"Cinderella of Modern Greece": Aliki Voyouklaki as National Romance

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ABSTRACT

As a metaphor for social unity, the love couple functions as an ideological symbol par excellence. Greece during the 1950s, characterized as it was by the attempt at establishing right-wing hegemony, saw a massive discursive mobilization of this privileged signifier in support of ideological reconstruction. Aliki Vouyouklaki starred in over a dozen hugely popular and commercially successful films alongside Dimitris Papamichael, and theirs was a popular dyad that conflated both diegetic and extra-textual romance, embodying a passionate and often rowdy on-screen relationship re-enacted in the well-publicized celebrity marriage that followed. In the context of post-war reconstruction it is not love that conquers all but capitalism – the Law. Three romantic comedies starring Aliki Vouyouklaki and Dimitris Papamichael (Spare the Rod..., Mandalena, and Aliki in the Navy) will serve to illustrate the process by which the authority of the law is inflected anew through the matrix of romance.

KEYWORDS

Vouyouklaki
stardom
ideology
civil war
popular cinema
romance

MODERN GREEK FAIRYTALES

> *I wrote once that Vouyouklaki was synonymous with Karamanlis, and I meant that they both began their careers together. And they were careers in parallel. They both imprinted on their careers the misery, the dreams, the illusions, the nightmares and the hopes, the delusion and the wiles of an entire people. Karamanlis created a bourgeois Greece … and it was one such Greek girl that Aliki personified.* (Kostas Georgoussopoulos 1995)

Greek commentary upon the Greek film phenomenon Aliki Vouyouklaki's star persona has argued its iconic status, suggesting not only the commercial significance of her image, but, in the precise semiotic sense of iconicity as the inference of meaning through resemblance, positing a semantic equivalence between star image and social imaginary:

> She incarnated the dreams and illusions of the bruised Greeks after the war. She symbolized the hopes of the bullied petit-bourgeoisie and their aspiration for a better and easier life. She identified herself with post-war society, the reconstruction, the politics of tourism, dreams of consumerism, and with rapid social ascension. (Georgoussopoulos 1995: 132)

Vouyouklaki is the "Cinderella of Modern Greece" (Georgoussopoulos 1995: 132), a fairy-tale figure that embodies both the internalization of the values of a capitalist state and the ego-ideal of that state's own social image. In the face of a nation undergoing massive societal and economic upheaval and instability, Aliki represented "a popular myth of sentimental order" (Georgoussopoulos 1995: 132) papering over the disparity between reality and the promises of modernization, presenting instead a popular icon of charming Greekness (see fig 1).

Fig 1 Conspicuous consumption and stardom

Thodoros Natsinas writes that "her film persona plays variations on the theme of a Snow White-like girl of modest means who uses her wit and fundamental generosity to charm her way into the higher classes" (Natsinas 1995: 447). It is a fantasy imagining of social unity in which values of innocence, generosity and geniality are reconciled with modernization and materialism, and are ultimately rewarded in the social, economic, and romantic *embourgeoisiement* that sees that Aliki always gets her man. This syncretic ambivalence underpins the very articulation of a star image founded upon the discursive binding of contradictory elements.

Vouyouklaki's star persona embodies two popular gender stereotypes distinctly at variance to each other. In terms of dominant typologies of cinematic femininity, Vouyouklaki represents both the classical image of virginal innocence, while at the same time also expressing its antithesis, a witty and impudent sexuality. She manages to integrate these opposing social subject positions and to reconcile (if not escape) the traditional binary classification of female types by embodying both ideals. These contradictions are narrativized in *To Klotsoskoufi/The Plaything* (Dinos Dimopoulos, 1960) in which the chaste and innocent Aliki is constantly being sexually propositioned to the point where she is eventually chased from job to job to avoid the unwanted advances of employers who just can't help but respond to her youth and beauty. This conflation of distinct gender roles and their associated expectations of femininity is emphasized in the following snapshot of Vouyouklaki by Mel Schuster, in which he describes her star image as an amalgamation of other female icons – from both Hollywood and European cinemas – each emblematic of either one of these traditional binary types:

> Take a pinch of Debbie Reynolds energy, a touch of Doris Day steeliness, lace generously with Brigitte Bardot child-womanliness, season with the committed ambition of Joan Crawford. Stir vigorously while adding Julie Andrews, Gina Lollobrigida, Lana Turner, Ruby Keeler and Shirley Temple. Bake for 15 years under a perpetual spotlight and voila! Aliki Vouyouklaki! (Schuster, 1979: 260)

This inventory of intertexts catalogues those star images which exemplify, on the one hand, the celebration of woman as moral embodiment – the childish innocence of Temple, the chaste virtue of Day – and on the other, the sexualized objectification of woman – the earthy exoticism of Lollobrigida, the naturalness of Bardot. It illustrates a gender typology whose binary logic finds imaginary resolution in the negotiation of these contradictory elements in a single, ambivalent star text. Thus Vouyouklaki holds the polarized positions of cinematic gender roles in hybridic tension, doing so through the articulation of an array of contradictory elements that inflect particular aspects of this

dialogism. Dyer talks of the "structured polysemy" (1998: 63) of the star image, of the multiple but finite meanings that in their relational aspect to one another constitute its significance. In the case of Vouyouklaki, her image accorded to a semantic centre structured around the interplay of "innocence" and "experience", a privileged dyad that determined the "meaning" of all the concomitant discursive practices and signifying elements – the promotional material and publicity, film performances and criticism (Dyer 1998) – that constituted the star text.

Central to the defining notion of innocence has been an emphasis on Vouyouklaki's youthfulness often articulated through references to Aliki the ingénue. The young Vouyouklaki made her stage debut at eighteen and appeared in her first film role, in *To Pontikaki/The Little Mouse* (Nikos Tsiforos, 1954), a year later, while in her review of *Diakopes stin Aigina/Holiday in Aegina* (Andreas Lambrinos, 1958), Eleni Vlachou writes of Vouyouklaki's "youthful high spirits" (*Kathimerini*, 12 March 1958). A broad appreciation of Aliki as generally youthