins per se. in this project as I engage with the archives haptically – as I touch them, and they touch me – I hope to convey connections, tensions, and proposition of an otherwise. As I feel the stories inhabit an otherwise. Not unthreatened, but already happening. In desiring bodies and desiring lives.

By the same token, choosing a haptic methodology as a form of inquiry my body and my relation to the archive is also an inextricable part of this experiment. As I touch, I feel, I

⁴⁷ The slogan ‘our bodies our selves’ comes from ‘A Boston women’s health collective’ (1968–2018) in 1970 published and circulated a booklet ‘women and their bodies’ <https://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/our-story/>.

move, and I am moved by the stories I mobilize in this project, my body emerges as a tool of theoretical inquiry.

Warp G. Archives as promise, debt, death and being

The following themes are the final yarns of the warp in this chapter that will be employed for this complex haptic exploration to begin being weft. Archives as debt, promise and process, as traces of erasure and presence, as silence and voice and as localities of grief and life will be examined in this section. Encompassing the methodology of the haptic as a way to navigate through the ambivalent attributes of the archives this research aims to illuminate and describe lives that lived and loved otherwise. The postcolonial scholar Arondekar (2009:99) sees the archive as ‘a space of catachresis than catharsis’ and proposes a critical approach to it which suggests not a recuperation but rather crucially, the refusal of one. Having this as methodological framework the present queer research hopes to be vigilantly alert of what Arondekar forewarned us against as ‘archival mythmaking’. Arondekar (2009:20–21) writes:

sexuality studies is an equal accomplice in such archival mythmaking and must remain alert to its own methodological and analytical foibles. To not do so would be to forgo the histories of colonization, to brush aside the possibilities accorded by the very source to the idea of the archive. This book is one record of such possibilities.

Seeing the archives as spaces of catachresis and possibilities offers a narrative from the haptic and the void towards queer prospects. Hartman (2019:xv) makes a case for ‘a narrative written from nowhere, from the nowhere of the ghetto and from the nowhere of utopia’. This nowhere of utopia drives also the present thesis where utopia is a direction, a space that is not here, and possible nowhere, but is still a desired and needed place. Hartman in this evocative book explores ‘utopian longings and the promise of a future world that resided in waywardness and the refusal to be governed’ (Hartman, 2019:xvii).

To remain uneasy in order to shed light to paths of otherwiseness and to account for the revolutionary force of being differently. These women enacted a refusal to be governed albeit experiencing the effects of racism, segregation and often impoverishment. They dared to live as they desired, in non – conformity, and Hartman’s task is the following:

the endeavour is to recover the insurgent ground of these lives; to exhume open rebellion from the case file, to untether waywardness, refusal, mutual aid, and free love from their identification as deviance, criminality, and pathology; to affirm free motherhood (reproductive choice), intimacy outside the institution of marriage, and queer and outlaw passions; and to illuminate the radical imagination and everyday anarchy of ordinary colored [sic] girls, which has not only been overlooked, but is nearly unimaginable (Hartman, 2019:xvi)

Considering the radical imaginations of wilful subjects, the narrative to be presented will neither be a lament nor an attempt of sanctification, but rather a way, a route which the archives in question will potentially pave. Arondekar, following Spivak’s theoretical strands of postcoloniality theorises the complexity of working with archives and proposes an archival turn that distances itself from ‘the presumption that if a body is found, then a subject can be recovered’ (Arondekar, 2009:3). Arondekar’s proposition it is crucial to launch archival research that does not concern recuperation but rather persists on imagining a queer future. Bodies who appear through the archive will not be unwittingly recruited or vituperated to serve an academic purpose or an exculpation of the past. To put it in another way, the subjectivities of the bodies that speak through the archive will not be presumed or ‘excavated’. Notably, as Gossett (2014:40) emphasizes, ‘all too often the violence of representation [...] evacuates the radical potentiality that can emerge out of collective anguish and outrage in response to violence’. It is rather about the desires, the actions and the social formations of certain bodies that lived and loved which constitute this project not a

‘rest in peace’ or a ‘rest in power’ endeavour, but rather about an unrest of the living subjects, in and out of the archive.

‘The critical task lies in crafting an archival approach that articulates against the guarantee of recovery’ as Arondekar (2009:4) prompts us. Thus, it is not a story of vindication, even if it ought to be. It is the debt that lingers which fuels. ‘Debt cannot be forgiven, it can only be forgotten to be remembered again’ write Harney and Moten (2013:63). The debt that archives and particularly archives of sexuality carry, is an ongoing debt that cannot be forgiven but only membered and ‘re/membered’.

Here, I borrow re/member as coined by the South African photographer Mofokeng in an attempt to evoke the relationship that the body has with the archive. Mofokeng writes ‘The word ‘remember’ needs elaboration. Re/member is a process by which we restore to the body forgotten memories. The body in this case is the landscape – on whose skin and belly histories and myths are projected – which is central to forging national identity’ (Mofokeng, 2013). It is important to clarify that a figurative re/membering of the archives is utilized here as an enrichment on the argument of materiality and embodiment involved in archival research rather an actual attempt of memory restoration of the past. As I have attempted to demonstrate the potentialities of archival research linger on debt and anguish.

The archive is not only a debt and a ‘promise and a responsibility for tomorrow’ as Derrida (1996:36) suggests, but it is also a process. A process that involves archiving and unarchiving and depends on the aims and subjectivity of the reader. Furthermore, archives transgress temporalities and by subverting time yet being bound to the period of their synthesis, they hold a unique sociopolitical stand in the threshold.

Following the Foucauldian tradition which acknowledges archives as institutions of power and tools that can sustain state’s violence (Foucault 1972), Stoler (2009) proposes holding

archives as accountable historical products. Taking into consideration the position that archives occupied in colonial states Stoler suggests a thorough investigation of the consequences of such documents rather than a reversal of the archival grain in order to highlight archive's disruptive potentialities. On her methodological commitment she writes:

I treat archival events more as moments that disrupt (if only provisionally) a field of force, that challenge (if only slightly) what can be said and done, that question (if only quietly) 'epistemic warrant' that realign the certainties of the probable more than they mark wholesale reversal of direction (Stoler, 2009: 51).

Looking at archives as incidents that mark historical moments and social nuances constitutes them as crucial testimonies of social constructions, prevalence, existence, and absence. For that reason, reading along the archival grain can question the premises of the status quo and through its fragmentations and inconsistencies a fertile ground for perspectives might appear.

In the same fashion, the yarns of silence and voice that transgress the archives weave vital theoretical patterns for the project. Erasure, absence and silence become interlaced categories of archival research challenging us to 'touch' and contact them.

Another yarn that I wish to add on this archival wrap is the constitutional function of silencing. Having previously briefly contextualized the recent Greek historiography and PASOK's attempt to flatten out ideological and racialized aspects of the resistance, I want to invoke the work of the Haitian American anthropologist Trouillot. In *Silencing the Past: Power and The Production of History* Trouillot (1999) examines the practice of silencing as an important component of history production, especially in Western historiography. In recognizing the constitutional function of silencing, Trouillot (1995:123) writes:

effective silencing does not require a conspiracy, not even a political consensus. Its roots are structural. Beyond a stated—and most often sincere—political generosity,

best described in U.S. parlance within a liberal continuum, the narrative structures of Western historiography have not broken with the ontological order of the Renaissance. This exercise of power is much more important than the alleged conservative or liberal adherence of the historians involved.

By employing the Haitian Revolution as an example, Trouillot examines how formulas of silence operate to deem certain events as ‘non – events’. According to Trouillot there are two short kinds of tropes that aid the process of silencing: Formulas of erasure – something like ‘this did not happen’ – and Formulas of banalization, where any revolutionary signification of an event gets striped down when re – telling the story.⁴⁸ In archival research I think it is crucial to be vigilant against the simplification of the formulas of banalization and erasure while at the same time acknowledging these tropes as recurrent in narration practices. For Trouillot history is a social process that carries power and ambiguity. As Trouillot (1995:43) points out: Power does not enter the story once and for all, but at different times and from different angles. It precedes the narrative proper, contributes to its creation and to its interpretation. Thus, it remains pertinent even if we can imagine a totally scientific history, even if we relegate the historians’ preferences and stakes to a separate, post – descriptive phase. In history, power begins at the source.

Power then is a dynamic component of storytelling, and if power begins at the source, it also pertains to the person that touches upon the material. Reading the source is a relational practice. Furthermore, it is a practice that does not happen in a time – space continuum.

⁴⁸ See Trouillot’s extract: ‘The treatment of the Haitian Revolution in written history outside of Haiti reveals two families of tropes that are identical, in formal (rhetorical) terms, to figures of discourse of the late eighteenth century. The first kind of tropes are formulas that tend to erase directly the fact of a revolution. I call them, for short, formulas of erasure. The second kind tends to empty a number of singular events of their revolutionary content so that the entire string of facts, gnawed from all sides, becomes trivialized. I call them formulas of banalization’ (Trouillot, 1995:112).

In addition, the importance of tracing historical silences as an imperative intervention is underlined by Campt (2012:36–37) who notes that ‘such historiographical intervention is [...] a project of disruption, one that disorders the rule that constitutes the existing historical record and makes visible the logic that structures the archive and authorizes its validity as a source of historical knowledge, meaning, and veracity’. Recognising then the vestiges of silencing and by taking into account the structural processes that ground social institutions, a conjuring of the archive under those terms and with the force of hapticality could allow for and contain the nuances of silence.

Drawing on all the aforementioned literature regarding archives, I am placing upon the warp the intricacies of archival research. At the same time, this part of the warp functions as a way in acknowledging power dynamics of narration practices. Bost’s work is crucial to illustrate how creativity and writing can be ways of coping and enduring trauma. Notably, Bost (2019) engages with the media and art that was produced by black gay activists and artists as a way of processing trauma, pain and loss during the AIDS crisis. The cultural narratives depicted in the book aim to transform grief into evidences of being. For black gay bodies who are being persecuted by the violence of antiblackness and antiqeeriness equally, threats of historical erasure and disavowal are omnipresent in grieving processes since they are situated within racial and homophobic societal structures that discriminate between ‘grievable’ and ‘ungrievable’ lives. Black gay literature as Bost underlines ‘through its aesthetic strategies of transfiguration and juxtaposition [...] reveals the entanglements of grief with the violence of value, even as its poetics of grief point to an elsewhere in which black gay personhood is not conditioned by value’ (Bost, 2019:45). These archives of existence become then both evidence and ‘possibilities of being’ (Bost, 2019:44), and through the defiance of effacing that these fragments produce, queer writings and creative practices beam potentialities. Echoing the adage ‘Silence is Death’ queer writings and texts that frame and describe bodies

imagined and lived ‘otherwise’ of the white cis – heteropatriarchal (capitalistic) society, become remnants and facilitators of further becomings/imaginaries.⁴⁹ Among their discrepancies, fragmentations and absences queer archives abide life depositions of difference and boldness.

The conceptualization of the archive as a tool to dismantle dominant narratives, to conceive queer possibilities, as well as the required alertness on multiplicities of its meanings, inescapably convey the burden of recounting unendurable things that not only happened and must be endured, but mostly must be endured because they happened. The immense violence that the bodies which instantiate the archive suffered is an integral part of the archive. Leading a queer and feminist archival project encompasses navigating the difficulties of confronting the unbearable as in violence, silence, and death.

For all the rebel hearts

In the first part of the warp then, I have placed the context of Greece in relation to social mobilizations, offering a brief historiography and its turbulent political history. By introducing the reader to the interpellation ‘motherland, religion, family’ I aim to set the terrain upon which the autonomous groups emerged. I have also situated my reading positionality against recuperation. Haptically tracing the otherwise constitutes this project an experimental inquiry rather than a historiography. Furthermore, I placed in the warp the thread of ‘the body’ in order to account not just for the site of the body as a field upon which power and desire is exercised, but also for my body – situatedness in the current project. Ultimately, I contextualized the archives as sites of life, death, resistance, possibilities.

⁴⁹ Bost uses the slogan ‘Silence is Death’ slogan as found in Dixon’s diary entry ‘September 11, 1987, Manhattan’ (Bost, 2019: 120), in Melvin Dixon Addition, Schomburg Centre for Black Culture, New York Public Library. It is also the slogan of Act–up.

Archives placed vertically in the loom become entwined conceptual threads that fuse, disjoin and mend again to create an embroidery of life and death, eros and thanatos.

Pondering about the thematics of life and death in the archive is no different than pondering about the archive itself. Infused with so many powers, meanings and significances throughout history and social sciences, conceiving the archive is no other task than stating what we as researchers wish to explore in the archive and most importantly for what purposes we were drawn to the archive in the first place. Being alert and accountable for our archival practice, ‘touching’ the archive is a disposition toward the fruitful possibilities of further becomings. Existing with the loss and the anguish that archives of subalterns enclose is an important stand in order to make theoretical terrains that can both cope and allow a pondering on that which cannot be retrieved or traced. But it can potentially rebel.

Another moment regarding Zak comes to memory. One of our joint discussions was about a playful disagreement over Madonna’s value. Zak, as a true Madonna fan, had a ‘rebel heart’ tattoo. When I asked about the inspiration behind the tattoo, Zak was shocked to find out I was not aware of this album or her recent tour and teasingly told me about the enlightenment that Madonna could bring into my life. Zak’s murder does not change my various views on Madonna. And my ethical consciousness prevents me from calling Zak a friend, since we only spoke a few times. The murder does not change the respect I have for Zak as an activist, a drag queen and a writer, which has been a constant over the years.

What changes is that I cannot listen to the ‘rebel heart’ without thinking about Zak. What changes is that I am listening to the song more often now. What changes is that whenever I listen to the lyrics, ‘so I took the road less travelled by and I barely made it out alive’, I break into pieces. And I know what I have to do. For all the rebel hearts.

CHAPTER 2

Warp yarns from first fieldwork impressions

Having introduced the work of scholars that make this exploration possible in the previous chapter, the warp is half—way set: Interlocutors of queer theory that will help my reading position; attune in being alerted—surrender to practices towards an ‘otherwise’; a brief contextualization of Greece in order to better understand my positionality and the magazines in question; the conceptualization of the body as a site of tensions between desire, power and relating; archives as sites of life, death and being. All these theoretical yarns presented in the previous chapter are stretched and directed by me for the weaving of this project, now placed in the warp. This chapter focuses on the first fieldwork impressions of *Amfi*.

Here, the reader might distinguish the complicated relationship I have with my country, and hence my involvement in such a weave. Through my fieldnotes, the ‘alert–surrender’ aspect of this haptic investigation will begin to come into view. Taking AKOE’s project *Amfi* as a starting point to think about political tensions, social movements in context, my first fieldnotes impressions offer a starting point for a *ksekatharisma* /clarification of how I will navigate reading the magazines in subsequent chapters, including a discussion of issues of translation.⁵⁰ This chapter is best thought of in relation to the previous one, as I am still setting up the vertical yarns of the loom.

By the end of this chapter, the warp of this project will be completed. The analogy of weaving not only facilitates the organizing of multiple threads which emerge from the archives in question. It also prompts us to understand that some threads are meant to be lost, to be left hanging; inasmuch as the warp yarns should remain steady, for the purpose of the

⁵⁰ Here I am using the term *ksekatharisma* as a term in greek meaning clarifying, making clear; and is related to an archival story present in this chapter.

weaving practice, the way the weft will be interlaced should not be as tight as to displace them. It will be in place, over—under, over—under as I delve into each magazine separately.

How else but in media res

As I have established in the previous chapter, the terrain of the third Hellenic republic remains gritty and textured. By all means, a haptic reading of ‘*Amfi*’ (1978—1990), ‘*Kraximo*’ (1981—1993), ‘*Lavriss*’ (1982—1983) and ‘*Skoupa*’ (1979—1981), is not an attempt to sooth the surface. Reading haptically as a practice that entails three registers of touch— physical, indexical and the affective— cannot perform an evaluation analysis. It is about an experimental inquiry. My engagement with tensions, relations, and desires of social movements in this chapter then, places these yarns upon the loom as threads of political connections, intricacies, the divergence. The fieldnotes are from *Amfi* 2—3 a double issue, Summer—autumn 1978.

If this chapter reads as if aspects are introduced *in media res*, it is because these yarns still consist of the warp. It is impossible to include conceptually whole balls of yarns when this weave requires only the parts that I situate in the loom. These yarns are important because not only do they link with the theoretical yarns of the previous chapter, but also because they will help in setting up more clearly my reading positionality.

While the task might not be easy, the claim is rather simple: ‘look over here, see what I observed, see what caught my attention’. What ‘touched me’ in the first fieldwork trip and upon which threads stories of desiring otherwise might be.

Warp H. An alert–surrender exercise on suspiciousness

February 10th 2020,

It was a sunny but windy winter day in Athens when I boarded the free shuttle bus of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Centre (SNFCC). The SNFCC is where the National

Library of Greece relocated. On my way there I was resisting the idea of liking the building. I didn't want to like it. This resistance was mostly a result of the SNFCC being a product of one of the richest Greek families which made me wonder: what are the implications of hosting the National Library there? How come that the National Library of Greece was now part of a privately owned institution? When I arrived, I was lured by the beauty of the landscape and the architecture of the building. It was my first time there. Immediately I got angry at myself that I couldn't resist liking the comfort and the structure of the building. 'I guess neoliberalism didn't come this far for nothing. It knows how to temporarily seduce and camouflage its sweeping effects', I thought. The library was no longer in the centre of Athens where the building was old yet accessible. The National Library of Greece was now far from the centre, 'uncluttered' and accessed by a free shuttle bus. Athens is changing and so am I. As I entered, I looked for the front desk. My email had bounced back, and I hadn't called beforehand. So the staff didn't know what I wanted. My reluctance to prepare them for my arrival came from a deep fear of rejection. A rejection common in my experience of queer trauma in Greek contexts: 'If they knew I would come they could have said no' I thought. I know that this was not a 'logical' thought or very fruitful for my research practice, but my hopes of finding the magazines there were not high. Yet, they seem to have most of them. A very sweet archivist very eager to help me, was shocked at the amount of magazines I requested. She really did seem happy to help me. She was also worried that they wouldn't have perhaps all the magazines I wanted, or they wouldn't be available all at once. She was worried that most probably I would need to make a special request and then in 3—4 working days they might bring all the issues here. This information got me worried too. Mostly I was caught by surprise by what seemed a sincere worry on her part. I asked if I could go to the other library to access the remaining issues, I also told her that online the Amfi ones looked available. She was still not convinced. 'Of course,' I thought 'silly me that trusted any online

repository system'. She pointed towards a seat as she headed back in her office to have a look. I sat waiting ready to be let down.

Five minutes later she came back with a smiley face as if she was sharing the same agony to let me know that the issues of Amfi and Skoupa were available, and I could access them right now! Happily, she disappeared again in her office. When she came back, she was holding six big dusty books. 'You should play the lottery today' she said implying how lucky I was. Yes, I felt very lucky, and I also knew that I had to go through a 'cold shower' first, before actually getting them. I somehow knew it. Discouragement until the revelation of relief has always been my experience with the 'Greek way' so far, and the beginning of my fieldwork in Greece did not disappoint in providing both.

The magazines were grouped together in issues of five, 'this is why they look more like books' the eager archivist told me. At first, when she brought out the items, Amfi and Skoupa, assembled into these old books looked like old accountancy books. 'I am sure she made a mistake' I thought. I thought that these were not the magazines I wanted and that I had to awkwardly ask for the 'gay' ones, that she would mock me and reject my claim. That she would say something like 'oh sorry we don't have these' with a condescending tint. Yet, I followed her silently to the study room and started to browse.

As I started to browse, I was certain that these were actually the ones I have ordered. Inside the most conventional and old-fashioned bookbinding laid the magazines that I wanted. I was surprised once again. It was unexpected. Was it the first trace of an 'alert-surrender' mode of inquiry? I momentarily thought that this was not happening in Athens. I felt a detachment. It was strange to realize that in this building of 'neoliberal paradise' I found the magazines I wanted. Why was I more surprised than content? Was it the architecture of the 'cultural center'? Was it the client-based approach of the archivist? Was it the place? Perhaps it was

my impression that in neoliberalism it is all about being the same, looking the same: Getting married, be happy, use a free shuttle bus to research, consider everyone as polite. I was suspicious. And I was kind of happy with myself that I was. My suspiciousness as a stance of resisting all this convenience and serviceability? – in the online dictionary thesaurus one word synonym of ‘suspicious’ is ‘queer’, well.

More notes on this suspiciousness:

It seems like the alert–surrender approach derives or is being connected to a feeling of suspiciousness. Starting from questioning, a ‘withholding’ that becomes ‘holding’ when I finally get to touch and immerse in the magazines. As I hold the archives, they are also holding me. I am no longer ‘withholding’ but rather holding–with.

I was surprised by the easy finding, by the polite personnel, surprised that I was allowed to have water in the room with me—this would ease my allergy to dust. I was now surrounded by six issues of Amfi and Skoupa incognito, camouflaged inside old khaki books with marblelike patterned covers. Disguising their difference, ready to be explored and engaged with people willing to hold them.

The fieldnotes above showcase archival research as an embodied practice, as I have also argued in Chapter 1. Regarding the situatedness and bodily presence in archival research, archives require ‘being in a state’ — they put the researcher ‘in a state’. This state, this embodied positionality is not only related to the materiality of the archives – holding them and being held – but also in the temporality of this kind of research, ‘I have to be in that state because the archives are here for me now. It is an experience both embodied and momentary. Momentary. I cannot afford to be flaky or inconsistent as I engage with the magazines’ (Gianniri 2021). This ‘deal’ of my body being present for the archives to be present I

interpret as relating to the haptic. Touching and being touched by. Not all the time, not in every page, but to be alerted to be surrendered if and when it comes.

Warp I. Ephemera/memory: ‘where do bars go when they close?’

In the last page of *Amfi*'s first issue (1978) stood three adverts of bars and shops.⁵¹ Upon reading them, even though I was aware of Athens' topography and topology and I knew that these spaces no longer exist, I had an urge to go and check these addresses, as if my presence would somehow animate the buildings' previous use.⁵² I asked myself: 'What would you be looking for in a building that once was something but now is something else? The kinship? The feeling/affect? The 'vibe'? The recognition? Where do bars go when they close? Do 'they' remember? Who is 'they'?

Of course, attempting to define 'memory' is far from the task in this haptic exercise. The literature on memory is vast and there are so many approaches that one can take regarding memory and memorialization. In relation to memory and archives, as I have argued in the previous chapter, I see archives as sites of debt (Mbembe 2002; Harney & Moten 2013), of potential re/membering (Mofokeng 2013), as artefacts of being and grief (Bost 2019), as spaces of catachresis (Arondekar 2009) as feverish promises and responsibilities of tomorrow (Derrida 1996) as well as related to the impossible/possible task of reaching the dead (Love, 2009). All these often oppositional modalities of an archive can entail some qualities of what one might call 'memory'. An interesting scope on archive and memory is Mbembe's argument warning against 'commemoration'. Mbembe (2002) sees archives not only as markers of debt but also as powerful structures that potentially can obfuscate memory in favor of the oppressor. The State that wishes to alleviate tensions and erase the debt can erode

⁵¹ Pop 11– Skoufa 15 first floor, Jacare Tholou 13, Christopher bar, Thrasivoulou 17, plaka.

⁵² For more on the changing topologies of 'queer Athens' see Papanikolaou's 'Mapping/Unmapping: The making of queer Athens' in *Queer cities, queer cultures: Europe since, 1945* chapter 8.

‘memory’, much like it happened with the case of Greece and civil war resistance ‘recognition’ (Vervenioti 2016, Mazower 2000, Boeschoten 1997, Papailias 2015) that I presented in the previous chapter. The paradoxical relationship of the State and archives in relation to memory should always remain at play. For archives to remain ‘a threat’ to the State Mbembe urges against a commodification of memory. Archives as sites of memory are both full and lacking. They hold tensions, myths, silences, absences, and presences.

Here, in a rusty magazine dedicated to the liberation of homosexual desire, the archive holds adverts of places that hosted so much life and now are gone. These shops/bars as other ephemera could be part of what Papanikolaou (2014:155) maps as an ‘arrangement of the queer city’. These places took part in the ever-changing topography of Athens and perhaps the only evidence of their existence are these ads and the memory of people who frequented them.

Vanessa Agard-Jones (2012) in the essay *What the Sands Remember* offers a queer methodology that traces the sand as the dispersed archive of same—sex desire in the Caribbean Island of Martinique. Agard-Jones (2012) notes the morphology of the Caribbean sand and its persistence to slip in bodies who meet at a cruising beach for sexual encounters, in cars, in houses. Drawing a parallel between sand as a record of encounters of oppression (enslavement) and life otherwise (same—sex desire/erotics) and sand as a geological force, Agard-Jones (2012:326) writes:

Today’s sands are yesterday’s mountains, coral reefs, and outcroppings of stone. Each grain possesses a geological lineage that links sand to a place and to its history, and each grain also carries a symbolic association that indexes that history as well.

The palimpsests of sand cover up spaces and affect the scenery wherever their grains end up. Notably, Agard-Jones brings up the volcanic eruption of Mount Pelée in Martinique, which

dissipated the entire cosmopolitan city of Saint–Pierre in 1902. Within five seconds Saint–Pierre was no longer the vibrant city of ‘all excesses’ and as Agard–Jones informs us the destruction of the city in some headlines was compared with the biblical city of Sodom and its connotation of illegitimate desire (Agard–Jones, 2012).⁵³ The sand that still stands in Saint—Pierre holds the history of a place, even if the place is no longer. As Agard–Jones (2012:335) notes:

the sands remember—or at least they reference—the eruption, and in doing so they call up all of the associations we might have with the city that once was

Similarly, the bars I found advertised in the last pages of *Amfi* form a part of the genealogy of queer living in Athens, even if now they are just buildings. The walls remember, the floors remember, the windows perhaps still permit the same amount of light. The ads place the yarn of palimpsests and ephemera, as memory of space and trace or filament of desiring and living otherwise.

Warp J. Social movements and hydra heads: An inquiry not an evaluation

This yarn is a particularly thick one. It needs to be placed in the loom in order to spell out that this thesis is not going to offer any evaluation or tools for assessing the achievements of social movements. Tracing the impact of social movements within the archives will take the form of inquiry. Adopting the inquisitive stand is a more fitting approach to this haptic exploration as it permits a more perplexing understanding of social groups that hoped to formulate politics of sexuality and gender in dialogue with oppositional political struggle. As I have discussed in the previous chapter AKOE— the homosexual/gay liberation front of Greece— was the first group that emerged from the archives in question, and fought for space, literally and

⁵³ For more see: Raphaël Confiant, ‘Libertinage à la Créole,’ in *Une nuit d’orgies à Saint–Pierre, Martinique*, by Effe Géache (Paris: Arléa, 1992). Unless stated otherwise, all translations from French and Martinican Créole are made by Agard–Jones.

figuratively. Notably, AKOE's 'offices' in central Athens was where people would gather, socialize, and problematize over the world's social modalities. Although, I could not find any trace of the women of *Skoupa* in AKOE offices, it remains the place from which *Kraximo* and *Lavrys* differentiated their political stands and publications a few years later. In 'Mapping/Unmapping: The making of queer Athens' Papanikolaou (2014:165) writes on the impact of AKOE in the city:

For the first time there was a place, a well-known address, clearly associated with the politics of non-normative sexual identity. AKOE further introduced a new activist politics of space. Many informants, for instance, remember that in the open activist gatherings in cinemas, core members of AKOE would sit among the audience, and then suddenly stand—up delivering parts of the movement's political lines. By doing this they were turning the row of cinema seats – one of the celebrated 'queer sites' of a previous era – into a political arena for the political expression of identity.

AKOE following the paths of other gay liberation movements created a space to discuss politics of non-normative sexual identity, more often than not from a critical, Marxist/leftist angle.

Through the discursive politics of *Amfi* we can see a hailing of a 'homosexual self'. Calling for identification through *Amfi*'s platform, columnists and contributors summon the consciousness of a political identity. This is, I think, one of the main distinctions between the archives in question and other lifestyle magazines that emerged later in Greece. Zestanakis (2017) offers an account of representations of gender and sexuality in three mainstream publications which emerged in the late 80s. Upon researching *Playboy*, *Status* and *Click* Zestanakis concludes that the magazines' stances varied as they combined reproduction of patriarchal structures on the one hand, while simultaneously opening up a public forum for gay rights on the other. Arguably, AKOE, with *Amfi*, has opened a public space to discuss social claims and political

struggles almost a decade prior to these publications — notwithstanding from a political rather than a lifestyle angle.

The cultural milieu of the Greek lifestyle magazines that Zestanakis examines contributes heavily to the weakening of radical movements. As Papanikolaou (2013) points out, during the 1990s the former mobilizations and press succumbed to a general social mode of ‘aphasia’ where certain social claims ceased to be vocalized in Greece. Papanikolaou (2013) by metaphorically utilizing the loss of language use, describes the rise of mainstream press and media which elbow in the queer and feminist claims into a form of silent—narrative, constituting them ‘un—narratable’ in the public sphere. Hence, according to Papanikolaou the already discontinued and dispersed narrative of claims became muted in the years that followed. What Papanikolaou sets to describe could be likened to a numbness towards public debates of sexual liberation in the decades to come.

Here though, I would like to draw a distinction between the ‘un—narratable’ in the public sphere and the non—existent. This is an important clarification for two reasons. Firstly, the mainstream press is one strand of printed publication but not the only one. Secondly, contextualizing the ‘aphasia’ further, we come across a time where gay liberation movements were fighting the AIDS epidemic, a period that Darsey calls, ‘battling the hydra’ (2006:497). Cook (2017) employs testimonial archives and press responses regarding the AIDS epidemic during 1987 in Britain. From the emotionally laden archives presented in this piece, Cook (2017:9–10) theorizes ‘the power of emotional rhetoric’ and ‘particular styles of emotional expression’ to which people in the archives attested. It goes without saying that experiences and expressed emotions in these archival records vary. However, thinking about the ‘un—narratable’ as Papanikolaou (2013) frames it, perhaps Cook’s point on media coverage of the AIDS crisis can be of use in inquiring the numbness of more organized sexual liberation claims in the 90s.

Cook (2017:2) writes:

The British press distinguished between innocent haemophiliacs and babies on the one hand, and drug users and homosexuals on the other. And of the latter pairing, it was homosexuals who were most frequently discussed in relation to the virus and devastating effects. This was because it was gay men who had been infected in the largest numbers in the UK and because they were already a demonised minority – and one which was developing a strident communal voice in part because of precedent political organising (arising out of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality and Gay Liberation, for example).

It was mostly within this climate of mainstream rhetoric that the AIDS crisis was depicted discursively by the UK media.⁵⁴ On the rhetorics around HIV/AIDS in Greece, I would have to agree with Yannakopoulos that the seemingly neutralized Greek medical discourse is not at all ‘neutral’. It is rather informed by the dominant ideology which is mostly concerned with keeping sexuality in order/controlled. To put it differently, HIV/AIDS is still part of a discourse that prioritizes a health system that is synonymous to keeping sexuality in order and classified (Yannakopoulos 2002). In positioning a yarn of inquisitive interest in social movements and sexual politics I feel that I ought to have these historicized dimensions.

Darsey (2006) discusses how catalytic events influenced the discourse around sexuality in the US. By offering a historical analysis on the rhetorics and public discourse around gay liberation, Darsey problematises an evaluation of the movement. For that, Darsey (2006:502) writes the following:

⁵⁴ On the power of discourse around the AIDS crisis also see: Altman, D. (2002) *Power and Community: Organisational and Cultural Responses to AIDS*. In this book, first published in 1994, Altman contextualizes AIDS as an epidemic of modernity constructed around dominant discourses of that period. Altman writes: ‘there are many ways to understand AIDS as an epidemic of modernity: its spread and the social constructions attached to it are closely linked (in the poor world) to the dislocations of economic and social ‘development’ and (in the West) to the growth of particular subcultures and regimes of sexuality. The widespread acceptance that AIDS results from infection by a particular retrovirus (HIV) was only possible in a historical period in which the paradigms of western biomedicine are dominant; the stress on seeing it as ‘sexually transmissible’ rather than (as is the case for hepatitis) a ‘preventable communicable disease’ owed a great deal to the ways in which AIDS was first identified and depicted’ (Altman, 1994:2).

Perhaps this is the fundamental question for any movement for social reform, the question of how to define success. How much do *we* become like *them* in order to enjoy the fruits of what they call success, and how much do *we* make *them* acknowledge that there are alternatives that must be respected? (emphasis in the original).

Darsey's scheme seems broadly applicable in evaluating 'reformative success' of social movements. Dividing a 'we' and a 'them' the struggle becomes one of recognition and respectability and by extension, centres issues of 'identity' since it is one's identity that is to be 'recognised' as 'respectable'. Cherishing alternative ways of being 'successful' and 'respectable' was definitely for some people one of the goals in gay liberation claims.⁵⁵

Now, presenting a homogenized view of the movement or deeming respectability as the cradle of gay liberation is not what I am getting at here.⁵⁶ However, it is important to include this thread as, especially in *Amfi*, we encounter an agenda of identity politics. Following Darsey's logic one might find it easier to quantify the rights 'won' or what is yet to be achieved in order for 'them' to accept and respect an alternative 'we'. Here difference seems like an obstacle, like a category of division that needs to be acknowledged in order to succeed in the ways in which *they* consider valid. What is more as Darsey (2006:502) points out, 'this cannot be separated from how thoroughly *we* have learned the lessons *they* have taught about *us*'. (emphasis in the original). Darsey's point that *they* — assuming 'they' as being the people in power or whoever isn't 'us' — dictate how a 'we' is presented and represented signals toward an antagonism that needs to be eliminated. Darsey (2006:502) continues:

⁵⁵ For an account on the transformations and rights won by social movement see Weeks (2007) in the World we have won: The Remaking of Erotic and Intimate Life.

⁵⁶ For a critique on politics of respectability see Harris, C (2014) The Rise of Respectability Politics. Here Harris argues that under neoliberalism politics of respectability inevitably produce other black Americans as the 'unrespectables' <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/the-rise-of-respectability-politics>.

I may feel that I deserve rights as an individual, but I may have difficulty demanding those rights as a gay person. In fact, I may feel more deserving of rights the more distance I can place between myself and constructs I have absorbed about gay people.

Following Darsey's point, for a project of citizenship based in the above rhetoric, a gay person needs to realize that he/she/they deserves rights *even though* he/she/they is gay (my emphasis). I am mobilizing this point here because it summarizes the mainstream rhetoric in relation to which AKOE/*Amfi* was positioned against. The creation of AKOE was precisely hoping to raise *consciousness* among homosexuals in Greece with political connotations. *Amfi*'s political agenda included not only claims but also Marxist critiques on society. At the same time, many of *Amfi*'s readers and contributors had to battle the sentiment that Darsey describes.

To illustrate, on page 8 of *Amfi*'s issue (1978) there is an article attributing idleness, apathy and silence to Greek homosexuals regarding a proposed bill that would criminalize homosexuality. In the most liberal fashion, this section of the bill was not part of the title. As *Amfi*'s contributor notes the official title of the proposed bill was: 'a bill for protection against STI's and relevant/related issues' (*Amfi*, 1978:8). The bill was referring to homosexuals as 'fags' (Greek: Κίνοιδοις) who engage in abnormal and sick actions and framed them as 'procurers' and 'paedophiles'. As the article emphasizes, while French intellectuals and others 'openly' homosexual from European countries took a stance against the bill, homosexuals in Greece – apart from AKOE – stood silent. In *Amfi*'s contributor's opinion, it is because homosexual themselves think they are indecent and lewd, 'because deep inside them, they (homosexuals) feel like they deserve it'.

This painful reclamation should not be disregarded. This sentiment could be analyzed in terms of the discursive construction of shame as an affect that holds a particular relation to queerness (Sedgwick & Frank & Tomkins 1995; Brayford 1999; Lichtenberg 2008). Many scholars have touched upon collective feelings relating to (homo)sexual desire, social

categorizations, and queer lives (Cvetkovich 1992; 2003; Stockton 2006; Halperin & Traub 2010; Love 2010; Stanley 2018). What the contributor in *Amfi* writes though, is a sentiment that remains important in the yarn I am placing here. Pulling this yarn that summons the political claims of *Amfi*, I want to propose another reading on Darsey's point. What if we think about the distance that Darsey describes between the constructs and his 'deserving self' in the way hooks and Theodorakopoulos invoke marginality as discussed in the previous chapter, in warp D. Considering together the topography of centralized power and the margins as radical space of opposition, the 'distance' that Darsey describes could potentially align with *a conscious abidance in the margins* – instead of moving towards regulations of centralized power. This positionality is often encouraged by *Amfi*'s contributors who consider the importance of summoning a (homo)sexual political identity and are simultaneously critical and in opposition to the status quo.

By all means, both *Amfi* and *Skoupa* orientate towards social reforms and follow the progressive strand of social movements. On the other hand, *Kraximo* and *Lavrys* are not projects of citizenship. With this in mind, the stories I explore in the chapters to come, I suggest are all resisting something, refusing something, exploring an otherwise, regardless of the political intentions of the magazines.

As the rest of the warp is set while reading *Amfi*, the tensions in this part of the yarn become apparent. At risk of seeming repetitive, it is important to reiterate that the reason I offer this perspective here is not to engage in any evaluation strand of social movements. Categorical assessment is in contrast with the haptic registers of inquiry that I have selected for this project. In this haptic exploration, what emerges in the weft is always informed by the contact with the materials in question, and their indexical, textual, and affective imprints on me.

Warp K. Politics of social movements and the Greek Left: ‘Working class takes it up the ass too!’

As I have already argued, this research is not concerned so much with the mainstream press and representations, but rather, sets out to illuminate aspects and unexplored stories in the archives of autonomous presses. AKOE, the Greek homosexual liberation front, started publishing the magazine ‘*Amfi*’ in 1978, among other actions.⁵⁷ Over eleven years, *Amfi* made a considerable contribution to turning public spaces as sites of sexual liberation. The first fight that AKOE had to give was against a proposed bill that would criminalize homosexuality.

The first and second issue of *Amfi* revolved around the withdrawal of the bill and was calling homosexuals, Greek and European intellectuals, and leftists to unite and sign a petition against it. Eventually, AKOE succeed in their goal and the bill did not pass.⁵⁸

A few years before the creation of *Amfi*, the political arena during *metapolitefsi* saw the circulation of the leftist magazine *Anti* (1974–2008 Eng: contra; against; opposed to). In the thirty–four years of its publication *Anti* hosted many Greek intellectuals and leftist thinkers. When I was asking around my parents’ circles if they had any *Amfi* issues, more than one person thought that I was researching *Anti*. Happy they could help they would say something like: ‘of course, I will look through my boxes’— I was surprised and excited each time, only to receive the phone call a few hours later: ‘wait, did you say *Amfi*? I only have *Anti*’. Then I would clarify, and they would apologize. These interactions showed that it is not that leftists of the time did not know that *Amfi* existed, it just seemed not to register with many of them. Was it because it wasn’t ‘their’ struggle? Was it the standard leftist/Marxist position that this was secondary to real struggle? What these interactions clearly show, however, is the important work of AKOE in discussing (homo)sexual desire politically.

⁵⁷ Magazine’s title derives from the Greek word ‘Amfisvitisi’ meaning controversy, contestation, doubt.

⁵⁸ As we found out in *Amfi* B PERIOD issue 1. Spring of 1979.

For instance, on Page 5–6 of the first issue of *Amfi* (1978) stands an article calling—out the Left radical magazine *Anti*. According to the article, AKOE had to contact *Anti* twice to publish *Amfi*'s letter regarding the bill and ignored *Amfi*'s request. Eventually as the piece informs us, *Anti* published AKOE's document, but they still did not take any written position on the matter. *Amfi* castigates once more the Greek left for its apathy and silence towards movements of (homo)sexual liberation. The apathy that *Amfi* describes echoes Papadogiannis' view that in Greek historiography 'the relationship between Feminism/homosexual liberation and the Left was strained, ranging from hostility in the case of pro—Soviet Communists to cautious openness concerning Eurocommunists' (2017:29).

Reading through *Amfi* though another dimension important of the warp becomes clear, that is, that the scope of *Amfi* is unambiguously focussed towards creating a political consciousness around homosexual desire. For example, in page 8–9 of the same issue, the columnist reiterates that AKOE seems like standing alone against the bill while all the young homosexual intellectuals who work in other 'progressive' magazines under the themes of politics, cinema, literature, the arts, the theatre, musical, philosophy, did nothing about the bill. They did not approach AKOE, anonymously or not. The columnist here assumes that it is because *Amfi* is not a *kathos prepi* (Greek: καθώς πρέπει; modest; decent; prim; proper).⁵⁹ According to the columnist since *Amfi* doesn't follow the status quo the intellectuals have nothing to gain career—wise, 'But how can they forget their homosexual self?' (1979: 9).

This lingering question is recurring in the political hailing AKOE wishes for.

On page 46, we find an article originally published in the left magazine *odofragma*. The author of the piece, Dimitriou, supports AKOE which surprises the *Amfi* commentator. Dimitriou argues that AKOE prompts the Left to think and criticize things further than just 'equal pay

⁵⁹ I examine this train of thought further in Chapter 4 where I propose the 'anti—seriousness' mobilization tactics as a way to describe the hybrid formula of radical politics that I read in *Amfi*.

and equal rights' AKOE urges the left to question things further and tries to spread 'the seed of dispute'. Dimitriou's take on *Amfi* is an attempt to dismantle misconceptions that many Greek communists had regarding homosexuals. Dimitriou concludes, 'another argument coming from the Greek communists is that homosexuals belong in the bourgeoisie ignoring that homosexual desire is experienced everywhere. The working class takes it up the ass too!'

Dimitriou's above declaration when put in dialogue with the claim which Theodorakopoulos makes that 'homosexuality has an inter-class capacity', already encompasses political tensions and desires. Challenging the notion that sexuality belongs only to the bourgeoisie is a crucial moment in understanding sexuality discursively and hoping towards a liberation of expressing such desires. At the same time, class struggle does not appear to be at the forefront of *Amfi*'s project— it is about spreading the seed of dispute/ of suspicion.

On the other side of this yarn, we find some of *Amfi*'s readers who are requesting a more de-politicized approach of homosexuality, a less provocative stance in order to 'be taken seriously'. One of the readers in the correspondence column of issue 2—3 precisely asks: 'what is *Amfi* about? is it about homosexuals or just leftist homosexuals?'

It is on a response to this correspondence section, where *Amfi* identifies as questioning first, as disputing values of status quo as well as homosexual liberation. 'Not all of us are Marxists, but we all are critical towards society' (1979: 68—69). Moreover, the responder adds that people in AKOE believe in political organizing.

Perhaps placing in this yarn, a discussion with Félix Guattari as an example can be helpful to understand the impact of identity politics in *Amfi*, on the one hand, and ideas towards autonomy, on the other. This discussion published in *Amfi* revolves around liberation, the STI's bill and the importance of self-organizing/grassroot collectives (1978:12–13). Holding a critical stance towards psychoanalysis, Guattari talked about his book *Molecular Revolution* (1984) on mobilizations of autonomous expression and liberations instigated from the

margins/fringe (Greek: perithorio). Here, Guattari emphasizes that nowadays the working class cannot be so clearly defined as it is becoming not just *one* but several, and thus suggests that the revolution must change structure.⁶⁰ Guattari proposes modalities of grassroots collectives that act in three levels. First, at a level of resisting the oppression of a social group which formulates claims (social, juridical etc.). The second level is that of autonomous expression, i.e. printed material related to the collective (press, magazine, zine, etc.). The third level is being in relation to the margins. I observe a link here to the theoretical vantage point of marginality that hooks also examines and I placed in the loom as ‘Warp D. Marginality as openness’ in the previous chapter.

In this text, Guattari does not explain further the idea of marginality within the practice of ‘molecular revolutions’. Nonetheless, since his theory is being shared both in *Amfi* and *Kraximo* in various occasions, I think it is interesting to delve deeper into the concept of the margins as Guattari frames it. I argue that this idea on marginality can be in dialogue with how hooks and Theodorakopoulos examine it too. Guattari (1990:1) writes on the double—edged aspect of marginality:

It is impossible to trace a clear and definite boundary between the recuperable marginals and other types of marginalities on the way to truly ‘molecular revolutions.’ The frontiers actually remain blurred and unstable both in time and in space. The real question is whether this phenomenon finally will remain on the Outskirts of society — whatever its scope — or whether it will put it radically into question. What characterizes the ‘molecular’ here is the fact that the lines of flight merge with the objective lines of deterritorialization of the system and create an irreversible aspiration for new spaces of liberty.

⁶⁰ This train of thought can be also found in Deleuze’s work and on Nikos Poulantzas theory on social movements. And of course radical black feminism writers has been saying this all along Angela Davis, Audre Lorde, bell hooks.

Guattari brings ‘the Free Radios’ as an example and a mode that combines ‘the technological evolution, in particular the miniaturization of transmitters and the fact that they can be ‘tinkered with’ by amateurs, meets a collective aspiration for a new means of expression’ (Guattari, 1990:1).

Mobilizing theorists like Guattari on the one hand, and trying to raise the consciousness of homosexuals in Greece on the other, I have the sense that the politics of *Amfi* are simultaneously hailing an identity and are also calling for a praxis. So, what can we ultimately place in this yarn as part of the warp? From the tensions between *Amfi* and a part of the Left, to *Amfi* as a platform of questioning, to proposals of molecular revolutions, I place in the warp the politics of desire and the seed of being critical towards established societal categories with frontiers that blurred and unstable.

Warp L. *Ksekatharisma*, a story of clarifications

Among the pages 24–31 in *Amfi*’s double issue 2–3, I came upon a story that touched me deeply. In these seven pages we meet Petros who generously offers the correspondence he had with his mother regarding his sexuality. What one in English nowadays might call ‘coming out’, Petros calls *ksekatharisma*. *Ksekatharisma* is Greek refers to a ‘clarification’; ‘the act of making something clear’. Reading the letters that son and mother exchange I feel a tangle of social and personal connections being made, quite affectively. As I narrate Petros’ story I will try to demonstrate the haptic at work. Firstly, I was touched by the content of the story; then clearly a physical touch was present, as I turned the pages of the old magazine feverously to read more of the text. Most importantly it touched me affectively, that is, I was hooked, invested and emotional during and thereafter.⁶¹ In the *ksekatharisma* that follows, we

⁶¹ I use past tense in this story when I describe my feelings. The rest of the story is in the present, but how I felt was bound to the moment. A mixture of ethnographic present and feelings felt.

see a son willing to share with his mother more parts of himself and his desires. We also come across Eli, Petros' friend (as in a friend who is a woman and not a 'girlfriend' as in lover – already I feel some clarifications seem necessary!) who supports and encourages this *ksekatharisma*. Clarifying Eli as Petros friend I think is crucial in understanding their intimate bond and their friendship as they frame it. Ultimately, it seems that both mother and son come out of this clarification more in tune with each other.

In the introduction of the piece, Petros describes his mother as overbearing and suffocating. A mother who is clingy to her son, who want him to get married and have kids and this is 'the only thing that matters in this world' for her. Petros jokingly states that this sounds like the 'prototype mother of homosexuals'. Then, Petros comments that we have definitely heard many more similar stories in textbooks of psychic explanation of homosexuality. In these textbooks, according to Petros, there is a tendency to generalize and state things like: 'when the mother is pathologically attached to her son she usually 'destroys' him'. Petros continues: 'I am not against the attempt of analyzing *per se*, but I hate the kind of analysis that hints towards a 'corrective'/ blaming approach rather than an *anthropognostic* approach (my emphasis).⁶²

In this introduction, I encountered a witty person who mobilizes popular discourses of clinical theory and practice regarding sexuality with a critical stand. As readers, we knew nothing further about Petros background – and we did not need to know. Petros continues describing the feeling of getting more and more frustrated with his mother over the years. His friend Eli urged him to talk to her. Eli is presented as the caring female friend—the one that his mother hopes he will marry. Eli steps forward and urges Petros to take action and make the *ksekatharisma* for his sake: 'you have to clear out the situation with your mum[...] she is

⁶² the term 'anthropognostic' derives from the Greek words: 'Anthropos'+ 'gnosi' meaning 'human' and 'knowledge'.

strong, she will handle it, you'll see. Plus, what do you really have to lose? The way things are now between you two is like a lost relation. At least if you clear things out, there might be something salvaged from it'. 'Eli was right, and I knew it' he writes.

Then, Petros lays out the dilemma. He supposedly had to protect his mother from a fall out or a crisis but at the same time he detested the fact that he had to pretend for her and consequently detested *her*. What is worse as Petros says: 'I could not hide this resentment; my mum could feel it/sense it'. So, Petros decided to write a clarification letter to his mother, to perform a *ksekatharisma*. As I read the letter tears came down my eyes. It was the second day of my fieldwork, and I was crying in a library room around other concentrated and seemingly serious researchers. But I could not help it as I read: 'do you really love *me* mum, or *him*'? the son you've built in your head. This man is a shadow mum, it is not me. You might need some time until you write me back. But it is ok. I will wait for you. Kisses, P.'

As if Petros knew how the reader might feel upon reading this letter, he quickly assured us that even if he never heard back from her, it would be as if it was his shadow— *her* son— committed suicide, but *not him*: 'I would still be alive. She would cry over someone else, not me'. Petros' boldness and attentive writing moved me once again. Her letter arrived within a week. In this short letter she is convinced that she had 'ruined him'. Near the end she confesses that nothing can come between them: 'I couldn't bond with anyone else, only with you, my child. I love you and if it was my fault, please forgive me'.

Petros is happy after this letter and Eli too. They are both optimistic that further dialogue can now begin. Although, before Petros writes again, two more letters arrive from his mother, pleading for his effort to 'change': 'you can change, you are strong, you can marry Eli'; 'I am a failed mother, I feel hurt, my child was my only success'. The way that Petros responds to her mother's lament with another letter, is in my view, amazingly caring and informative. He

debunks his mother's worries without being dismissive all the while offering an impressive social analysis of morals, ideas of morality and revolution. Petros and his mother exchange a few letters, and he always reassured her that it is not 'her fault'— because he sees no fault in his desire.

When in one of the letters he shares that he prefers to be on the receiving end of anal intercourse, his mother loses her patience. The most interesting part of her reaction is that it opens up between mother and son, a deeper discussion on homosexual desire in relation to 'manhood' and 'masculinity'. She is worried that her son 'is a woman' as Petros explains. What is more, she shares with Petros that her husband as well as her brother both had some homosexual encounters— though always on the 'giving-end'. Here, the issue becomes more centralized to sexual positionality and constructed ideas on 'manhood' prevailing in Greek culture (Yannakopoulos 2016). It is also a telling example on how identity politics enter the social space to formulate (political) subjects. Homosexual practices and experiences are no longer just another part of heterosexual male desire as it was the case in previous decades (Yannakopoulos 1996; Avdela 2013). This transgenerational communication between Petros and his mother offers a rare standpoint in discussing desire intimately and personally but as ever, with social connotations present.

Petros finally meets up with his mum to talk about their letters and see if they can salvage their relationship. It is not surprising to me that 'masculinity' comes up first in their discussion. Petros clarifies that he is 'not a woman', nor is he 'pretending to be one'. 'What are you pretending to be then?' asks his mother. 'I am not pretending anything. I just like the male body'. Then his female friend comes up in the discussion:

M: What about Eli?

P: What about her?

M: Does she know?

P: you bet!

M: but maybe you can get used to having sex with her

P: Mum, come on, are you joking?

M: So, she doesn't attract you at all?

P: I think I gave a clear explanation in the letter.

M: And she doesn't mind?

P: She is sleeping with someone else.

M: And you?

P: I sleep around.

M: with Nikos?

P: Sometimes.

M: I thought that at least you two were together.

P: Well, kind of, but more casual.

M: Alas, what can a poor mother say?

P: say? Nothing! There are plenty of fish in the sea.

M: is this the life you want? / Is this what life is about?

P: well, what is life about? Bonds/chains, *desmous* (meaning relationships and emotional ties) and wardens? No, these things have tormented me enough.

(*Amfi*, 1978:29)

In this discussion that Petros generously offers – and I so poorly translated – there are many threads of care, of a desire to understand and a need of *ksekatharisma*. The discussion gets quite philosophical, but Petros’ certainty and willingness to communicate seems to calm the mother. She too tries to salvage what she knows, what she has been taught, what life for her is about. To be sure, she is the one who goes back to the woman in his life, Eli. Later on, she admits that she admires Eli and her choices. The issue of ‘femininity’ comes up and his mum starts:

M: At least you are not effeminate

P: I am not because it is not who I am. But if it was...

M: I see them, and they disgust me.

P: Why they disgust you? They might have a woman within, and they try to express that, who knows?

M: It is degrading

P: To be a woman? (*Amfi* 1978:30)

She stops to think as Petros tells us. I am greatly surprised by how their conversation is going and I am deeply invested. I cannot help but make the association that a part of her at least, must be proud of her son. ‘She must’, I think. And then as I follow the page it seems like the wall of the mum starts to break as she talks about Eli again:

M: in any case, I admire your generation. I mean, take Eli for example... *we* could never! Sex was such a big taboo for us. You have taken it more seriously, *we*...didn’t even mention it (*Amfi*, 1978:30).

It is her turn to open up, to share her story with her son. She confesses how she only had sex a few times because his father became ill. Her son is encouraging her to go out there and have sex. By the end of Petros’ piece, they are walking hand in hand, and she is asking about all

his friends that she has ever met: ‘Are they homosexuals too? What? He is too? I had no idea’.

What a story, what an archival journey. Through Petros’ *ksekatharisma*, I saw a mother who was trying to understand her son through his female friend. She thought it will be the one he was going to marry, then she wondered if she knew about his homosexuality and what she might have to say as a woman, later on she contemplated on her own life trajectory, taking Eli’s sexual liberation as a starting point. As I perceived it, she was looking for the women in Petros’ life, to identify, to mirror her sociocultural experiences through her son. It seems like this story touched me way more than expected, an example of alert–surrender. What is more, Petros’ writing reminded me somehow of my written communication with my mother— I write letters to my mum too for everything important. Like Petros’, this story is very intimate and sweet, and as I write these lines, I am still in awe that I had the privilege to read it.

The term *ksekatharisma* that Petros uses is a crucial move to start thinking about non–globalized language practices as this project is being weaved. For instance, some words found in the archives will remain untranslated in this project with the hope to enrich ways in which sexuality, practices and ways of living can be perceived— or not entirely perceived. To explain, one might certainly read this story as a ‘coming out story’. Though I argue that it is so much more. The act of clarification of a *clear—out* I claim that it is way less on hold of a disclosure positionality, in the sense that the person does not need to step forward in a stage, to come out, as if one re–enters the world. I am not claiming here that the process is not important. Neither that it is unequivocally something that one *must* do. My aim is far from dictating how one will discuss or not their desiring selves, and of course if one *should* disclose some aspects of them or not. What I think that *ksekatharisma* as a practice has to offer is a modality that leans more on a ‘just so you know’, ‘by the way’. This way the jurisdiction of the people involved in it would not require any ‘spacial’ movement— a step

outside a closet for example. Does it always need to be perceived as an act of ‘revealing’? to entail—linguistically—a ‘spacial move’ of the person whose sexuality is being discussed? I am particularly sticking with Petros’ *ksekatharisma* here because a clarification like that can still be political while also balanced between the person that decides to give a clarification and the ones that receive it. The agency of the claim remains more to the person performing the act than the one receiving the information.

This proposition adds to the warp the importance toward sociocultural aspects of language positionality. It is fairly common of English as a globalized language to influence academic and research practices often smoothening or simplifying a surface for the convenience of communication. Of course, this has multiple utilities and I am not going to indulge in an analysis of the social construction of language. What I think can be of use in this theoretical weaving is a link between this yarn and one from the previous chapter.

Given the fact that this project engages with archives in Greek, I draw this yarn as relevant with the warp E. ‘queering Greekness’ as discussed in the previous chapter. Apostolidou’s ethnography of disclosure practices of gay men in Greece can help in perceiving sociocultural intricacies as something we need to carry rather than discard. Apostolidou argues that if the 20th century underscored the homogenization of a ‘gay subject’ formulated as another category within globalization, in the new century ‘the performatives of cultural specificity are far from pointless in resisting the tendency to be harmoniously slotted under a marketized rubric’ (Apostolidou, 2018: 362–363). Taking the case of Greece, practices of disclosure are inevitably informed and thought through the three ‘constraining’ discourses of ‘Greekness’ motherland/religion/family. For Apostolidou (2018:363), ‘the Greek closet is neither defended nor fully abandoned by Greek men’ noting that they are already somehow queering the closet. Apostolidou (2018:363) concludes that ‘the widespread assumption that ‘there is no coming out in Greece’ is untangled by the fact that there is indeed no closet, either’. This

provocative claim does not mean of course that queer lives are not persecuted in Greece nor that the discussion around sexualities is not prevalent. What Apostolidou ultimately theorizes is how discursive practices always happen *in conjunction* with cultural contexts and thus by ‘queering the closet’ a ‘queering of Greekness’ is also at play. Now, Apostolidou’s account remains limited and racialized since it focuses on Greek men–desiring– men, and not so much on women, or non–Greek non–heteronormative men residing in Greece. One could make the claim that systematic structures of ‘nation—religion—family’ as pillars of ‘Greekness’ affect the discursive ways in which people residing in Greece situate themselves regardless of ethnicity. However, the linguistic exercise I want to propose here is a creative challenge to think about globalized established terms of disclosure in this example, differently.

To do so in the next part of the warp I will place the next yarn, that of translation’s complexities and positionalities. Not before the final part of fieldnotes:

I’ve been thinking about Eli, Petros and his mother.

I understand his mother a little bit more today.

Warp M. Translations, the incommensurable and otherwise

By all means, the problem with translation is not only bound to Greek language. Many scholars who research in a language other than English and need to address an Anglophone audience, or academics who work in translation, have produced numerous writings on the topic. From the field of translation studies (Holmes, Fay, Andrews, & Attia, 2016; Baker, 2011) to International Business Studies (Chidlow, Plakoyiannaki & Welch 2014) scholars’ consensus over translation issues seems to be that there will never be a consensus *per se* between two languages, yet of course, translation is an imperative tool of communication.

Venuti (2008) calls for a practice of ‘foreignizing’ approach to translation. In particular, Venuti notes how Anglophone translators ‘often disregard words or contexts affiliated with the original language of the text:

The ethnocentric violence of translation is inevitable: in the translation process, foreign languages, texts, and cultures always undergo some degree and form of exclusion, reduction, and inscription that reflect the cultural situation in the translating language. Yet the domesticating work on the foreign text can be a foreignizing intervention, pitched to question existing cultural hierarchies (Venuti, 2008:267)

Venuti’s critical approach to the translation canon through history, identifies translation as a political exercise that requires our attention. Translation is a process that will inevitably exclude certain meanings that are bound to linguistic limitations and differences. By leaving words untranslated one can queer up, foreignize bits of the texts. This practice on the one hand is driven by the imperative that meanings of words are often sociolinguistically contextual and thus to an extent untranslated. On the other hand, ‘foreignizing’ a translation can act as a reminder of the multitude of ways that stories can be expressed through linguistic channels. Posocco (2014) examines the problem of heteroglossia and transcription of ethnographic fieldnotes, an act especially delicate when negotiating guerrillas’ experiences. Posocco’s choice to leave certain words in their original non-English form, is a practice which ensures that a lexicon pertinent to significant political struggles in Guatemala, does not get lost in translation.

The field of postcolonial studies is also greatly interested in the power relations between languages and translation practices (Asad 1986; Bhabha 1990, 1994; Chakrabarty 2000). Bhabha’s collection of essays *Nation and Narration* discusses how English is no longer just related to the concept of ‘Englishness’ and recognizes the international dimensions of the

English language. Interrogating the structures that uphold the mythmaking of nation and culture this collection proposes that ‘English’ can offer an *international* perspective. As Bhabha (1990) notes in the introduction—borrowing Fanon’s phrase ‘international dimension’—this collection hopes to critically mobilize cultural difference, both as an anti-nationalist and an ambivalent nation–space imperative, towards ‘a new transnational culture’.⁶³

Attempts to create a translational culture should always also take into consideration that constituting English itself as the language towards a non-nationalist narration is also to an extent a consequence of British imperialism. Language cannot escape mythmaking or power. On the contrary, language *is* mythmaking and power. By the same token, the linguistic colonialism of English (Corradi 2017) and understanding colonial violence through language (Ravishankar 2020) can lead authors to produce writings in languages other than the ones through which colonialism and empire was mostly created upon.⁶⁴

What matters again here is to explain why I mobilize these debates in relation to my analytical intentions and positionality. For that I want to invoke again two scholars, Papailias and Bhabha. First of all, in this project I recognize language as a node of cultural difference that is present. However, I will take up Papailias’ point that the ‘mother tongue’ should not be fetishized. As Papailias (2014:19) writes:

⁶³ See Bhabha’s (1990:2) quote: The representative emblem of this book might be a chiasmatic ‘figure’ of cultural difference whereby the anti-nationalist, ambivalent nation–space becomes the crossroads to a new transnational culture. The ‘other’ is never outside or beyond us; it emerges forcefully, within cultural discourse, when we think we speak most intimately and indigenously ‘between ourselves’.

⁶⁴ Here I am thinking about the work of playwright and author Ngugi wa Thiong’o who prompts African writers not to writing in the colonial languages of English or French. <https://www.wpr.org/never-write-language-colonizer>.

as speakers are forced to conform to a dominant language, it is important not to fetishize the ‘mother tongue,’ which itself can be the product of nationalist campaigns of standardization and the eradication of multilingual practices.

In addition, the practice of translation of the archival material mobilized in this project is a necessity for communication and for writing this project. By the same token, my practice of searching for possible linguistic equivalents is informed by the (post)–structuralist notion of language, meaning making and power.⁶⁵ As Papailias (2014:19) puts it:

In demanding that equivalences be found for different languages, registers, and alphabets, translation as institutional practice can be said to support the ideal of an unmixed, pure, ‘native’ language and the innate separation of (national) language.

Following that logic, I am not supporting the ideal of a ‘pure’ native language, nor am I particularly in favor of globalizing one and any language in particular. Furthermore, the anti–nationalist stance of writing in this thesis, I doubt that is enough to achieve the highest hope of escaping language as power— in a thesis from all places. What I want to do is try to think about translation in relation to that which remains *incommensurable*. Das (2020) also discusses the conjunction of commensurability and translation, arguing that the case of incommensurability might hinder ‘imagining a future together’. For Das this warning concerns not only people from different societies but also within one’s daily life where ‘one is faced with behavior that does not so much violate this or that norm but violates the very picture of human life that we may have even as we know that the limits of the human body or human voice are not knowable or even given in advance’ (Das 2020: 291). Although Das considers the incommensurable of the human body and voice, I think that her claim touches more on the limits of language in general and the ways in which violence operates under

⁶⁵ Following the thought of Saussure, Lacan, Foucault, Deleuze.

hierarchically organized social orders, rather than in the need to alleviate non-proportionate differences in translation.

To be sure, my argument on the need of the incommensurable is not based in the claim that few words left untranslated in this project describe something ‘better’, or ‘worse’, nor that ‘all Greek speakers would understand their meaning’, nor that ‘Greek speakers would agree upon understanding a meaning’, and definitely I am not arguing that incorporating them into academic discourse would salvage something. Bhabha’s (1994:162) point might help in clarifying my differentiation:

The question of cultural difference faces us with a disposition of knowledges or a distribution of practices that exist beside each other, *abseits* designating a form of social contradiction or antagonism that has to be negotiated rather than sublated. The difference between disjunctive sites and representations of social life have to be articulated without surmounting the incommensurable meanings and judgements that are produced within the process of transcultural negotiation (emphasis in the original).

Bhabha’s perception of cultural difference as a site which will always produce and reproduce subalterns is an important one. To point out, my persistence with ‘cultural difference’ is not a way to disregard power at play and much less to hold on to hierarchies of nationalist frontiers. It is not culture that I am defending here, but difference. Bhabha’s suggestion on negotiation can offer an alternative so that sublating knowledges is not the only way to desiring beyond loci of centralized power which fuel from antagonism.

Reaching this penultimate yarn to the loom, the words that I leave un-translated here account for the incommensurable— linguistically and beyond. This that cannot be translated not because it is ‘purer’ as it is, neither as something ‘better’; nor as an aspiration or a warning.

Maybe, as a reminder that ‘translation [...] is never just a transparent exchange of currency in a free market circulation of language’ (Papailias, 2014:19).

Last, but not least, what I find interesting is that the more lay and anti-academic/intellectual the magazines are such as *Kraximo*, *Lavrys* and often *Amfi*, the more words I feel would be lost in translation. Thus, I chose to leave particular words untranslated and work my way around it. If this makes the weave feel lumpier at times, it is because the fabrics of the threads were never chosen in relation to being finely— textured in the first place.

Warp N. A note on difference

I think it is important to clarify the way I am thinking about difference in this project. The radical black lesbian mother of two socialist thinker Audre Lorde in the paper ‘Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference’ discusses how systematized oppression is based on hierarchies of difference which are necessary for the profit economy to deem the ‘outsiders as surplus people’. Lorde (1984:115) writes:

As members of such an economy, we have *all* been programmed to respond to the human differences between us with fear and loathing and to handle that difference in one of three ways: ignore it, and if that is not possible, copy it if we think it is dominant, or destroy it if we think it is subordinate. But we have no patterns for relating across our human differences as equals. As a result, those differences have been misnamed and misused in the service of separation and confusion.(emphasis on the original)

Lorde’s claim is a very important one. The way I read it is a call to anti-assimilatory practice, for justice, a call to unity within heterogeneity— against hierarchal systems of domination. In the same piece Lorde clarifies, ‘the need for unity is often misnamed as a need for homogeneity’ (1984:119). For Lorde then any form of unity which ignores, incorporates

(copy), or destroys differences, is nothing but a new façade of oppression. Now, I am not arguing this a way to deny any social production on the categories of differentiation nor to disregard the power structures which sustain ‘separation and confusion’. On the contrary, it is in order to place a thread upon this weave that takes into consideration social construction of human differences in relation to power as not equitable with desiring homogeneity nor ignoring differentiations upon relating non–hierarchically.

The work of Audre Lorde is also invoked in the lesbian magazine *Lavrays* and will be further discussed in that chapter. What is important to keep in this thread is that even though heterogeneity is part of the difference I invoke, at the same time, like Lorde, I acknowledge the social distribution of difference as that which is orchestrated to maintain economical hierarchies (and thus injustice). I also want to note that what is key in this social distribution is the hierarchies of value placed on those deemed different/known as different as part of the social practice of disavowing difference that is the problem that leads to injustice. A thread related to modalities of difference, of being—doing—desiring differently.

Derrida in an attempt to escape the logocentrism of western philosophy formulated the notion of *Differance*. *Differance* can be vaguely conceptualized through language and within its etymology one can find modalities related to differ (disagree) and to be different. According to Derrida, *Differance* is neither a word or a concept, ‘It is not—it cannot be generally something like ‘the truth of a present or the presence of the present’ ‘(1982: 6), it’s the opposite of presence, is what lies between text (language) and meaning, what transport the difference of meaning that fuels the chain of signifiers in language. The key thing about the concept of difference is that it is both difference (non–correspondence) and deferral (of meaning) and hence opaque/ambiguous. This metaphysical take on difference can be linked to a Deleuzian take of difference.

Deleuze in his thesis *Difference and repetition* argues for an ontology of difference that is related to ‘heterogeneous systems and even completely disparate things, the *disparate*’ (1995:120). Deleuze in this book argues that Difference must become the ultimate unity upon which each being becomes ‘a difference between differences. Difference must be shown *differing*.’ (Deleuze, 1995: 56 emphasis in the original).⁶⁶ Following Deleuze’s theorization of difference as I read it, difference becomes demonstrable in acts/thoughts/creations of differing. According to Dosse (2010) the Deleuzian ontology of difference hoped to diverge from Deleuze’s professor Hyppolite reading of Hegel’s notion of Being as that which ‘can only be identical to difference when carried to an absolute—meaning contradiction’ (Dosse, 2010:119).⁶⁷ Thus, as Dose puts it ‘For Deleuze, the issue was to replace Hyppolite’s reading of Hegel, which seeks to shift ontology toward Being, with an ontology entirely oriented toward life’ (Dosse, 2010:119). To clarify, the argument of my project is not a formulation of an ontology of difference. However, the way that Deleuze conceives difference as demonstrable upon *differing* on the one hand, and *oriented towards life* on the other, might help me show that the difference I am arguing for here is always somewhat relational. It relates to something, in order to differ from it. Correspondingly, Deleuze acknowledges the danger in theoretically pinning difference to the point of having to contradict it.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ In Deleuze’s (1995:56) words: ‘Difference must become the element, the ultimate unity; it must therefore refer to other differences which never identify it but rather differentiate it. Each term of a series, being already a difference, must be put into a variable relation with other terms, thereby constituting other series devoid of centre and convergence. Divergence and decentering must be affirmed in the series itself. Every object, every thing, must see its own identity swallowed up in difference, each being no more than a difference between differences’.

⁶⁷ In Dosse’s reading of Deleuzian ontology of difference in relation to Hyppolite’s theorization, the two thinkers agree upon defining Being as meaning rather than as essence. ‘If ontology abandons essence, there is no second world, and by this fact, absolute knowledge cannot be distinct from empirical knowledge’ (Dosse, 2010: 119). In that sense Deleuze’s theory of difference remains an empirical approach.

⁶⁸ Here I am thinking again with Dosse who writes that Deleuze’s thesis argue for ‘ontology of difference that wouldn’t have to go as far as contradiction, because contradiction would be less rather than more than difference’ (Dosse 2010: 119) Dosse’s point comes from the paper ‘Jean Hyppolite, logique et existence,’ *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l’Étranger* 7– 9 (July– September 1954): 457– 460. Reprinted in Gilles Deleuze, *L’île déserte et autres textes*, 18– 23. As found in Dosse’s notes.

Now, pulling back on these threads to the final yarn of the warp. In this project my aim is not to contradict difference – and precisely defining it will be contradiction. My goal is neither to indulge on discarding or formulating an ontology of difference. What I want is to signal are archival stories that demonstrate living/being/thinking differently already. When I think of modalities of difference in this project, then, I do not imagine difference as a factor of hierarchical categorizations, the weft is horizontally produced. I mobilize ‘difference’ as a term in the sense that the conceptual practice of ‘queering up difference’ still remains an unnecessary distinction. And within this project also lies my hope that ‘queering up difference’ shall remain an unnecessary clarification to make. By all means, perceiving difference as something relational— thinking differently, living differently— is a concept that refers to practices. Similarly, to the ways in which Hartman (2019) describes the lives that the black radical women led in the turn of the century in NY who refused to follow the categorizations available, the life paths available and practiced an existing otherwise. This is why this project remains a haptic experiment of imaginings.

For the sake of my project, I propose to think of the otherwise as relational. Equally important is a clarification of the distinction between relationalities and relations of categorizations. For that I want to leave the thread of difference lingering as relational but not further categorized. Bringing to mind again the practice of weaving, the textures become uneven and variable. In this way, I hope to show the heterogeneities among the stories, as imaging/living/creating otherwise. Mobilizing the tripartite sense of the haptic (Campt 2012) and the also relational approach of alert–surrender I wish to weave in the archival stories as sites of existing/desiring/living differently. Inevitably this ‘differently’ corresponds to established social categorizations at play in at least two aspects: not only as to *how* and *what* one *should* desire, but also towards to a gendered and racialized *who* whose desires’ reign over societal prioritization of capital. I read these archival stories of expression then as sites

that challenge and oppose the economies of hierarchal categorizations that Lorde notes, in favour of heterogeneities, the incommensurable, an otherwise. Like the affective dynamic that I have tried to demonstrate between Petros, Eli and his mother, where he utters his sexual desire as *ksekatharisma* with attentiveness and precision and differing from dominant social categorizations, while challenging but containing his mother's experience. Like the story of Martinegkou in the next chapter where she writes her testimony as a late 19th century woman in Zakynthos who decides to leave her bourgeois house— 'not to follow a lover' but because she feels obliged to do so to avoid the certain death that awaits her in this house and as she writes 'to use that 'wit' that god almighty gave me' (*Skoupa*, 1979:30). Like 'the desperately in love woman from Patra' declares her love for her friend who desires men in a letter to *Amfi* and Mr. Ntinos offers an advice that relates to her desire in a caring way, different than what I would anticipate. Like the story of Nancy we find in *Kraximo*, chapter 5 who redefines intimacy by tracking a separation on sexual pleasure and kinship but does not reject neither her sexuality nor her queer friends. Like Rania's letter in *Lavrys* chapter 6 which meditates on a different living, sharing, and loving among women that can be potentially borderless.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have laid out the rest of the warp yarns that will make the weaving of this exploration possible. Based on fieldnote impressions of the first days within the archive, these complex and multi-textured threads complete the setting up of the loom. The yarns placed in chapter one and two vertically, will be horizontally touched by the archival weft in the chapters to come. The chapters that follow will offer the context of the magazines, their scopes and the stories that touched me upon reading them.

The sixteen yarns in total (7 in this chapter) presented here set the base, the tensions of desiring socialities, the politics that inform the archival formations, the racialized and

gendered discourses, nationalist and anti-nationalist power structures, linguistic limitations, incomplete historiographies, intimate stories of relating otherwise. By adding an alert-surrender part in my positionality as I read the magazines, I hope to contextualize them and their scopes and then present parts and stories that I read as proposing different modalities of imagining/living. Theoretically separating the scope of each magazine from the stories I mobilize is a way to guard against a smoothing terrain of claims as the collectives stated them, and my archival configurations.

Why is the warp important then? For two main reasons. First, because it is the place that interweaves many different interlocutors that make this project viable with their contribution and intellect. Secondly, because it is the place upon which one, many, the rebel hearts, can become otherwise *of*. Is my approach critical towards hierarchical categories of meaning? I hope so. At the same time, as I present the archival stories that touched me, their reading—both inevitably and intentionally—remains my impression. Inasmuch as the ‘otherwise’ remains only descriptively defined—as I argue it should—the context of the magazines inescapably carry within them encoded ‘directions’, opposing a ‘wise’; a socially scripted ‘being in a given way’; according to which the stories I bring propose something different by their existing/desiring/living otherwise. In the warp I asked ‘how can one begin to attune to lives lived otherwise, who refused that which is ‘wise’ to do/to be, in order to imagine ‘an otherwise’ lived.’⁶⁹

Here I am using ‘wise’ as the proper, the sensible, the ‘reasonable’ thing to do, to desire according to the available categories, knowing that power is always present and in favour of the dominant ideology. In the language of capital ‘*the wise thing to do*’ as a message addressed to non-conforming modes of desiring, of relating, and of living, is to either

⁶⁹ Here I use the term ‘wise’ as in judicious, sensible, giving direction, being in a given way. I am not referring here to the term merely as a modality of ‘accumulating knowledge’.

conform, or assimilate, or be regulated in the language of power/ the power of language, or to
'be careful'. Or else.

And to this, I hope that the archival stories in this project, reply: otherwise.

CHAPTER 3

Still waters run deep: women's movements, resistance, and haptic archival encounters in *Skoupa*

‘All water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was.

Writers are like that: remembering where we were, what valley we ran through, what the banks were like, the light that was there and the route back to our original place. It

is emotional memory – what the nerves and the skin remember as well as how it appeared. And a rush of imagination is our ‘flooding’.

Toni Morrison, *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir* (1995: 99)

The above quote of Toni Morrison will be with me as I write this chapter of feminisms, memoirs, opposition and ‘floods’ of imagination. I argue that the stories that emerge from this chapter are all connecting and connected threads in women’s struggle– not just women, in the struggle of oppositional politics. and of course, differently so.

Here, I will first introduce to the reader *Skoupa*’s scope and their contributors’ positionalities. Then from the threads emerging from *Skoupa* I will draw some connections with the feminist movement in Greece, women’s resistance and discuss how these accounts add vital threads to the project regarding politics of oppositional struggle. I will then focus on three stories from *Skoupa* that touched me contextually and affectively. In the final part of this chapter a story from my notes hopefully illustrates longer yarns of connections and relationalities, which I weaved into this project.

The women of *Skoupa*

The editorial team of *Skoupa* consisted of a group of ten women who had been part of political organizations since a young age and saw the need to create a platform for discussing

women's issues from a feminist and critical perspective.⁷⁰ According to Michopoulou (1996), all but one of *Skoupa's* editors studied in the field of humanities, highlighting the overall theoretically rich sensibilities that the team brought to and layered into the magazine, and was reflected in its scope. The magazine ran from 1979 to 1981 with five issues in total. The length of each issue would range between 90 and 120 pages.

An extended introduction to the women that made up the editorial team might be useful to better locate and contextualize interests, aims and challenges that the collective dealt with. The editorial board consisted of: the historian Efi Avdela who has authored, edited and co-authored a plethora of books and papers.⁷¹ Fani Ziozia a film editor who died in 2013, and a few articles are dedicated to her memory, contemplating her activism in leftist circles and feminist movements.⁷² Lyda Moschona and Mariliza Mitsou–Pappa both most–likely translators, Georgia Papageorgiou, Ida Florentin, Marina Papagiannaki, a lawyer and possibly a lecturer in the study of Gender and Equality at Pandion University, Anna Fragkoudaki a sociologist and author of various books, Aggeliki Psarra a writer and historian, Marianna Kondlyli a scholar in sociolinguistics and author of textbooks and books regarding linguistics.⁷³

⁷⁰ Notably, As Michopoulou (1996) notes the first issue was conducted by nine women and from the second onwards another editor joined them. Marianna Kondlyli's name first appears in the 2nd issue, assuming she is the tenth member of the team.

⁷¹ Indicatively some of the works of Efi Avdela include: the book *Silent Stories. Women and Gender in Historical Narrative*, Psarra (co-ed) (in Greek, Alexandria 1997), the paper Engendering 'Greekness': Women's Emancipation and Irredentist Politics in Nineteenth-Century Greece in *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 20:1, 67-79 co-authored with Psarra (2005). The book *Morfes Dimosias Kinonikotitas Stin Ellada tu ikostu eona* [Forms of public sociality in twentieth century Greece] Eksertzoglou, Ch., and Lyrintzis, Ch. (co-eds) (University of Crete, 2015).

⁷² For more see here an article on Ziozia's life (in Greek). <https://www.kathimerini.gr/culture/494037/fani-ziozia-anthropos-tis-prosforas/>.

⁷³ The works of Anna Fragkoudaki include: *Sociology of Education* (1984); *Language and the Nation 1880–1980* (2001); *Nationalism and the rise of Far–Right* (2013). Psarra has written the book *Feminism in the Years of Metapolitefsi 1974–1990* (2017) with co–editors Repousi & Michopoulou.

According to Michopoulou (1996) the women did not know each other before coming together to write, translate feminist texts, and publish pieces for *Skoupa*. The older ones were in their 40s and the younger ones between 25–30 years old when the magazine was created. Further demographics that Michopoulou offers about the editorial teams is that 3 of the 8 women that she interviewed were married and two had children. Some of them were working full-time while other in a freelance or a part-time base. Right from the first issue of *Skoupa* the women clarify that they are an editorial committee, rather than a ‘women’s group’. The core aim of their project is to express issues that feel personal and familiar to them and related to their experiences, rather than the pursuit to mutually work out some positions on the women's issue (Michopoulou 1996).

This information shows a group of women who received formal education and were relatively well versed in feminist thought and theories. In the five issues of the magazine, we encounter many translated pieces of European feminist thinkers mostly moving between academic circles.⁷⁴ These characteristics possibly indicated that the targeted readers of the magazine were mainly intellectual Greek women or women who most likely already had some knowledge over women’s issues. At the same time, as the editors clarify the conduction, publication and distribution of the magazine was not profitable and the goal was never profit. Their dedication to the magazine was happening outside their work schedules and leisure and derived from the desire to include a feminist lens into the realities of Greek women, as well as make accessible texts of European feminist thought in Greek.

⁷⁴ Indicatively in issue 2 (1979): Janla Hammer p.80–93 a text about violence and social control of women from Jalna Hammer, translated by Georgia Papageorgiou. First published at *questions feministes* 1 (dec 1977). In issue 4 (1980): p. 52–63 a translated piece of Genevieve Fraisse 1980 book: *l’histoire sans qualities*. The translation was done from the editorial committee. p 78–84 for an analysis of difference written by Lea Melandri in 1975 (the Italian feminist that they tend to use) translated by Aggeliki Psara, Mariliza Mitsou–Pappa. In issue 5 (1981): Rosi Braidotti ‘who can calculate/account for the consequences of ideas? P. 13–17 (first published in *Penelope*, autumn 1980,p.5–11) Gisela Bock’s ‘women’s studies’ and the trap of integration p. 18–19 (from magazine *Alternative*, June–august 1978, p.125–127) Anna Bravo ‘a formulation of a scientific example of female gender’ (from *Doppia Presenza: lavoro intellettuale e lavoro per se*, Griff Franco Angeli, 1981, p. 108–122).

The stance of the women of *Skoupa* seems clear with their main focus being to introduce feminist critique and discourse to a Greek audience. Similar to AKOE's onset—which was initially formed in 1978 to oppose the proposed bill regarding Sexual Transmitted Infections—the magazine *Skoupa: For the woman question* was created in 1979 as a response to a set of legislations regarding abortion.⁷⁵ According to the bill's sanction on abortion, a woman could have an abortion only if any of the following was the case: if a doctor could assert that the life of the pregnant woman or the fetus' health were in danger; when the pregnancy was the aftermath of rape; a pregnancy deriving from incest; or concerning a person under 15 years old (*Skoupa*, 1979: 23). Opposing the legislation on abortion situates *Skoupa* in the political space of bodily autonomy.⁷⁶ Alongside, thinking together the quite different starting points of social claims from *Amfi* and *Skoupa*, the body emerges again as a contested site where legislative power is exercised to oppress desires related to autonomy, resistance, and pleasure.⁷⁷ As if these legislations aim to dictate the limiting directions and formations that a body can take in both public spaces and private spheres.

From presenting parliamentary proceedings on abortion laws and their critical examination through the feminist lens of bodily autonomy (p.25–34), to a feature on existing legislation and women's struggle in other European countries such as France, England, Italy, Switzerland and Eastern European countries (p.40–48), the editorial team of *Skoupa* illustrate a well-connected network of national and transnational solidarity. Furthermore, the personal accounts on mistreatment and moral defamation that women who chose to have abortions faced (p.39) the way that the female body is discussed in medical circles (p.37–39) and the

⁷⁵ Regarding the bill see *Amfi* issue 1.

⁷⁶ For more accounts on the struggle for body autonomy in Europe see the edited collection *European Women's Movements and Body Politics: The Struggle for Autonomy*. Joyce Outshoorn (ed) 2015. This collection discusses issues of abortion and prostitution in relation to citizenship in the case of Portugal, Czech Republic, the Netherlands, and Sweden.

⁷⁷ This view echoes the relation of body and power as described by Foucault, Butler and Spivak and I discussed in chapter 1 as one of the threads in the warp.

reportage which analysed the patriarchal ideology behind the so-called women's magazines that were popular at the time (p.66–72) emphasize the dominant ideas that considered women and their bodies as commodities that are socially scorned upon and could only be part of the sexual arena as tools for reproduction.⁷⁸

It is also important to note that in order to criticize and stand against the aforementioned general rhetoric, the authors had to turn to statistics and provide quantitative data to demonstrate the sexist stereotypes regarding 'women's press' (p.69–71). Although nowadays most feminist research focuses more on qualitative methodologies, I think that quantitative statistics or scientific tools were means for feminists of the time to assert themselves and gain a degree of authority/validity under the phallogentric scientific eye of society, perhaps with a hope to differentiate their practice later.



Figure 3. Skoupa issue 1. Delfys archive

⁷⁸ The magazines are: gynaika (woman), Pantheon, Phantazio, Vendetta, Domino, Romantzo, Manina, Katerina.

Against sweeping under the rug: positioning *Skoupa* in the weft

A broom could be associated with mainstream ideas of womanhood and household chores but of course it is also an integral accessory of the figure of the witch. The symbol of the witch has preoccupied immensely the feminist imagination (see Bovenschen, Blackwell, Moore, & Weckmueller, 1978; Sempruch 2008; Anczyk & Malita–Król 2017; Federici 2018;). Hence, a drawing of a witch on a broomstick graces the first issue of *Skoupa* (figure 3). Adopting the word that signifies broom in Greek, the magazine *Skoupa*, already from its title conceal its feminist angle. Weaving the trajectory of *Skoupa* in this project, I will invoke two interlocutors to accompany us in order to be alert and aware of certain intricacies related to feminisms, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and bell hooks. This way I can interlace the magazine within the warps presented in the previous chapters and it will prevent from ‘sweeping under the rug’ conceptual tensions of heterogeneity.

In the *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990) Sedgwick critically examines the binary oppositions of sexuality and paves the way for a different reading of the Western canon which can offer more radical and new ways of perceiving human sexuality. Notably in subsequent works Sedgwick would also come to propose a novel way of reading and producing theory summoning the force of affect, a vital reading position for this endeavour, as we have established in the first chapter of this project.⁷⁹ Sedgwick (1990: 27) then, offers an axiom that will be important as we surrender to the stories that *Skoupa* is about to narrate:

Axiom 2: The study of sexuality is not coextensive with the study of gender;
correspondingly, antihomophobic inquiry is not coextensive with feminist inquiry.
But we can't know in advance how they will be different.

⁷⁹ Regarding Sedgwick (2002) in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*.

This is an important axiom that I had to keep in mind as a reading positionality willing to succumb to an alert–surrender approach while reading *Skoupa*, as to not equate certain claims with others and not to conflate the feminist inquiries of *Skoupa* with an ‘all–encompassing’ viewpoint regarding sexualities.

In like a manner, bell hooks in *Ain’t I woman: Black Women and Feminism* writes about the exclusion that Black women felt from white feminists in America.⁸⁰ A systemic equation of feminism with white women’s right advocates led anti–racist claims and experiences of black womanhood to be disregarded and silenced. As bell hooks (1990:172) points out:

When women suffrage failed to alter in any way the social status of black women, many black female suffragists became disillusioned with women’s rights. They had supported woman suffrage only to find their interests betrayed, only to find that ‘woman suffrage’ would be used as a weapon to strengthen white oppression of black people. They found that obtaining rights for women would have little impact on their social status as long as white racial imperialism automatically denied them full citizenship.

Interweaving hook’s take on white oppression against black feminists would be incomplete without noting the issue of class privilege which was not considered by some white women groups who advocated liberation utilizing the lexicon of the oppressor, ‘they chose to define liberation using the terms of white capitalist patriarchy, equating liberation with gaining economic status and money power’ (hooks, 1990:145). Even though hook’s book focuses on the racialized debates and tensions between women in the USA, under the White Supremacist

⁸⁰ ‘Ain’t I a woman’ is in reference to Sojourner Truth’s speech. Truth’s speech was delivered in 1852 in Ohio. See Truth’s speech in bell hooks (1990:160).

Capitalist Patriarchy that hook theorizes, middle-class white feminism is still very much present as a set of values in the West.⁸¹

Skoupa was published before the texts by Sedgwick and bell hooks, as the editorial collective operated from 1979–1981. Interestingly, the *Skoupa* editorial team expressed throughout their publications that texts and opinion pieces were bound to their experience and did not represent all women, aiming to avoid ‘universality’ claims (*Skoupa*, 1979 & 1981; Michopoulou 1996). Reading *Skoupa*’s content on the one hand by considering their scope and on the other hand by being alert to the issues raised by Sedgwick and bell hooks, the magazine is situated as a product of specific women with specific visions, politics, and agendas. Women who did not and could not assume positionalities of *all* Greek women of the time and who were vigilant on a writer’s limitations. Granted that, the women of *Skoupa* saw the significance of international connections and engaged in theoretical networks of feminist inquiry.

Girls of the rain: women’s accounts and resistance in modern Greece

Vaiou (2019) recognizes the contribution of *Skoupa* and *Dini* as periodicals that helped in the development of feminist research agendas and methodologies in Greece. Moreover, Vaiou (2019:1078) argues that the often ‘undisputed richness and hegemony’ of Anglophone frameworks regarding feminist geographies is postulated as ‘international’ by default and thus regulates the guidelines for the debate. This tendency according to Vaiou makes ‘local’ knowledges and visions from elsewhere harder to partake in the dialogue. Through a personal account, Vaiou echoes Haraway’s (1997) notion of situated knowledges as sites that

⁸¹ for a contemporary exposition and critique from black feminism, this time in the UK, see Olufemi (2020) *Feminism Interrupted: Disrupting Power*.

challenge universalisms while permitting solidarity networks. Simultaneously, Vaiou (2019:1078) emphasises the importance to:

produce so-called ‘local’ knowledge/s and keep up the debate within our own linguistic and (multidisciplinary) intellectual community, which has its own traditions, ways of approaching the subject, theoretical formulations and empirical interests.

Proposing a theoretical approach on feminisms that takes into account both a locality and trans-national frameworks has already been established as one of the arguments of this project. Keeping this thread of different loci at play, in contextualizing *Skoupa* I sense that I need to draw in threads from Greek historiography again, to avoid erasing the thickness of the fabric in weaving.

In chapter 1 when locating the yarns of Greek historiography, I discussed the complexity of such an endeavour. Here, I will bring in the role of women in resistance, because in order to write/ weave in the connections of Greek feminist movements that flourished in *metapolitefsi*, we have to go further back in time. Notably, after the retreat of the German occupation in Greece –fuelled by the Greek resistance; the advance of the Red Army (Soviets) in the Balkans; and the affiliation of Greece with the Allied Forces (United Nations); – began the civil war. The Greek civil war was one of the first developments of the Cold War and it was ignited by the UK influence of Winston Churchill (Mazower 2016). As discussed in chapter one, the civil war preceded the dictatorship of the colonels (1967–1974) and in 1974 historians charts the beginning of *metapolitefsi*.

Now, women’s role in the resistance was vital from the first world war to the civil war and of course during the dictatorship. Since this chapter is the first one concerning the weft, the

book that was a gift for my birth to my mother, my father and me and unravelled the haptic yarn– as I have presented in this project’s introduction– could not be ignored.

Moschou–Sakorrafou (1990) charts a historiography of women’s participation in national liberation from the Ottoman empire to 1955.⁸² Moschou– Sakorrafou claims that the pivotal role of women during wars and junta has been disregarded in the main historical accounts of Greece. Two aspects here invoke again the significance of thinking this project as a weave. Firstly, we tap again into the threads placed upon the warp regarding national narratives of the state as examined in chapter 1. By the same token, the historiography that Moschou– Sakorrafou offers, disrupts the canon of male–centred accounts of Greek resistance that she notes. And I weave these threads rhythmically over–under/ under–over. Along with Moschou– Sakorrafou (1990) other scholars have written on the role of women in Greek resistance (Boeschoten 1997; Vervenioti 2016). Furthermore, a parallel can be drawn with women in Greek resistance with the participation of women in the Italian resistance – following similar partisan formations of communists, socialists, and an anti–fascist alliance of intellectuals *Partito d’Azione* (D’amelio 2001) and the testimonies of women who fought in the Spanish civil war (Mangini, 1991).

Important artefacts of cultural memory on womens’ testimonies of resistance in the case of Greece, are the three documentaries of Alida Dimitriou: *Birds in the Mire* (2008) *Life on the Rocks* (2009) and *Girls of the Rain* (2011). In these documentaries we see women’s’ collective responses during German occupation (1941–1944), the civil war and the

⁸² On the specificities of the case of Ottoman Empire in relation to an ‘orientalist generality’ see Bryce’s (2013) ‘The Absence of Ottoman, Islamic Europe in Edward W. Said’s Orientalism’. Here, Bryce argues beyond the binary of Orientalism as argued by Said, by taking up the case of Ottoman Empire in Europe. Bryce argues that while Said explicitly links the formulation of European identity in relation to orientalism does not draw in the association of the material proximity in the Ottoman European lands. This according to Bryce can maintain the imagined chasm between west and East that Said theorized, if we don’t think about the specific case of Ottoman Europe. As Bryce writes: ‘The historical memory and lingering presence of such a state that was simultaneously European yet whose broader cultural and political presence diminished the centrality of ‘European–ness’ was – and is – intolerable for the binary Orientalist discourse’ (Bryce, 2013:108).

dictatorship of the colonels, respectively. Albeit all three works of Dimitriou offer affective encounters of resistance, for this project I want to focus on Dimitriou's final work, *Girls of the Rain*. I chose *Girls of the Rain* to weave in the presence of women in oppositional political struggle because this work of emotional memory flooded my imagination as a writer like water, as Morrison's describes in the epigraph of this chapter. In particular, as I watched the film in a stance of 'alert-surrender', I felt the 'flood' of the film enchanting me as I heard stories of companionship, solidarity, and resistance of women during Junta. Similar stories to what my mum and her friends were discussing as I was growing up.

Girls of the Rain is a documentary that demonstrates how leftists, Marxists and Communists were vilified and chased down from the inception of the regime of the colonels. Women share their experiences of being incarcerated, tortured, and abused by military forces. Within the breath-taking accounts of 50 women that participated in the documentary emerge various interesting points that add to the weaving patterns of the project and stratum of the subsequent feminist mobilizations in Greece. 'We grew up really fast' said one of them talking about the abrupt realization of dictatorship and her almost intuitive decision to join the resistance. Most of them were part of the youth of United Democratic Left (Ενιαία Δημοκρατική Αριστερά-ΕΔΑ) which later became known as the 'Lambrakis' democratic youth'. Grigoris Lambrakis was a doctor and a politician who was an active member of the resistance during World War II and later led leftist organizations centring anti-war and socialist policies. His assassination by right-wing bigots on May 22nd of 1963 in Thessaloniki caused a youth-uprising. His murder is considered one of the events that disempowered oppositions against the upcoming dictatorship in 1967. According to the testimonies of the women in the documentary, the Lambrakis' movement was the epitome of leftist ideals: 'resistance to xenocracy, anti-capitalism, peace in the era of the Cold War,

marches for peace, demands for 15% increase in funding for education and the 114 legislation law'.⁸³

The women in the documentary being politically active before the Junta note that 'you could smell it in the air, the Junta coming', 'we were screaming: 'here it is not Madrid' – referring to the Franco dictatorship in Spain (1939 – 1975). By spreading leaflets against the regime both in Thessaloniki and Athens and participating in the student movement, these women were arrested and incarcerated through the dictatorship. During the course of the documentary the women debunk the fallacy propagated after the coup that there were no fatalities during the dictatorship, by naming killings that were institutionally hushed.

While in prison, there were two main consolations for those women: *rain* and *new friends*. 'My dream in prison was to get wet by the rain' says one woman, as others narrate that when it was raining outside, they would rush to a chamber that had two high windows. To reach these six-meter windows the girls had to assemble their eating table, then add one smaller table on top of it and then a chair in order to be able to see the rain. 'One rainy day the girls pick me to climb up and watch the rain' confesses a woman almost on the brink of tears.

Communication in prison among them required a code, so the women invented one: 'we had to learn the code of knocking through the walls in order to be able to communicate. This is how I met Ioanna' says a woman and points at her friend that sits beside her on the couch. 'Yes, and that was such a big help for me' replied Ioanna 'my fingers are still stiff from all the knocking on the walls' she added.

⁸³ Xenocracy in Greek is Xenokratia, i.e. being ruled/influenced by foreign forces. From xenos (foreign) and kratos(state of law).

Resonating was also the story of a woman who in the solitary confinement ward came across a very wounded prisoner. She narrates: 'I told him: do you need anything? how can I help? Do you need water, I can call the others for help' and he replied: 'can you sing? just sing'.

Another woman who was tortured multiple times recounts: 'It was so clear that they wanted to strip away your humanity, to hate your body from all the bleeding and succumb to their pressure, that in the end I was able to endure it all so that they wouldn't get their way'.

Furthermore, many agreed that the worst part of it all was hearing the screams of fellow-prisoners from the torture basement or witnessing the atrocities of the tortures enforced on their fellow inmates. 'But there was always your adjacent, on the other side of the wall. You would knock the wall, communicate and be able to gather up yourself again' another woman confessed.

It was deeply touching for me hearing all these testimonies and the ways in which their bodies and souls resisted the horror, without making any proclamations of heroic acts but just reiterating that it was 'what they had to do'. A woman that was pregnant when she was captured and imprisoned, not only miscarried due to the tortures, but also lost the ability to bear children because her oviducts were ruined from the violence and the beatings. This particular woman stated that the women who fought against the regime are a continuation of the women who were part of the Greek resistance in the World War and civil war: 'we are their continuations and now the respective youth is our continuation'.

This temporal continuum encompasses strong transgenerational bonds of kinship in favour of resistance. Each group had to fight in their own ways but recognizing a certain continuity in the struggle trails a theoretical thread of rememory, as Morrison (2004) might name it, that is vital in this intervention. Her statement implicates my generation too and calls for ongoing drops of resistance.

Thinking again about the haptic touch that Camp (2012) theorizes as a three-fold touch which includes indexical, physical and affective qualities, this documentary of women's role in anti-dictatorship resistance paves the way in haptically contextualizing the climate in which autonomous feminist collectives emerged after the junta.

As the credits fall I read the names of the women who provided their testimonies while moving my hand to read them carefully. Was any of them part of the editorial team of the *Skoupa* magazine? I yearn for a tick and a recognition, of the particular connections. This artefact is now moving me spatially as my hand runs the screen keeping a registry of attendance. Even if no name is there, I want to image a relation, as I am sure that the political and social influences existed even if I have no 'proof'. Their absence here means presence elsewhere and certainly there was *still* a connection. The women in the documentary are not labelled as feminists and even though they might not be part of the magazines in question, are part of this archive of oral history and there is certainly at least a psychic connection between their resistance and the feminist resistance that created collectives and magazines. A connection inevitable in the certain nerve and boldness that characterizes women that resist regimes and fight for anti-patriarchal structures. With this in mind, we should not forget that not all Greek women had the same junta experience, still, their life trajectory might have led them to grassroots feminist activism (or not).

Remarkably it is still imperative to have in mind that there is not a universal category of womanhood and there were definitely diverse experiences among women who lived in Greece during the dictatorship. For example, the absence of accounts of migrant women in the documentary does not imply that they were absent from the events of resistance.⁸⁴ Their

⁸⁴ Here by migrant women I mean women who fled Greece during the dictatorship and participated in international networks of solidarity, such as in Paris. For more on students' resistance in Paris during Junta, see chapter 2 Phoenix with a Bayonet in Kornetis' (2013) *Children of the dictatorship: Student Resistance, Cultural Politics and the 'Long 1960s' in Greece*.

absence here is a presence elsewhere. The aim of this intervention is not to imply a certain way of being or reacting regarding situations of violence.

Feminisms: Women's liberation in Greece and beyond

Having briefly contextualized the turbulent political history of Greece, it is time to outline the dynamics of women's mobilization after the dictatorship. Between the many strands that women's liberation took in Greece, heterogeneities in 'feminisms' start to emerge. As Stamiris in the article *The Contemporary Women's Movement in Greece*, comments:

'women's movement has been particularly influenced by the antecedent or simultaneous roles of women within democratic and class struggles.' (1987: 83) According to Stamiris after the fall of the Colonels' Regime, activist women were once again asked 'to put aside their own special demands in order to support a fresh struggle for freedom and democracy' (Stamiris, 1987:84). Prior to examining feminist mobilizations in Greece, as we place *Skoupa* upon the weft, I suggest taking into consideration the threads of the warp that challenge us to delve deeper, to question, to keep asking: 'whose freedom? what ensemble of categorical relations and whose democracy? By examining the various strand of autonomous groups we carry along hooks' (1990) argument that warn us on the implications of disregarding aspects of class and 'race' in feminist rhetorics.

Another point that Stamiri makes is that 'the women's movement which re-emerged was integrally connected with the wider context of progressive politics' (1987:84). Notably, the mobilizations started from women belonging to political parties of the Left and called for feminist liberation: 'There can be no women's liberation without social liberation, no social liberation without women's liberation' – became the slogan of an increasing number of feminists' (Stamiris, 1987:84). Thinking about the term 'progressive' and the promise of a liberation psychosocially, helps us unpack the connotations and limitations of all 'liberation'

movements. By scrutinizing rather than ignoring the systemic mechanisms that parlay and co-opt any liberation into tactics of assimilation, and by considering the psychic realities that might resist the boldness of certain otherwiseness, we have to be wary and attentive towards calls of liberation. It is precisely why stories, accounts and imaginations of existing otherwise—in the sense that Hartman (2019) talks about the lives that Black women led in the US in the late 1800's and early 1900s—are crucial in allowing for different and valid ways of navigating life. At the same time, considering the historiographical context of Greece and the always aligned conservative and nationalist front that opposed the Left and supported traditionalist patriotic and domestic values, 'progressive politics' was a term of identification and aspiration for many leftists of the time.

Under those circumstances, when examining Western Eurocentric feminisms, the question that Toni Morrison (2019:24) poses is imperative:

At the heart of her nineteenth-century battle for veteran's pay is the burning question of twentieth-century feminism: How can a woman be viewed and respected as a human being without becoming a male-like or male-dominated citizen?

This question shall remain open ended and accompany this endeavour as a thread when thinking about feminism and embodied experiences of resistance. For some of the reasons why feminists started to abandon main political parties and began formulating their own groups, Stamiris (1987:84) notes:

feminists within the parties of the Left inevitably came into conflict with persistent male biases and androcentric thinking. From the very beginning, some party members had resented the autonomy and exclusiveness of the women's groups, which seemed a *terra incognita* beyond the reach of the party.

The proliferation of groups that sprung from the political parties and formulated autonomous assemblies, according to Dontopoulos (1982:26), followed two ideological trends, ‘one of which is directly related to the nature of feminism itself, and the other to the reality of political life in Greece since the fall of the junta’. On the one hand, it was the autonomy that women sought from men due to the limited role they offered them within existing political parties. On the other hand, it was the need to unshackle hierarchical structures of organizing, persistent to their political realities. Thus, the non–hierarchical grassroots groups became the basic feminist units of the country. What Dontopoulos describe as ‘anarchic’ mostly in structure rather than ideology. Dontopoulos (1982:7) adds:

Greek feminists can take this non–hierarchical direction because they have all done duty in the communist and socialist parties of the Left and are still deeply committed socialists. In choosing the small group as their *modus operandi*, and in denouncing the party organizations, they are in fact following basic feminist principles while remaining fully loyal to the kind of leftist ideology, which has always been the mainstay of Greek progressive political life.

Thus, most Greek feminists of the time appear to be closely associated with the Left and socialism, even when diverged from political parties’ affiliations. Socialist values *still* informed the majority of their demands (Stamiris 1987). A brief contextualization of how socialism was expressed in Greece during that time is due in order to understand the claims of the archives in question better. The political strands of Greek socialism were pro–soviet (KKE–exterior), Eurocommunist (KKE interior) and the centrist, Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) that represented more moderate changes. The pro–soviet and Eurocommunist organizations were produced from the split of the Greek Communist Party (KKE) in February of 1968.

As Dontopoulos(1982a:7) tells us:

Immediately, the two parties, as well as Papandreou's PASOK, became the official voices of socialism in Greece, and like anything official they slowly began to assimilate into the system, each pressing forward separately with a dogmatic line of the 'right party,' and all together selling out a lot of the old fighters who had fought for the legalization of communism. It was primarily the young people who were beginning to raise new basic revolutionary issues of social as well as economic content.

The historiography of modern Greek politics resonates with other European politics, and we meet again with the revolutionary youth that attempts to re-imagine things, following the threads of the past and not staying still. Moreover, what Dontopoulos boldly points out as 'like anything official they slowly began to assimilate into the system' requires our full attention. Thinking critically on the power structures that encourage and drive assimilation practices is key into delving deeper onto relationalities, temporalities, and different states of being.

Notably, the government of PASOK actualized reforms and called for the participation of feminists who were part of established and 'acceptable' women's organizations. Dontopoulos denotes that the feminist organizations that PASOK's delegates were eager to negotiate with came from associations affiliated with party organizations, 'ignoring the autonomous movement which has been the major factor in getting the parties to accept that there is indeed a need for a women's movement' (Dontopoulos 1982:26). The autonomous feminist movements chose not to participate in the reforms of PASOK criticizing its political agenda and calling out the government's forced and conditional 'acceptance' over women's struggle.

Regarding the decision of more grassroots and radical feminist movements not to participate or be represented by PASOK, Dontopoulos (1982:26) adds:

there is also a question of process here. The feminists' position is that no hierarchical body of 14 women, chosen by a hierarchical government, is truly representative of the women's movement.

As can be seen, the feminist mobilizations in Greece became divided into more reformists or abolitionists ideas, more socialist or liberal claims and were organized separately by lesbian women and non-lesbian women, as the two different publications pertinent to this project, *Skoupa* and *Lavrys* also indicate. Stamiris (1987:85) writes that Western radical feminism 'appealed only to a small number of young middle-class students and intellectuals, often educated abroad, and was generally perceived by both women and men as yet another import of 'decadent' cultural imperialism'. This argumentation raises the question if and how movements of Greece managed to reimagine strands of feminism that could fit in their context or adopted the liberal 'progressive' approach that was characterised as cultural imperialism by the socialist Left in this context.

Underlying the heterogeneities and strands of autonomous feminist collectives, some collectives focused on more theoretical strands of feminism, like *Skoupa*, while other groups wrote and acted differently. Chordaki and Stavridi (2021) argue that on the many strands and dilemmas pertinent to feminisms, taking Greece as its site: personal-political, theory-practice/movements, local-translocal, and call for a push beyond the binaries, their response was something akin to 'neither-nor' in its totality. Notably, playing with the ambiguous pronunciation of David Bowie's surname, 'Bowie' the two authors conclude that there is just not one way of pronouncing it (Chordaki & Stavridi, 2021:67).

To bring the yarn back to *Skoupa* as I weave the magazine in the weft, another encounter in the text of Chordaki and Stavridi (2021) can be useful. There, Anna Michopoulou, in relation to the local–translocal/transnational binary, notes that the two main influences of the Greek feminist movement come from French feminism and its connection to psychoanalysis, and Italian feminism with autonomous networks and de–centralized mobilizations (Sánchez, & Sevillano, 2006).⁸⁵ What is important for our current weave within the juxtaposition that Michopoulou points to is that *Skoupa* possibly addressed an audience of women with more theoretical inclinations than others. As Michopoulou (2021) adds, ‘I was younger and I did not care much about theory, I would read *Skoupa* and say ‘mmh interesting, bravo!’ [laugh] I did not understand much, but I was like ‘bravo’ [...]’. Conversely, as Michopoulou states in the introduction of Chordaki’s and Stavridi’s piece, she became a feminist since she was around nine years old. This interesting provocation touches upon Avdela’s argument that feminism is not one, but many and that any woman who recognizes and gains consciousness on the oppression she faces as a woman then, she is a feminist. From that point onward it is a matter of political and theoretical choices (Avdela 1988).

To summarize all the various threads emerged in this section, as Stamiris underlines for socialist–feminists, ‘the feminist struggle was a difficult and profoundly revolutionary challenge to the very fabric of society, from the microlevel of the family to the macro–level of world male culture’ (Stamiris, 1987:85). Correspondingly, I would situate *Skoupa* as a product from a collective that recognized both patriarchy and capitalism as systems that suppressed women’s autonomy both in society and in private life. The women involved in the making of the magazine participated in the first large–scale feminist demonstration that took

⁸⁵ It is important to note that while Michopoulou here mentions Italian feminism only in relation to its structure, the discourse of sexual difference and psychoanalysis was also present in Italian feminism. For example, see De Laurentis (1990) who traces the trajectory of sexual difference in Italian feminist thought.

place in Athens on March of 1980.⁸⁶ According to Dontopoulos (1982a:7) ‘four to five thousand women gathered under heavy rainfall, with banners and microphones, and expressed themselves militantly and collectively, without prearranged scheduled speakers’. The impromptu character of the speeches under the rain added to what Dontopoulos described as a very moving experience, ‘as woman after woman took the mike and talked about her personal experiences, her pain, and her anger. This demonstration fuelled the Greek feminist movement with a great deal of energy’ (Dontopoulos 1982a:7).

Energy as a force that fuels movements and the throbbing feeling when participating in mobilizations is a strong impetus. Likewise, water, through rain, seems to link again the strands of emotions that Dontopoulos, Morrison, and the *Girls in the Rain* describe. Having contextualized *Skoupa* within theoretical and practical challenges of mobilizations, what follows is an array of incidents ensued from haptic relationalities between me and narratives enliven by *Skoupa*.

Haptic archival encounters in *Skoupa*

Considering Campt’s understanding of the haptic as a form of contact that includes, seeing, touching, and feeling (Campt, 2017:72) follows a mode of writing that contains these capacities as manifested in me, while reading *Skoupa*.⁸⁷ In particular this section includes stories that touched me, accompanied my thoughts, and were mobilized in discussions with intimate others. In between the three archival encounters in *Skoupa* appears an incident that I have situated in this chapter even though it did not derive directly from materials found in

⁸⁶ Here I am using ‘first’ as described in Dontopoulos account and while stating that my interest does not lie in ascertaining ‘first place’ categorizations. To put it differently, the weave of social movements is non-hierarchal. A potential restatement of the sentence in the text if necessary, would be: ‘possibly the first recorded protest that was self-described as feminist, informed by theoretical impetuses of the time and occurred in the era of metapolitefsi in Athens’.

⁸⁷ Here I acknowledge the differentiation between ‘seeing’ and indexical. The haptic touch is physical, indexical and affective (Campt, 2012) similarly a haptic reading involves seeing, touching and feeling (Campt, 2017). In chapter 5 I draw the parallel between the optical sense and its indexical touch.

Skoupa. However, I sense that this incident belongs here since I trace a temporal thread which weaves it through the days in which I was reading *Skoupa*. This entanglement of archival materials I think illustrates further their connections. Perhaps a conceptualization of the ‘still’ can be of use here. As I have argued elsewhere the term ‘still’ can encompass many meanings, a category of these connotation regarding the temporal: an ‘even now’, an ‘even so’ a ‘still–yet’ (Gianniri, 2021). This is why the second archival story of the following section regarding alert–surrender–forgetfulness I feel is *still* part of this chapter and this thread of relationalities and connections as occurred while I was reading *Skoupa*.

These stories are just a glimpse of the material available in *Skoupa*. Their narratives entail crucial affective forces towards relations, women’s’ positionality, and personal accounts of revolt. Accounts that both bounds and exceeds their time frame, invoking the affective aspect of ‘still’. ‘Still’ in its spatial sense, in its temporal sense and as an ‘even so’.

A feminist writer ‘not *in theory*, in the Ionian Islands’

In the second issue of *Skoupa*, I come across a feature about women’s magazines in 19th century Greece presented by Psarra where the editorial team formulates two categories of ‘women’s press’: the ‘we’–type and the ‘you’–type (*Skoupa*, 1979: 3–13). The first one concerns a collectivity, towards a collective awareness and women’s attempts–failed or not–to call for a collective female consciousness. At the other end of the spectrum lies the ‘you’–type of press targeting women readers in order to manipulate and bridle them through a form of speech and language use, familiar to Greek audiences. The ‘we’ as the *Skoupa* team notes is connected with the concurrent moment of women’s struggle each time in history.

A few pages later, in a section called ‘women’s writing’, I found her. Elisavet Moutzan–Martinegkou was a Greek woman who lived from 1801–1832 in the Ionian Island of Zakynthos (Zante). Through pages 21–32 I encountered an extract of her autobiography

‘behind closed curtains’ a title that reveals the experience of confinement that she faced as a woman of her time.⁸⁸ Coming from a rich aristocratic family, Elisavet, was well taken care of materially, yet she was bound to her house and walls. She was not allowed to leave the house unaccompanied or live a life of her choosing. Her father, Martinegkos, was an important figure in the island and maintained closed relations with the Venetians and the British who were occupying the island at the time. The only way that Elisavet could maintain a connection with the world outside the four-walls of the house, was by overhearing discussions through the walls. One day, as she narrates, her teacher, Dimadis, informed her about the upcoming revolution for ‘Greek Independence’ against the Ottoman Empire and after her teacher left, she expressed on a piece of paper her deep desire to participate in it too.⁸⁹

She hopes to fight for freedom, ‘a freedom that if treated well gives to people immortality, triumph and happiness’. Elisavet continues: ‘I wholeheartedly wished participating, but then I glanced at the walls that hold me captive, looked at the long-dresses of female captivity and remember that I was a woman, and even more a woman from Zante and I sighted’ (*Skoupa*, 1979: 26). Elisavet was internally rebelling but could not escape. Now, the extracts of her autobiography are being interrupted by the editors of *Skoupa* who offer commentary and additional information regarding Elisavet’s life, making her story more resonant. Her writings were an attempt to communicate her story, however, as the *Skoupa* team informs the reader, parts of her autobiography that criticized authoritative relations and strongly condemned

⁸⁸ ‘Behind closed curtains’ in greek ‘piso apo tis tzeloutzes’.

⁸⁹ To help the reader clarify Martinegkou’s comment a brief historical contextualization perhaps is needed. During Martinegkou’s life the assemblage of the Ionian Islands that Zante is part of, went under British rule. During that time other parts of what we now know as the Greek state were ruled by the Ottoman Empire. The incident that Martinegkou’s teacher is referring to is the Greek war of independence. Now, a unified nationalist account of the Greek State is by far my aim in bringing in Martinegkou’s story. On the contrary her desire to fight for the resistance/independence— should be placed in relation to the structures of imperialistic power at play during her life. By the same token, the nationalist connotations present in narratives of any nation-state making should not be undermined. For more on the anti-nationalist scope of this project see chapter 2 on the warp.

women's oppression within family structures, were mangled by her son. The *Skoupa* team also highlights that all accounts regarding women's situation in Zakynthos during that era support Elisavet's narrative on the ruthless and despotic rules that women lived under, constituting Elisavet a common case of the bourgeoisie.

Her intense narrative continues. Elisavet reiterates that her role in the house is to serve men and never leave. She lives with closed windows and bannisters. While she notes the importance of knowledge and education and hopes for a better future for women— she also doubts it. Elisavet is angry at men and their values, while her main concern is remaining unmarried. Notably, as Elisavet tell us, her mother would often scare her off with that and utilized 'spinsters' stories' as cautionary tales. 'You are useless, you're only fit for a monastery!' her mother would hail. Ultimately, Elisavet realized that a monastery actually might be better than any husband; and she begins enjoying that idea, 'the monastery would be a peaceful and happy place' (*Skoupa*, 1979:27).

Subverting the narrative of remaining 'unmarried' from a threat into a desired outlet in comparison to being a man's subordinate, adds another layer to her restless mind. When she asked for permission from her father and brother to go and live alone at a small house that the family owned in the mountains, the men replied: 'of course no', 'you will stay in this house forever' they added. Then, she starts plotting her escape. She is planning to leave the house at night and embark on a boat to Italy. (*Skoupa*, 1979:30). Elisavet writes: 'My conscience is clean; I am not leaving my parents to follow a lover— I would never do such a ruthless thing— but I am forced to do it to avoid the certain death that awaits me in this house and to use that 'wit' that God almighty gave me' (my translation).

I find her writing mesmerizing so far; her insight and her inquiring mind underpin a haptic relationality. I am particularly touched by her declaration that she is not leaving for a lover

but in favour of her own survival. The distinction that Elisavet makes on leaving on her own I think it is a crucial one. Not only does she decide to leave the house, but she does that consciously against a path that perhaps would be more socially encoded – ‘for a man/a lover’. Elisavet distinguishes herself from any socially encoded extenuating of ‘eloping’; her decision to leave is done for different reasons, for her wit.

Then again, the difference in class and wealth are apparent and should not be ignored; still there is a personal tragedy intertwined in her narrative and cannot be overlooked either. I want to know what happened. Better yet, I want to follow her story not because of the gratification of possessing the information but rather as a worry. I think, I am worried about her: ‘did she make it?’

She is now preparing to leave. She packs a few things, her writings, some money and when the night comes, she leaves the house. As she is walking alone on the streets, she feels uneasy. She had never left the house on her own. The past four years she had only been out twice to go to church with her parents at night. Yet, she feels brave, ‘so brave that I’m thinking that young men do not possess steps as solid or as fast as I did that night’ (*Skoupa*, 1979: 31). She roams for a while and then she seeks shelter at an un-known house, after fabricating a false background life story. The homeowners refuse hosting her. As she keeps wandering in the streets, she finds a group of ‘disreputable women’ as she calls them.⁹⁰ Referring to their social status rather than their character, I note. These women are the ones that offer her shelter, but she refuses. Then, she comes across her house again. Now it seemed like ‘paradise’. As she tiptoes back in, she is afraid that one of her servants would notice her. Yet, the door that she left open, still is. She is finally back in the house and content about it.

⁹⁰ ‘disreputable women’ in Greek ‘potapes gunaikes’.

An unpacking of this bewildering ending could be of use when considering affective readings. I would argue that Elisavet's story is more than just an account of a privileged bourgeois woman. Her critical approach towards oppressive structures sheds light to a certain mode of living common for women in the island. Even though her revolt was momentary, her writings uphold an unconventional touch almost 200 years after. Not to mention, that through her story she provides a glimpse in the life of some 'disreputable' women who were willing to welcome and host a stranger fellow woman who was roaming alone at night. I would urge us to consider the kin gesture that these women perform not as a way into quickly affirming them as 'ultimately reputable', so as to restore or recompensate a social recognition bound to naming, but rather question the notion of 'reputation' as a sufficient modality of categorization in relation to care and attentiveness.

Elisavet eventually got married and died two weeks after giving birth to her son due to childbirth complications, a common fate for women of her time. Her autobiography was published 50 years after her death, heavily censored by her offspring.

When I return home, I asked my mother if she has ever heard about Elisavet Moutzan—Martinegkou. My mother replied: 'of course. She was one of the first feminist Greek writers. Not *in theory*, in the Ionian Islands'. I found my mother's response dubiously interesting. As my mother subsequently explained, she meant that Elisavet was not a theorist, or a pioneer of feminist thought but rather a resident of an Ionian Island with feminist intellect. Yet, Elisavet was living otherwise at least for that time of her rebellion. I think that we could also read this answer as pointing to the practical ways in which one can exercise 'feminist living' and then consider how would that look like for each person. Recognizing a spacious distinction between feminist theories and feminist practices, is key into allowing applications of multiple formulations to happen.

‘Look what I found’: alert–surrender–forget

I am running an hour late. I have just missed the shuttle bus and the 33°C temperature hinders my ability to walk for 40 minutes to the library. My only option is taking a taxi, so I start walking on the side of Syggrou avenue until one appears. As I walk, I think about the day before. Yesterday, something remarkable happened as I was discussing my project with a friend over coffee. In particular, I was recounting to him a one–act play that I encountered in *Amfi* (1979) a few days before, titled ‘To Pagkaki’ (the Bench). The play is about park cruising, written by Andreas Mousourakis. In the play, a lonely older man gestures to a 25–year–old who is just sitting on the park bench, not just a physical contact proposition but also love. The proposition does not go as planned. This was the second in a trilogy of one–act plays by Mousourakis, only two of which were published in *Amfi*.⁹¹ The first one, ‘Florentia’ (Florence) did not have a ‘hopeful ending’ either.

Impressed that there was a Greek book out there titled ‘Three Gay one–act Plays’ I was expressing to my friend my inability to locate a copy, since it was out of print and unavailable.⁹² ‘I have looked everywhere’ I am quick to assume. ‘The bench story, rings a bell’ he interrupts me. ‘Have you read it?’ I eagerly asked considering that I could finally discuss in more depth the particulars of the story with someone. ‘Maybe, it must have been a long time ago. I don’t remember much’ he added.

After we finished our coffee, I went back to the archives to read *Skoupa* and he went home. A few hours later while I was still at the library reading *Skoupa*, I received a photo of him with the rusty book on his lap (figure 4) and wrote ‘look what I found on my bookshelf!’ I could not believe it. Not only would I now have a chance to read the third story, but, most importantly, my friend was now part of the archival thread. Similar to the discovery of the

⁹¹ The first play was published in *Amfi* issue 2.

⁹² The title in Greek: Tria gay monoprakta. 1981.

book about *the History of the feminist Greek movement* as previously discussed, another book and another linkage appeared in a space outside of the archival building, but within archival threads. The same night, after the library, I went to his house and he gave me the book, ‘Keep it. Take it with you to London too, if you want’. (Heartened by his gesture I kept it figure 5. – The third play ‘Bar Susana’ has a more ‘hopeful ending’).

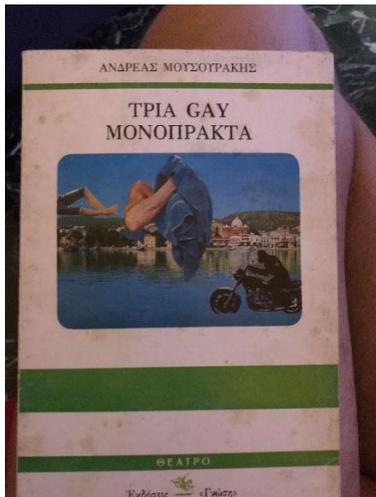


Figure 4. Three gay one-act plays book on my friend's lap in Athens.

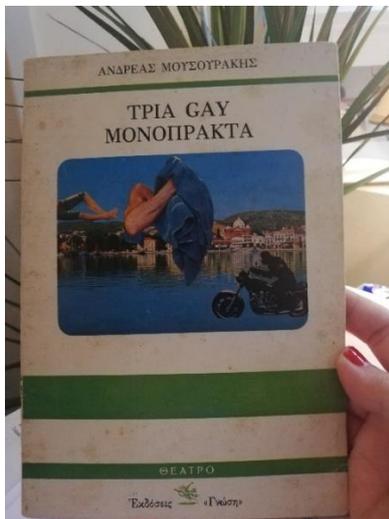


Figure 5. Me holding 'Three gay one-act plays' in London

These thoughts about last night accompanied me as I walked under the Athenian sun. Almost without realizing it I have arrived at the library walking. As if the haptic relationalities between me, my friend, and the book brought me earlier at the library. That book about

encounters of gay and trans intimacies was now in my bag, a direct effect of the haptic capacities of my research.

After completing the daily entrance procedure, the archivist who greets me hands me over only one of the two boxes of magazines that I always keep on hold prior to my appointments. ‘Thank you, but I am still reading the first one. So, I will need that one too’ I say politely. ‘But you left the other one in the return pile yesterday, so we took it back’ she replies. I freeze. I instantly sense that I might never hold the box in my hands again, even though there was no logical explanation behind my angst. ‘Oh no! I never said I finished it. It must have been a mistake’ I retort. The archivist reassures me that I can soon have my magazines back, as I stand still, close to the reception desk. What was this instant fear of loss that I felt? As if I missed my chance to say goodbye to a loved one, not to mention that I have not finished reading the *Skoupa* magazines. Possibly, it was an anxiety produced by the abrupt loss of connectivity between me and the archive. The magazines momentarily became inaccessible, idle and produced a feeling of ambiguity that I might never complete the article that I was reading the day before.

Did I become so absorbed yesterday that I kind of ‘surrendered’ and accidentally left it at the wrong pile? Was I so enchanted by my friend’s discovery of the book that I hastened my moves to arrive at his place earlier? Whether any of these apply or the incident being just a mere bureaucratic mistake, the emotional imprint of the misunderstanding and dislocation of the box, was unquestionable. Within five minutes the archivist returned with my box, ‘I am really sorry’ I said, ‘it’s fine. Just be careful next time’ the archivist replied. I confirmed that I would and seized the box from the counter. This reconnection gestures that the material was back with me, safe and sound.

Furthermore, I argue that this story of not-remembering in which box I left the magazines, all the while following a procedure that has been familiar to me for months, adds another aspect in the alert-surrender reading modalities I employ, that of 'forgetfulness'. This too is part of a haptic exploration, of archival work, of an eagerness to leave faster from the archives to go meet a friend that is holding a book for you, so that you can read a story that you were so desperately looking for within the archive. And it is still part of the archive in all these million threads that link, alert, surrender, forget/remember.

A broom's ending

The fifth and final issue of *Skoupa* was released in July 1981. On page 3 the editorial team has conducted a small piece about the trajectory of the magazine, seeming like a prelude to the magazines' halt, although they do not mention it clearly. They offer an overview of their trajectory as an editorial team which started 2 and a half years ago, emphasizing that creating their magazine was their only common aspiration. The insinuation of such a claim is to reiterate that all their work, opinions and scopes on the feminist movement were presented in the magazine. Notably, they were a closed editorial team, in contrast to *Amfi* for instance that constantly called for contributors.

As the women of *Skoupa* inform us, when they began work on the magazine there were very few women's groups active in Greece. Noticing the lack of political mobilization, they believed that this magazine could work as a stimulus, offer an encouragement, and hoped to be a space for exchanging views and perspectives. Indeed, even though they do not clearly state it, *Skoupa*'s influence must have worked as an impetus for some of the autonomous women's groups that have emerged by 1981, whether they emerged in favour of differentiation or multiplication, *Skoupa* definitely participated in the thread of social mobilizations in Greece. In their convolutedly final text as a team, women of *Skoupa* also

tackled the sporadic turn that publications have taken, noting that it has been a year from issue 4 to the realization of the current issue (5). The editorial team explained how editorial processes were getting slower as the women became preoccupied with other aspects of their life. They also accounted for the fruitful conversations among them throughout the course of the magazine that never made it in the published paper. Here, the editors show the importance of ephemera and temporality, suggesting that discussions that are bound to be lost are not less important, or fruitful, without, of course, negating the influence of written material. As they write ‘these discussions always worked unifyingly for the team and where never recorded or, when recorded, appeared impoverished and disappointed us’ (issue 5, 1981:3 my translation). What is more, I understand the collective’s worry as investing in oral discussions and communicating beyond the paper is still part of my relationality practices with the archive.

On page 4, the editors of the magazine continued to describe their mutable formulations between an editorial team that inevitably becomes a group and then a group that has to be an editorial team. A positionality that both accosted and isolated them from other groups of women. The reflexive aspect that they adopted when outlining their aspiration and challenges not only constitutes their endeavours understood but also permits a theorization of the absences. Overall, the editorial team of *Skoupa* included White educated heterosexual Greek women. In *Skoupa* there are some articles regarding lesbianism, fewer mentions to White supremacy and quite a few critiques on Eurocentric thought and capitalism.

By the end of that introductory piece, it remains unclear whether this issue is the last one. But it ultimately is. This introduction makes it more compelling since it works as an introduction to the end in such a way that it is not quite clear but a possibility. Thus, this makes me wonder about their views and hopes for a future potential issue, while also having in mind that a pause is best, due to their lack of time, their internal problems and also the emergence of new groups and feminist magazines. By being reflective they also become

more vulnerable to the reader, a quality that most of their collective writings entail. The last pages of *Skoupa* ends as it 'should', by hosting writings and proclamations from other groups of women, and in particular from the group 'Women of Law–School' (*Skoupa*, 1981:97–101).

Conclusion: Flood of imaginations

In this chapter I have presented the *Skoupa* magazine as a publication pertinent to a continuum of feminist thought and mobilizations in Greece and beyond. By accounting for tensions, dilemmas and challenges of feminisms' imprints among women's groups I wished to weave in threads of relationalities among women who engage in ongoing oppositional struggle.

Upon reading the magazine I was alert by the advice of a distinctive anti–homophobic lens when thinking about feminisms which Sedgwick proposes (1990). In the meantime, I intended to draw lines of relations among my loved ones and the archive, after having felt the affective touch engulfed in the stories I presented. The stories themselves entail inter–personal connections which transgress their time and space and participate in a bigger network of intricacies. All the subjects in the stories bring along multiple other characters and formations. In particular, Elisavet Martinegkou is accompanied with the glimpses of the 'disreputable women' who are there to complicate the perspective that she describes. Similarly, the story on alert–surrender–forget– remember, where my friend remembered that he had the book that I was looking for but was nowhere to be attained, while simultaneously I forgot (?) to place the archival box where I should– is a signal that affective narrations already exceed and surpass the archive. In the final issue of *Skoupa* we follow a thread of ending, only as an invitation for the struggle to be continued by other collectives.

What is more, the stories I selected are not the only ones who achieve such goals.⁹³ It is rather a personal imprint as I experienced it that led to their presentation and illuminated their commonalities and differences. This tapestry of connections mobilized further discussions that transgress written communication and exercised the practice of imagination. This aspect of relations demonstrates how inter-personal relations help in the structuring and re-structuring of the project through contributions, reactions, and care of others, in and out of the archive, both echoing and extending the limits of any archive.

The work of emotional memory requires imagination, critical enquiries, alert-surrender-forgetfulness. Evoking women's testimonies and examining social mobilizations should always be an intervention that needs to account not only for the presences but also for the absences of certain bodies in their claims. The illusion of fairness, the veneer of equality and assimilation, are key features of neoliberalism (Hall and O'Shea, A. 2013) that easily confine and strip down alternative possibilities of existing and socializing. Challenging Eurocentric and phallogocentric values and seemingly 'apolitical' technocracies, questioning binary oppositions of living and acting, and archival stories of inhabiting an otherwise, might be probing streams of psychosocial imaginations. Then, now, and still.

⁹³ For another archival story that touched me haptically regarding Trota de Salerno see: Gianniri, L. (2021) Haptic touches in COVID-19 times: reaching and relating in the archives, *Journal of Psychosocial Studies*, vol XX, no XX, 1-12. Trota is a woman who lived in 12th century Italy and as part of a group of women medical practitioners wrote medical texts adding empirical knowledge to what later became the field of gynaecology. The case of Trota is again part of a larger yarn of women who personally and collectively defied the norms of their time in order to compose empirical knowledge.

CHAPTER 4

‘Anti-seriousness’ mobilization tactics in *Amfi* archives

‘we are imagining a liminal and Dionysian celebration in an open space with bands, dance, song, grotesque theatrical sketches, cinema – with the general aim of breaking down the most common mask of Power: seriousness’.

(*Amfi* 3–4, 1979:69)

Greek archival practices and the creation of *Amfi*

The first issue of *Amfi*, a magazine published independently by some of the members of AKOE, the liberation movement of homosexuals in Greece appeared in the spring of 1978.⁹⁴ The quarterly magazine with a longevity of 12 years (1978–1990) was named after the word ‘*Amfisvitsisi*’ (Eng: doubt, challenge, dispute) to emphasize the critical scope of the publication towards the status quo and the structural oppressions of homosexual desires. This chapter focuses on the cultural artefact of *Amfi* and the associations and theoretical networks that emerged as I was reading its issues. In this chapter I argue that within the writings, relationalities, and correspondence of *Amfi* prowl certain ‘anti-seriousness’ mobilization tactics that ultimately can further impel the conceptual loom of ‘doing activism’ differently. The theoretical backbone of the present chapter is the work of Hartman on practices of ‘waywardness’, Halberstam’s and Crehan’s takes on Gramscian ‘common sense’, Hall’s incitement to vision and re-vision the Left differently, Warner’s theorization of the public,

⁹⁴ AKOE acronym in Greek: Apeleftherotiko kinima omifilofilon Ellados. Again, as per the introduction footnote 1, it is important to note that here I am using the term ‘homosexual’ instead of ‘gay’ as it is the term used by the specific movement and magazine of the time. Even though the term ‘gay’ and ‘homosexual’ are used interchangeably in Greece nowadays to express male homosexuality I think it is important to include the terms used by AKOE as part of their political visions and struggles.

and a brief sociocultural account of ‘humor’ and the use of jokes. This chapter specifically focuses on three examples of what I call ‘anti–seriousness mobilization tactics’, where the use of humour and jokes offers the public of *Amfi* an enjoyable push to consider aspects differently and drifting. To clarify, this endeavour is focusing solely on the practice of ‘doing activism’ and my intention is not to diminish or disregard the gravity and seriousness of *Amfi*’s and AKOE’s aims. In the first place, it is crucial to examine *Amfi*’s goals and visions of revolution, social change, and the correlations with akin social movements of the time across the globe.

In *Genres of Recollection: Archival Poetics and Modern Greece*, Papailias (2005) offers a valuable ethnographic reading on the Greek civil war, the Left and the inevitably disrupted documentation of such histories. Even though the task of my project is not a historiography of recollection, Papailias sets an important parameter when considering archival work in Greece: ‘the politics of archiving and documentation in a ‘peripheral’ state such as Greece are anything but straightforward or predictable’ (Papailias, 2005:33). Following Papailias’ argument on the aspect of unpredictability in such endeavours, I want to draw attention to how the archives of queer desire in Greece are not only pertinent to the periphery but also coming from the periphery within an already ‘peripheral’ state. Similarly, Papanikolaou (2018) argues that if one wishes to produce a queer history of Greece, this will also mean accounting for the reasons this history ‘is not (and should not be taken as) a unidirectional itinerary of liberation’ (Papanikolaou, 2018:174). The hope for this chapter then, is not to recuperate or recover any united or refined version of queer Greek history, but rather explore what can emerge if we attend to the multiple parameters and perimeters when reading *Amfi*. To begin this weaving journey of ‘anti–seriousness mobilization tactics’ as loci of conceptual inventiveness, I want to point to the first cover of *Amfi* (figure 6) where we see a different interpretation of Michelangelo’s *The Creation of Adam*. In this drawing Adam’s prolonged

finger does not touch God as in the original but points towards superman who is staring at him in an agitated fashion. Both men have dialogue boxes above their heads well-known to the comics genre, yet these speech balloons are empty. What do these men say? It is left upon the reader to decide. And thus begins the story of *Amfi*.

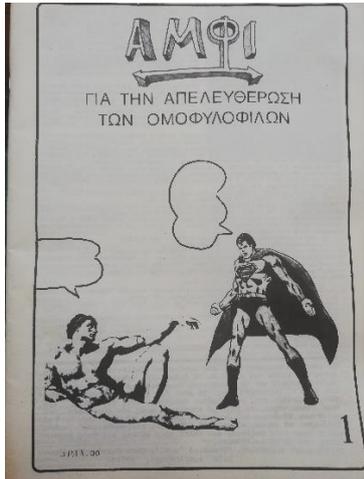


Figure 6. first cover of *Amfi*

Visions of liberation and wayward publics in *Amfi*

On the first page of *Amfi*'s first issue stands a declaration of AKOE that calls readers to realize the oppression that homosexuals face, stating that the main route of this oppression is the 'unofficial yet effective debarment from the right to speak'.⁹⁵ This deprivation of speech/presence in the public domain as identified by AKOE leads to three consequences: 'many don't admit their homosexuality, not even to themselves', 'no one dares to declare it publicly' and 'no one can utter that they are being oppressed in order to examine the ways in which they are being oppressed and thus start fighting for their liberation' (*Amfi*, 1978:1).

Greatly influenced by the Marxist idea of the importance of consciousness of the oppressed

⁹⁵ Here we can also think in the lines of Spivak who in the essay 'can the subaltern speak' emphasized the strategies in which colonial and post-colonial ruling classes did not allow the gendered subaltern 'to speak'. Even though Greece cannot compare to the colonial and post-colonial experiences of India, it is fair to say that within the Greek context, as in any context, exist subalterns that cannot be heard or imagined as part of the dominant discourses of citizenship.

about their oppression in order for action to be taken, the AKOE group sets early on a political framework. As the declaration continues, members note how in order for them to exist they had to confront the prejudice of ‘the family, the school, friendly relations, sexual relations, work and generally all social relations’ (p1). These circumstances of bias that AKOE members succinctly bring up, follow the Marxist line of thought about social relations echoing what Althusser (1970) theorized as the *Ideological State Apparatuses* where societal institutions produce and re-produce the ideology of the capitalist ruling class. The last sentence of the declaration also clearly indicates how AKOE positions the venture of *Amfi*:

We believe that a deeper liberation means abolition of the ‘roles’ which society imposes to immature individuals. Within roles, not only ‘A list’ and ‘B list’ citizens are being produced but also the fascist mentality in its broadest sense is being cultivated and perpetuated (*Amfi*, 1978:1).

Now, in the above sentence lay many loaded notions that the group does not clarify further, leaving a few conceptual doors open, for writers and readers of *Amfi* to roam through. Yet, the mere emphasis on critical procedures that would challenge dominant ideologies of compulsory heterosexuality, citizenship, and traditional family structure pertinent to the cultural hegemonies of Greece, points to how AKOE imagined liberation. At the same time, while formulating the theoretical grounds of the group, there emerges inevitable contradictions. For example, their initiative to create the independent publication of *Amfi* seems to contradict the statement that ‘no one’ dares or ‘no one’ is aware of their oppression. It is precisely the existence of the cultural artefact of *Amfi* that shows that some people did dare. Moreover, observing the presence of such an archive does not imply that ultimately ‘everyone’ acted, or ‘everyone’ could feel included due to the existence of this magazine. What *Amfi* certainly did was to create a longstanding platform for an open-ended dialogue regarding sexuality, desires, and social claims in Greece during two decades of publications

with different syntheses of contributors. The multiplicities and anti-hierarchical structure of *Amfi*'s team mimic other grassroots formations throughout Europe and the US that centred sexuality and feminism to challenge normative ideas of being, heterosexism and, latterly right-wing austerity policies. For example, a few groups contemporary to *Amfi*, are the Revolutionary Homosexual Unitary Front (FUORI) 1971–1982 in Italy, the Homosexual Front for Revolutionary Action (FHAR) in France, the French lesbian group 'Gouines rouges' 1971, the Gay Liberation Front in the US in the 70s, the alliance 'Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners' (LGSM) in the UK during the mineworkers strike in 1984–1985, The Gay Freedom Movement in Jamaica in the 1970s (Batra, 2010).

Back to the first ever page of *Amfi*, the declaration ends with an open invitation:

We call for the support of any progressive individual and group that believe in the deeper liberation of humans. We call every political party and every political youth organization to take a position on 'homosexuality', We ask to be 'hosted' by all progressive press, we demand equal treatment, we no longer tolerate any discrimination in the social sphere we live in, we aim to public meeting and discussion with every progressive person(*Amfi*, 1978:1).

AKOE members here utilize the term 'progressive' without specifying its meaning further. However, considering the context, the term possibly is used to challenge the macho-ideologies of the orthodox left and seek for alliances in this quest. Already being a 'we' and pushing forward demands and invitations, *Amfi* creates a conceptual arena that addresses a public. All writing has some aspiration towards a public. Warner (2002) in the influential essay *Publics and Counterpublics* locates some of the characteristics and axioms of publics and counterpublics. The second axiom of Warner (2002:55) is quite useful for the current project: 'A public is a relation among strangers'. Strangers can partake at the same public and

might end up linking up through common grounds of sociopolitical claims. As Warner (2002:57) notes a public is always contemporaneous and most certainly the cue of strangerhood 'is the necessary premise of some of our most prized ways of being'. I consider a shared strangerhood under common sociopolitical grounds as a vital form towards *Amfi*'s goals and public and in this chapter, I will examine relationalities among strangers all over Greece, and Europe, whose benchmark is *Amfi*. Whether agreeing, disagreeing, or merely participating in the provocations that *Amfi* urges its readers to, strangers related in significant and significantly different ways.

In *The Care Manifesto: The Politics of Interdependence* (2020), the care collective identifies modes of care as prevalent to 'strangers like me' (2020:37). In these networks caring practices are mobilized by 'strangers whose lives resemble our own' (2020:37). This notion of stranger familiarity, on the one hand, can help us enter the world of *Amfi* magazine already imagining certain relationalities. On the other hand, it is crucial to note that the term 'strangers like me' is mostly used here as an entertaining paradox rather as an assumption that each life involved in *Amfi*— both as a contributor or a reader— resembled each other. Part of the allure of examining such an archive is to cross paths with various lives, positionalities, and relations, carefully.

Returning to Hartman's imaginative archival work that focuses on stories of black survival and upheaval I want to point out Hartman's notion of 'waywardness' as indicative of another possible social 'otherwise'. In particular, Hartman (2019:227–228) writes in relation to term 'wayward':

Wayward: to wander, to be unmoored, adrift, rambling, roving, cruising, strolling, and seeking. To claim the right to opacity. To strike, to riot, to refuse. To love what is not loved. To be lost to the world. It is the practice of the social otherwise, the insurgent

ground that enables new possibilities and new vocabularies; it is the lived experience of enclosure and segregation, assembling and huddling together. It is the directionless search for a free territory; it is a practice of making and relation that enfolds within the policed boundaries of the dark ghetto; it is the mutual aid offered in the open-air prison. It is a queer resource of black survival. It is a beautiful experiment in how-to-live.

By acknowledging 'being wayward' as a form of an insurgent living ever borderless, Hartman offers various beautiful radical experiments in how to navigate life, directionless yet practicing a social otherwise. A social otherwise ventured from perseverance, resistance and practices of waywardness as led by the young black women of the book. This non-hierarchical outlook of potentialities theoretically informs the present archival project as I touched and was touched by the issues of the *Amfi* magazine. Considering Hartman's idea of waywardness as an experimental wander we might imagine the drifting and cruising public of *Amfi* and its multiple wanders and wonders.

Strangerhood and waywardness require our constant imagining when considering the sociopolitical premises of *Amfi* and its public. Furthermore, the political position of *Amfi* as a magazine that focuses on the unbounded potential of liberation of desire inevitably concerns and creates a counterpublic. Warner (2002) sees counterpublic as an active group creation instigated by a public that cannot be recognized as a public by the dominant culture and thus has to 're-create itself as a public' (Warner, 2002: 80). Inevitably then the activation of a counterpublic is in conflict and poses a challenge to the mainstream sphere of a public. A counterpublic permits a level of recognition that is not always present in a public, yet all participants of a counter-public are aware that it is the mere existence of such a counter-public that allows for this extirpation of a 'general' public. To illustrate, let us examine the very relevant example of a gay or queer counterpublic, that Warner (2002:86) brings up:

Within a gay or queer counterpublic [...] no one is in the closet: the presumptive heterosexuality that constitutes the closet for individuals in ordinary speech is suspended. But this circulatory space, freed from heteronormative speech protocols, is itself marked by that very suspension: speech that addresses any participant as queer will circulate up to a point, at which it is certain to meet intense resistance. It might therefore circulate in special, protected venues, in limited publications.

Amfi is one example of these limited publications that belongs to a queer counterpublic, in which the readers are aware simultaneously of the counterpublic and the public that they partake. This ground and interchange make *Amfi* what Banta calls a ‘print-mediated community’. Banta (2010) examined the newsletter *Jamaican Gaily News*, one of the few archives available regarding the history of gay and lesbian activism in post-colonial Jamaica. More specifically, Banta in the paper "*Our own gayful rest*": *A Postcolonial Archive* describes how *Jamaican Gaily News* aimed at a ‘self- and public education to articulate a move from unconsciously homosexual to consciously gay self- and societal affirmation’ (Banta, 2010:54). The counterpublic that Banta describes draws many parallels with the *Amfi* archive in relation to ‘outness’, police violence and accounts of social life beyond the newspaper, such as bars and clubs. For the purpose of this project we will focus on the relationalities of the ‘print-mediated community’ that emerged from *Amfi*’s columns, articles and ‘anti-seriousness’ mobilization tactics, a term that will be explained further.

Weaving together the threads of waywardness within the print-mediated counterpublic of *Amfi* it is important to note that the tagline ‘for the liberation of homosexuals’ which was used in the first five issues of *Amfi* was one year later replaced with ‘for the liberation of homosexual desire’.⁹⁶ This shift highlights the inquiring mind of *Amfi*’s participants

⁹⁶ As we see from *Amfi* issue 3–4 (2nd period) autumn–winter 1979 onwards.

regarding rhetorics of liberation that move from concerning specific groups to more open-ended dynamics of liberation of desire. With this shift *Amfi* expands the possibilities of claiming towards a ‘directionless search for a free territory’ (Hartman, 2019:245).

Directionless but not unfounded, wondering and wandering, *Amfi*’s public engages in the imagination of a social otherwise. In an article on the double issue 3–4 of winter 1979 Titled ‘liberation of homosexuals or liberation of homosexual desire?’ AKOE explains how it is not a ‘messianic group’ about to ‘liberate’ a group of people, but it is rather a collective attempt to publicly criticize the male-dominated patriarchal logic and open up discussions and questions regarding sexuality, one of them being the multifaceted experiences of homosexuality (*Amfi*, 1979:21). Invoking other social movements, AKOE writes that it is not about ‘liberating the worker, but work, not women but ‘womanhood’ not homosexuals but homosexual desire’.

With this article AKOE redefined their struggle as something that was targeting structural and conceptual social mechanisms, rather than focusing on mere ‘identity’ groups and politics. Yet, they uphold the idea that gender, sexuality, and class are imperative parameters to leftist socialist political endeavours. Notably, even though the parameter of ‘race’ seems absent from their agenda, *Amfi* has hosted articles regarding the civil rights movement and referred to the struggle with solidarity.⁹⁷ By all means, this absence does not mean that there were no racialized tensions in Greece at the time.⁹⁸ On the contrary, racism is still a common phenomenon in modern Greek society and many scholars have written about the issue (Trumpeta 2000; Triandafyllidou & Kouki 2014; Lawrence 2005; Lefkadiou, 2017). Even though – or rather especially because – this project cannot expand further to contain these

⁹⁷ See for example articles in *Amfi* issue 2 p.35–44(1st period.1979), issue 2 p.85 (2nd period. 1979) issue 5(2nd period.1980).

⁹⁸ See Kouzakiotis, G (2008) The Appearance of the Roma issue in Greek Bibliography and approaches of intellectuals in the 19th Century, in ‘Roma in contemporary Greece: Cohabitations, Absurations and Absences (2008) eds:Trumpeta. (My translation from Greek).

crucial debates, being vigilant of such absences in the archive is imperative in the current endeavour. Traces of the archive in question point towards international solidarity webs which situates the *Amfi* cultural artefact an important compass in delving into social claims in Greece regarding sexuality and desire.⁹⁹ Its politics expand the realm of the political parties and the political arena.

The political arenas of *Amfi*

To contextualize the political arenas and possibilities that *Amfi* encompass, it might be helpful to join Hall (2017:242) in thinking ‘culturally about politics and politically about culture’. Stuart Hall, a critical thinker immersed in Marxist thought while remaining critical on certain socialist doctrines, was a pioneer in the field of cultural studies and its politics. Born and raised in Jamaica under British Colonial rule, Hall experienced first-hand the violence of colonialism, observed early on the racialized tensions, and as a black public intellectual nudged the Left to consider ‘race’ and other social formations along with the aspect of class antagonism. In *Familiar Stranger: A Life Between Two Islands* (2017) Hall offers an intellectual memoir of his life and work, mapping his trajectories between Jamaica and Britain. In the title of the book we meet again the notion of ‘familiar stranger’ implying the links, gaps and differences that constructed his political journey, his emphasis on cultural domains that brought race, sexuality and gender in the forefront, and the urge to challenge the ‘orthodox Left’. In Hall’s (2017:236) own words: ‘it could be said that I entered Left politics a born revisionist’. As a revisionist and a critical thinker, Hall’s focus on cultural politics, follows Gramsci’s theory about the circuit influence that popular culture has on political ideologies and vice versa. As members of AKOE write, the orthodox Left’s dismissal of other social formations and oppressions other than class struggle needed to be challenged.

⁹⁹ Some of the international solidarity fronts found in *Amfi*, are The Gay liberation front in the US, the French FHAR, Fuori! In Italy.

Against this background, *Amfi* appears as a magazine that was not just about politics, or just about sexuality, or a ‘lifestyle’ publication. Rather, it was a meeting point, a terrain where many strangers met, exchanged ideas and experiences about desire, revolution, loneliness, connections, and life, in different ways and patterns. *Amfi* and AKOE members dedicated their leisure time in the magazine and other political activities. Since they all worked in different sectors, editing, and distributing the magazine was not part of their job or income. What is more, usually the sales of *Amfi* only covered its expenses. Through *Amfi*, members of AKOE were always inviting the readers to contribute, to add, or comment on some of the primary goals of the group. In the process of formulating its basic principles, AKOE consulted similar forms found in other mobilizations of homosexuals in Europe and then each member voted ‘article by article’ in the AKOE assembly. The following is a layout of the core principles and aims of AKOE (*Amfi*, 1979:31–32):

1. AKOE is fighting against a system that sustains and reproduces a fear towards sexuality– through the patriarchal family, church, school, civil society– and fight to dismantle male–dominated ideology that the ruling class employs to oppress the rest. AKOE fights against the institutionalized opinion that the heterosexual couple, marriage, and reproduction is the ONLY aim of sexuality (capitalization in the original)
2. AKOE is fighting against the discrimination based on sexuality, fighting to recognise the right to *differ* on the personal and social level. Fighting to end ‘ghettoization’ of homosexuals and for homosexual desire to be considered just one more side of sexual desire which is multifaceted. (emphasis in the original).

3. Sexual revolution is key to abolishing the taboos and patriarchal structures that reproduce an oppressive sexual ideology, abolishing the categories of homosexual and heterosexual, abolishing the ‘top–bottom’ dichotomy. Homosexuality as something separate always entails its oppression. Fighting for a cultural revolution which will bring a) reparation of negative terms about sexuality, b) an overthrowing of oppressive male–dominated ethics, g) the recognition of pleasure as basic and inextricable right of one’s existence.
4. Sexual revolution needs to be accompanied with social revolution that will overthrow current political, economic and ethico–social structures of society and will allow liberation for all sexually oppressed groups, whether morally oppressed (homosexuals, lesbians etc.) whether ‘aesthetically’ oppressed (disabled, elders etc.) aiming to a free–floating sexuality within an actually free, classless society. (my translation)

Reading the above statements of position, we get an idea on the aims of AKOE and simultaneously, inevitably, formulate some critical associations with them. For example, it is important to note that AKOE spoke to the male perspective disproportionately and even though later on, a feminist and lesbian group was formed within AKOE, still many accounts are missing from AKOE’s principles, sampling in the ‘etc’ part of each of the parentheses. What is certain is that the social revolution that AKOE as well as *Kraximo*, and *Lavrays*, and other groups of social mobilizations in Greece and worldwide envisioned did not come, partly because it would be impossible to include all aspects of being. While it is vital to have in mind the positions and aspirations of *AKOE* as we go about to explore ‘mobilization tactics of anti–seriousness’ in *Amfi*, it is also important to note that this chapter does not focus on the evaluation and achievements of these principles.

The queer arts of challenging common senses

One of the things that AKOE certainly achieved through *Amfi*, was to challenge the ‘common sense’, both in theory and with practices. For Gramsci ‘common sense’ is an accumulation of popular beliefs that end up constituting the norm, and it is ‘common sense’ that ‘creates the folklore of the future, that is as a relatively rigid phase of popular knowledge at a given time and place’ (Gramsci, 2005: 326). According to Gramsci the creation of ‘common sense’ is inevitably a product of history and within this collective noun stand more than one notion of ‘common sense’ (Gramsci, 2005: 325–326). The variables of common sense are deeply regulated by the dominant ideologies and capitalist social relations and vice versa. As Crehan (2016:43) writes:

Senso comune, in the notebooks, is that accumulation of taken–for–granted ‘knowledge’ to be found in every human community. In any given time and place, this accumulation provides a heterogeneous bundle of assumed certainties that structure the basic landscapes within which individuals are socialized and chart their individual life courses.

This heterogenous bundle within which individuals are called to be socialized and interpellated, tends to be conservative and ‘neophobe’ (Gramsci, 2005:423)– fearing new undiscovered paths– yet at the same time ‘common sense’ is multiple enough to be able to be challenged.¹⁰⁰ To understand this better we can keep in mind the probing question that Crehan (2016:57) poses: ‘whose common sense?’

This open–ended question can be further oriented to wayward ways if we invoke again the relations between a public and a counterpublic, between strangers and strangers ‘like us’, as pipelines that form a continuum within which *Amfi* challenged normative ideas and pushed

¹⁰⁰ Here I am referring to the process that Althusser describes as interpellation.

for something else, within that certain historical moment of Greece. By applying the alert–surrender approach while reading *Amfi*, I was immersed and wandered within and against the ‘common sense’ of the time–as much as I could – and consequently specific tactics of writing that challenged the societal consensus within that counterpublic, became tangent to me. I identified these encounters as instigators of ‘silliness’, of ‘anti–seriousness’ ploys present in all the wholeheartedly important claims of the archive. As sparkles of resistance within and beyond each one and all common senses, as a tactic, as a way to mobilize revolutionary tactics further and differently. Particularly because they are provocations, responses, and invitations bold enough to exist jokingly as writings within an activist framework.

Halberstam in *The Queer Art of Failure* connects the Gramscian ‘common sense’ with the heteronormative common sense. Halberstam (2011:89) writes:

What Gramsci terms ‘common sense’ depends heavily on the production of norms, and so the critique of dominant forms of common sense is also, in some sense, a critique of norms. Heteronormative common sense leads to the equation of success with advancement, capital accumulation, family, ethical conduct, and hope.

The queer art of failure as Halberstam frames it, is a response to the capitalist and heteronormative ideas of success, happiness, reproduction of wealth and production of offspring, as politics of radical refusal. As a practice that ‘turns on the impossible, the improbable, the unlikely, and the unremarkable. It quietly loses, and in losing it imagines other goals for life, for love, for art, and for being’ (Halberstam, 2011:88). To do so the book focuses on a ray of what Halberstam calls ‘silly archives’ such as children’s animations which through the lens of ‘childish’ narrative and public, might offer anticapitalist modes of relating and ‘covert and overt queer worlds’ (Halberstam, 2011: 20–21).

While Halberstam turns to ‘silly archives’ to locate the revolutionary, the queer, and to emphasize the fact that the act of rebellion is ascribed in ‘common sense’ as something childish and immature, I embark on a similar path, but in reverse. The archives I examine are not, and I do not intend to describe them as ‘silly’ or ‘non–serious’. On the contrary, what ultimately concerns me is certain *practices* that can be deemed ‘childish’ and filled with jocularity within an archive of serious and important claims– as *affective tactics of activism*. Not as the only way, but as a way to oppose seriousness and properness. To put it in another way, by tracing the affective force of ‘anti–seriousness’ mobilization tactics within *Amfi*, I hope to illustrate further that there is not just one way of claiming, of *doing* activism, of professing different worlds, not one proper way of playing that out, but many and differently so. To examine non–normative ways of claiming non–normative things.

Halberstam employs Berlant’s (1997) phrase about ‘the counter– politics of the silly object,’ to theorize alternatives that can vary significantly from high cultural archives. What interests me here is not to evaluate the quality or status of the archives I examine. I reiterate that I found them valuable, and I invoke jocularity, humor and ‘anti–seriousness’ as a mobilization tactic and not as a qualification of the materials in question.

With this in mind, the archival encounters in this chapter concern tactics, actions and doing activism differently, as a mutinous plea against normative taxonomies of being, doing and claiming– and always as an expansion rather than a unidirectional tactic. Joining Halberstam’s argumentation on the Gramscian anti–deterministic notion of ‘common sense’ and ideology, we can think of ‘anti–seriousness’ mobilization practices as ‘an improvisational mode’ to align, to flow, to account for the shifting and multiple relations of political life (Halberstam 2011). While Halberstam, takes this as a starting point to ascribe failure within the range of political affects ‘we call queer’ (Halberstam, 2011: 89) as in anti–capitalist and anti–normative modes of relating, I am not focusing on ‘failure’ but rather in the attainment

of challenging the normative common sense of doing when hoping to imagine various and variable codes of living, relating, and desiring. The abrupt potential of a joke or a call for action against ‘seriousness’ and ‘properness’ within the *Amfi* magazine as a move that challenges the common sense. Making ‘anti-seriousness’ mobilization tactics as an improvisational mode of the importance of claiming desires, differently.

I am focusing on three examples found in *Amfi* that embrace tactics, practices of anti-seriousness within their goals. I am pointing towards these tactics as indicators of the radical potential of humour in social change processes, as something opposing anti-properness.

Hence, I propose the term ‘anti-seriousness’ to describe certain mobilization tactics found in the issues of *Amfi*, not as a compound or as any ‘gate-keeping’ form of activism/doing things, but with the hope to trace different mobilization tactics as improvisational modes, eager to resist and imagine playfully. The composition of the term ‘anti-seriousness’ emerges to describe certain practices that are inevitably relational and devoted to opposing sternness, ‘properness’ and ‘serious looking’ habitudes of ‘doing activism’. ‘Anti-seriousness’ mobilization tactics already concern and imagine a public, and a counter-public, a reception and relation– it concerns something else beyond its creation. The ‘anti-seriousness’ mobilization tactics are already from the start, relational in similar ways as jokes and joking is an exchange.

‘The joke is on me’: humour, politics and ‘anti-seriousness’

Social formations that hope to challenge the status quo often use humour in slogans, brochures, and publications as a way to constitute and communicate with their counter-public and poke at or trouble the common sense ideals. For example, in the continuum of political struggle we can bring to mind the 1970s feminist slogan ‘a woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle’, or the infamous motto of the French Homosexual Front for

Revolutionary Action (FHAR) ‘Workers of the world, caress yourselves!’.¹⁰¹ Many scholars have been concerned with the use of humour as a practice of resilience (Kanai 2017, Cheurfa 2019) as resistance (Sorensen 2008, Mersal 2011) and as subversive, especially within queer contexts. Notably, Jönson’s & Siverskog’s (2012) paper *Turning vinegar into wine:*

Humorous self-presentations among older GLBTQ online daters regarding dating approaches of elder gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual and queer individuals in two online dating platforms in Sweden, and De Moor’s (2005) work *Diseased Pariahs And Difficult Patients: Humour and sick role subversions in queer HIV/AIDS narratives* on how HIV/AIDS patients and their loved ones employed humour and anecdotes to cope and resist the painful circumstances.

Considering the relational mechanisms of joke telling and the social–construction of humour, a further contextualization is pending in order to outline some instances of ‘anti–seriousness’ tactics in cultural politics. Billig in *Laughter and Ridicule: Towards a Social Critique of Humour* (2005) highlights the importance of always being cautious when considering humour as a form of rebellion. For example, as Billig (2005:203) underlines, ‘those who make racist or sexist jokes often claim to be rebelling against the demands of ‘political correctness’, placing themselves on the naughty, contestive, powerless side’. Billig (2005) notes how racist and sexist right–wing aficionados often prefix jokes as a way to oppose this nominal oppression, overlooking their own prevailing social positions in a system of heteropatriarchal capitalism. In particular, as Billig (2005:204) discusses:

In such arguments, one’s own power is curiously invisible, for power is always claimed to reside on the other side. Thus even the powerful can justify their humour on the grounds that it is challenging, not exercising, power. That is why one needs to

¹⁰¹ In French: ‘Prolétaires de tous les pays, caressez–vous!’.

be cautious about describing disciplinary humour as being unambiguously conservative, and rebellious humour as being objectively radical. It is not quite so straightforward.

Following this train of thought, humour is imperatively contextual and relational. If it is worthwhile utilizing it towards radical political imaginations that are willing to oppose sterile social categories of properness, seriousness, prudishness, and ‘being a certain way’ it needs a more concise web of inspections. Freud (1991) in *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* sees humour as greatly attributed to the psychic realities of the unconscious and frames jokes as a way to communicate what is being suppressed. Billig (2005:168) comments on Freud’s theorization of humour:

In Freud’s vision, humour is seen to be on the side of the powerless. It teases the world delightfully; it challenges authority and evades restriction; it is the child laughing at the parent. Although Freud calls humour ‘rebellious’, this joking rebellion is a form of accommodation.

Here, we encounter again humour as a form of rebellion that is welcomed as a release, as long as the subject becomes once again reconciled with the circumstances as they were prior to the joke. This approach to jokes and joking echoes Halberstam’s idea that frivolity is being frowned upon and viewed as childish and immature, as something that needs to be overcome in order to be taken seriously. A question then arises: what if we deliberately embrace these joking rebellions as a way to imagine something beyond propriety? This question might be probing, yet, there are other layers to contextualize in order to approach a notion of ‘anti-seriousness’ tactics. For instance, Freud also distinguishes the linguistic rebellion of a joke from the comic, ‘a joke is made, the comic is found’ (Freud, 1991: 238). The comic here can be added as another layer, something that might exceed language when describing a situation,

and possibly leaning closer to affective dimensions of an interpersonal joke exchange.

Possibly the cover of *Amfi* presented in this chapter (figure 6) can be an illustration of such an intersection between the comical and the joke, putting in the same frame two known fictional cultural figures improbable to appear together usually, as well as insinuating a discussion that it is up to the reader to imagine.

For the purpose of this chapter, it is important to consider both aspects of humour– the comic and the joke– as far as ‘anti–seriousness’ tactics are concerned. Attributing humour as deriving from the unconscious might add a layer of complexity to its intensity. Furthermore, and crucially so, it means that the social aspect of humour, and the interpersonal aspects of it should not be undermined. Ridanpää (2014) offers a critical reading on practices of humour illustrating its political dimensions. As Ridanpää (2014:452) indicates:

Humor (sic) directed at ethnic minorities has generally been considered to operate as a socio–cultural tool through which hegemonic national narratives are maintained. The motive for making fun of ethnic minorities or religious groups is ultimately a socio–political one and commonly understood as a socially subjugating practice.

Hence, the content of the joke is highly related to the humour’s potential to either briefly comfort antagonistic psychic realities, to ultimately offend and reinforce the status quo and its racist, sexist, fatphobic, ableist, ageist and femmepobic structures or to offer a glimpse of new imaginations through a creative anti–prudishness stand. An equally important dimension that we need to take into consideration as far as the sociopolitical aspect of humour is concerned, is the context and the participants – the individuals partaking in it. In particular, Ridanpää (2014) touches on the relevance of inter–personal power relations between subjects who participate in humorous communication:

As important as it is to focus on the content of laughter, it is equally important to

dissect the relationship of the subject *who* is laughing and the one at *whom* the laughter is directed. In addition, laughter, as such, is an active performative subject in the context of the social and political processes in which power–relations become negotiated, and thus a political subject and a subject of politicization (Ridanpää 2014:453– emphasis on the original).

Humour is thus inevitably political, while sustaining also unconscious procedures which collide in sharing a successful joke. By all means, people do not laugh at the same jokes yet the jokes that one laughs with or one produces, hold a sociopolitical aspect within the creative process of humour–making. What makes a good joke is not something one can address greatly through an academic framework, though I sympathize with the theorization of a ‘tiny conspiracy’ that Kuipers (2006) makes in *Good Humor, Bad Taste: A Sociology of the Joke*. Kuipers by examining an array of interviews, historical, archival resources and survey data, concludes that:

A good joke is a ‘tiny conspiracy’ between the joke teller and his public. The appreciation of a joke is a social process, not just a confrontation between one person and one joke. Even if the joke is in a joke book (or a questionnaire), broader identifications play a role. This is also why joke tellers have made *telling* the jokes the main issue. It is not only about the joke but also about those with whom the joke is shared. [...] the fact *that* a joke is told is more important than what the joke is about. The content of a joke can beef up or lend support to a social message, but the telling *is* the message. [...] not only are style differences in how humor is appreciated linked to the humor’s social meaning but each individual joke only ultimately realizes its meaning within a given social situation. Joke telling is, like all humor, an *exchange* of jokes and laughter (Kuipers, 2006:252– emphasis in the original).

According to Kuipers, humour is an exchange that acts as an instant form of communication and the process of telling a joke is equally important with what it contains. This phenomenological approach to humour suggests that ‘telling *is* the message’ making it thus imperative to situate humour on certain grounds of ethical relationalities. Considering the counterpublic of *Amfi* certain ideas and jocularities could be entertained on the grounds of ‘tiny conspiracies’ – even among strangers. Here, it is crucial to remember that since a public, or a counterpublic is formed by strangers ‘the resulting social relationship might be peculiarly indirect and unspecifiable’ (Warner 2002: 56). The direction of each tiny conspiracy among these potential strangers was yet to be redefined in every interaction, in every tactic.

It is for all the aforementioned argumentations regarding humour and joke-telling that I propose the assemblage of ‘anti-seriousness mobilization tactics’ as a formula which is not commensurable with the term humour or joke, since it is bound to more specific practices of social claims and resistance. The *Amfi* magazine centred discussions around sexuality and liberation of homosexual desire as an addition to other desired forms of liberation and revolution, constituting it as an arena of perspectives and opinions that concerned a public political life that included sexuality and gender dimensions as well, rather than just class struggle, differentiating and variegating social claims. Then again *Amfi* was – of course – far from perfect and the people involved in it would reiterate that premise frequently. If one thing is certain, it is that *Amfi* became a waterway of struggles and ideas by challenging the norm not only with progressive ideas of that era, but also by utilizing ‘anti-seriousness’ tactics of action, to achieve that. Hall’s attentiveness to the cultural politics of difference can be again helpful as we move on to think about three patterns of anti-seriousness in *Amfi*. Hall (2017:174) writes:

The task of theory in relation to the new cultural politics of difference is

not to think as we always did, keeping the faith by trying to hold the terrain together through an act of compulsive will, but to learn to think differently.

In an attempt to broaden the conceptual terrain as Hall prompts us I read these tactics as nuggets of permitting activist practices to be variant and imaginative. Albeit as part of a vision and a re-vision, we can conceive ‘anti-seriousness’ as a mode and a practice to think and act differently, otherwise. I consider humour loaded with creative potential and thus a useful companion when wishing for critical spaces of ‘being’. Since humour is a palatable and plastic notion on its own as a term it is not enough. It needs a certain positionality which I propose to be against properness and ‘being proper’ as the main way of being considered a modern well-functioning adult in the western world. What interests me is a practice that embraces informality and creates an ‘anti-seriousness’ network of relationalities as emerged in the political magazines of *Amfi* examined.

Experimenting with ‘anti-seriousness’: three practices from *Amfi*.

This section focuses on three loci where tactics of ‘anti-seriousness’ emerged within the issues of *Amfi* in question as critical responses to the oppressions of the status quo. Namely, a semi-fiction piece found in *Amfi* 1979 titled ‘A taboo topic: are heterosexuals a danger to society?’ that involves an interview with a fictional doctor, Dr. Pervertson;¹⁰² the call of the first ‘pride’ protest in Athens in 1982; and some fragments of the correspondence section that indicate ‘anti-seriousness’ practices which employ humour as a tool for care and love beyond ‘properness’. I read these three different examples as skeins of ‘anti-seriousness’ practices, which if knitted together hopefully produce playful improvisations of being and doing differently. As per the motif of my reading approach (alert-surrender), I did not begin my research looking for this kind of practices *per se* but the underlining force of what I have

¹⁰² My Translation from the Greek Diestramenidis—which means Mr. perverted.

come to name ‘anti-seriousness’ tactics, caught my attention between alert and surrender, in the realm of waywardness, as ‘the directionless search for a free territory’ (Hartman, 2016).

Let us take the first thread of ‘anti-seriousness’ that appeared when coming across the interview with a fictional doctor Dr. S.K. Diestramennidis (Dr. Pervertson in English) with the title ‘A Taboo Topic: Are Heterosexuals a Danger to Society?’ written by Alekos D (p.24–26). This taunting imaginative piece was inspired by a similar article in the monthly French gay magazine *Gai Pied*. The imaginary doctor Dr. Pervertson is a professor of hormone-psychiatrics in Athenian University, chair of ‘the National Neurological and Psychiatric Association’ and of the ‘Salaminian Hospital of Psychiatric Conditions’. Now, all these titles and institutions are fictional, yet they sound pompous to the prestige-making of the doctor. Here the writer by utilizing all the psychiatric and psychoanalytic tropes and cliché of ‘Oedipus complex’, frames how compulsory heterosexuality might be a fixation and an unresolved stage of childhood.¹⁰³ By utilizing the psychoanalytic jargon to ‘pathologize’ heterosexuality demonstrates how anything if contextualized a certain way can be perceived as pathological or not, when applying the ‘psychoanalytic format’. Dr. Pervertson also views reproduction as ‘a very interesting’ chapter of heterosexual pathology. In particular, Dr. Pervertson analyses how the pathological heterosexuals have deviously lodged the idea that the only aim of sexuality is reproduction, consequently blaming homosexuals because they employ their sexuality for inter-subjective connections and pleasure and not for procreation. Furthermore, Dr. Pervertson discusses how heterosexual men are prone to violence, aggressiveness, daily competition for supremacy and dominion, and by taking these tendencies into consideration he adds to the interviewer: ‘imagine a society based on the subjugation and humiliation of half of the planet’s population, women. This would be hell’ (p.24). Dr Pervertson goes on to analyse how the media constantly bombard the viewers with

¹⁰³ Notably what many psychoanalysts (in Greece at least) still theorize about homosexuality.

stereotypical men and women and heterosexual couples. According to Dr. Pervertson, ‘these brutalizing stereotypes are directly beneficial to the current social system, both in terms of consumerism and in terms of reproduction of the working force so that they can regulate low value of workforce’ (p26).

The above extract of an interview with a fictional doctor in a magazine with certain political aims, can be read as a funny ‘anti-seriousness’ comment on the way that prestige-making language and categorizations impact lived experiences. By capsizing the use of ‘pathologizing’ language some might just find it funny, some might find it a witty commentary on the current social system, yet the absurd framework allows both, none and more. Alekos D. invented Dr. Pervertson to pathologize the normative, instantly allowing the readers the radical possibility of the above being both absurd and ‘real’. Notably, Alekos D. did not clarify that the doctor is fictional, yet his name, his affiliated institutions and the ‘pathologizing’ of the normative did not leave many possibilities of him being an actual doctor/person. To complicate more the issue, the interviewer asks his last question: ‘Dr. Pervertson, should legal action be taken to fight the social danger that is heterosexuality?’ to which Dr. Pervertson replies: ‘This is a political question. I cannot answer this since I am a scientist and I do not interfere with politics’ (p26). The above sentence holds an eerie resemblance with the seemingly a-political stance that many psy-professionals take, disregarding sociopolitical aspects of their practice and their power. In Dr. Pervertson’s case, even though his whole stance is entrenched in a political hegemony he interprets his scientific position as dissociated from politics. Dr. Pervertson concludes that he would of course be interested in a collaboration with the government to compose a bill that would solve the problem of compulsory heterosexuality in alliance to achievements of psychiatric science (p.26).

This interview with an imaginary Dr. Pervertson, is ultimately fiction. Yet its presence in a magazine that hopes for the liberation of homosexual desire, in an era of radical political mobilizations, constitute it as an ‘anti-seriousness’ practice that challenges the reader to push and expand further their notions of social categorizations along with the power of the psy-discourses.¹⁰⁴ It is important to note that in later issues of *Amfi* some readers complained about the view of Dr. Pervertson, thinking that he went over the board with comments regarding heterosexual men. Whether these letters considered the provocative theorizations or the existence of a Dr. Pervertson as the main worryment remains unresolved. Yet *Amfi* had to clarify that this interview was fictional.

Interestingly, Banta (2010) came across a similar archival story in the newsletter of *Jamaica Gaily News* when an infuriated reader had written to the newsletter to complain about the ‘bitchiness’ of a specific column, ‘Suss-uration’, ‘despite the editorial caveat that the column was not to be taken seriously’ (p57) as Banta informs us. The reader saw the character of the column ‘as contributing to the low image of the community in general’ (p57). This gossip column was curated by Morgan/Chang who according to Banta suggested that ‘the column can be seen as an occasionally apocryphal or playful public reportage about love, loss, change, and death within the community’ (p57).

Within that exchange exist many levels of interactions. The statement that this column should not be taken seriously, yet a column that motivated an accusation regarding the character or image of the community, and curator’s response on its playfulness and multidimensional aspects. Our task here is not to deem Dr. Pervertson’s interview ‘legitimate or useless’ neither to pick a side on the story that Banta offers. It is rather to excavate how ‘anti-seriousness’ tactics can mobilize and poke reactions and engagements under these circumstances. A set of

¹⁰⁴ Thinking in line with Nikolas Rose (1998) here.

practices that is not concerned with an ‘operational qualification’ of approaching social claims, but different ways of attempting to.

In dialogue with Dr. Pervertson’s interview can be an actual ‘talk’ about homosexuality held at the youth centre of Kareas, a neighbourhood in Athens as describe in *Amfi* 9–10 (1981) by two members of AKOE, Loukas and Adonis who attended. In particular the Centre for Family, Child and Youth Care organized a discussion about homosexuality and thus invited experts, an endocrinologist (D. Adamopoulos), a psychiatrist (Dr. Liaros), and G. Piperopoulos, a sociologist and social psychologist. AKOE members were hesitant because of their prejudices towards ‘expert scientists’ yet six of them attended out of curiosity. On the night of the discussion, according to *Amfi*’s account (p. 27), AKOE members were not introduced as part of the ‘official’ speakers and the ‘experts’ of the panel started the discussion. Thus, inevitably AKOE members sat through to listen to the sociologist discussing whether homosexuals are useful or harmful for society, to the psychiatrist framing psycho–traumatic experiences, and an unsuccessful resolution of the Oedipus complex as the reason homosexuals are fixated and stunted in the ‘anal stage’ (p.27). During the talks AKOE members were taking notes and when given the chance started firing long questions to the speakers. The ‘experts’ seemed surprised as if they did not know that members of AKOE were there. The sociologist attempted to retrieve some of his points then, yet, according to the article, the only reason of his actions was the mere presence of AKOE and not a ‘sincere’ change of argumentation. In addition, the psychiatrist, in response to one of AKOE’s comments, accused them of ‘using ideology in their argumentation’. After that greater tension was created and AKOE members stood up and left the discussion. Using the platform of *Amfi*, the committee of AKOE formulated an answer to the points made by the psychiatrist Dr. Liaros. Addressing him they concluded ‘you will get ahead Dr., you will become successful’ commenting on the societal reproduction of experts to regulate human desire,

‘and those who refuse to do so (i.e. progress in society in the expense of others) are described as 'immature', 'neurotic', 'stuck at a certain stage', and 'incapable of orgasm' ... not bad’ (p.28).

This sardonic response that Loukas and Adonis make demonstrate an avowed opposition to ‘properness’ and ‘maturity’ if that is the gateway to epistemic violence and perpetuation of oppressions. Tantalizing the ‘immature notions of possibility’ as Halberstam (2011) points out, this mischievous response entails playful tactics as part of a specific political project and might enclose more potential than the highroad. Their dissatisfaction of the way sexuality and homosexual desire was discussed by experts and ‘proper men’, led AKOE to organize their own conference themed broadly as ‘sexuality and politics’ which took place in November of 1982 with an array of speakers, one of them being Félix Guattari. Guattari as a prominent figure in the anti–psychiatry movement and an exponent writer on the liberation of desire expressed solidarity and support to AKOE and both *Amfi* and *Kraximo* interviewed him.

To keep tracking the thread of ‘anti–seriousness’ tactics of mobilization in *Amfi*, let us discuss the call – out of the ‘first Athens pride gathering’ which caught my haptic attention. Camp’s (2012) study on photographs of the African diaspora in Europe situates these images as an archive of haptic images, as sites that have both a tactile and an affective register. The haptic touch, ‘is a touch that suffuses both the composition of the image and our responses or relation to it’ (Camp 2012: 43). While Camp’s main theorization concerns photographs, I mobilize the term haptic here to emphasize certain relational responses that the *Amfi* archive invoked in me, while I was reading it.

As I was reading *Amfi* issue 3–4 (B period) autumn winter 1979 on the bottom of the page 69, the calling appeared. I was caught by surprise as I had the impression that pride in Athens did not happen until much later, yet the calling was clear.¹⁰⁵ Based on the ‘international day of

¹⁰⁵ An account from *Kraximo* that dates the ‘first pride’ in Athens in 1996.

homosexual pride' June 26th AKOE called for new political formulations and was asking for suggestions from the *Amfi* readers.¹⁰⁶ The inviting tag line read: 'we are imagining a liminal and Dionysian celebration in an open space with bands, dance, song, grotesque theatrical sketches, cinema – with the general aim of breaking down the most common mask of Power: seriousness' (p.69).

In this calling three imaginative aspects arise, an invitation to both bring into visibility and inhabit a liminal space, enhanced with collective activities and interactions and the goal of participatory frivolity to unmask social 'seriousness'. An anti-seriousness stand then, against staidness here goes hand in hand with the capacity to collectively create somethings else, touching liminal spaces of transgression within confound urban spaces of central Athens. In *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* (1969) Turner sees individuals who are part of a liminal situation as being in 'betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremony' (Turner, 1969: 95). Following Turner's theorization of liminality as a temporary state between passage and incorporation, the proposed anti-structure of the call is a temple of new political formulations promises something new, fleeting yet possible. What is more, the statement's opposition to 'anti-seriousness' already involves a 'tiny-conspiracy' among future participants who have no specific plan to follow, apart from collectively attend something 'in the making' and 'anti-proper'.¹⁰⁷

This invitation against the 'common mask of power', against the common sense of seriousness, vividly caught my attention. I started wondering if the event actually happened, if it had a good turn-out of people, emotionally investing in a past event that was ambiguous if it would actually occur. Did it happen? Should I just browse the next issues to find out or

¹⁰⁶ Based on the Stonewall Riots in New York in June 1969.

¹⁰⁷ Here I am referring to the 'tiny conspiracy' that Kuipers theorized and is included in this chapter.

stay with the longing?¹⁰⁸ I decided to stay with the longing as part of the relationship of continuity that was created between me and the text. Not knowing at that point if it would actually occur in the future – which was already past, yet unknown – left a yarn hanging. Betwixt and between the uncertainty, the unspecified, lurked a temporal suspension that hinted my emotional investment. It was at my disposal to wander and wonder, and imagine the future event, its participants, and my interpretation of a Dionysian celebration. And I wanted to imagine it all. Reading through each issue of *Amfi* created a nexus and a distinct relationship as I became an affectionate reader – asynchronously of course – yet somehow there among the other readers. This relationality was particularly apparent when reading in *Amfi* announcements for future events, mobilizations, social gatherings and of course in the correspondence section that was part of every magazine.

This affective bond that listed me among the committed readers of *Amfi* strained the yard of ‘anti-seriousness’ in one particular letter of the correspondence section in which I invested greatly. The correspondence column first appeared in *Amfi* issue 3–4 (B period) autumn–winter 1979 and is a place where readers send all kind of letters to Mr. Dinos and he responds. There is no specific identification or description of Mr. Dinos whose answers are more often than not playful and witty. Usually, this kind of correspondence column, where readers can pose love questions and ask for general advice or confess a problem, is a common characteristic of lifestyle magazines. Yet accepting all kind of correspondence within a magazine of stated sociopolitical aims and desire alternates Mr. Dinos as an ‘expert on love’, who is of course also intellectually–savvy when required, but who also deliberately shakes–

¹⁰⁸ For the practicalities of research I want to let the reader know that the celebration did happen as a description of the even was found in *Amfi* issue 12–13 winter 1982, titled ‘the chronicle of a celebration’ (p.17). the Gathering started at 8.30pm on Saturday 26th of June, almost 250 people attended, and the article notes how AKOE members managed a successful organization. At some point as Gianis N. writes ‘three men with a beautiful voice start singing ballads me kithara. The moon has risen, people was gathering, approving, disapproving, commending. We were singing all together now. Almost 300 people in the end when the even was over around 11pm. Some stayed in Zappeion of course.

off any pompous recognition as the main mediator figure between *Amfi* and its readers. By not adopting any authority status Mr. Dinos amplifies the notion that *Amfi*'s correspondence space is ultimately a form of communal sharing. In those pages, readers from all parts of Greece could write to openly, with anonymity ensured, and express themselves in a way not greatly feasible in other contexts of political mobilizations in Greece that I have encountered so far.¹⁰⁹ It is moving to see individuals sharing stories and tribulations regarding their sexuality, their experiences, their anxieties, or their loneliness with other readers. What is particularly touching is when in some of the following issues someone might respond to the call or agony of another reader or ask Mr. Dinos for an address of a specific person to which Mr. Dinos obliges if the other person has also expressed interest of contact.

In the 'Mr. Dinos responds' column then many fragments of lives interact and communicate, with the only common thing being readers of a magazine dedicated to the liberation of homosexual desire and the sociopolitical implications of such a project. The informal and conversational aspect of this kind of space is seeped through 'anti-seriousness' and humour within the given framework. However, follows a particular correspondence exchange where both the question and the response can be an experiment of practicing 'anti-seriousness' as a way of care and potential. In the issue 3-4 (B period) autumn- winter 1979, a woman reader shares with Mr. Dinos her love problem and hopes for his advice (p83). She writes that she is a young and beautiful woman who had a greatly successful love life. Yet, the only man she ever loved, Takis, is a homosexual. The woman wants to marry him and asks if it is a good idea. Her main concern is if he can really be her 'pillar'. And then she signs-off as 'tragically in love', Patra.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Notably, *Skoupa* did not have a correspondence section. Maybe *Kraximo* and *Amfi*.

¹¹⁰ the capital city of the municipality of Achaia, Greece.

The letter does not have any more details, nor Takis' view on the matter. Still I found a genuine agony in her request. Considering that she wrote a letter to *Amfi*, I could not help but feel somewhat sympathetic towards this 'tragically in love' woman as I got emotionally prepared for Mr. Dinos to humorously deter her. Yet, Mr. Dinos replied that this idea sounds good if she is okay with this type of relationship noting that they will have a fun and peaceful life. He writes that her husband will not be the aggressive type of man or the possessive type and will love and respect her. As long as she is okay with a less 'masculine' or 'protector type' of man, and Mr. Dinos thinks she is. 'With a homosexual husband there will never be a shortage of men from your side' Mr. Dinos asserted in his conclusion.

This written exchange between two strangers tosses various theoretical threads at once, all weaving different kinds of relating. First of all, Mr. Dinos offers a reply that encourages companionship and partnership and contains the desire of the woman. By all means, none of them considers Takis in this matter, and Mr. Dinos presents lots of assumptions on the 'type of man' that Takis is. However, this kind of correspondence might not be about Takis at all. But between a woman from Patra 'tragically in love' and Mr. Dinos who is not an 'expert' or any 'authority figure' but someone who chose to caringly address the love of the woman. Conversely, I could think of many socially– ascribed scenarios that would have framed this woman very differently, possibly diverging from 'forever unhappy' to 'a pitiful figure doomed to a sexless life'. Yet every part of this exchange signals otherwise. This exchange permits more kinds of caring relationships to exist and flourish, as a possibility. Without a doubt this reply leaves nothing certain, nor legitimizes their marriage, or coerces Takis to this union. It is a casual correspondence after all. What this exchange of letters does is taking the desire of that woman into account, against all odds of sternness.

Perhaps to demonstrate the attentiveness of desire as a practice of 'anti–seriousness' in Mr. Dinos responses, it is worthwhile offering another letter of a woman who got a very different

reply. In *Amfi* B issue 5 (1980) a frustrated mother shared that her son is going out with a man— a nice man she adds— but her whole social circle impatiently asks her ‘when is he going to get married etc’ and she feels bad. She asks Mr. Dinos for advice on how and where to find a woman for her son, to secure his marital status, and then continue dating that man.

Asserting that ‘society has progressed now, and all married people have a secret life’. She concluded that at least her son is not prodigal or a communist, ‘but what are you going to do, each household has a cross to bear’ (p.82). The quest and request of this letter vastly differs I think in the claims made about the desire of a mixed–orientation marriage, making Mr. Dinos craft different advice. In particular, Mr. Dinos replied that she should consider the position of the woman too and should never wish such a life to anyone. ‘Your son knows what he wants, and the rest is history’ he continued. Conversely, what Dinos proposed was to invite all her friends and family to a lovely tea afternoon gathering to declare that ‘Nikos is dating a nice guy from work’ assuring her that it will be fine after. ‘Tell them it is your pride, and they will stop throwing it at you as an insult’ Mr. Dinos concluded echoing the re–claiming strategies of the queer movement.

This extract demonstrates that Mr. Dinos is not inconsiderate towards the kinds of life that a woman might have next to a homosexual husband, reinforcing a purposeful attentiveness to the rascal suggestion that the woman from Patra made. At the same time, mixed– orientation marriages were not uncommon or infrequent in that era, yet both women that wrote to *Amfi* advocating for one, got two quite different responses.¹¹¹ Arguably, it is the locus of the desire and the positionality of each woman that modified Mr. Dinos attention and what I consider an ‘anti–seriousness’ topography that maps love and affection differently. Last but not least, it is

¹¹¹ Here I am thinking of the various mixed–personal adds I found in *Gay News* (1976) and in *Pink Paper* (1995) when researching the *Gerald Kremenstein Collection* (LMA/4678) for my MRes dissertation (Gianniri, 2018). In these adds gay men and lesbian women were looking for someone to marry, or to form a companionship with and/or to have a child.

important to note that Mr. Dinos is not unequivocally positive about marriage as a practice, and in other issues he has proudly described himself as someone who has successfully ‘ruined so many marriages’.

Could an ‘anti-seriousness’ claim for ‘the tragically in love’ woman from Patra be made today? Could a response be perceived as attentive and nothing else? Or do all the marital options according to which a hypothetical contemporaneous Takis can legally marry a man, automatically assume that a woman with such desires cannot/should not exist today?

Responses, if any, might vastly vary. Many could argue that these kind of love letters are bound to the past, others might give consequential and inclement replies, some could offer thorough cognoscente opinions. What if though, we allow just a small conceptual pathway in which such a wish is not only about ‘being taken seriously’ but about an ability to merely utter desires towards and for an ‘anti-seriousness’ which are bound to other forms of affective relating?

Conclusion: ending hemline

In this chapter I have proposed practices of ‘anti-seriousness’ as topographies that chart and entertain possibilities of non-hierarchical and non-evaluating modes of being and relating as appeared in the archives of the *Amfi* magazine. The team conducting this print-mediated artefact could not entirely know the realm of its addressees, yet they had to imagine an audience and communicate their aims and visions for liberation(s). Through assemblies, weekly meetings, parties, open calls for activist events, and certainly the correspondence column many reciprocal and interpersonal relations were formulated, sustained, challenged, and expanded. The thought-provoking and somewhat unconventional writing styles of *Amfi* I believe, allowed publics and counterpublics to communicate, to judge or accept, to argue, to expand and re-image social formations. Certainly, *Amfi* hosted many critics of the orthodox

left as well as many letters from leftist readers that challenged the ideas that *Amfi* advocated. On the other side, possibly the public and counterpublic was not aware of its potentials and relationalities, prior to coming across *Amfi*.

I have attempted to weave certain sites which, by disavowing solemnity and formality within specific sociopolitical aims, draft spontaneous and unrestrained modalities. Such modalities hopefully lean towards a practice of an ‘imagining otherwise’ similar to what Hartman envisioned from the radical imagination and wayward practices of young black women in the turn of the 20th century in the US. Albeit greatly different surroundings and social positions, I think that the need to imagine otherwise is and still should be imperative.

Considering humour as a creative outlet of whimsicalities, I have placed it alongside ‘anti-seriousness’ mobilization tactics as an ensemble that can motivate inventiveness. Above all, these practices present multi-layered modalities of care. Through wit, humour, and jokes as psychic insurgence, these extracts resist authority figures of the psy-discourses, allow non-normative taxonomies of desire to be held and show how anti-seriousness can function as a means to an end. An ‘end’ that is ascribed with different ways of being and interrelating, but not yet figured out. ‘Anti-seriousness’ mobilization tactics entail creativity and imagination as forms of resistance, which are crucial components to not succumb and accede the poetics of life to the never-ending machine of assimilation.

CHAPTER 5

Fluorescent threads of desire and refusal in *Kraximo*

I cannot pin down when I first found out about *Kraximo* (English: *slating*). I remember though, asking my mother to get me the special book collection *Kraximo*, as a present for my 16th birthday. This special edition published in 2007 featured many of the magazine's articles, interviews, and poetry. I vividly remember receiving the large pink book in my hands. The cover read:

Kraximo: magazine of revolutionary homosexual expression

Editor: the trans sex worker Paola.

During the 12 years of its issuance, *Kraximo* (1981–1993) has shifted between taglines. While in the 3rd issue the tagline was ‘a *newszine* (Greek: *efimerodiko*) of self-expression and social critique’ (June 1982), later it shifted to ‘a magazine of revolutionary homosexual expression’.¹¹² Furthermore, its format changed throughout the years. Early issues of *Kraximo* are in newspaper format, printed in thin pink paper. Similarly, early issues of *Butt* magazine, a ‘magazine for homosexuals’ (2002–ongoing) were also printed as a pink pamphlet, kin to *Kraximo*'s aesthetics. Notably, *Butt* published a tribute to *Kraximo* as a politically charged magazine that depicted the ‘Athenian underworld’ (Calvi, 2013).

Kraximo's later issues, 8 and 9 come in typical magazine style. The evolution in its format was also a fact pointed out by Paola Revenioti, the editor. In summer 2020, when I met Paola for coffee with a view of purchasing the only three remaining issues 6,7 and 8, she pointed out that these consecutive issues ‘chart the transition from newspaper to magazine setup’ illustrating the dynamic nature of its publication course. A dear friend of mine kindly loaned

¹¹² As seen in issues 5(July–August,1985) ,6(May 1986),7(January–February 1987),8 (April– may, 1988),9 (November–December 1989).

me three additional issues of her personal collection of *Kraximo*, issues 3,5,9 so that I had access to six issues of *Kraximo* in total, covering the years 1982–1989.

The alternating taglines, the discrepancy in publication timing, experimenting with format, demand for contributors, can all be seen as challenges, when arranging an autonomous publication of revolutionary sexual expression.¹¹³ By the same time, I argue that these characteristics also illustrate the dynamic and shifting nature of this magazine. By all means, one subheading remained unaltered throughout *Kraximo*'s course: 'any kind of labour aiming at profit is prostitution'. This fearless phrase sports every cover page communicating right from the start a specific message to the reader about the magazine's scopes and desires. In this chapter I will weave in traits of *Kraximo* daredevil content through archival stories that I read as fluorescent refusals. Prior to doing that though, I start with some key extracts from this archive which express *Kraximo*'s positionality in terms of politics and resistance.

Protoqueerness– 'just resist'

Contextualizing the 'messiness' and turbulent dynamics of sociopolitical struggle in Greece, as I have presented in the warp of this weave, is a recurrent task throughout this project.

Kraximo perceives the state as an object and encourages questioning and the critical capacities of its readers. *Kraximo*'s political outlook is based on refusing to abide to labels that might limit its potential as a printed tool hatched to 'slate'. The following extracts from a piece titled 'crisis' published in issue 3 (June 1982), I think outlines *Kraximo*'s intention to

¹¹³ Legal persecutions of Paola Revenioti, for both sex-work and the publication of *Kraximo* (*Kraximo*, 1985) were part of the reasons that led to the temporary halt of *Kraximo*'s publication. Financial hardship and lack of permanent associates are further reasons that the *Kraximo* team identifies as the key aspects of such disparities, as the editors noted in issue 8, 'the main characteristic regarding the publishing process of *Kraximo* is inconsistency' (p1).

challenge dominant discourses of categorizations and to uphold practices of desire and resistance as revolutionary means:

questioning has begun. Young people do not want to participate in what is referred to as 'progress'. The myth of production and work is being diminished. There is not a convincing argument that someone should work hard, or that cutting edge technology will solve our problems. (p1)

Labels that we used to name things are now empty. We do not know what a man is and what is a woman. People do not know what their sexuality is. The romancer, the bombshell, the obedient wife, are notions that no longer have the same value, since we figured out the processes hiding behind the production of such categories. There is no longer any ideology whose legitimacy can be proven. There is nothing objectively real and there is no conclusive knowledge on anything. A theory that can be self-proclaimed as sufficient and instructional will always end up in fascism [...] there are only ideas, temporary conclusions and theories open to discourse/logos. There are no wise people and to those who pretend that they can be, we will object and deem their knowledge as lacking. (p2)

as far as the typical revolutionist goes, nowadays we see that their truth is akin to a religion. Yet behind this 'truth' of the revolutionist lies something genuine: desire. The desire for the truth, the desire to stop the exploitation and the oppression, the desire to liberate the most beautiful things inside us. This is what is left after all the thousand volumes of political theory books: desire. So spare your suggestions for wise, scientific political theories to which we need to comply. We will juxtapose to you what hinders behind these theories, meaning the suppressed desire, the truncated desire, the canalized desire. Dominant political discourse is built upon these

constructions. From Poland to Salvador, within jails, within ghettos, in schools, even in families, people rise up because they no longer accept the given socio–economical context and assigned social roles (p.1–7)

Crisis though is also productive. Women, gay men, youth, propose new ways of relating, new ways of living while conservative people give them strange looks because the language that they speak sounds incomprehensible to them. These new ideas are not only different from the ones of 50 to 100 years ago, but also contradict the bases of civilization so far (p.7)

Power equals hierarchy, equals punishment, equals discipline. Especially for homosexual’s power equals oppression, equals self–destruction, equals guilt, equals compliance. The word ‘power’ has a broad definition.Power surveils, ciphers, records and keeps records in order to oppress. [...] (p.7)

Conclusion: there is no advice. Just, resist. Alone or with others, with groups, unionized or not, with all the means available. Resistance not only toward the practices of Power but mainly to the ideology of individual idleness that is being currently cultivated (p.7).

(*Kraximo*, 1982, my translation)

The above quotes underline the newszine as a tool for ‘slating’ pertinent to its name. Through harsh criticism and with questioning as the main compass, these radical statements underpin various themes. For instance, not only do they echo Foucauldian theorizations of power and post–structuralist views on ‘truth’ but also deconstruct any axiom of objectivity and undermine the common sense in ways indicated in the previous chapter, ‘this is what is left

after all the thousand volumes of political theory books: desire’ they tell us.¹¹⁴At the same time, in the above quotes a line can be drawn with strands of political theory that examine situations of ‘crisis’ (Stephanides 2017; Osborne 2010; Poulantzas 2008). In *Kraximo* crisis can be a process that conveys new ways of relating.

What is more though, the above text found in the newszine, engages with a critique of theory in order to utter certain open-ended propositions of action: ‘there is no advice. Just, resist’. Certainly, the aim here is not to assess the text’s legitimacy or evaluate its components. It is an attempt to recognize *Kraximo*’s longing for an otherwise. A desire for resistance and refusal. The refusal to ascribe to teleological ideologies while exercising practices which hinder social assimilation. The refusal to be governed. The otherwise that seems to interest *Kraximo*’s team is based upon new ways of relating and living, as proposed by ‘women, gay men, youth’. A recognition of the revolutionary ideals that animate ordinary lives (Hartman, 2019).

Perhaps, a term open-ended enough to inform the reader on *Kraximo*’s outlook, can be ‘protoqueer’. While Rubin (2011) employs the term to emphasize mainly a chronological order, ‘protoqueerness’ as a prototype, I am not using it to trace continuity within the printed Greek press. Mainly ‘protoqueer’ has been used for textual analysis (Downing 2018, Stokoe 2018) and construction of protoqueer narratives in sexual awakenings (Linne, 2003). Here, I use the term protoqueer as a way to contextualize the impression I acquired as I read the issues in Greek. Protoqueer as something *protognoro* (English: unprecedented) not in comparison of what came later nor in the sense of leading, or being forward, I am not referring to a baton type of mobilizations here. I am arguing mostly for a two-fold dimension of protoqueer–protognoro. First let’s invoke the etymology of protognoro. Protognoro is a

¹¹⁴ Foucault (2020) observes power as disperse and omnipresent. Subjected to disciplinary power subjects oblige to rules and Laws imposed by the sovereigns.

compound word coming from *proto* meaning ‘first’ and the verb *gnorizo* which means knowing; meeting; encountering; become acquainted to. Protognoro then means meeting/encountering for the first time. Following this train of thought, I read *Kraximo* not only as an ‘unexampled’ hybrid of protoqueerness in its time, but also as a newszine that I recognize, I became acquainted to, something like Cocteu’s adage: ‘I didn’t meet him, I recognized him’ that I’ve discussed in the introduction of this project. *Protognoro* as a feeling.

Furthermore, there is another *proto*, as in another first modality, arising from my relationship with this publication. I happen to hold this collection, to own part of it. I can travel with it, read it everywhere, I have the fear of losing the materials or accidentally besmearing a page. I am simultaneously anxious and relieved. An ambivalence of responsibility and connection which is unprecedented, because the manner I relate to these materials, is different from the *Skoupa*, *Amfi* and *Lavrys* archives. There are no time restrictions nor a definite space where I need to transport to access them. This is also another *protognoro* feeling regarding my relation to this publication that I will develop in the next section.

Tracing the fluorescent: visual aspects of the haptic and the optical unconscious

So far in this project I saw no need for the threads placed in the weave to have a particular colour. What is more, I did not visualize the yarns of the warp or the weft in any particular colour combination, leaving it up to each reader to imagine the mixture they see fit. Albeit the sense of the haptic covers the gritty textured touch of the threads set, any other aspect of visualization remains to the discretion of the reader. Even though I wish to preserve the openness of colour interpretation in the conceptual loom, in this section I will argue for a particular *quality* I saw while pulling the *Kraximo*’s yarns. A quality pertaining more to the brightness of the threads than any specific colour in itself. At times when reading *Kraximo* I

felt a certain luminescent glow, as if *Kraximo*'s stories, interviews and articles were 'flashing their lights' to me in a different way from the other magazines, or better yet with a certain particularity that I can only explain in writing as 'fluorescent'. Adding a visual aspect to the reading process of the haptic, a fourth register of the haptic is introduced, that of optics. As we have been discussing up till now, haptic occurrences require the tripartite senses of touch: an indexical, a physical, and an affective touch (Campt 2012). Here, utilizing the notion of 'optical unconscious' quoted by Benjamin I will describe how I perceived *Kraximo*'s signalling as fluorescent, enriching the textualities of the haptic in relation to the visual. In the second part of this section, to illustrate on this particularity of *Kraximo*'s I will introduce three incidents. One anecdote that underlines my material relation to the magazine and two sites found in the magazine in question: its non-intellectual positionality and its interviews.

Going back to Campt's theorization of the haptic, the visual is already considered as an aspect of the indexical touch. Notably, the viscosity of haptic images is partially what distinguishes photographs – in Campt's case – from those which are merely tactile objects and those photographs that are haptic images (Campt, 2012). The visual touch of the photograph, i.e. what is being presented in the image; that which is being negotiated in the photo, according to Campt, partakes to the identification of haptic images. While the present project focuses on magazines and not particularly photography, I think it is important to briefly touch upon the politics of the visual in order to define the optical aspect of the haptic.

Thinkers like Barthes, Benjamin and Campt have all theorized the visual medium of photography, centering images as key sites of their work. Barthes in *Camera Lucida* (2010) distinguishes two qualities in the art of photography, the *studium* and the *punctum*. For Barthes the *studium* touches more upon cultural interpretations of the image, on how the message of the photograph is perceived 'technically' and 'collectively', while the *punctum* concerns the personal relation produced between the onlooker and the still, it concerns affect,

an ability to ‘wound’.¹¹⁵ According to Barthes, the second aspect trespasses the sovereign consciousness of the studium and offers a different layer of interest. Punctum derives from the image as an ‘element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me’ (Barthes, 2010:26). It is then a touch made between the viewer and the image orchestrated by something that transgresses the mere study of the photograph as an artefact. ‘The incapacity to name is a good symptom of disturbance’ (Barthes, 2010:51) Barthes will tell us later on about his attempt to define the punctum. Ultimately, the studium is always coded, the punctum is not (Barthes, 2010:51). I understand the coded nature of the studium as a socially constructed interpretive lens of the visual. Notably, the field of visual culture is particularly interested in the various aspects in which the visual becomes socially organized and psychosocially coded.¹¹⁶ In the introduction of the anthology *Visual Culture: the reader*, ‘What is Visual Culture?’ Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (1999:41) define visuality as ‘the visual register in which the image and visual meaning operate’. Now, even though I find the interdisciplinary terrain of visual culture particularly interesting, for the purpose of this section lets keep the thread of visuality as that which is not only bound to an image, but to that which contrives a ‘visual meaning’. Thinking about studium and punctum as Barthes defines them, I argue that visuality links to both, while also insinuating the promise of an affecting encounter. Something like: visuality can exist without punctum, but punctum operates presupposing a certain visual meaning– not always clearly defined.

¹¹⁵ To better understand the distinction between these elements Barthes brings the example of the photos utilized in newspapers. He writes ‘News photographs are very often unary (the unary photograph is not necessarily tranquil!). In these images, no *punctum*: a certain shock–the literal can traumatize–but no disturbance; the photograph can ‘shout,’ not wound. These journalistic photographs are received (all at once), perceived. I glance through them, I don’t recall them; no detail (in some corner) ever interrupts my reading: I am interested in them (as I am interested in the world), I do not love them. (Barthes, 2010:41).

¹¹⁶ For more on visual culture and the power of images, see *Visual culture: the reader* (1999) Evans & Hall (eds). Particularly Part three on ‘looking and subjectivity’ where scholars discuss the operation of optics in the process of gendering (Mulvey; Gaines; Rose) and racialization (Hall; Bhabha; Fanon; Doane; Dyer).

Together with the definition of visuality, the ‘incapacity’ of Barthes to pin down a proper description of the punctum, is useful here, to make a case on the limitations of language when trying to signal towards the fluorescent threads of *Kraximo*, as something that not only interests me affectively (like the index of the rest of the magazines did) but also differently so (in such a way that an urge to visually describe the threads emerges). It makes me wonder: since the affect of certain objects is not produced by their mere visuality – in the case of photography by their existence as stills – but is also related to the relationality with the beholder, can one verbalize it? And if so, how?

And in comes the haptic again to mediate. Camp’s theorization of the haptic as a three-party sense of touch that involves psychological, indexical, and affective qualities of touch engulfs visuality. As a matter of fact, Camp discusses the notion of ‘haptic visuality’ that Marks has previously theorized. Marks adopts one of Deleuze and Guattari’s intellectual babies, their distinction between a haptic space and an optical one, to account for a visuality that ‘functions as the sense of touch’ (Marks, 2000: 22). For Marks the affair of haptic visuality involves the eye as an organ of touch. Simultaneously, the eye is attached to the body of the onlooker/reader/viewer as ‘embodied perception’ (Marks 2002: 4). Adding this form of touch to a haptic reading, highlights the affective bonds formulated between haptic objects and their interlocutor(s). It is about a sensual perception pertaining to what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) described as ‘a haptic space’.

Now, not to get lost in the fascinating universe of Deleuze and Guattari let’s hold on to the thread of visuality as I lay out the difference between haptic and optic space, as Deleuze and Guattari envisioned it. For them the optic space is a codified terrain, a striated space, a space that can be visually perceived. On the other hand, a haptic space is a ‘smooth space’, a non-intended space, a tactile space which is ‘a sonorous much more than a visual space’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 382). Taking into consideration the different capacities of the forms of

space, the haptic one ‘is a space of affects, more than one of properties’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987:479). The open-ended setting of the haptic space is an advantage for Deleuze and Guattari whose project relates to multiplicities, affects and non-hierarchical schemes of cohabitation. Based upon this logic Marks bridges the haptic with the visual to account for ‘haptic visuality’ as an approach that holds up both to what we see and to ‘the material presence of that which we view’ (Marks, 2012:33) as Camppt puts it. Likewise, Camppt incorporates an embodied viewing position in her vision of the haptic while visually reading images of black diaspora and vernacular photography. The haptic terrain has affective potentialities, it is less defined—than the striated space— and it seems to resist visual configuration. Or better yet, any possible optical depiction emerging is not purposefully mobilized to any codified means of representation. Here, I want to draw a parallel between Barthes’ distinction of studium and punctum and the striated (optical) and smooth (haptic) space. It is as if Deleuze and Guattari are playing with Barthes’ phrase, to utter: the incapacity to configure is a good symptom of disturbance.

The mode of haptic visuality then, can be felt as a wound, as an affect, as a relational motif. As that which is present and yet resists depiction. like a luminous bundle of threads, there were glint was not a necessity to appear, yet they did. One could even argue that all this theoretical knitting happening here occasioned by *Kraximo* is already a luminescent haptic space in operation.

Another concept that will be helpful to tighten further into the weft in my argument of touching upon fluorescent yarns in *Kraximo*, before moving on to this chapter’s archival stories, is Benjamin’s ‘optical unconscious’. Many scholars from different study areas have mobilized Benjamin’s theorization of an optical unconscious (Taussig 1991; Krauss 1996; Conty 2013; Reinhardt 2017). It is again the visual medium of photography that Benjamin takes as an example to write about that which through a camera one can observe, something

that is not often visible to the naked eye. A photograph allows time to reflect, to observe a still, becoming a medium that signals to everydayness in ways that perhaps were not obvious/aware/perceptible before. Borrowing the term ‘unconscious’ from psychoanalytic practice, Benjamin (1999:510–512) writes: ‘it is through photography that we first discover the existence of this optical unconscious, just as we discover the instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis’. I am aware that a whole new project could potentially begin by starting from Benjamin’s phrase and the correlation of camera/photography with psychoanalysis. However, to contextualize the fluorescent signals I received while reading *Kraximo*, I want to clarify that since I am not working on photographs and my visual material is mainly textual, my ‘camera’ in this case is the alert–surrender–approach. Being alerted to the haptic and surrendered to the process, as I was reading *Kraximo*, often a brightness caught my eye. However, this fluorescence was not only present when I was reading a captivating archival story. With this magazine it was also something else. For example, when I was carrying the artefacts with me in my daily tasks; or when I was being extra cautious not to rip the long pink fragile pages, covering them with my hands to protect the zine from a sudden wind in the terrace.

Reflecting on this seemingly ‘everyday’ reaction I argue that the yarn of materiality becomes interwoven with that of hapticality. Taussig (1991) in the essay *Tactility and Distraction*, employs Walter Benjamin’s concept of ‘optical unconscious’ to theorize the connections one experiences through the materiality of everyday objects. Taussig (1991:149) writes:

To the question how in our everyday lives do we know or perceive a building?, Benjamin answers through usage, meaning, to some crucial extent, through touch, or better still, we might want to say, by proprioception, and this to the degree that this tactility, constituting habit, exerts a decisive impact on optical reception.

The capacity to perceive an object according to this theorization exceeds the visual perception and emphasizes on the object's spatial position, *avoirdupois*, knowing where the object stands and where the person stands. Both physically and psychically. Permitting a possible occurrence of a haptic space as I think Deleuze and Guattari would claim.

Following this process, the proprioception of the everyday is an exercise to explore where *Kraximo* stands: in refusal, in multiplicity, in desire. Similarly, my reception of this magazine is that its main concern is the everyday struggle, the everyday pleasures, and the quotidian connections that flourish from both. For example, all the issues that I read, include interviews of lay people in cruising spots, workers, friends of the editors, customers, with the same zest and attention that host interviews of famous authors, poets, intellectuals, directors. *Kraximo* focuses on the displacement of stories and stories of displacement.

Taking into consideration Benjamin's optical unconscious as a way to process objects not only visually but also through reflections and tactility, Taussig frames the 'objectness of the object' as an important part of psychic connections with daily artefacts. Perceiving objects, with conscious and unconscious registers, according to Taussig, contributes to 'the analysis of the everyday, and unlike the readings we have come to know of everyday life, it has the strange and interesting property of being cut, so to speak, from the same cloth of that which it raises to self-awareness' (Taussig, 1991:152). Recognizing the role of tactility in Benjamin's theorizations, the objectness of the object becomes 'a form that, in an age wherein analysis does little more than reconstitute the obvious, is capable of surprising us with the flash of a profane illumination' (Taussig, 1991:152).

Thus, the event of fluorescent threads here, presupposes *Kraximo* and a haptic reading that encompasses a physical touch, a textual one, an affective one and now a stated visual touch. A haptic visuality that concerns the unconscious functions of vision. Moreover, I reckon that

it is precisely this dubiety of perceptibility that makes the terrain of haptical optics so engaging. As Deleuze and Guattari (1987:494) puts it:

Where there is close vision, space is not visual, or rather the eye itself has a haptic, non-optical function: no line separates earth from sky, which are of the same substance; there is neither horizon nor background nor perspective nor limit nor outline or form nor center; there is no intermediary distance, or all distance is intermediary.

The perspective of the haptic allows me to theorize that which is not always visible to all; to read the archives with a tripartite sense of touch– textual, physical and affective; and to now add the register of optics. Notably, the work of Guattari and Deleuze is often mobilized in *Kraximo*'s pages, illustrating a deeper connection with their theory of desire.

Correspondingly, later in this chapter I will present an interview with Guattari found in *Kraximo*, which will help us to better place the threads presented here that relate to his work.

Ultimately what the notion of 'optical unconscious' offers, is a possibility of a presence that is not 'full' (Conty 2013), that is not clearly codified. To me it is about a presence, about being present in the haptic space of a quality that one can 'see', can feel, a force with potential, a relation that 'can meet our gaze without being appropriated by institutional power' (Conty 2013). Equally, an element that is not capable of being assimilated. In effect, it needs a body. In this chapter's case, I claim that through my embodiment the fluorescent yarns of the magazine appear. Still, it might not be present to all. It might not be present to some. And it is particularly this quality of the haptic space that I find engaging. For instance, in this exploratory project, some readers might read as fluorescent different stories than the ones I am about to offer. The above section, more than anything could be viewed as a

conceptual tool of what it might mean to add the aspect of visual hapticality to the mix.

Solely as it appears (the only way I can).

‘For those interested’: coming together and the flashing lights of ‘anti-properness’ in *Kraximo*

Kraximo is a great example of everyday connections and attendance. Not as the only sight and not necessarily as an illumination, but as an object capable of luminosity and surprise—within the alert surrender mode of the haptic— that adds novel and fluorescence threads in this project of archival weaving. This section discusses these relational capacities of *Kraximo* by discussing a field-trip, by briefly touching on its complicated relationship with *Amfi* and by extending threads that reach beyond the web of the present research, like a ‘DeJa’Vu’ related to materials from the life of Gerald Kremenstein, whose archives I read as part of my MRes research (see the discussion in the Introduction).

Kraximo developed ties with international organizations and during the hiatus for the trials, the team received international support and coverage.¹¹⁷ In the issues I read, an ‘outward-looking’ point of view is recurrent. From political dialogues with international groups on homosexual liberation and European anarchist collectives, to ongoing calls for participation and engagement, reveals the interest of *Kraximo*’s team to get in touch and create networks.

***Kraximo* is going on a fieldtrip**

I particularly felt the realm of affective networks, when I saw the open call for a fieldtrip.¹¹⁸ Having read the issues in reverse— since I first acquired the 6th issue and consequently the 5th, I was already aware of the successful fieldtrip. What is more, I was wondering if I would find

¹¹⁷ Issue 5. RFSL, H.O.S.I (Austria) G.L.R.C. (Australia), F.H.O. (Norway) N.V.I.H. (Holland) F.W.H. (Holland) and associations from Denmark, France, A.R.C.I. (Italy) C.H.E (Britain) Amnesty International, S.H.R.G. (Scotland).

¹¹⁸ Issue 5 (July–August, 1985).

any traces on the organizational aspect of the trip, when I received the previous issues. I was wondering: how overtly advertised could this trip be? What were the logistics? I wondered. The call read:

Kraximo is going on a fieldtrip

‘We are commencing fieldtrips to various places. This on the one hand will help to detox from everyday city routine and on the other hand to meet and get to know each other, between us readers! Those interested, write to the magazine stating your interest and a respond address’ (*Kraximo*, 1985:4)

I found the call simple and welcoming. ‘If only I could participate’, I thought. The destination was unknown, bringing in again the limit of the archive; reminding me that some connections are forever lost. Lost or protected? I thought again. This trip was an exchange that remained between the participants, ‘those interested’, some of the readers of another time. The issue of time emerges again. Invested in the haptic moment, temporality being present. The haptic at work to remind me what *I* can reach and cannot reach, being determined by what reaches/touches me. As Campt puts it (2017:98):

The haptic is not merely a question of physical touch. It is the link between touching and feeling, as well as the multiple mediations we construct to allow or prevent our access to those affective relations. These haptic relations transpire in multiple temporalities, and the hands are only one conduit of their touches.

In issue 6, under the *Kaliarntosures* column, the magazine let the readers know that the last trip did not happen due to inadequate planning.¹¹⁹ So, in order for the trip to be realized, a phone number is given for ‘those interested’ along with proposed time for calling, ‘unless

¹¹⁹ Kaliarntosures in Eng: Gossip.

you are Charalabos Papanikolaou who can call me 24/7'.¹²⁰ After this small confession of lust, the announcement closes with 'we are also awaiting participation from elder homosexuals who feel lonely' (p.12).

Directly inviting people from different age groups that might feel lonely, made me recollect Gerald Kremenstein, whose archival collection of life memorabilia I had the opportunity to reach in a previous research project. In the last archival box on Gerald's life laid a brochure of a service called SEGAL (Supporting Elder Gays and Lesbians), The brochure asks: 'are you a 60+ Lesbian or Gay Man in London and feeling isolated? [...] we will telephone you once a week for a chat, to see how you are and refer you on to the proper agencies if you have any problems, and all in complete confidentiality'.¹²¹ This vivid recollection of searching through the last box of Gerald's archives came back when I read *Kraximo*'s special trip invitation towards people who might feel isolated. As if these two parallel adverts touch upon each other as I connect them. In *Kaliarntosures* of issue 8 (April May 1988) I found out that the fieldtrip did happen and was a success, so the team is organizing a new daytrip and calls for participants. No more information is provided. Destination remains unknown; Regardless, I am pleased to know that the trip was successful.

'we have the streets': Anti-properness VS anti-seriousness

A crucial connection pertinent to the current project is the tensions and affinities between *Kraximo* and *Amfi*/AKOE as two publications that envisaged different sexual liberations and played a crucial part in queer Greek genealogies. Mentioning, addressing, criticizing, and applauding AKOE/*Amfi* are recurrent themes in *Kraximo*'s issues. Notably, during the first years of its publication, *Kraximo*'s editorial process was taking place at the AKOE offices,

¹²⁰ Charalabos Papanikolaou is a professional swimmer. In a previous announcement in the same issue, further admiration towards Papanikolaou is expressed.

¹²¹ London Metropolitan Archives, City of London, LMA/4678/02/01/010.

where *Amfi* was being edited too. From sharing the same space, to their breakaway and later on the reported ending of AKOE/*Amfi* in 1989– with *Amfi*'s last issue published in 1990– *Kraximo* offers an interesting overview of associations and raptures among the two magazines.

The trajectory of their relationship in this chapter, starts of course in *media res*, on issue 3. There Paola thanks some friends from AKOE stating that ‘through your support and constructive criticism of *Kraximo* through *Amfi* you made my will stronger so that I can continue publishing this newspaper’.¹²² On issue 5, where *Kraximo* accomplished republication after two years of court cases, announces that a few representatives of AKOE decided to ‘kick them out’ of their co–working space, right before the editing process. AKOE summoned ideological differences. ‘Thus the current issue was written on the benches of Omonoia and exarcheia square. But we are alive and kicking’ (p.1) highlights the editorial team of *Kraximo*. In the same issue lay an article titled ‘AKOE and its misery’ (p.6) where Paola castigates AKOE for ‘properness’. While the article is mostly a personal attack to *Amfi*'s new editor, the piece mainly emphasizes that many people left the group after the successful conference on sexuality and politics as if the goal of AKOE has been accomplished.¹²³ Paola attributes this shift within AKOE to their ‘bourgeois aspirations and being proper’. Now again, the task here is not to scrutinize both sides, or evaluate motives of each publication. *Kraximo*'s reading of AKOE could be understood as yearning for properness and ‘high–class etiquette’. In contrast, the previous chapter of this project focussed on my reading of ‘anti–seriousness’ mobilization tactics in earlier issues of *Amfi*. The tense relationship between the magazines at play brings in another perspective of reading both.

¹²² In last page issue 3 (1982).

¹²³ I've written about this in chapter 4 which focused on politics of *Amfi*.

Certainly, while the formula I theorized in the previous chapter is mostly on practices and not pertinent or unique to *Amfi*'s goals, I find the slating of *Amfi* regarding 'properness' very interesting. This conflict adds another dimension that not only affirms the variance and multiplicity of the yarns in question but also it illustrates that *Kraximo* is overtly not a project of citizenship. It is *Kraximo*'s positionality that inevitably renders *Amfi* into an appeal to 'properness', because for *Kraximo* the evolution of *Amfi* drifted from any radical potential present in its dawning. Thus, this 'properness' is read mostly as an aftermath and not so much in the tactics of *Amfi*'s earlier publications. Notably, Paola distinguishes AKOE's earlier years of mobilizations. '*Amfi* nowadays (1985) does not have many things in common with AKOE's vision in 1978' writes Paola (p.6).

While the complicated relationship of these two publications will be further discussed in the final chapter of this project, here it is crucial to distinguish *Kraximo*'s desire for anti-properness with the 'anti-seriousness mobilization tactics' that I saw while reading *Amfi*. Furthermore, taking into consideration the COVID-19 circumstances and restrictions I was unable to access latter issues of *Amfi*. Observing the shift of *Amfi* through *Kraximo*'s point of view, I think rightly serves the fashion of this project as an exploratory weave. It is through *Kraximo* that the thread of *Amfi* surfaced again to complicate and braid in turbulent and concurrent chronologies of movements. To put it differently, I argue that if *Amfi* was interested in anti-seriousness mobilization tactics, *Kraximo* had no interest in tactics whatsoever. *Kraximo*'s arena was cultivated with refusal, desire and assemblages. The article concludes 'let them have the offices, we have the streets' (p.7).

***Kraximo* interviews: fluorescent refusals**

As I have previously stated, someone did not have to be famous to be interviewed in *Kraximo*. It was a space for everyone since all would have something to say. Within the

tapestry of interviews, from ‘Mrs Maria’ an elder woman who was the restroom attendant of the public toilets of Omonoia square– a well know cruising spot in Athens at the time– to famous Greek actresses and artists, and Félix Guattari, shine many stories of living and desiring differently.¹²⁴ Having in mind the now four registers of the haptic that include an embodied touch, an indexical, an affective and a visual one, in this part, I will present some affective life stories from *Kraximo* that I read as luminosities of fluorescent refusals.

The *Kraximo* (2007) book entails a vast collection of interviews conducted throughout the twelve years of the magazine’s production. However, there is no specific reference or information on which specific issue each interview originated from. No date of reference has been a common agony for me in this archival journey. Trying to trace a chronological order right where it slips away, is an inextricable part of this feverish archival intervention, as I have come to realize. I will then leave chronological facts out of the equation here, as I delve within the interviews. Alerted and surrendered, prepared for the potential haptic temporalities, rather than affirming a concrete timeframe of publication data. In addition, I want to draw the attention the reader to the thread M ‘Translations, the incommensurable and otherwise’ part of the warp of this weave. As I discuss in warp thread M, here I will leave many words untranslated. To reiterate, my decision to leave some words in Greek, i.e. untranslated is part of my argument on the incommensurable of language. Moreover, it can also be perceived as part of my limitations, as my incapacity to transfer linguistically certain meanings. Thus, I chose to describe certain words rather than to define/ replace them. All interview extracts are my translation, unless differently stated.

¹²⁴ For Mrs Maria’s interview see issue 8 (1988). For more on famous artists’ interviews see *Kraximo* (2007) that hosts interviews (in Greek) of Melina Merkouri, Meri Chronopoulou, Sperantza Vrana, Dinos Christianopoulos, Chronis Missios, Kostas Tatxsis etc.

There, between the pages of the heavy book, I came across Nancy, ‘the queen of adult movie theatres’ (p.186–188). Nancy is a frequenter in adult theatres, drive ins and other cruising spots. Paola in the interview’s introduction describes Nancy as notorious and very sexually active. Legendary and revolutionary. ‘Many of you would have probably met her, and probably be jealous of her, hate her or love her, like I love her. Enjoy! According to Nancy, she has had sex with 15.000 toyboys!’ (p.186). The interview has a pleasant flow as it contextualizes the atmosphere of cruising Athens. Nancy replies that the best time of cruising in adult–movie theatre was up until 1986. ‘what happened next?’ asks Paola. ‘AIDS’ Nancy replies while adding ‘many young ones felt more liberated (and no longer came for cruising) ... though I believe that liberation was already happening prior to that. I think that with the threat of AIDS those who are still cruising stayed around but became marginalized by the rest. Others that used to come no longer come, or ask for money’ (p.187)

In this small extract, this interview offers not only what I was somehow looking for, i.e. a general timeframe, but also an account of the shifting cruising realities of Athens during the AIDS crisis. Furthermore, within Nancy’s comment on liberation, we witness the refusal to accept that liberation was just a mere cultural product of the time. Later on, Paola asks if Nancy ever wanted something else apart from sex with these men, the need to be intimate in other ways with a man, a more ‘intimate’ relationship? To which Nancy replies:

Never! On the contrary, with other *aderfes* I was closer, but with the men I have sex with, never. They are just a means to an end. I liked some of them. And I am glad whenever I meet some of them again, we talk, but nothing more. To fall in love with a lad is unthinkable to me. I just want to know that they fancy me, that they would like

to repeat the deed, that they might bring more people in the mix, it is totally sexual.

The rest is unnecessary for Nancy! (p.187–188).¹²⁵

I pause as I find myself nodding while I read the above reply. I feel a strong connection with Nancy. Even though I have no visual reference of Nancy, yet I can almost hear her/him say ‘the rest is unnecessary for Nancy!’. The last question is: ‘Nancy honey, could you ever live without sex?’ Nancy: Never! I would be like a fish out of water.

And there ends the story of Nancy. I know that this interaction happened sometime after 1986 and that seems enough. What is in the front row, strutting its stuff, as I read this interview, is the sincere audacity in Nancy’s statements. Nancy’s boldness. In two and a half pages, I have come to know – partially of course – ‘the queen’ Nancy. And the rest seems unnecessary.

Nancy’s refusal to abide in the mythmaking of ‘a couple’ as the only socially legible way of being intimate, is touching. Nancy’s capacity to explore and experience desire the way they please can be seen as refusal towards ‘the call to order’ (Moten & Harney 2013). In *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (2013) Harney and Moten, following the black radical tradition, suggest different pedagogies of approaching the world; through the feel, the touch, ‘hapticality/or love’ as they frame it. In this sharp study the two authors criticise sterile theorizations and prompt readers to think of the experiment of the hold as an absolute fluidity. As a way to oppose rigidity, formality and solemnity and try out practices of being moved and touched differently. The study of the undercommons is about practices of touching, feeling. It is about recognizing the call to order only to refuse it. As Moten puts it: ‘in order to be recognizable, you have to answer the call to order – and that the only genuine and authentic mode of living in the world is to be recognizable within the terms of order’

¹²⁵ The term ‘aderfi’ in Nancy’s time was used to particularly describe effeminate gays. The literal meaning of ‘aderfi’ is sister. This term is also used among feminists to define ‘sisterhood’. However, in the context of sexual desire ‘aderfi’ is nowadays considered derogatory, while many have reclaimed the term for themselves.

(Moten, 2013:126). I see this yarn of refusing the terms of order as corresponding to the concept of haptic space' that Deleuze and Guattari envisioned, and I developed previously in this chapter. What might occur if one refuses to answer the call to order? If we rely on hapticality as 'the interiority of sentiment, the feel that what is to come is here' (Moten and Harney, 2013:98). What uncommon and peculiar connections emerge through this touch? In this archival story, I sense that Nancy is recognizing the question – the call to order that hints towards a normative desire that should propel Nancy to fall in love with the people she/he has sex with – but refuses to be recognized under such order. Notably, Nancy is not regretful, or poses the 'unlucky' card, and shows no aspiration towards being anything other than 'single'. Nancy's response is a refusal to be recognized within the terms of the order. Nancy refuses to be placed in order and orderly, just to be more legible within societal demands. Similarly, Paola as the interviewer, does not deem Nancy as unloved or unfulfilled based on her answer. In this dialogue, I *feel* both participants and I sense a joined disavowal of subscribing to just one and only valid mode of living and relating.

Another story of fluorescent refusal that gleamed as I read the interview section was an 'Interview with a 'wayward' lad' (p.166–168). In these pages, I found Giannis interviewing Antonis. Antonis is twenty–three years old, and he is living with his partner of three years. It is no secret in the neighbourhood that he lives with a man. He tells Giannis that ever since he started wearing an earring, neighbours have been gossiping about him, so he is open and honest with them. He comes from a middle–class family but has an estranged relationship with his father, while his mother has passed away. Antonis confesses that he was dating women for years before starting to date men and he adds that even though his sister is overall supportive, a single mother and a feminist, she does not understand why he has to be 'provocative' and 'kiss boys publicly'. This statement of his sister made Antonis realize that: 'all this 'progressiveness' that people around me emphasized was fake, as it did not come

with an ideology of a different way of living' (p.167) he confesses. Antonis takes up various small jobs to live by, including sex-work. Giannis asks how come Antonis abandoned his 'heterosexual potential'. Antonis replies that he is against marriage and procreation and felt that in heterosexual relationships it seems that the relationship *on its own* is not enough.

According to Antonis:

In a heterosexual couple I constantly see that there is a demand for more than just the pleasure offered by a relationship of two people. I don't know, it might be just my experience, but I think that they (people in heterosexual couples) are trying to alleviate an array of insecurities with marriage. Homosexuals too have insecurities within their romantic relationships, but these relationships do not respond to societal demands. So they lay bare. I like this, I find it sincere (*Kraximo, 2007:167*)

Giannis continues saying that all exclusive types of relationships harness a societal purpose and a need to have life 'in order'. A closed-ended ideological system corresponding to a singular leader, to a singular state. Yet 'life offers such a multiplicity in meaning for us to exist. Order always accompanies hypocrisy/pretention' (p167). To that Antonis proposes to replace 'purpose' and 'logic' with 'eros'. Eros as our work, eros with our neighbours, eros with our relatives, etc. Notably, the word that Antonis uses in Greek is 'erotas' which can mean both eros and/or 'making love'. It is a term that can harness both. Eros as practice, eros as idea, eros as a feeling.

Giannis wonders if personal life can offer such a change by itself and suggests that we need something bigger, more efficient, a critical stance. Antonis replies that if a brick is beautiful, he prefers to admire it than examine its composition. 'I want experiences and practices. I believe that those who want a clear critical stance in society, stand in its center. But I prefer to stand away from the focal point' (p.167). Giannis then comments: 'what you are saying

now suggests something specific, that by being in the margins you are overthrowing the system. Yet you said that you often practice sex–work to come by’ (p.167). To that, Antonis replies: ‘yes I am using the already established commodified relations to survive. If I were an artist I would have the afford to say, ‘I am doing a nice job, I express myself through it and I need to sell it to live by’. Whilst now I say: I am a sex worker; I express myself through it and I make a living. I do not think there is much difference in the end’ (p.167).

Their interesting discussion ends with the following:

Giannis: is there anything else you would like to add?

Antonis: I do not know if this discussion was helpful. But we could do something that is definitely helpful, if you would like.

Giannis: like what?

Antonis: why, making love of course. (*Kraximo*, 2007:168 my translation).

The sincerity and frankness of both interlocutors made me feel comfortable and greatly invested in their discussion. Antonis through his waywardness seems to long for encoding life differently. Antonis paves towards an otherwise that lurks in ‘waywardness and the refusal to be governed’ (Hartman, 2019:xvii). Similar to Nancy, Antonis refuses to practically comply with normative ideologies, and this denial becomes an exercise of wayward living. Desire for an otherwise seems the driving force of Antonis’ empirical sensual practice. Insecurities laying bare. This fringe approach to living, echoes the task that Harney and Moten (2013) assign to refuse the call to order. What is more, I consider important that in both cases of Nancy and Antonis, the interviewees narrate their lived experiences of refusals at ease and with confidence especially because the conversation is free flowing and dynamic. For example, Giannis also exposes his views and responds with a few commentaries, as well as Paola when interviewing Nancy. These discussions show tenderness, care, and connectedness

among individuals. Relationalities that demonstrate not only the desire to listen and imagine, but also a certain proximity, a tangent of akin that is present. It is particularly this exchange, this rapport between interlocutors that turns the yarns fluorescent in my eyes. Touched by the stories of phosphorescent refusals, parts of a haptic space where the visual resists any figuration apart from intensity and potential.

Practicing desire

The declaration in the 3rd issue: ‘This is what is left after all the thousand volumes of political theory books: desire’ (1982) illuminates the importance that desire plays in revolutionary living, according to *Kraximo*’s worldview. Based on practices of desire and desiring practices, *Kraximo*’s critical viewpoint always aim against tactics of oppression. As I have been discussing in this chapter this magazine’s scope is against citizenship of any kind, i.e. is not interested in categorizations and codifications, and recognition by the state and its agencies. Its main focus is the politics of desire through lived experience and a web of possibilities deriving from it, like the conflict with *Amfi*, the life of Nancy, of Giannis, of Antonis to name a few. The following section discusses the centrality that desire plays in *Kraximo* through the work of Guattari in conversation with Paola and through testimonies from the international anarchist congress that took place in Venice, in September of 1984.

How does desire animate you?

Kraximo’s investment in the revolutionary potential of desire led to an interview with Félix Guattari (*Kraximo*, 2007:172–173). Guattari along with Deleuze in their two – volume study, *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987) proposed the idea that the unconscious is a desiring producing machine. This theorization of the unconscious as a producing machine opposed the Lacanian idea that desire comes from lack. According to Lacan, human subjectivity is formulated through the distorted medium of the visual – in the mirror stage – and the first ‘I’

that a person utters corresponds to the mirror, with a fantasy of wholeness and command in denial of vulnerability and dependence, and not to one's self. By the same token, one becomes a subject when one enters the symbolic, i.e. the conceptual field of language, which also comes with a loss, that cannot be symbolised or spoken, yet drives desire. For Lacan, this loss comes with identification. By identifying an 'I' the subject is able to speak in order to cover for that which is forever lost. In Lacanian thought then, humans are always lacking something and through this insufficiency, desire is produced.¹²⁶ As long as lack is forever relocating within the psychic desire, longing will be present, according to Lacan.

On the contrary, Deleuze and Guattari opposed the idea that desire occurs from deficit and suggested that desire exists in excess. Following this logic, Deleuze and Guattari formulated a non-hierarchical scheme of the unconscious, depicting it as a rhizome, to emphasise a non-vertical infrastructural formation. Desire produces rhizomes in every direction, it is dynamic and willing to 'become'. Emphasising the palpable and ever producing aspect of desire, Deleuze and Guattari proposed anti-capitalist, anti-individualistic and anti-hierarchical processes of relating.

In *Molecular Revolution Brazil* (2008) we find Guattari in conversation with psychoanalyst and cultural critic Suely Rolnik. In this book Guattari expands on its concept 'Molecular revolution' suggesting that revolutions should not concern only the register of the social, but inner psychic processes which regulate relating too. As Guattari (2008:63–64) points out:

The idea of molecular revolution concerns every level synchronically: infrapersonal (at work in dreaming, creation, etc.), personal (in relations of self-domination, what psychoanalysts call the superego), and interpersonal (in the invention of new forms of

¹²⁶ Notably, for Lacan this desire is to be 'reunited' with that which has been lost – the seeking of object petit a.

sociability in domestic, romantic, and professional life, and in relations with neighbours and school).

Considering the infrapersonal, personal and interpersonal levels as interdependent and interconnected modalities, Guattari suggests a sufficiently open-ended infrastructure that is not merely theoretical. As Revenioti notes, 'Guattari proposes not another theory- as he emphasizes that there are already a plethora of theories- but a critical scope, a positionality towards power, in an attempt to encourage expression of desire' (*Kraximo*, 2007:172). In the introductory part of the interview, Revenioti echoes Guattari's idea that the main goal of the system is to normalize and assimilate in order for subjects to work, produce and re-produce. Revenioti frames the Guattarian concept of 'deterritorialization' as a tool to break societal encodings of family, 'typical couple', sexuality, religion, the state, nationalism, axioms, hierarchies, etc.

Following this, they start a discussion on transness, sex-work and societal demands. Through the fruitful discussion, at one point, Guattari notes 'there is a place for everyone in the future' to which Paola asks, 'when is this future finally coming? [...]' While Guattari replies to the rest of the question, this part, of course, remains unanswered. Ultimately, what I think is important to stress from this interview, is the point that desire can very well be a canal and a potential for revolution, yet it is not in itself radical. Not related to fixated ideas of identity and subjectivity, Guattari highlights throughout the dialogues, that it is not about being 'something' or about 'being what you desire' but rather '*how* this desire animates you'.

Towards which ways it might take you. If it is a route that directs you towards the consolidation of dominant discourses - though from a different pathway - or if it is a route that urges you towards creative/creating processes of living and desiring. (*Kraximo*, 2007: 173). It is these same procedures that hold the possibility to be assembled into what he calls molecular revolution.

As can be seen so far in this chapter, *Kraximo*'s engagement with intellectual work is a process that always concerns a practice. Practices that are driven by desire. Desire for bodies, for revolution, for resistance. Desire for an otherwise. It was this meshwork of desires that led Paola and Theodoros to participate in an international anarchist congress that took place in Venice, in September of 1984 (*Kraximo*, issue 5).

Beside a Venetian Canal

In issue 5 (1985) *Kraximo* hosted an interview with 11 (homosexuals) participants of the aforementioned congress. The text was titled 'beside a Venetian canal' (p. 8–9). The piece sets the tone beautifully as it describes the scene. Enraged punk guitars met the songs of the gondoliers while these eleven people were prompted into discussion by the following prodding: 'accepting your homosexuality is part of your revolution'. Participants consisted of Charley Shively, editor of *Fag-rag* (anarcho-homosexual magazine in Boston), Christos from Cyprus that lives with Giorgos in Lyon, Steven from Montreal, Petra from Sweden, Wolfgang and Thomas from Frankfurt, David from London, Roberto from Italy and Paola and Theodoros (from Greece). The discussion diverted somewhat from the original topic, as expected. In addition, their impressions of the congress were expressed. The discussion started off with sharing experiences from their various countries. Questions on the age of consent in each country came next. Thomas noted that for heterosexual sex consent is 16 years-old, while for homosexual acts is 18. David shared that in England it is 21 years-old for male homosexuals. While for women there is not a defined age of consent. The variations in ages of consent underline known restrictions of legalities. As Theodoros emphasised, in Greece after 1923 there might not be a law against it, but homosexuals face problems daily with police, work and family. Paola added that there is excessive police and policing in Greece, 'at night you are afraid to go out, not in case someone robs you but because of police' (p.8).

At some point Charley handed out the magazine *Fag–Rag* and started talking about the situation in the US. The biggest problem that Charley identified is AIDS and the propaganda of CIA on it. Charley emphasized that AIDS has the reputation of a ‘god–send disease’ and that the policy varies by state. Then he attested: ‘two friends of mine got arrested and forced into testing’ (p8). Regarding the US context, Charley added later on: ‘there is a fascist gay group too. A Catholic one, other bourgeoisie groups, overall these groups say ‘yes we are gay, but we need to conform and comply and be good. We should not be provocative’ [...]. Thomas said that there is also a fascist gay group in Germany.

As the discussion progressed Theodoros asked Charley, ‘are there any more (apart from *Fag–Rag*) anti–authoritarian groups of homosexuals in the US?’. ‘Yes’ Charley replied, *Peper Storme* in NY. A few in Montreal, Canada. There was a stronger wave of these kind of groups in the 1970–1975 but not so much nowadays. There are lot of communal living spaces though. Away from the city, closer to nature. The largest one is in Tennessee, called *list*. ‘Are these anarcho–queer communes?’ asked Petra.¹²⁷ Charley replied that this would be hard to define. After a while Petra redirected the discussion: ‘Let’s talk about this conference. I think it is the only space where homosexuals do not face any particular problem. The position of everyone on sexuality is ‘let’s break stereotypes and roles’ (p.8). ‘Doesn’t it bother you that the logo of the conference consists only of an anarchist man?’ Paola wondered. ‘It does. This is why we drew a woman next to him’ replied Petra. ‘Yes, but you drew it, and not the organizers, as they should’ added Paola.

Charley stated that even though the organizers invited their zines, overall the topic of homosexuality was absent from the congress. Thomas agreed, ‘same old, same old about economy, the capital, the ‘heroic worker’. Luckily on some discussions these issues were

¹²⁷ Again the word in the original text is ‘homosexual’ not ‘queer’.

demythologized, and new opinions emerged’. ‘I still believe that for many of them (i.e. male non-homosexual anarchists) revolution is still a man’s thing’, commented Paola. Thomas added that the majority of the congress was mainly theoretical.

After a while, Charley said, ‘there are acts that are more anarchist and revolutionary than going to protests and petrol bombs, like sex, sucking, blow jobs, S&M, kissing men in public’ and the group applauded. This comment fired the discussion again. Wolfgang noted: ‘Human sexuality is anarchist by default. It does not abide to any law. So all homosexuals, whether they like or not, act like revolutionaries when they fuck. I think that it is their (i.e. heterosexual/ macho anarchists) loss though if they do not invest in pansexuality and free-flowing sexuality. Free sexuality is the base of all revolution – because it goes against family’. Theodoros objected: ‘I don’t agree with that. For example, in countries of late capitalism young people can take a loan and live with their partner, regardless of their gender’.

As I read the lines, I find the flow of the dialogue compelling. The concept of pansexuality is a novel addition to this discussion and then Theodoros brings in mechanisms of capitalism, where in favour of the legal obligations that coupledom has toward the state, partners of all gender can be recognized. David wondered if the rumours about the liberty of homosexuals in San Francisco are true. ‘It is sexual release, that is considered free there, not sexual desire’ replied Theodoros. Here, Theodoros draws a clear differentiating line between release and desire. I imagine that the ability to distinguish between these aspects can be often hard to do. It requires a conscious recognition. The clarity in which Theodoros engages in the discussion fascinates me. Thomas invited Charley to address the question of ‘sexual release and desire’, since he is from the US. Charley’s reply was the following:

Nowadays if capital realizes that it can gain profit over something, it's the only thing that matters. The rest are not so important. System capitalizes on everything, body–building, fashion. Total commercialization (or commodification) of homosexuality as a way of living in the USA, is a fact. For capital we are all molecules of an economic system. Everything depends on how rich we are, how pretty we are...

‘Or how young we are’ added Giorgos. ‘Yes and how well–dressed we are, how smart we are. Every inch of our body becomes a commodity’ concluded Charley. The author of the article informs the reader that conversation stopped being theoretical after these points.

Kraximo writes:

‘The talk lasted around 3 hours, we got to know each other quite well, we drunk wine, we smoked, some left in pairs, while Paola, Theodoros, Charley and Christos stayed.

The tape ends with an American gay poem of Charley:

‘lovely nuts

Reach my mouth,

lovely words

Reach my ears...’ (p9).

Conclusion

I am abruptly back to 2021. I feel both tired and intellectually stimulated by the discussion, as if I participated in it as well. There is a photo of Paola and Theodoros that I had not even noticed before. I smile as I see it. There is no photograph with the whole group, the rest of the participants I need to imagine. And I did. It was a task I happily embarked upon. Transcribing and translating parts of this discussion intensified the haptic temporalities between me and this archival record. I was simultaneously reading, typing, and feeling for most of the topics

that participants touched upon. A plethora of things emerged from this multifaceted discussion, such as views on desire, statutory absence of women's desire, machismo, and practices of resisting machismo in collective settings, a perceptive tracking of difference between freedom of sexual release versus freedom of sexual desire, the commodification of sexuality. An axis relevant to all the above thematics is a desire to conjugate theory and practice. And as ever, links, attachments, recognitions, fruitful collective creations.

Following the haptic threads that these participants allocated, I set to explore further accounts of this congress. I encounter the zine *Black Rose*, issue 11, Winter/Spring 1985, distributed by the International Libertarian Initiative in Portugal. This volume is all dedicated to articles regarding the conference.¹²⁸ In *Black Rose's* introduction more information about the gathering is given. *Incontro Internazionale Annarchico.Venezia 1984* was organized collaboratively by the Centro Studi Libertari (CSL) of Milan, *The International Centre of Research in Anarchism* (CIRA) of Geneva, Switzerland, and the *Anarchos* Institute of Montreal, Canada. There among the contributors I see a familiar name, Charley Shively. We meet again. It is as if I encounter someone I already know. A quick search online leads me to articles and eulogies on Charley's life and gay liberation activism. Editor of the *Fag-Rag*, poet, a Whitman's Studies scholar, an activist, 'one of the most brilliant minds of the last century'.¹²⁹

I do not know much about eulogies. I know that Charley shared aurally the same name as my friend who passed away in April 2021. I know that Charley sat on a Venetian canal one night of late September of 1984 among other 10 people to talk about everything. I know that he

¹²⁸ See the volume here:

<http://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/ScarletLetterArchives/BlackRose/BR11/BlackRose11.pdf>

¹²⁹ IN MEMORIAM: Charley Shively, 1937–2017. Ed Folsom . University of Iowa in Folsom, Ed. 'IN MEMORIAM: Charley Shively, 1937–2017.' *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 35 (2017), 218–218.

drank wine and that he liked poems. And I know that *Kraximo*'s narration ended with one of his poems.

As I roam the *Black Rose* I look for his poem feverishly. The one in *Kraximo* was translated so perhaps I could find the original English version now? Is it the same like the one translated by *Kraximo* team? I found it. No. It is another one. A new one to me:

[...] arms raised

running overboard

street sheets all around

town same name

different joint [...](*Black Rose*, 1985:26)

CHAPTER 6

'Touching stories': Politics of love, intimacy and difference in *Lavrys* and beyond

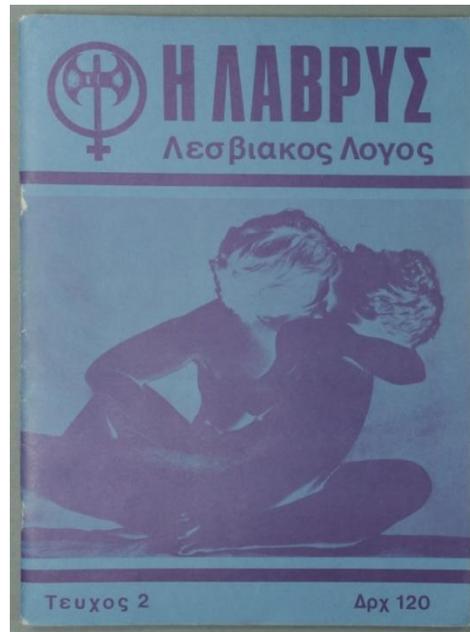


Figure 7. *Lavrys* issue 2, 1982

‘And all this history—women’s history—
often reaches our ears as a myth, if it reaches us at all.

Our archives are getting systematically destroyed,
so that none of us ever finds out that
we are all a part of an ongoing tradition of resistance’.

(*Lavrys*,1982)

We have finally reached the last chapter of the weft. This chapter focuses on my encounter with *Lavrys*' trajectory as a lesbian feminist magazine that holds stories of intimacy, love, feminist struggle, and a rich tapestry of emotional and political ties. I argue that the stories mobilized here have a particular sense of intimacy and love, pertinent to the radical positionality of *Lavrys* towards the politics of the erotic.

The radical publication of *Lavrys* (Greek: Λάβρυς, 1982–1983) published by the *Autonomous Group of Homosexual Women*, albeit short-lived, intersects spatially and chronologically with *Skoupa*, *Amfi* and *Kraximo* and it is believed to be one of the magazines that introduced lesbian discourse and counter-discourse to the Greek audience (Kantsa 2010).¹³⁰ The *Autonomous Group of Homosexual Women* emerged from the social space of *Liberation Movement of Homosexuals in Greece*– AKOE, (Papanikolaou 2014) and as we learn from the last issue of *Lavrys* (1983:58–59) more than 50 autonomous women's groups operated, diffused, reformed, or continued to act from 1974 onwards, in Athens and other provincial towns in the municipality of Greece.¹³¹ The *Autonomous Group of Women* began its formulation and first meetings in AKOE's space and later joined *Women's House*, a feminist space in central Athens. As Kavvadia (2022) notes, the women's group left AKOE 'after a series of disagreements with the male members of the group over the latter's perceived negligence of feminist politics.

The symbol of *Lavrys*, the double axe, is considered 'the symbol of the female religion, the goddess, the symbol of the Amazons, the symbol of matriarchy, the symbol of women's liberation' (*Lavrys*, 1982:2). *Lavrys* has been adopted as a symbol of power and self-sufficiency among many lesbian feminist movements (Myers, 2009). In just three issues

¹³⁰ The Autonomous Group of Homosexual Women in Greek: *Aytonomi Omada Omofylofilon gynaikon*.

¹³¹ As we have seen in chapter 4, AKOE is the group that published *Amfi*.

Lavrys managed to publish a plethora of articles, texts, personal accounts, poems, and drawings and broaden the terrain of lesbian *logos* and *antilogos* in Greece.¹³²

To start combing the archival threads found in *Lavrys* so that we weave them together through narratives of love, physicality, and inter–connections with the other social networks of sexual liberation in question, we can begin by reading the epigraph on this page.

Lesbian continuum after Adrienne Rich

This epigraph is an extract from the article ‘Female sexuality: how innate is heterosexuality?’, (*Lavrys*,1982:22–29) where the author, Charula, maps women’s connections and relationalities through centuries around the globe, to dispute the view that heterosexual desire is as much instinctive and inborn in women as society assumes.¹³³

Charula sees the power of female sexuality being deliberately side–lined in history books and notes that especially lesbian existence is being systematically airbrushed out, in order to accommodate heteropatriarchal societal reproduction. According to Charula, lesbians suffer a double oppression, of being women and homosexual, an experience that non–lesbian feminists disregard. To support these claims, Charula summons Adrienne Rich’s (1980) text *Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence* where Rich questions the assumption that ‘most women are innately heterosexual’ and suggests examining heterosexuality as an institution, ‘as something that has had to be imposed, managed, organized, propagandized, and maintained by force’ (Rich, 1980:648). Rich’s provocation to examine heterosexuality under this lens questions the assumption of ‘innate heterosexuality’ and sheds light to the social aspects at play. Both Rich and Charula note that the erasure or pathologizing of lesbian existence throughout history is one of the main forces that help to sustain the ideological

¹³² In English ‘logos and antilogos’ is translated as discourse and counter–discourse (Kansta, 2010) or elsewhere ‘women’s speech and dispute’ (Kavvadia, 2022).

¹³³ Some of the parts that Charula notes worldwide are: Holland, communities in parts of Africa, China, Australia.

premise of compulsory heterosexuality and emphasize that women who opposed or resisted heterosexual coupling and norms like ‘women healers, witches, spinsters, single mothers – form a large history of resistance and woman–to–woman identification ’(Charula, 1982: 27).

This identification among women, is what Rich calls ‘the lesbian continuum’. The lesbian continuum is a form of kinship among women that often exceeds sexual desire and concerns an inner realm of emotional bonds particular to women. As Rich (1980: 648–649) writes:

I mean the term *lesbian continuum* to include a range–through each woman's life and throughout history–of woman–identified experience.; not simply the fact that a woman has had or consciously desired genital sexual experience with another woman. If we expand it to embrace many more forms of primary intensity between and among women, including of a rich inner life, the bonding against male tyranny, the giving and receiving of practical and political support; [...] we begin to grasp breadths of female history and psychology which have lain out of reach as a consequence of limited, mostly clinical, definitions of ‘lesbianism’

One aspect of the lesbian continuum then ‘is the primary intensity between and among women ’that does not have to be necessarily sexual, although it might. A lesbian continuum as I understand it, suggests that political support and sisterhood/solidarity do not happen in the vacuum, in the same manner that violence against women and systematic erasure of lesbian experience do not happen in the vacuum either.¹³⁴ The lesbian continuum engulfs inner psychic life between women who love women produced and sustained by their societal positionality. I think that Rich proposes a psychosocial scheme of relations for women who love women, whose interior life touches upon each other *differently* based on experiences

¹³⁴ See a case of femicide from Greece in 2021. The murder of Caroline Crouch from her Greek husband Babis Anagnostopoulos <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jun/17/greek-husband-confesses-to-of-british-woman>. Anagnostopoulos in the beginning framed it as a robbery and accused an alleged group of non–Greek robbers for her murder.

under capitalist, racialized, and patriarchal structures. Notably, Rich's position engulfs a psychosocial reading of female sexuality as it talks about the social bonds of womanhood as well as the inner intricacies of the 'lie of compulsory heterosexuality'. The kind of kinship that Rich encompasses within the lesbian continuum is used greatly by *Lavrys* team to support the view that heterosexuality is first and foremost, a political institution. What is more, under the scheme of the compulsory heterosexuality it is not only lesbians that are being oppressed, but rather, all women.

Queering the continuum

Now, before moving on to examine the scope of *Lavrys* and its tales, it is crucial to consider some theoretical risks when thinking with the lesbian continuum. What would 'all women' mean and who gets to be a woman in the continuum? How can we avoid an essentialization of womanhood in this analysis? Or rather, how can we queer the lesbian continuum? If we take into consideration the expansive abilities of Rich's phrase 'history-of woman-identified experience' the queering has already begun. In the social production of history, the construction of womanhood is an never-ending process. Thus, the category of woman can be defined open-endedly by feelings, experiences, positionalities, while at the same time carries connotations that are heavily sexualized, racialized, classed, ableist, as well as timed and measured. As an example, we can think about reproductive health economies. How 'egg freezing' procedures in the US are unequally distributed among white and black women, with black women facing more difficulties accessing the service (Allen, 2016), or how a blind woman was deemed unfit to be a parent and was denied access to fertility treatment (Hughes, 2003), or the reprehensible – for many – desire of a deaf lesbian couple to choose a deaf donor for assisted insemination (Kafer, 2013). Or in relation to different experiences on motherhood, how Caribbean mothers in the UK equip their children with strategies to cope

and resist racial discrimination in social settings (Reynolds, 2005).¹³⁵ Now, even though these cases were not found in *Lavrys*, the scope of the magazine is conscious about the social aspects of womanhood. Furthermore, the magazine's aim to disseminate lesbian discourse in Greece would be impossible without sustaining networks with other radical and/or lesbian feminist groups internationally.¹³⁶

These connections and the longing for communication, can also be seen as part of the lesbian continuum, since activists and writers in *Lavrys* participate in feminist discourse and counter-discourse without removing or negating their multiplicities. Following that thread, the lesbian continuum can be read as continuities (and disruptions) of care. What is more, the term *continuum* entails both a continuity and an a-synchronicity. Here, I utilize the term 'a-synchronicity' to account for the temporal and the disruptive, as well as for the 'constitutional function of silencing' based on Trouillot's (1995) argument on how this silencing works, as I placed on the loom in warp G 'archives as promise, debt, death and being'. Placing in the duality of the term lesbian continuum and accounting for the systematic erasure of histories that do not serve the status quo, I add a queering layer to the epigraph:

And all this history – women's history – often reaches our ears as a myth, if it reaches us at all. Our archives are getting systematically destroyed, so that none of us ever finds out that we are all a part of an ongoing tradition of resistance

Trouillot's theory can be of help as I re-interpret the epigraph: 'our archives are getting systematically destroyed, yet still we find out continuously, that we are part of ongoing traditions of resistance'. This re-reading is not to invalidate the epigraph's original

¹³⁵ Notably, Reynolds (2005) in 'Mothering, child rearing practices, and strategies in resisting racism' identifies four of strategies that Caribbean mothers adopt to prepare their black children for a racist world: emotional preparation; close monitoring of their school education; celebrating black diaspora and Caribbean culture traditions to amplify collectivity and 'cultural belonging'; and monitoring their activities in other public settings.

¹³⁶ including magazines such as *Sinister wisdom*, *Ripening*, and hosting texts from Audre Lorde, Aurora Levin morales, the story of lesbians in cuba etc.

perspective but rather to emphasize that historiography as a practice is already from the start full of uneven power relations, plurals, silences, as well as screams, whispers, songs, and tears that often touch upon each other. The publication of *Lavrys* in my hands 39 years later is an event itself that defies the imminent destruction that the epigraph assumes. By all means, this is not to say that archives do not get destroyed or that stories of sexual dissidence do not get silenced; what this intervention hopes to do is to complicate and disrupt totalizing assumptions that only cover the binary position of ‘all or nothing’, in favor of practices of living differently. A weaving of different modalities of relating, in, of, through time. Simultaneously, different temporal relations emerge too.

Thus, as I delve in *Lavrys*’ texts I do not have in mind any tracing of origins. Rather it is a sequence of yarns that unravel from the premise of acknowledging compulsory heterosexuality in women as a political institution, in order to weave through women’s desire as pleasure, as practice and often as political struggle along with feminism, anti-racist activism, anti-capitalist mobilizations, and together with radical women thinkers. As Rich (1980:647) puts it:

But whatever its origins [...] it becomes an inescapable question whether the issue we have to address as feminists is, not simple ‘gender inequality,’ nor the domination of culture by males, nor mere ‘taboos against homosexuality’, but the enforcement of heterosexuality for women as a means of assuring male right of physical, economical, and emotional access.

I perceive this ‘whatever’ not as a sign of indifference but as a yearning to push forward the discussion of sexual liberation as we interrogate the dominant ideologies that consistently suppress it. I feel that the challenge is to read *Lavrys* as a product within the lesbian continuum and thus to resist the ceaseless quest of origins that would also imply a beginning

and a teleology. Perhaps a useful term to invoke is the ‘geologic time’ as used by the queer theorist Gayle Rubin. Rubin (2011) in the essay ‘Geologies of Queer Studies: It’s Déjà Vu All Over Again’ pleads with queer scholars to resist the idea of newness when producing queer theory. Rubin claims that due to lack of preservation and collective assemblages of queer knowledges, there is a common practice among scholars to fall in the pitfalls of novelty and innovation. This effect has as a consequence a constant ‘déjà vu’ that hinders more complex processes of interrogating queer knowledges. Geologic time scale is often depicted in a circular shape, and as Rubin notes ‘in geologic time, the present is a blip’. Hence, queering up time both in the geological and genealogical sense, Rubin (2011:369) prompts us to ‘think about longer processes that have shaped the present and in which the present is deeply rooted’. Following Rubin’s paradigm, Gea’s/earth’s rhythm, sets the tempo of queering the lesbian continuum as I turn the pages of *Lavrys*, an ongoing lore of resistance.

Let us imagine the following as a crochet of the epigraph:

Queer life is full of examples of fabulous explosions that left little or no detectable trace, or whose documentary and artifactual remains were never systematically assembled or adequately conserved (Rubin 2011:355).

Short-lived, *Lavrys* is a fabulous explosion that happened in the 1980s and still harnesses associations of love, relating and resistance. The following sections are an introduction to the magazine’s objectives along with challenges of translation.

‘Who we are’: introducing *Lavrys* and its linguistic tribulations

We are women.

We are lesbians.

We are feminists.

We are members of *the Autonomous Group of Homosexual Women*.

These are the introductory lines to *Lavrys* 'readers (issue 1, 1982:4). As the members clarify, this effort is not about guidance:

We don't know more than anyone else. We are not wise perfect lesbian feminists who are going to develop an infallible impeccable theory. We do not wish to prove anything apart from our desire to be heard, touch each other, within these pages but away from the magazine too, to find what connects us all, what moves us, what repels us, and what impel lesbian feminism (p.4).

As a group and as individuals, members disclose to the reader that there are many things they need to learn together and separately. The team call *Lavrys* an experiment through which they can become stronger as a movement, share ideas, with mistakes and successes, with tears and laughs (p.4). Their introduction ends, 'we published this magazine with immense love, and little experience, and we demand the same handling from our readers– or their lack of engagement/interest'(p.4).

Right from the beginning, the *Lavrys* team presents their positionalities, hopes and aspirations, while simultaneously setting boundaries and demands. The language of emotions and physicality, the touch is present, aired and openly expressed. They call for a touch and instantly it becomes palpable. It is a touching call addressed to the readers, to me. My haptic attunement is present and welcomes a new register of the haptic, one of reciprocity and expectancy. The three registers as Camp (2012) envisions are here, and *Lavrys* pokes me to read another one too. The textual touch is here, the indexical touch too, as well as the affective – I am moved as I read their hopes and feelings lay bare on paper – and there is an expectancy to 'touch each other', 'to be in touch'.

The Greek word for touching here is *agigma*. *Agigma* can signify: the act of touching; a tap; a caress; a tickling; a feel; to be in contact; to understand; to get in touch; to communicate tangibly; as well as the erotic touch; The haptic perception, ongoing in this project, is in this case not only stated but also kind of expected. An invitation that I have to respond to. I perceive these lines like touch in *Lavrys*' case is a proposition, as if the haptic is anticipated. As a calling I have to respond to. *Lavrys* as a project bound to emotion and communication, deeply invested in the touch. A touch not only literal, not only erotic, not only affective, not only intellectual, but also a touch *in suspense*.

Throughout this exploratory research I have been discussing the intricacies of translation, meaning differentiation and linguistic limitations. In particular, in the *Warp M I* touch upon the incommensurability of some words in translation as well as in chapter 5 regarding some notion described in *Kraximo*. In *Lavrys* again I feel the need to incorporate the term *aggigma* to enrich the description of the archive in question. The yarn of language and significations takes me to the work of the anthropologist Venetia Kantsa who has written extensively on relationships between women in modern Greece.

Regarding the term 'lesvia' Kantsa (2010) writes on the re-introduction of a word of Greek Origin into Modern Greece with a signification socially encoded differently. Interestingly, Kantsa locates the re-introduction of the word *lesvia* to modern Greek society as a categorical description of women loving women, in the late 1970s as a derivative of international lesbian movements. During this era of social mobilizations, the influence of feminist and lesbian movements from Anglo-Saxon countries, mainly the USA, popularized the term *lesvia*, lesbian and *lesvianismos* (Eng: lesbianism) inspired by the ancient poet Sappho who lived in the island Lesbos and wrote erotic poems exalting the female body. In Kantsa's article, among the various interviews of women in same sex-relationships who comment on the usage of the word *lesvia* as a term to categorize women who love women, I

encounter one who was a member of *the Autonomous Group of Homosexual Women*. Notably, Kantsa republishes an interview of the anonymous woman, conducted for the purposes of *Yinaika* (Eng: woman) a mainstream magazine in 1982, where the woman restates the wish of the group ‘We want lesbian discourse to be heard in Greece as it does in the rest of the world, and we want to slowly create a strong movement. Only then will we be able to move around freely’ (Kantsa, 2010: 29–30).

As Kantsa concludes, the term *lesvia/lesbian* is situational, dependent on context and constantly re-negotiated. Yet, the Greek example is unique ‘to the extent that Greek women who are engaged in same-sex relations have at their disposal a Greek-originated word they can identify with, which nevertheless gains its full meaning and significance only if applied to an Anglo-Saxon context’ (Kantsa, 2010: 36). I see this interesting linguistic trajectory of the word *lesbian* as another part of *the continuum*. Similarly, the re-introduction of a Greek word to the Greek population by international lobbies, also links to my claim made in *Warp M*, pertaining not only to the power that *is* language, but also to the influence of English-speaking audiences even when the vocabulary expansion concerns non-English words. It is not that women who loved women in Greece did not have a term to ‘define’ them prior to the 1980s. However, in the tradition of social movements communal influences co-construct a vocabulary that usually correlate to social claims and state recognition.

On page 33 of the first issue of *Lavrys* (1982) Alkmene signs a piece titled, *I Rizospastria*, i.e. the radical feminist. For Alkmene a radical feminist is a woman who loves the woman and not the image of the woman, who is not afraid to touch her friend, who is not afraid to show tenderness in public from fear of categorizing the wide feminist movement as ‘lesbian’. ‘Radical feminist is the one who is not hesitant to question sexuality and expose the power games at play’ Alkmene concludes. In Alkmene’s account we encounter the touch again. This time as tenderness, as a touch in public, as intimacy that is not afraid to show itself, whether

sexual or not. For Alkmene radical feminism involves an unrooting that concerns relationality first and foremost. At the bottom of the page stands a note that reads:

Those of the readers who feel like discussing, researching, disagreeing, fighting, becoming militant, loving, or be loved by any of the parts proposed in this piece, can look for Alkmene on Wednesdays after 8.30pm at the House of autonomous women's groups at Romanou Melodou 4 (*Lavrys*, 1982:33).

I feel as if this call is addressing me; in a similar way that I felt the invite to a Dionysian celebration of *Amfi* (chapter 4) or my desire to participate at *Kraximo*'s fieldtrip (chapter 5). As I hold the magazine in my fingers, I write down the address. I know that Alkmene will not be there, as I also know that autonomous women's groups are not based there anymore. Yet, I sense that this unmet urge needs to be somehow mediated. The place is close to my house in Athens, so I agree with myself to not plan this. 'When you are near the street you can pop up 'I think to myself. One day on my way to the cinema with my mother – where we have arrived early as usual – I asked her if she wanted to come with me, since the street was remarkably close to the cinema we were going. My mum agreed and we started walking. On the way I asked her about the women's cafeteria, *kafenio gynaiikon*, that operated in the 1980s in Athens. 'Yes, I know about it. Men were not allowed in. Only when a woman accompanied them 'she replied with a grin. 'Have you been there?', 'Yes, once 'she replied. Unfortunately, she did not remember much and as the road got more uphill than we expected, we remained silent. None of us suggested aborting the plan, as we panted uphill. When we reached Romanou Melodou, a neoclassical building with surveillance cameras stood in the corner of the street, where the *kafenio gynaiikon* was supposed to be. I did not feel comfortable approaching any closer, as I felt that the camera would record my presence. I was aware that it would be just a quick look, but the high-tech protection discouraged me. I was hoping to take a photo, but it did not happen either.

The next day, as I opened my notes to write down these reflections, I realized that I had written down the wrong address. What a relief! What a strange relief too. Apparently, *women's house* used to be on the other side of the road. 'I will visit again', I told myself, all hopeful. A strange hope, as if at number 4 of the street once more I could find 'the House of autonomous women's group' still standing. A year after this ethnographic note, I have since been to Athens numerous times. Yet, I still have not visited the site of the women's house. I have only been there with my mind.

The next session touches upon imprints of love and difference that intrigued me in the short-lived publication of *Lavrys*.

'With lots of love and little money': love in the very house of *difference*

In the contents page of each issue the team of *Lavrys* informs the readers that this publication is being realized with lots of love and little money, adding that they still have a debt at the printing shop. The second issue (1982) is dedicated to their absent friend, Chrysa. 'We are women who birthed the first issue of *Lavrys* with lots of love, lots of excitement, lots of hard work and agony' the team re-introduces themselves (p2). On the same page the group states that most of the letters that they received are gone— 'under very tragic circumstances' they add. Apologizing for the lack of a correspondence column in this issue they urge the readers: 'Do not stop to send us letters, poems, texts!'

In just three pages of this issue so many emotions are being compacted. The group shares with the readers snippets of their effort and investment in this project. An absent friend, love, loss of an archive of letters and drawings, addressing an apology, the urge to communication, the encouragement to contact them. I felt as if the excitement, the hard work and the agony they mention leans in to touch the reader. I am already invested in the rapport. As I ponder

this investment, I gather the word 'love' in the recurrent lexicon of this publication. In poems, in articles, but most importantly in their political statements.

Love and desire as political practice upholds a long history in the quest of sexual liberation, especially among black feminist writers and activists such as bell hooks, Maya Angelou, Silvia Wynter and Audre Lorde. In an intervention like this one where affective touches and investments take the lead in theorizations, examining the psychosocial aspects of love is a difficult but worthwhile task. Since *Lavrys* lavishly engages with love, this section focuses on love, the erotic and being-in relation, as signs of pleasure and resistance central in black feminist thought and politics of sexual liberation.

I will begin with Audre Lorde, as *Lavrys* hosts one of Lorde's famous quotes: 'My silences had not protected me. Your silences will not protect you' (*Lavrys*, 1982:42). This sentence belongs to the essay 'The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action' where Lorde advocates speaking up rather than staying silent, taking into account the risk that a self-revelation entails. For Lorde, what is at stake when women remain silent due to fear is the suffocating weight of silence, 'while we wait in silence for that final luxury of fearlessness, the weight of that silence will choke us' (Lorde, 2007: 44). This paper was delivered at the Modern Language Association's 'Lesbian and Literature Panel,' in Chicago, on December 28, 1977, where Lorde addressed the audience in the following way:

Perhaps for some of you here today, I am the face of one of your fears. Because I am woman, because I am Black, because I am lesbian, because I am myself — a Black woman warrior poet doing my work — come to ask you, are you doing yours?
(Lorde, 2007:41–42).¹³⁷

¹³⁷ First published in Sini.Her Wisdom 6 (1978) and *The Cancer Journals*(Spinsters, Ink, San Francisco, 1980).

Lorde's life work as a black woman warrior poet, lesbian, mother, writer, and so many more attributes, has inspired greatly radical politics, black feminist thought and anti-racist mobilizations. Throughout her life, Lorde stressed the interlinked qualities of systems of oppression such as racism, sexism, and homophobia. In the biomythography, *Zami: a new spelling of my name* (1982) Lorde beautifully narrates her life story along with fictional/myth additions. In this book Lorde adopts the term *zami* a Carriacou word 'for women who work together as friends and lovers' (Lorde, 1982: 255). The relationalities proposed by the term *zami* are not as one-dimensional as Anglo-Saxon categorizations that describe either friends or lovers, pointing towards other more-open ended modalities of female kinship, loving and naming. In the same book, Lorde offers an account of 1955's New York lesbian bars and night clubs 'scene. The exploration of the queer night life of the city seems to leave Lorde somewhat dissatisfied. Unlike many, Lorde embraced the pluralities and different modes of relating that she inhabits, she wanted to and she lived otherwise. In this living life otherwise she still speaks of a collective, a 'we'. Lorde writes (1982:226):

'Being women together was not enough. We were different.

Being gay-girls together was not enough. We were different.

Being Black together was not enough. We were different. Being

Black women together was not enough. We were different. Being

Black dykes together was not enough. We were different '

This 'being different' emphasizes the reciprocal ordering and disordering of all the puzzle pieces that make up one's life, which often exceed classifications. As Lorde adds 'it was a while before we came to realize that our place was *the very house of difference* rather the security of any one particular difference' (my emphasis, Lorde, 1982:226). In the very house of difference, pluralities and fragmentations of beings attend to the unsettling premise of

living. And they do so, *differently*. What is more, inhabiting the very house of difference does not have to be a solitary endeavor, there can always be companions. Notably, Lorde still suggests intrapersonal relations: ‘our place’. Co-habitants of the very house of difference.

Rania’s letter to *Lavrys* (issue 3, 1983) touches upon places of difference, commonalities, and centers love and care, as revolutionary propositions:

Friends,

... I am sitting alone at home, and it is quite late to call a friend now. It is not late to write this letter though.

What would I want to write? Just that I feel you very close to me, even if we have never spoken to each other. That you create and share something beautiful. Something that can touch even the most confused female soul if it crosses her path. When I say ‘confused’, I am not referring just to myself, but to every woman who at some point starts questioning all these things that they taught her, all those words that told her: ‘there is nothing beyond this point, these are your borders.

I know that we are entrenched in fear that prevents from looking deep inside us, under the surface. To find the tiny little pieces that make us ourselves. To place them all together.

We are still full of fear for the new face/person we might encounter there, the one forgotten in our silence, inmate to all these ‘should ’and ‘shouldn’t’ that a woman has to obey.¹³⁸ Yet, this thought fills me with a strange happiness, a certainty almost.

¹³⁸ In Greek Rania uses the term *prosopo* that can signify both a face—a visage, and a person.

Yes, I am sure that this new *prosopo*, our own, will not be afraid to live, to share, to love.¹³⁹ It will be a new face/person where there will be no borders to enclose it. Its beauty you can only share, in order to bring you closer even to those you don't know personally...

Now, I don't know how to end this letter, maybe it seems a bit confused, like I am. I am thinking of finding you one night and not be afraid'.

Rania

Rania's letter echoes some of Lorde's liberating introspective reflections that aspired to turn the silence of the oppressed women into communication and action. Rania envisions a becoming, a new *prosopo*— inevitably fragmented— where living, sharing, and loving can be borderless. In addition, the semiology of the border can be seen as an anti-nationalist wish, a defiance of borders, resonating again with Lorde's words. Likewise, Rania's proposition 'not to be afraid to live, to share, to love' contains modes of interpersonal relations that require constant emotional investment and negotiations.

Lavrys' response to Rania's letter ends with the following:

[...] we agree with you that there will be no borders to enclose this new (or old) *prosopo*, the same way that there are no borders to obstruct the beauty.

The problem is to whip out this self, behind the armour that society has imposed in us. A society with oppressive structures and male values which unfortunately we carry within.

¹³⁹ I am leaving 'prosopo' here untranslated. It's the original word that Rania uses that could mean both face and person.

We believe, though, that our existence as people or as groups has a revolutionary nature because it debunks many of the myths that underpin male–dominating society.

We are waiting for you in person, when you overcome your fear.

Lavrys

From *Lavrys*’ perspective, what Rania calls *prosopo* is already a self that needs to be dug up, excavated under oppressive societal structures. Albeit the two letters have many communal spots, I find *Lavrys* response limiting to what Rania gathered to propose. Bringing together these letters, we can interweave the possibilities of assembling these fragmented pieces to create a *prosopo* that is not scared of living, loving, and sharing, while at the same time, a collective critique of the status quo can cause the façade’s fracture. Yet, I suggest that the façade has to break not with the intention of merely proving its deceptive qualities, but as it breaks at the very house of difference as Lorde’s tell us. Notably, the chapter that follows (chapter 7) focuses on the tensions and connections between the archives in question, reading the aspirations of *Amfi* and *Skoupa* as reformist, while the critique that *Kraximo* and *Lavrys* embark on is more fundamental on all societal structures.

While *Lavrys* scope upholds promises of origins that are due to be discovered when patriarchal myths get debunked, I ask: what if instead we employ myth–making processes towards Rania’s vision of being and relating?

As the plot of relationalities and love practices thickens, let us invite again Lorde to hold on to the significance of the intentional practices and remind us of the power of the erotic. In ‘*Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power*’, Lorde (1984) emphasizes the vitality to intentionally resist western societal structures that promote the erotic only as sexual pleasure; instead, she propels us to start looking for the erotic as a dispersed force in all aspects of our lives. Being in tune and accepting of the force of the erotic will increase our capacities to feel

and enjoy, ‘for the erotic is not a question only of what we do; it is a question of how acutely and fully we can feel in the doing’ (Lorde, 1984:54).

Noting that erotic comes from the Greek word *eros*‘ the personification of love in all its aspects ’(Lorde, 1984: 55) Lorde highlights the empowering capacities of eros, if we dare to disseminate and scale up the use of the erotic in various aspects of life. The creative source of the erotic makes us brave, willing to refuse and dare. As Lorde (1984:57) puts it:

Our erotic knowledge empowers us, becomes a lens through which we scrutinize all aspects of our existence, forcing us to evaluate those aspects honestly in terms of their relative meaning within our lives. And this is a grave responsibility, projected from within each of us, not to settle for the convenient, the shoddy, the conventionally expected, nor the merely safe

Thus, practicing erotic knowledge in life–pursuits other than the sexual – though this type of the erotic as well – one comes in touch with the feminine and its greatly feared powers, to oppose ‘a racist, patriarchal and anti–erotic society ’(Lorde, 1984:59).

Lorde is writing from the place of the black woman in the USA and the propositions that Lorde suggests here can be expanded to address all those who wish to protest the dogmas of misogynistic, racist, anti–erotic and heteropatriarchal societal structures.¹⁴⁰ I do not read Lorde’s positionality as essentialist, because she focuses on social aspects of oppressions and in the institutions that preserve these oppressions.

However, the recognition of addressees is needed to refuse the widespread ideological structure of ‘peopling ’of the world that perpetuates violence against black women (Lewis, 2017). Lewis in ‘Questions of Presence’ explores different conceptualizations of ‘presence’

¹⁴⁰ I am thinking here with Smith’s ‘Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy Rethinking Women of Color Organizing’ in *Color of violence: incite! Anthology* (2016).

to demonstrate some of the ways in which the black woman is deemed simultaneously visible and invisible, through lenses of imperial legacies, demographic accountings, and the neo-colonial project. To grasp the oscillation that the black woman is subjected to between 'absence' and 'presence', Lewis (2017:17) offers the following argument:

'we can read her 'absence' within the figures for both the categories 'BAME' and 'Women' as a contemporary instantiation of her de-gendering. She cannot be made visible in 'Women' because she is not fully one since such a person is always already constituted as white. At the same time she cannot be made visible in 'BAME' because though in one sense a heterogeneous category 'containing' multiple ethnicities, in gender terms it is a homogenising category wherein specificities of the social, emotional and psychic organisation and effects of gender do not matter'.

This de-gendering that happens without the black woman's permission or will, accommodates the neoliberal project of assimilation, which through acronym groupings, attempts to flatten out specificities and intricacies of experiences. The 'presence' of the black woman in governmental, neo-liberal discourse and practice, is always accompanied with rhetorics of 'fairness' as Lewis notes.¹⁴¹ Through the frame of fairness, the figure of the black woman is positioned to answer for her 'score' in the arena of nominally equal opportunities, and if it is legible as unsatisfactory, she has to face the consequences individually, while structures that sustain this frame remain intact (Lewis, 2017:18). As Lewis (2017:19) prompts us, the figure of the black woman can be one of hope, 'in her collective push against the violences of fleshy, experiential and epistemological erasure'. One who can pave the way to new modalities of socialities if we find her and recognize her presence 'as a maker of knowledge' (Lewis, 2017:21).

¹⁴¹ Lewis uses the term 'fairness' as conceptualized in Hall, Stuart and O'Shea, Alan (2013) 'Common-sense neo-liberalism'.

Lewis 'intervention is in dialogue with Lorde and illustrates the continuum of resistance and anti-racist feminist struggle. The hard work that ought to be done. Lorde's (1997) words can once again knit aspects of love, presence, and presence in the difference:

A Woman Speaks

Moon marked and touched by sun

my magic is unwritten

but when the sea turns back

it will leave my shape behind.

I seek no favour

untouched by blood

unrelenting as the curse of love

permanent as my errors

or my pride

I do not mix

love with pity

nor hate with scorn

and if you would know me

look into the entrails of Uranus

where the restless oceans pound.

I do not dwell

within my birth nor my divinities

who am ageless and half-grown

and still seeking

my sisters

witches in Dahomey

wear me inside their coiled cloths

as our mother did

mourning.

I have been woman

for a long time

beware my smile

I am treacherous with old magic

and the noon's new fury

with all your wide futures

promised

I am

woman

and not white.

Conclusion– an archival love story

Like Rania with her letter, I struggle to gather how to finish this chapter. The ‘fabulous explosion’ (Rubin 2011) of *Lavrys* mobilized complex and interconnected threads of kinship among women, partaking in a continuum that I have attempted to weave here. *Lavrys* like its symbol of a double axe remains sharp in most edges, rough in others, and one needs to be gentle when touching upon it. As a magazine that aspired to break the silence and register lesbian discourse in modern Greece, *Lavrys* centred love, sentiment, social critique, and personal accounts of loving women. Notably, the touch, *agigma* is a recurrent thematic of their texts, recognizing it conceptually as a form of political tactic. A haptic reading here seemed almost expected from the creators a few decades before. In fact, it was clearly stated– ‘let’s touch each other’. This invitation introduced another, unexpected realm of the haptic, that of *in suspense*; Here the haptic relation entailed the physical touch – me browsing the material –, the indexical touch applicable to the content, the affective one when the magazine’s contents moved me, not only spatially but also psychically; and another register, related to being in a state of tense anticipation because the editors of *Lavrys* have requested my touch.

Now, perhaps one can claim that every time we read something that addresses us, there is an *in suspense* at play. However, I cannot claim that I sense any kind of haptic relation when for example, I read adverts in public transportation or in bus stops that its mere purpose is to address me. If anything, I often find this kind of interpellation usually infuriating and disheartening. If I can ultimately say something about this ‘in suspense’ dimension of the haptic, it is that, as far as I am concerned, it presupposes the other aforementioned registers, and touches upon a stated calling of participation through touch, as *agigma*.

I will close with a touching story of two women in *Lavrys* issue 1 (1982: 45–48), a personal account of Vaggelio. Vaggelio recounts the chronicle of a lover’s imprisonment in four deeply emotionally invested pages. As this testimony begins Vaggelio does not share any details of why the lover has been arrested. What these four pages are, is actually a love letter to the incarcerated woman. The story starts with the first time Vaggelio attended visiting hours, three days after the arrest. *‘We come closer and I feel that all these fights, all these years, have finally vanished, there is love and only love. How are we going to make it I wonder, how can hugs be enough, how can kisses be enough; and now here come the tears. But they do not relieve us.’* The inner monologue of Vaggelio continues as time passes. Worried about the woman Vaggelio loves, her inner monologue shares an agony: *‘how will your life be when you get released?’* When she gets pre-released, they go to the sea for a swim. *‘You are so happy, you stretch, you smell the air, and you feel it moving through you, in you, you smell the sea. You live again. [...] we hug, we stay like this for a while and tears run through your face, you confess that you wanted to hug me all this time. But the guards did not allow it. It is my turn now, I ask you: did you find the piece of paper that read: I will love you no matter what?’*

Time passed, the trial is completed and as Vaggelio tells us – though it is always in second person narration – the lover’s sentence is reduced, but still imminent. *‘Once the verdict was in, there was no time to touch you, not even to properly see you [...] I ask the guards if they can let me hug you, kiss you. They remain silent as they start to take you away. I stay close to you like a loyal dog’*. Vaggelio follows the police car with an old scooter– *‘one I stole for a bit’* – until they arrive at the prison. *‘I am with you again, along the way’*. The next visiting hours meetings, Vaggelio is there. *‘when you entered the room I couldn’t recognize you, you looked so much older. You come closer; I see a laborious smile. You look ready to scream so that your voice reaches everywhere, to let out all your sorrow’*. As the two lovers sit a guard

surrounds them frequently so they cannot speak freely. The guard seems eager to eavesdrop their conversation. *'You cry. You cry unrelentingly as you transmit me your sadness. I feel it transgressing me, yet I laugh. I laugh so joyfully that even if the guard comes near us again, she will not understand. She looks at me filled with curiosity trying to understand what is happening. Nothing. She doesn't understand. How dumb of her...to look for communication only through language. No one ever taught her that greatest passions are expressed through the eyes'* Vaggelio writes about the guard. Vaggelio's annotations on the guard demonstrate how Vaggelio and the lover are accustomed to non-verbal communication, to sentiments that exceed linguistic expression and seek other variants.

A few days later Vaggelio visits to no avail, *'they tell me that I cannot see you, because you do not want any visitations'*. Vaggelio writes in despair *'I cannot do anything, but I wonder. I was the only person that you could see, and I have done so much to access this capacity, and suddenly you don't want to see me'*. Next week the pair is reunited and Vaggelio learns the truth *'you were in the hospital, but no one told me, because there I could stay with you many hours during the day. There I could finally hug you again, we could have talked openly and without hidden lexicon'*. Vaggelio's deposition of rage on paper has me nodding in agreement.

During their next meetings, the lover would share stories from her incarceration. Any uprising within the jail equated loss of a visitation or those who worked while in jail would have their days of work erased, so they could start the task again. *'Women who would cut themselves to release some of their pain were left unattained from the guards, until they recovered (if they did) or until other prisoners helped them. The job sharing among the inmates. The hierarchies among inmates and how quickly these would shift or cease when one protested. The letters that we exchanged were monitored as if me or anyone else would write something particular in a letter. They cannot understand that what one is looking for in*

letters are feelings of love ? A touch of a different kind. As can be seen, through the testimony of the incarcerated woman as written by Vaggelio, emerge so many more stories of women inmates and the horrific circumstances of incarceration. *How happy you were when you secretly confessed to me that a woman imprisoned for life managed to escape* ?

The hardest day in prison for Vaggelio's friend was the fifteenth of August, [day of the Virgin Mary] *Dekapentavgoustos*, a Greek orthodox national holiday. *The inmates did not eat, did not leave their cells, could not accept visits (they are forbidden on Sundays and holidays). Every hour one by one swallowed her sorrow until it was dark. And then, sorrow becomes rage* ? The events of that night ended with severe violence from the guards and isolation for some women.

After this, Vaggelio writes that time moves slowly *you weave, you knit, you draw for the passing of time, until you are released* ? Autumn has arrived, *as the days of your release approach, there is a part of you that is sad. Who would have thought that you wouldn't want to leave. The reason? Your 'friend'*.¹⁴²*You do not want to separate from her, you do not want her to stay there and you being out... yet you never admitted anything. Your last night in prison. You both stay up all night, you lay down together, you talk, you both cry that you are going to be separated, you both laugh that tomorrow you will be free. Promises of help that carried within them all your love. hugs, kisses, executioner of thoughts.* ?

The release day. Vaggelio waits outside the building from 5am. it is now 9am. *the heavy door opens slowly. You still hold in your hands the paper of your release, your face is smiling, and I run joyfully to hug you tightly along with a hug full of flowers; we twirl ourselves in kisses, until the tension is reduced. How sweet, how beautiful I felt you. Graceful like a bird, ready again for freedom* ?

¹⁴² These are Vaggelio's quotations.

The emotional deposition of Vaggelio, I think, brilliantly shows aspects of caring and the practice of love. This story also outlines the physicality of their bond, the touch, the hug, the non-verbal communication. In the broader aspect, Vaggelio narrates how some modes of surviving-prison are mobilized and the violence of confinement is prominent and recurring. Many lives cross paths in these four pages, each one from Vaggelio's lenses. In this peculiar love letter, that shows the violences of the state, seep deep sentiments of desire, devotion, despair, agony, and consideration, *'Promises of help that carried within them all your love'*. The bond of the two women as presented by Vaggelio echoes McBean's (2018) argument that often same-sex female desire and 'best friends' narratives overlap allowing for queer narratives. In Vaggelio's story I read the bond of the two women as more than just friends, but also (and simultaneously) more than just lovers.

CHAPTER 7

‘With open windows and an imaginative will’: space, tensions, perceptibility, and rhythms in *Amfi*, *Skoupa*, *Kraximo* and *Lavrys*

‘Within and through space, a certain social time is produced and reproduced; but real social time is forever re-emerging complete with its own characteristics and determinants: repetitions, rhythms, cycles, activities’ (Lefebvre, 1991: 339)

In the previous chapters I offered a haptic reading of *Skoupa: for the women’s movement* (1979– 1981) in chapter 3, *Amfi: for the liberation of homosexual desire* (1978– 1990) in chapter 4, *Kraximo: a magazine of revolutionary homosexual expression* (1981– 1993) in chapter 5 and *Lavrys: lesbian discourse* (1982– 1983) in chapter 6. This weaving would not have been possible without setting up the warp first, in chapters 1 and 2. The vertically placed yarns on the loom transgressed and supported conceptually and ideologically the base of this project, assisting the production of the weft.

Mobilizing the notion of the haptic as a three-folded sense of touch (Campt, 2012), this archival investigation considers the physical touch of the materials; the touch related to the content of the magazines (indexical touch); and the affective touch – a dynamic touch formulated by the reading process. The affective touch derives from the two first aforementioned meeting points of touch, while the haptic summons all three aspects of these affective engagements of sensoria. Furthermore, as the reader might have noticed, in all the chapters of the weft the modalities of the haptic were enriched and framed in tune with each publication, reiterating the relational aspect of the haptic methodology.

Notably, not all the articles I came across touched me in the way in which the archival stories I included in the chapters did. The archival stories weaved through this project illustrate haptic at work, as I delved in the materials from a psychosocial scope. Inevitably a reading informed by the haptic, entails the inner world of the reader and all of the multiplicities that form my positionality as a researcher, as well as a theoretical conversation with the magazines in question. From Petros' caring *clarification* letter to his mother (Chapter 2), to the various aspects of the 'still' in women's struggles as presented in *Skoupa* (Chapter 3), to the anti-seriousness mobilization tactics embarked by Mr. Ntinis that deemed the desire of the tragically in love woman from Patra valid (Chapter 4) from the luminescent paths of refusal in Nancy's and Giannis views in *Kraximo* (Chapter 5) to the promises of help that carried within them all of Vaggelio's lover, love in *Lavrys* (Chapter 6) archival stories touch upon each other to compose a network of connections, intimacies, desires, politics of love and refusal.¹⁴³

While the magazines emerged during the same time-period of *Metapoliteusi* in the capital of Greece, each one of them envisioned liberation differently. How the collectives imagined liberation has various spatial and social overlaps, as well as stark differences in their politics. The first section of this chapter will focus on the connections, conjunctions, and fissures between these archives as we explore their theoretical and practical politics of space. Here, the analysis begins with Theodorakopoulos (2005) book *Amfi and liberation*. Then discussions of (in)visibilities emphasize the importance of perceptibility when engaging with queer narratives. Later, I take up Papanikolaou's challenge of an (un)mapping a queer Athens and weave in theories of subjection. The tensions between *Kraximo* and *Amfi* are also part of this chapter, to illustrate the palimpsests that constitute their liberations. In the second part of

¹⁴³ Here I use the term 'clarification' as equivalent to nowadays 'coming out' used by Petros in chapter 2. Greek: ksekatharisma.

the chapter, I engage with the social theory of Henri Lefebvre regarding space, rhythms, and the right to difference, notions I find that touch upon the haptic experiment I attempted. The project ends, of course, with a story from the archives.

Theodorakopoulos notes on *Amfi* and liberation

The Greek movement for homosexual liberation (AKOE) that started *Amfi* is considered a social aftermath of French May '68 that draws ideas from the Left and at the same time it is critical of some of its values (Gkeltis, 2019). *Amfi* rebukes the suppression of homosexual desire and expression within mainstream Left Greek circles, critically engages with post-dictatorship political climate and the Greek elections of 1981, won over by the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), while simultaneously *Amfi* raises transnational discussions of gay identities and claims. It is important to note that even though many articles of *Amfi* offer a Marxist critique on Greek politics, from correspondence columns, interviews, and other contributors it is clear that *Amfi* became a forum of a broader discussion over homosexuality as an identity and the dominant political ideologies that oppress it. As the first editor of *Amfi*, Loukas Theodorakopoulos (2005: 47–48) writes in the book *Amfi and Liberation*:

The trajectory of AKOE showed that these type of organizations, anti-authoritarian by nature, inter-class from their formulation (since homosexuality is a phenomenon met in all classes), impossible to be popularized without reproducing the power structures of political parties and other kind of organizations, or impossible to participate in these structures while keeping their attributes, their fate and their goal is to each time employ the historical conjectures, in order to pressure and intervene for the improvement of living conditions and contribute to the education of mainstream population about a topic that is still considered taboo or that is being distorted by moralist chauvinists and professionally corrupted psychiatrists (my translation)

The above statement illustrates that *Amfi*'s goal was mostly to disrupt dominant ideas on homosexuality and to introduce the language of homosexual desire within the sociopolitical context of *Metapoliteusi*. The book of Theodorakopoulos regarding *Amfi* was published in 2005, twelve years after the last issue of the magazine. Assessing the impact of the publication years later after its halt, Theodorakopoulos (2005:48) comments:

If it is true – and as things historically show it is– that people assemble and take the streets only when they can no longer live under the given circumstances, today's liberal regime, with all the multiple outlets that it provides for the homosexual individual, does not help in organizing and protesting alike. However, there are always people who experience their problems *differently* and reach the point of realizing their political dimension, act like citizens and not like individuals, they feel the need to come together with others and so they create small islets of solidarity and defence against a hostile environment(my emphasis, my translation)

Theodorakopoulos sees a modern gay identity entangled within societal privileges which hinder communal action. Here Duggan's notion of 'homonormativity' could be useful to understand his point better. The politics of homonormativity do not oppose dominant heteronormative institutions but rather sustain them, 'while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption' (Duggan 2003:50). Homonormativity as a hegemonic structure often engulfs nationalist ideals and de-radicalizes homosexual expression.

Theodorakopoulos and Duggan's books were published around the same time and offered a commentary on the popularized strand of thought that appeared after the turn of the millennium. While within the spectrum of domestic gay life one inevitably finds aspects of homonormativity, I think that for the argument of this project the key lies in the second part of Theodorakopoulos' commentary. There are always people who inhabit the world

differently, who do not get a seat at the table of homonormativity, others who actively refuse to and echo Kraximo's chant: 'let them have the offices, we have the streets' (Chapter 5).

Theodorakopoulos also mentions certain islets of solidarity that have assembled throughout Greece after, and along, AKOE and hopes for other groups to appear covering the geographic domain of Greece. The influence of AKOE, *Kraximo*, *Skoupa* and *Lavrys* in the context of social claims and grassroots organizing could be traced in the terrain that these groups cultivated so that others could emerge and diffuse, passing the baton among spaces and places in the public political sphere of post-junta Greece.¹⁴⁴ These publications created spaces—both literally and figuratively—to discuss, share, meet, disagree, protest; to communicate values, desires, and needs. The following section focuses on the spatial aspects of convergence and divergence among the groups while negotiating desire and liberation in public urban spaces of Athens and beyond.

'Unsuspectingly': (in)visibility and perceptibility of queer spaces

The park

Withdrawn old men and nannies

Little boys playing in the flowers

And street simit sellers, and little bums

In the mornings adorn the park

with their innocent insouciance and their poverty.

¹⁴⁴ Regarding further groups in Greece, see the Greek Homosexual Community (Elliniki omofylofiliki Kinotita, EOK) Group Initiative of Homosexuals in Thessaloniki (Omada Protovoulia Omofylofilon Thessalonikis, ΟΠΙΟΘ).

And the sun shines through the foliage

And everything is nice and petty– bourgeois.

But when night falls, everything changes

perilous faces are circulating now [...]

And the whole park becomes a service station

That takes its virginity under the hammer.

But in the morning the municipal cleaning services will come

in a hurry to clean

The evidence of the night collected,

dirty handkerchiefs, crumpled papers –

let the sun come, let the children come,

to play in the flowers unsuspectingly.

Ntinios Christianopoulos, 1982

(my translation)

The Park by the Greek poet, novelist, translator, editor, Ntinios Christianopoulos (1931–2020), is a good place to begin unravelling the multiple connotations of public spaces when investigating expression of non– normative desire. The poem above, written most likely about a park in Thessaloniki where Christianopoulos lived, sets the scenery of the practice of cruising by taking the place rather than the people as the protagonist. The park as described by Christianopoulos, radically changes uses between day and night, converting from a ‘petty–

bourgeois' setting to 'a service station' of pleasure and mischief at night, leaving traces in the flora, in the ground, in the whole of the park's topography as day users inhabit the space 'unsuspectingly'. The park hosts different publics depending on the time of the day, serving as a meeting point for people from all strands of life and ages. Albeit one point to consider the difference functions of the park could be the time of the day my focus here is not on the night-time as the marker of visibility and invisibility of homosexual desire. After all, there are day-time cruising spots in Athens and beyond. Practices of male homosexuality were spread out in public and private spheres during post-war Greece (1950 – 1970) without necessarily constituting a homosexual identity. According to Yannakopoulos (2019) during that time a man could meet another man for sexual pleasure almost in all public places of Athens, in Stadiou Street, Syntagma and Omonoia square, in public transport, in cinemas, at parks, at urinals. Yannakopoulos (2019) also links the 'spread out', pervading homosexual practices with the fact that public spaces were almost exclusively male dominated, due to the societal restrictions that women faced, especially the unmarried ones. Following Yiannakopoulos argument we can also read these bonds among men of the time as homosocial, since these encounters possible upheld the dominance of male socialities among the public spheres.

Papanikolaou (2014) analyses the intricacies of tracing queer public life in a changing urban scenery. In his analysis, Papanikolaou includes Theodorakopoulos' experience of the same-sex paths in Athens during 1950s and 1960s, which are being recalled as 'part of a larger culture of homosociality and uncontainable homoerotic desire that was not, as a whole, related to a specific identity narrative' (Papanikolaou, 2014:160). These additions are not to negate the oppression that many men and women faced regarding their homosexual desires of course, but to add another perspective in the context of the era and to recognize the

complexity of mapping metropolitan queer aspects and spatial cartographies of grassroots movements.

Kirstoglou's *For the Love of Women: Gender, Identity and Same– Sex Relations in a Greek Provincial Town* is an ethnographic study of a group of women who navigate life and relationships in a town that Kirtsoglou calls Kallipolis. Kirtsoglou (2004) uses the Greek term *parea* meaning company/ group of friends, to describe the relations among the women she follows. Notably the women of Kirstoglou's study refer to their *parea* as an 'affective community' (Kirtsoglou, 2004: 5) and the whole book is a revelation of the bonds, loves and tribulations of this all– female network. Regarding the impact that spatial context has on relations, Kirtsoglou in the chapter 'Different People, Same Places – Different Places, Same People' records the origin of the *parea* which began by four university students in 1980s Athens who then returned to Kallipolis and developed their 'affective community'. As Kirtsoglou (2004:128– 129) writes:

What these four women brought back to Kallipolis was the knowledge that political movements can be utopian and sometimes dystopian, that university and student cliques are frequently the very spaces where gender and class hierarchies are reproduced and last, but not least, that women's networks can sometimes be the safest and most creative places to be and to become

Thus, the women gathered together to form an affective network of relations in their own local frame. Ultimately, the women's group in Kallipolis alternates from a homoerotic space, to a place of emotional and material support when needed. As Kirtsoglou (2004:149) puts it:

The group is formed within and out of a provincial Greek culture that negotiates wider influences in its own particular way. In this context, being a 'lesbian' does not always

have a fixed or clear meaning or one that corresponds to the actual practices of women who find themselves in homosexual relationships

While the *parea* prefers to remain unclassifiable the impact of sociocultural context in their relations becomes apparent. Even though again the pendulum of visibility and invisibility is in motion, the current project derives from an urge to push beyond this dipole. In this endeavour we can bring to mind the fourth dimension of the haptic, that of the visual that I have discussed in chapter 5. The possibility of a haptic touch, i.e. a reading that involves an indexical touch, a physical one, an affective and often ‘a visuality’ offers a perceptibility of socialities different from the pole of mere ‘visibility’ or ‘invisibility’.

For queer spatialities we need to move beyond the concept of visibility and invisibility. I think that the term *perceptibility* can be a place to start. Perceptible is that which is ‘capable of being perceived especially by the senses’.¹⁴⁵ Perceptibility then is the capacity to register something involving more senses than mere vision. Perceptibility tunes in touches, in vision, in rhythms (the theory of *rhythmanalysis* by Lefebvre is explored later in this chapter) and makes noticeable theoretical and practical spaces of non– normative desire.

Many scholars have studied the concepts of visibility and invisibility. Woodward (2015) examines aspects of ‘being there’, ‘being seen’ and ‘being looked at’– both actually and virtually– in various aspects of modern society, emphasizing on the power relations between visibility, invisibility, and in/visibility. Woodward (2015:60) by including different sites of embodied space and cyberspace underlines the role of ‘temporal and spatial dimensions of the politics of in/visibility’ when discussing sexual differences at ‘different times and in different places’. Jones, Robinson and Turner (2012) remark on the reductive way of conceiving absence as not being present and presence as not being absent and propose that

¹⁴⁵ See: [https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/perceptibility#other- words.](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/perceptibility#other-words)

these two concepts are ‘co-constituted and co-exist simultaneously’ (Jones, Robinson and Turner 2012: 258). Similarly, the discourse of being deemed ‘visible’ or ‘invisible’ in the sense of being present in the former case and absent in the latter, favours ‘one sensory experience above others’ (Jones, Robinson and Turner, 2012: 258) as the authors note. The special issue raises epistemological questions regarding these oscillating geographies as the authors highlight that presence often also rests on ontological tangibility.¹⁴⁶ For that they suggest more inquisitive approaches to trace invisible geographies. As Jones, Robinson and Turner (2012:262) write: ‘there is also a need to understand the processes that keep absences absent, as well as those that make absences present and presences absent’. I find this argumentation crucial as we examine the topography and overlapping spaces of queer desire in post-junta Greece through archival inquiry, as I took up the challenge which the authors called upon by reading haptically and by considering perceptibility in the analysis. An intervention that involves the eye but only, the touch but only, the affect but not only, the body but not only, a psychic touch but not only. It is important to mention that visibility and invisibility are also terms greatly gendered and racialized.¹⁴⁷

Bonner-Thompson (2021) mobilizes the stories of 30 men who use Grindr for sexual encounters to argue that touch, sex, and space co-produce meaning during the participants

¹⁴⁶ As Jones, Robinson and Turner (2012:261) write regarding the ontological aspects of these topologies: ‘they must have a condition which allows them to be named and recognised as such’.

¹⁴⁷ For more on gendered and racialized (in)visibilities see: Brighenti, A., 2007. Visibility. *Current Sociology*, 55(3), pp.323– 342. And Simpson, R. and Lewis, P., 2005. An investigation of silence and a scrutiny of transparency: Re-examining gender in organization literature through the concepts of voice and visibility. *Human Relations*, 58(10), pp.1253– 1275. For hyper/visibility and the experience of black scholars in institutions see the quantitative study of Settles, Buchanan and Dotson (2019) Scrutinized but not recognized: (In)visibility and hypervisibility experiences of faculty of color. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 113, pp.62– 74. Also Martin-Baron, M. (2014) in (Hyper/in)visibility and the military corps(e) conceptualizes the queer necropolitics of military funerals in the US, where the state consolidates its power and perpetuates the war-state. In *Queer Necropolitics*, Jin Haritaworn, Adi Kuntsman, Silvia Posocco (eds.), Oxon: Routledge, pp.51– 71.

Grindr ‘hook-ups’ and employs the framework of haptic geographies to account for the creation of temporal affective spaces. Bonner– Thompson (2021:458) writes:

Haptic geographies enable an understanding of the ways touch and place are co-constituted, exploring how places shape how touch can be enacted and how the touching of bodies and objects can (re)make places

As discussed above, for many non– heterosexual people domestic spaces are not always comfortable and maybe prefer certain touches and practices to be sought elsewhere. The topologies of touch created in the corporeal encounters that Bonner– Thompson recognizes come to touch upon the web of *The Park*, the experiences of homosexual and homoerotic desires in the cartography of Athens (Papanikolaou 2014; Yannakopoulos 2019) as well as the affective community of the women of Kallipolis (Kirtsoglou 2004). Bonner– Thompson (2021:460) concludes that:

Sexualities are not only constructed, embodied, and negotiated discursively, but through multisensory and emotional experiences-across multiple spaces-that matter to the ways that sexual practices come into being (as uncomfortable, shameful or pleasurable, for example). It is therefore important to pay attention to the intimate and sensory to understand the complex ways that sex and sexuality emerge, and the power relations that continually shape sexualities

The dynamic aspects of sexualities and the power relations at play are thus more multi-dimensionally experienced if we bring the sensoria into the analysis. Following that line of argumentation, multisensory embodiments can be seen as important premises of social movements, along with the mediation of visibility. By the same token, both these dimensions are, of course, contextual. However, the mantra of Lacanian psychoanalysis that to be recognized means to simultaneously become subjected is also something to take into

consideration when discussing the pluralities of living. According to Lacan, a psychic process has preceded and de-coded signifiers which are not available to language, before– and in order for– the subject to utter: ‘I am’.¹⁴⁸ This recognition and subjection to language according to Lacan is inevitable. While Lacanian theory is mostly concerned with subject formation, I think that the relationship between recognition and subjection– similar to what Althusser calls ‘interpellation’– needs to be taken into consideration when we read archives of queer and feminist content in order to be attentive to the context, the language, and the process of groups’ formation.

From Christianopoulos poem to Yannakopoulos notes, we see already visibility and invisibility at play, where Kirstoglou’s notes on female intimacy in peripheral Greece come to perplex the topographical tapestry of queer desire. What these contributions offer is on the one hand a surrounding quite vital when thinking about actual and intellectual spaces, and on the other hand motivate us to perplex the reading of the archives in question. The imprints of *Amfi*, *Kraximo*, *Skoupa* and *Lavrys* are still present and visible, perceptible, to those who are eager to look.

political spaces and urban traces

As Papanikolaou (2014) notes, in the quest of reading queer experiences, examining just the nightlife and bar culture of a city does not begin to cover the fragments of the people that live and breathe in the city. For that Papanikolaou engages with an un-mapping of Athens, a dynamic process that exceeds a list of gay bars, clubs, and saunas, accounting for a queer rather than a homosexual Athens, ‘a queer Athens understood not as a stable topography or as a finished historiographical project, but as an epistemological and identitarian question

¹⁴⁸ Here I am referring to the mirror stage in Lacanian Theory, where the subject speaks and their unconscious becomes structure like language. See chapter ‘The Function and Field of Speech and Language’ in *Psychoanalysis*, in *Ecrits: the first complete edition in English*.

unfolding in historical time’ (Papanikolaou, 2014: 166). Part of the historiography of queer Athens is inevitably AKOE and as one of the interviewees of Papanikolaou we meet again Loukas Theodorakopoulos.

The political work of AKOE expanded far beyond *Amfi* with actions, protests, the organization of the conference ‘sexuality and Politics’ in 1982– which will be further discussed in this chapter in relation to lesbian politics of *Lavrys*. AKOE’s office was also the space that *Kraximo*’s team used for the early years of its publication, until the fight of the two (circa 1986). The tension between AKOE and *Kraximo* was discussed in chapter 5 as described by the editor of the latter, Paola Revenioti. Revenioti criticizes *Amfi* of its misery and claims that *Kraximo* team is the one that kept alive the offices of AKOE. According to Revenioti after the well– known conference of AKOE on ‘Sexuality and Politics’ in November 1982, five– six people of the editorial team of *Amfi* were not actively involved with the magazine any longer, because ‘they made it’ i.e. got recognition from important speakers of the conference. As Revenioti informs the readers, Theodorakopoulos published the issue 16/17 of *Amfi* almost by himself and then withdrew from his editorial post.¹⁴⁹ As Revenioti notes for the three past years, she is the one attending to the administrative tasks of the space. According to Revenioti a member of AKOE, Antonis, had a personal malice against her:

I had a need to learn so I could create things, so I fell on his trap. He treated me like I was ill, like a person needing psychoanalysis and therapy. He tried to kill my femininity, my desire to be trans (the word originally used at the time is *travesti*) [...] he tried to ‘teach’ me how to love, how to desire, how to fight. In a few words he

¹⁴⁹ Theodorakopoulos left *Amfi* in 1984. From then on editor in chief of *Amfi* was Grigoris Vallianatos, until the closure of *Amfi* in 1990.

wanted to kill my spontaneity and teach me to think like him. He inserted inside me an *Antonis– cop* who incriminated everything I did

Revenioti's testimony outlines her rebellious stance against an authoritative figure. The *Antonis– cop* a metaphor of self– surveillance and governance, echoes the Foucauldian sense of 'governmentality' (2004) and also illustrates a psychic imprint of power. Butler (1997) in *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* brings together psychoanalytic theory with Foucauldian ideas of power to account for the internalization of power structures during the process of subject formation. Revenioti's negation to be subjected to the internalization of an *Antonis– cop* shows her perception of agency. In the above extract we read Revenioti's resistance to this subjection. Her refusal to be recognized as an intellectual if this meant to lose her whim. By all means, my role here is not to pick a side on the rupture. I think though that Revenioti's stance and the metaphor of an *Antonis– cop* works well to describe a psychosocial event.

Revenioti identifies the spite that some of the members of AKOE have towards her as per the following:

I am a sex worker, and they cannot forgive me that because, regardless of all the relations of commodification that capitalist society produces, they see in me that they would like to be: someone who is getting paid, instead of paying, as they do. They see me with lovers that during these moments love me for what I am, and most importantly I make love, something that they have been deprived of, due to current social systems. They come to a point where they hate me for that, because they see that even through my lived experiences I managed to abstain from misery and I have a circle of people who appreciate me, love me for what I believe in and for what I do, and they cannot stand me

Revenioti's view here comes in opposition with the trope of the 'miserable sex worker' and illustrate her active refusal to participate in this stereotypical narrative. Perhaps she also falls in generalizations, but again my point here is not to act as the mediator of the fight. It is rather an invite to read the above testimonies as a desire to be ungovernable. This bring to mind Esther Brown a black rebellious woman we meet in the archival stories of Hartman (2019). In the chapter 'The Anarchy of Colored [sic] Girls Assembled in a Riotous Manner' Hartman narrates the story of Esther Brown whose life was an 'open rebellion' against the world (Hartman, 2019: 237). Esther's way of rebelling was not through a manifesto, or through a recognition from any of the intellectual circles of her time; It was through inhabiting the world with dare:

she knew first-hand that the offense most punished by the state was trying to live free. To wander through the streets of Harlem, to want better than what she had, and to be propelled by her whims and desires was to be ungovernable. Her way of living was nothing short of anarchy (Hartman, 2019:230).

Esther was an unmarried mother– the father of the baby proposed to her, but she rejected the proposal – she briefly married another man and then went to live with her grandmother and sister, who all raised her son together. Esther had lovers and a social circle, and although she worked when she had to, she was brave enough to overtly detest work. In 1917, she was arrested by the police and without an employment to register, 'she was convicted because she was unemployed and 'leading the life of a prostitute.' One could lead the life of a prostitute without actually being one' (Hartman, 2019: 241). The state could not recognize that a black woman could roam around the streets of Harlem, with friends, or alone, or with lovers just to have a fun time. As Hartman (2019:241) notes, 'the mere willingness to have a good time with a stranger was sufficient evidence of wrongdoing'. Similarly, in Revenioti's narrative, Antonis could not recognize that she was not in need of treatment and that her life did not

equate unhappiness. The refusal of Esther Brown towards misery echoes in Revenioti's story, in the desire to be ungovernable. A longing for an otherwise. In Hartman's (2019:235) words:

Esther Brown longed for another world. She was hungry for more, for otherwise, for better. She was hungry for beauty. In her case, the aesthetic wasn't a realm separate and distinct from the daily challenges of survival; rather, the aim was to make an art of subsistence. She did not try to create a poem or song or painting. What she created was Esther Brown.

Antonis attempted to prevent the re-publication of *Kraximo*. The mere issue that Revenioti writes this in though is evidence that Antonis' attempt was not successful. When Revenioti returned from the international anarchist congress that took place in Venice (discussed in chapter 5) she found the locks of AKOE's offices changed. As Revenioti reports, there is an article in *Amfi* accusing her of assault and violence, while she states that it is she who has been assaulted by Antonis and Tasos. Revenioti also addresses the accusation of repurposing the offices of the group:

That is true. I had to sleep there with the person I loved, Giorgos, and we would eat cheap fries in this basement, because we could not afford a penthouse with a view in mount Lycabettus. We would go out and ask for a few pennies or did escorting. Maybe this is what bothered A.V. and his friends. That there was no one to truly love them albeit their luxuries. On the contrary, I was hurt, and able to love and be loved for what I really was: a vagrant, a *tsoli*, a sex-worker in Syggrou. For the beauty I had and have. Because I did not sacrifice my desire for any conformity (p.2) ¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ 'tsoli' is a term meaning cheap fabric, or metaphorically a person of low social class, 'disdained' and usually promiscuous. Most often is used to describe a hot young man.

The above extracts underline the tensions between AKOE and *Kraximo* and illustrate how their once common space of assembly and editorial process now denied access to *Kraximo*. Both publications continued separately and if one passes today from the narrow street of Zalogou, the only thing noticeable is a closed door that once was much more. Again, the intricacy of the visible and the invisible appear, when considering queer spatialities, and more specifically, what Papanikolaou (2014:154) distinguishes as two different versions of Athens, ‘the easily mapped city of gay bars and cafés on the one hand, and the city of oral narratives, memories and intense negotiations of queer identity on the other’.

There is no point in getting into further detail regarding AKOE and *Kraximo*’s dispute, or the reasons that AKOE grew apart. The fact is that like all social movements, AKOE ceased to support the same networks that were key to its inception, as the cycle of collective action diffused. Oliver and Myers (2003:177) distinguish three aspects of network proximity that influence the flow of social mobilizations: ‘spatial, organizational and other social’. The first dimension recognizes that usually movements are ‘space– bound’, a characteristic found in both *Amfi* and *Kraximo* that shared for years the same space. The second aspect concerns organizational tactics:

Even within spaces, the participants in particular actions usually have additional ties to each other beyond mere proximity. Between spaces, actions may be coordinated through political/movement ties between movement organizations(Oliver and Myers, 2003: 177).

Notably, AKOE offices hosted *Kraximo* and *Lavrays*, held lesbian nights, and offered the space to different groups within the group. Furthermore, thinking about proximity, it would be fair to say that it seems *Kraximo* and *Amfi* were more akin in the first years of their

actions. The third dimension that Oliver and Myers set out focuses on relations among members and non– members as a dynamic process. They write:

Movements whose members have social connections to the larger society through many different social ties are likely to be better able to mobilize support than those that lack such ties. However [...] these external ties can have both 'positive' and 'negative' effects on movement mobilization (Oliver and Myers, 2003:177)

In AKOE's case different desires in courses of actions, as well as the influential profile of the press officer in the media, were some of the elements that produced tensions and discrepancies that eventually led to diffusion. The dynamic processes of group assemblage inevitably lead to change or diffusion. Under the two letters which are justifying the diffusion of AKOE, *Kraximo's* commentary 'slates' both sides, concluding that 'a movement is not represented or patronized by two or three individuals who promote themselves as representatives of the gay community' (*Kraximo*, 1986: 56).

Having had the chance to read the first few issues of *Amfi* that led to specific haptic relationalities on stories that touched me, as theorized in chapter 4 on anti– seriousness, I cannot help but feel affected by the knowledge of the way things ended. On the other hand, I now know the end of AKOE and *Amfi*, from this sideway path of *Kraximo*. Through the connections, the networks, and following the threads, I located some of the reasons that *Amfi* ended. A knowledge that seemed improbable under the COVID– 19 regulations that brought my visits to the archive to an abrupt halt, has now reached me. Poking my shoulder as a reminder that no thread can be dropped or slipped, as the archival weaving happens.

Some remember, some learn, some forget, and it is all part of the ongoing process of social mobilizations, of being active and in motion, of coming 'out and about'. The door is still there, even if it no longer is what it once was. To follow Agard– Jones (2012) on 'what the

sand remembers' about queer desire in the Caribbean context (chapter 2), history is in the sand; in the walls; in the periphery. It is in what the streets remember, what the parks remember.

Rhythmanalysis and Representational Spaces

So far in this chapter I have discussed scopes and tensions beyond the magazines and the spatial dimensions of an ongoing cartography of non–normative desire in the city. The circular time of memory, a process that trespasses linear calculations of time, meets the concrete product of urban development fitting into narratives of linear time and 'progress'. The tempo recognized here is an old tale of everydayness. The Marxist sociologist and philosopher Henry Lefebvre wrote extensively on everyday life, capitalist commodification and the politics of space in social struggle.¹⁵¹

Lefebvre (1987) reads the changing habits and topologies in urban life as a tempo of repetition that emerges from the merging of two different understandings of time. As he puts it:

the cyclical, which dominates in nature, and the linear, which dominates in processes known as 'rational'. The everyday implies on the one hand cycles, nights and days, seasons and harvests, activity and rest, hunger and satisfaction, desire and its fulfilment, life, and death, and it implies on the other hand the repetitive gestures of work and consumption (Lefebvre, 1987:10).

Lefebvre (2004) named this process 'rhythmanalysis', a method to account for time and space within everyday life. As if rhythmanalysis records the cardiogram of a city. Lefebvre sees the

¹⁵¹ See Lefebvre, H. (2003) *Key Writings*, eds S. Elden, E. Lebas and E. Kofman, Continuum, London. Also Lefebvre H. (1996) *Writings on Cities*, eds E. Kofman and E. Lebas, Blackwell, Oxford.

rhythmanalyst as an empiricist whose several bodily rhythms participate in the rhythms they set to analyse, as Lefebvre (2004:25) writes: '[the rhythmanalyst] changes that which he observes: he sets it in motion, he recognises its power'.

Embodiments them become crucial in the process of rhythmanalysis is to follow the tempo of cyclical time, to observe the rhythm, to sense that which is in motion. Perceiving the circular geological aspects of time, we can notice the relevance with Rubin's argument in chapter 6 regarding queering time and genealogies. In addition, McBean (2016:17) argues in favour of 'unruly temporalities, in complicating the linear and the generational'. Notably, McBean examines feminist theorizations of time which focus on the linear and the generational, along with perceptions of queer time as 'non-linear' in order to resist this dichotomous relationship (McBean, 2016:38) and argues for an alternative that entails feminism's queer temporalities. Now, if we consider temporality 'outside of or in resistance to the dominant, the linear, and the generational' (McBean 2016:38) and if 'presence is a blip' (Rubin, 2011: 369) then it is also an echo, a tap, and the body of the rhythmanalyst serves 'as a metronome' (Lefebvre, 2004:19). The sensorial embodiments of a rhythmanalyst build upon the haptic inquiry of this project, to account for time and space as perceived by the researcher.

As Lefebvre (2004:20) writes:

time is not set aside for the *subject*. it is only slow in relation to our time, our body, the measure of rhythms. An apparently immobile *object*, the forest, moves in multiple ways: the combined movements of the soil, the earth, the sun(emphasis in the original)

The forest in motion. The park in motion. The ground of Syggrou that remembers. What the sand remembers.¹⁵² How archives move us.

Chris Butler (2012) offers a detailed analysis on the influential theory of Lefebvre regarding politics of space and social struggle. In the chapter ‘Space, abstraction and law’, Butler notes how for Lefebvre law is a ‘concrete abstraction’ which is materialized through the force of the state and its interaction with physical, psychological, and social conditions of space. The abstract space can be employed to control and suppress resistances to the dominant ideas of the city:

[Lefebvre] emphasises how the reproduction of abstract space inevitably demands the violent imposition of state power in the form of coercive strategies and sanctions, technologies of administrative governance and the abstractions of legal formalism (Butler, 2012:58).

Following this point, state power occupies not only ideological spaces but also physical spaces. For instance, the proposed bill ‘on protection against venereal diseases’ by the government of Karamanlis in 1981 had a section according to which men seeking to have sex with other men in public could face up to one year imprisonment (Theodorakopoulos, 2005). This bill aiming to protect the population was also planning to interfere with the spatial politics for some of the citizens. Notably, it was this proposed bill that brought people together to assemble and resist, as discussed in chapter 2. Expulsion from the public sphere would be a terrible setback, as it was vital for the socialization of homosexuals (Gkeltis, 2019). The first meeting to resist the bill occurred in ‘Louzitanía’ theatre, trans women leading the discussion (Theodorakopoulos, 2005). Following the assembly, The Greek

¹⁵² Referring to Agard– Jones (2012:326) piece where the author writes: ‘Today’s sands are yesterday’s mountains, coral reefs, and outcroppings of stone. Each grain possesses a geological lineage that links sand to a place and to its history, and each grain also carries a symbolic association that indexes that history as well.’

movement for homosexual liberation (AKOE) was formed and started publishing *Amfi*, whose office nurtured the seedlings of social mobilization. The ‘Louzitanian’ meeting, the protest, the publications interfered with and joined the rhythm of the city to fight for public space. As Butler (2012:130) notes, ‘resistance to the laws of abstract space requires not just the reappropriation of physical space, but a reassertion of alternative rhythms’. Similarly, the Women’s House and the *kafenio gynaikon*— a women only café bar in 1980s Athens— were spaces that altered the rhythm of the city with talks and meetings regarding feminism and the lesbian experience.¹⁵³

The social spaces pertinent to the archives in question provided what Lefebvre calls *representational spaces*. Representational spaces differ from representation of spaces, as the latter refers to the power relations of abstract space.¹⁵⁴ Representation spaces, on the other hand, are produced from lived experience. Butler (2012:41) writes on representational spaces:

Representational spaces are closely associated with the social and bodily functions of lived experience. They form part of the social imaginary of ‘inhabitants and users’ of space, in which complex symbols are linked to non– hegemonic forms of creative practice and social resistance’ [...] representational spaces provide the means for engagement in struggles for alternative forms of spatial organisation and the transformation to a non– alienated existence. They are the sites of resistance and counter– discourses that have either escaped the purview of bureaucratic power or manifest a refusal to acknowledge its authority.

Now, the representational spaces produced by the publications I have examined here not only engaged with a counter– discourse and address a counter– public, as discussed in Chapter 4,

¹⁵³ With ‘kafenio gynaikon’ I am referring to the women’s cafeteria that I discussed in chapter 6.

¹⁵⁴ For more on representation of Spaces see: Butler, C. (2012) *Henri Lefebvre: Spatial politics, everyday life and the right to the city* Chapter 2, The production Of Space.

but also formulated their resistance in different ways. The main common grounds of the representational spaces produced are an anti– capitalist critique and the interest of the collectives in the local. The magazines also sustained international networks, hosted articles by foreign activists, theorists, and scholars, and contributed to a broader international discourse regarding sexual liberation, feminisms, and political struggle. However, as social mobilizations targeting the Greek society, these publications hoped to leave an imprint on the local.

Gkeltis (2019) offers an overview of actions of resistance in public spaces which occurred during the years of these movements that frame geographies of the local. As Gkeltis argues, a plethora of discourses around sexualities was produced during the 1980s in Greece. An illustrative example is the research of the journalist Vassilis Apostolidis on ‘erotic life in Greece’. From 1980 to 1982 about 3,000 questionnaires were written, distributed, and completed that put under the microscope every erotic practice, desire, fantasy (Gkeltis, 2019). At the same time, Betty Vakalidou, Paola Revenioti, Aloma and Anna Kouroupou denounced police brutality which dehumanized trans women sex– workers. Numerous raids on Zappeio and other cruising spots led to unjustified arrests. State repression led to resistance. People protested outside police stations, in central Athens, and barricaded Syggrou avenue with a human chain (Gkeltis, 2019). A protest outside the house of the Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou took place in Kastri, in spring of 1983 led by Aloma. ‘It seems that we also had our own Stonewalls – decentralized, silenced and less symbolized’ writes Gkeltis (2019). I find Gkeltis’ commentary particularly important for the analysis of this project. First, I read this comment not as a comparison but rather as a relation. The scale and proportions are different yet fighting back against an oppressive state is a point of touch. Nonetheless, what could this ‘less– symbolized’ mean? Are the riots of Spring 1983 and the Kastri intervention less symbolized or are they symbolized in codes which we are not trained to recognize? Is it a

matter of lexicon or part of the politics of the participants? Perhaps both? What if we read these events as alternative forms of spatial organisation regarding resistance, as Lefebvre prompts us? If we employ visibility as perceptibility, or more precisely still, Hapticity, what changes in the reading?

Now, thinking about the representational spaces that the archives in question built, I would argue that *Amfi* and *Skoupa* address an audience of intellectuals. For instance, in the correspondence column of *Amfi*, we encounter readers from all strands of life and often they state in their letters that they are not educated, as if it is a prerequisite. Anna Michopoulou, a member of the editorial team of *Skoupa*, emphasizes that even after the halt of its publication, the magazine was established as a reference point, demonstrating the seriousness and integrity of its content. According to Michopoulou, *Skoupa* was the trailblazer of feminist research in Greece and it is noteworthy that many of *Skoupa*'s women writers later co-edited *Dini* (Eng: *Vortex*), a journal of feminist research (1986–1997). Furthermore, while in *Amfi* many of the theoretical articles or opinion pieces entail the *anti-seriousness mobilization tactics* that I discussed in Chapter 4, in *Skoupa* jokes were not that frequent or they had to be clarified as such, illustrating the different positionalities that these two publications occupied in social claims. *Skoupa*'s intention to establish the feminist discourse in Greece and raise women's consciousness perhaps required sternness and precision. The magazine was not queer, in either content or form. Ultimately, the representational space that *Skoupa* established was a feminist one. *Kraximo* on the other hand, held an anti-intellectual stance. *Kraximo* hosted interviews with Poulatzas, Guattari and other famous thinkers, alongside interviews by a sex-worker, a *tsoli* and many more people from the everyday life of the team and the readers.

Space transactions and cooperation was at play between AKOE and *the autonomous group of homosexual women*.¹⁵⁵ As Theodorakopoulos' mentions, before renting AKOE offices in Exarcheia that would be the place of meeting and encounters of several groups fighting for liberation, it was a women's organizations that hosted AKOE in their space.¹⁵⁶ Soon the women left AKOE to find their own space. *The autonomous group of homosexual women* was established in 1979 to fight for the free expression of lesbian sexuality and the abolition of the lesbian oppression by society. Members of the group published the short-lived publication of *Lavrys*, whose touching stories were discussed in chapter 6. We can get a glimpse of *Lavrys*' politics in the article on anarcho-feminism, utopia and action (issue 1:38-39). The article is based on the book *Anarchism and Feminism* (Ehrlich and Farrow, 1980) and is written by Anna and Sisi. Anna and Sisi offer an analysis on the links between anarchism and feminism quoting Emma Goldman:

Anarchism stands for a social order based on the free grouping of individuals for the purpose of producing real social wealth; an order that will guarantee to every human being free access to the earth and full enjoyment of the necessities of life, according to individual desires, tastes, and inclinations. (*Lavrys*,1982:39, my translation)

Following Goldman's theory on personal and social enjoyment as a revolutionary act, Anna and Sisi see feminism and anarchism as practices that require not 'social change', but rather a total re-organization of society. According to them 'social change' is a trap meant to assimilate women within the patriarchal establishment. The radical politics of Anna and Sisi see a utopia that is possible because 'the political is not 'out there' but in our thoughts, in our bodies, and among people' (p38). The authors emphasize that we need to let go of the

¹⁵⁵ At least in the years of Theodorakopoulos.

¹⁵⁶ The name of the group remains unstated see Theodorakopoulos (2005) in *Amfi* and liberation: a chronicle and articles.

dominant ideology of man which perpetuates oppression and not only separates the world in binaries but also favours always one: logic over emotion, rationalism over intuition, and creates structures that separate active from passive, adult from child, the rational from the irrational, work from play, spontaneity from staging. The argument of Anna and Sisi echoes Wynter's call to re-organize our thinking processes away from the ideas of the European Enlightenment which frame the white European heteronormative adult male as the prototype of being. According to Wynter the binary categories created to sustain Western ideologies of white male dominance situate all those who differ from this category as lesser human and the work to be done is to disentangle these connections. As Wynter (2003:260–261) tell us:

All our present struggles with respect to race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, struggles over the environment, global warming, severe climate change, the sharply unequal distribution of the earth resources [...] these are all differing facets of the central ethnoclass Man vs. Human struggle.

Institutions of colonial projects that uphold the binary of central ethnoclass Man versus human struggle, prevent from imagining other potentialities of being. A task of disinvesting from colonial ideas created to rule and subjugate is imperative for the possibilities that Anna and Sisi write about. Anna and Sisi call for active resistance against the binary that Wynter notes, emphasize how participation in autonomous groups like *the autonomous group of homosexual women* is a good exercise. The group adopts an anti-hierarchical structure and helps them 'unlearn' passivity and the scheme of 'followers' and 'leaders'. According to Anna and Sisi, what women need the most is hope. They identify hope as the most powerful revolutionary weapon of women, 'and it is exactly that [hope] which we give to each other, every time we share our life experiences, our work and our love' (Lavrys, 1982:39).

What Anna and Sisi do with their radical thinking and politics of love and anarchy, is to attend to that which Hartman (2019) also beautifully touches upon when narrating everyday rebellions of ordinary colored [sic] girls in racially segregated America. An active refusal to be recognized under limiting categories imposed by the white man and with a radical hope of living otherwise.

The right to difference and the possibilities of everydayness

Lefebvre's concept of 'the right to the city' can help us pull all the threads together again to examine how *Amfi*, *Skoupa*, *Kraximo* and *Lavrys* opened a space for discussions, meeting points and connections, as well as theories and practices of inhabiting the public sphere. The spatial dimensions of protests, assemblies, fieldtrips, guidelines on how to handle police arrests, experiences of rural queer lives, testimonies of police brutality, participations in overlapping discussions and stories of interpersonal relations, cross-stitch the theoretical inquisitions that animate this project. The right to the city, as Lefebvre sees it, starts in negation. It is the refusal to let go of social hubs as places of sociopolitical galvanization. As Butler (2012:144) puts it:

the right to the city can be best understood as a 'transformed and renewed right to urban life', which links it to the essential characteristics of the urban as both a creative work and a space of 'centrality', 'gathering' and 'convergence

The right to the city is recognizing the dynamic relations between bodies and spaces and fighting back the consolidation of abstract spaces. Autogestion and active participation of the inhabitants of a city is important in the process. Lefebvre (1976:120) writes:

Without self-management, 'participation' has no meaning; it becomes an ideology, and makes manipulation possible. Self-management is the only thing that can make participation real, by inserting it in a process that tends towards the global

The magazines discussed in this project, albeit different in terms of focus and continuity of their production, emerged from collectives that exercised– or hoped to exercise– anti–hierarchical modes of assembly and creation. Drawing from international debates on sexuality, gender, and political struggle, each magazine focused on a locality, considering the global. However, *Amfi* and *Skoupa* touch more upon the importance of institutional rights, than *Kraximo* and *Lavrys*. Certainly, the contrast between institutional rights and the right to the city is clear for Lefebvre, as the right to the city exceeds the frame of institutional claims.

Notably, the right to the city according to Lefebvre pushes beyond citizenship rights. As Butler (2012:148) notes, ‘while not rejecting the strategic use of legal mechanisms to further political demands, he [Lefebvre] explicitly rejects the idea that the right to the city can be reduced to a positivist legal right’.¹⁵⁷ The right to the city is an ongoing struggle located to practices of everydayness. Butler (2012) and De Souza (2010) guard against an institutionalization of the ‘right to the city’.¹⁵⁸ More specifically De Souza offers a libertarian point of view and criticizes modern interpretations of Lefebvre’s work:

In fact, in many cases the ‘right to the city’ seems to mean the following: *The right to a better, more ‘human’ life in the context of the capitalist city, the capitalist society and on the basis of a (‘reformed’ and ‘improved’) representative ‘democracy’*. The fact that neoliberalism, gentrification and ‘disenchantment with politics’ are more or less critically analysed does not necessarily imply that the fundamental premises of neoliberalism, gentrification and ‘disenchantment with politics’ are consistently criticised (and refused). This requires some further and more decisive steps. Who is

¹⁵⁷ In more detail see: Lefebvre H. (1996) *Writings on Cities*, eds E. Kofman and E. Lebas, Blackwell, Oxford.

¹⁵⁸ As Butler (2012: 157– 158) writes: ‘it should be remembered that Lefebvre specifically resists framing the right to the city as a legal entitlement because he envisages it as a means for contesting both state power and legal individualism, through the transformation of urban space and the institutions that govern it’.

still interested in taking this radical path?... (De Souza, 2010: 317, emphasis to the original)

The path that De Souza invites us to take requires meticulous work. It also requires the help of Wynter, Anna, Sisi, Emma, Esther, Paola, Betty and their attentive defiance.

To understand better the radical idea of the right to the city, Lefebvre, locates it in relation to ‘the right to difference’. Lefebvre sees the right of difference as a political stance that ensures a differentiation of dominant practices of social reproduction. He writes: (1991)

The ‘right to difference’ is a formal designation for something that may be achieved through practical action, through effective struggle – namely, concrete differences. The right to difference implies no entitlements that do not have to be bitterly fought for. This is a ‘right’ whose only justification lies in its content; it is thus diametrically opposed to the right of property, which is given validity by its logical and legal form as the basic code of relationship under the capitalist mode of production (Lefebvre, 1991: 396–397)

Centering the *content* as ‘the right to difference’ means being and living differently from the assimilatory abstract spaces dictate. It means to practice inhabiting a space that seems impossible in the schemes of abstraction. It is the right to difference that can produce differential spaces, and to synch ‘onto rhythms, onto circulations of energy, onto the life of the body’ (Lefebvre, 1991: 373). Attune to social movements, body movements, archival moving stories, the hand moving to write, Lefebvre’s social theory is in theoretical conversation with the archives in question, as it acknowledges the importance of space, desire

for difference, and embodiments and open towards that which Butler (2012: 159) calls ‘the transformative possibilities of everyday life’.

Moments of comradery¹⁵⁹

Connections and tensions between the archives, expressions of non– normative desire in Greece and spatial politics as forces of social struggle, have been the key aspects of this chapter. Having focussed on lust in the public sphere, re– thinking the private and signalling towards modalities of living differently every day, this project can only end with another archival story that touched me.

On Christmas 1982, Dimitris decided to spend his holidays in Budapest with a group of friends. As he notes in *Amfi*, he was greatly affected by the Communist Party and used to believe that there are no homosexuals in socialist countries and that ‘homosexuality is a remnant of the bourgeoisie’. Before this trip, he had visited Bulgaria and Romania. When Dimitris visited Bulgaria, he was so influenced by the Communist Party’s doctrines that he did not even look for sex. When he visited Romania, it was because of his lover, so he did not pay attention to anyone else but him. Now he was going to Budapest with friends, and only he and his friend Orestis were gay, so he states that they had to be discrete in their search for bars and pleasure.

One day, when the rest of the group was visiting a church, Dimitris waited outside. There he saw someone locking eyes with him. He followed him to the supermarket. They didn’t exchange a word, but they were staring at each other, ‘he smiled to me through an advertisement of a soap’. He went out and Dimitris followed him. ‘He was waiting for me across the street, as I approached a voice interrupted ‘we are leaving’ – Dimitris recounts. The tour was over and Orestis was calling him. He laughed, looked at the guy one more time,

¹⁵⁹ A story by Dimitris, in *Amfi* issue 11 period B winter spring 1982:36– 37.

took a handful of snow and threw it, aiming at his heart and then, left with the group. The afternoon was free from tours, so they went with his friend to Marx square. They told him that public toilets must have ‘something’, that is, cruising opportunities. But they the square was being re– built, so they had no access to the toilets. They looked over at the train station, ‘loneliness always circulates in the stations. We will find something there’ – he said. They went downstairs and the toilets were full of people. His friend didn’t waste any time and went in a cubicle with someone, Dimitris stared hesitantly. Many comrades – as Dimitris called them – approached him but he was too shy and was mainly looked at the floor, ‘Marx was standing across from me with the hammer and sickle threatening me with castration’. At the same time, comrades would go in in pairs, finish, leave, and others took their place, many others as Dimitris describes. Then, his friend took him by the hand, and they left. Two guys followed them up until their hotel but did not enter. Now it was time to hit the bars, but they did not know how to find them. Later, they met a girl who could speak Greek because her boyfriend was a truck driver from Greece. They became friends, but when Dimitris asked about the bar the girl replied shocked: ‘Dimitris, this is where faggots go’. He lied to her and told her that a friend was waiting for him there, so she took them to the bar, but it was closed – bars in Budapest in winter used to close at 10 – in August they last till morning, Dimitris added. The girl seemed sad that he did not get to find his friend.

On their last day in Budapest, during their tram trip, a guy came in. ‘He entered the tram, sat across me and suddenly our eyes met. He was holding a record with music from his country, he smiled and so did I’, narrates Dimitris. ‘In that moment, I imagined the record playing, suddenly just like that, on its own, and us two dancing there in the tram, in front of everyone, among everyone. I saw him coming closer, he gave me the record, I didn’t even had time to say thank you, he was off the tram’, continues Dimitris. The same night at the hotel someone waved at him to go to the toilet, he followed him hoping to get lucky, but the guy just asked if

he could exchange his money to dollars. The following day, after delays they arrived in Athens. Dimitris arrived home at 12 am. He writes, ‘as I smoke the last cigarette of the day, I turned on the radio in *Radio Tis Allagis*. The radio station among other news on culture and films, broadcasted that Sergei Parajanov, the famous Russian director, was accused of homosexuality and the Soviet court sentenced him to five years in Siberia. I changed the station. A home– brewed station broadcast the most recent hit of Litsa Diamanti. I turned the radio's volume to the max and opened all the windows’.

I find this account amazingly touching, caring and strangely hopeful. Dimitris offers a description on the laws of desire in a Soviet country from a very personal perspective. He shares the internalized processes of shame produced by ideology, as he tries to negotiate his desires. Yet he desires. And when he cannot act on it, he imagines it; ‘two guys dancing in a tram full of people’. The honesty and care of the description activate haptic forces in me, as I read, as I learn, as I almost hear the rhythm of the record playing. Ultimately, back to Athens late at night he listens to the news about Parajanov. And he responds– reacts– refuses to, instantly. He changes the radio station, not because he does not care, but because he knows. An urban folk song from Litsa Giakousi becomes the soundtrack across his neighbourhood at midnight. With open windows and an imaginative will.

A suggestion:

This project could also end with one more archival story.

Though this time, it is you who gets to imagine it.

For all the rebel hearts.

CONCLUSION

How can I claim a conclusion for this written weave? As I suggest in chapter 7: ‘this project could also end with one more archival story’, and some readers might choose to follow that way. However, considering all the over– under/ under– over theoretical weaving motions that took place in this thesis, I need to offer some conclusive reflections to finalise this haptic exploration and its theoretical contributions. I invite the reader to read this part of the thesis as an ending to this written project, while the processes, the stories, the connections, and imaginations hopefully continue, as I place this weft upon the world.

In this research, I have brought together archival stories that ‘touched me’. As I have claimed throughout the thesis, this touching was enabled by the tripartite sense of touch that Camp (2012) described as the haptic touch — a physical touch, an indexical touch, and an affective touch — felt simultaneously. The haptic touch as a way into reading these queer archives made my alert – surrender reading position possible. Aware of the possibility of the haptic touch. The stories I presented also illustrate interpersonal connections and my relation to the archives in question. I see a certain recognition upon the warp and the weft of this written weave that began from the discovery of the book as a gift for my birth.¹⁶⁰ A recognition that I still feel is evolving and will continue outside of this thesis.

This recognition comes from my psychosocial positionality, from the context of the archives and from the emergence of the haptic touch. Notably, if I performed a haptic reading to a phonebook for example, not only would it be a very different project but also, I doubt if one could claim an appearance of ‘the haptic’ apart from names that remind them of something, that they recognize. This example is not to compare these archives with the functionality of

¹⁶⁰ Just a reminder to the reader that here I am referring to the *History of the Greek Feminist Movement* (Moschou– Sakorafou, 1990), an encounter that I discuss in the introduction.

white pages. I employ this example to point out that the methodological composition of this project is intrinsically exploratory and relational, inasmuch as relations are processes and dynamics shaped by the social realm and lived as if individual and personal.

The inventive concept of the weave added creative possibilities to this thesis that I think are crucial when dealing with such rich material. One has to imagine the loom, assemble the warp, and enlase the weft. What this research offers is how I— a psychosocially produced subject, brought together sixteen warp threads and stories from four magazines that ‘touched me’ haptically. Taking up on these methodological innovations, in this thesis I have presented juxtapositions and reflections, as I performed a haptic reading and interlaced the yarns in a written form. I chose to dedicate each chapter of the weft to a different magazine, giving space to the different worlds that the archives entail, to unbind the stories that touched me. In chapter 7 I linked the different aspects of the archives together to discuss their everydayness in the quest of a public space imagined otherwise and mediating desire in the urban landscape. By centering archival stories whose protagonists lived and desired otherwise, the notion of the haptic and my reading positionalities get enriched throughout the project as well. For example, the journey of Elisavet Martinegkou that we encounter in *Skoupa*, is a plead and a practice to live her life differently from what it is expected of her. And for one night she is free. It is her story that made the ‘alert–surrender–forget’ reading scheme to momentarily appear, as I discuss in chapter 3. A psychic disarray that is welcomed in this exploratory project. Similarly, in the chapter of *Amfi* I theorize the anti–seriousness mobilization tactics that derive from the political arenas of the first years of the publication which challenged the common senses. By implying ‘whose common sense?’ AKOE disputed common senses not only on ‘how to do desire’ but also on ‘how to do politics’. The archival stories from *Amfi* that I analyse in chapter 4 reveal an otherwise. An otherwise as a practice, like the article of Dr. Pervertson and the first call for Athens’ pride, and as desire, if we bring

to mind the letter of the tragically in love woman from Patra. The caring reply of Mr. Dinos to her agony and despair shows the attentiveness of desire as a practice of ‘anti-seriousness’. And I find it touching.

Kraximo’s stories show another layer of the haptic, that of optics. I see the visual aspect of the haptic in *Kraximo*’s refusal to conform in order to become a citizenship project, in the life of queen Nancy who rejects the given because she pleases otherwise, in the casual talk of Giannis and Antonis fuelled by lust and sexual politics, in the lively discussion of a few friends by a Venetian canal in 1984. Life trajectories that meet in the archive and through the methodological apparatus of the haptic, I become attune to their ‘flashing lights’. In chapter 6 the stories take us to the term *aggigma*, a greek word for ‘touch’, as if *Lavrys*’ team is kind of waiting for a touch from the readers. There, within the politics of love, intimacy, and lesbian discourse a touch is expected, a touch in suspense. A desire for connections, tangible and theoretical simultaneously. Chapter 7 that links the magazines together and offers a rhythmanalysis as Lefebvre imagine it, is where I place the love story of Dimitris during Christmas of 1982. Dimitris imagines, desires, lives and writes about it. All the stories in this thesis I think express lives who yearn for an otherwise and in the everydayness. People that come from different angles and places yet encountered in magazines that are concerned with sexual politics, class struggle, and socio-economical consciousness, propose different modalities of living and desiring. What I find particularly hopeful is the ease within which this haptic exploration might spark discussions/imaginings and draw connections outside of the bounds of paper. I see something quite pertinent that can enliven the political present in Greek society and beyond.

The original aspects of this thesis involve the methodology of the project and the way I read through the archives with a psychosocial situatedness. Taking up the method of the haptic along with my alert-surrender reading position I was affected by the stories I included here,

stories that touched me and depict ‘an otherwise’. Affected by the materials, the relations, the desires, and the imaginations that they offer up to me, I produced this originally written weave. Relations play a key role in the originality of this piece as it began with something familial, i.e. the scene of the discovery of the book with what seems to be my toddler art, and the warp and the weft is the haptic extension into social and political socialities — past and presents — that the book is a portal to, i.e. feminist and queer movements.¹⁶¹ The haptic registers that allowed for the book to become a portal, together with the psychosocial perspective that accounts for an ‘I’ (me) that becomes a factor involved in this research — the hand that writes, that weaves, that moves, are components that greatly animate this project. This project mobilises the haptic approach and the psychosocial standpoint to extend haptically towards other subjectivities as they have emerged in the archives. What is that which links all these stories together then? All of the above. And, well, me.

¹⁶¹ The book I am referring to here is *History of the Greek Feminist Movement* (Moschou– Sakorrafou, 1990).

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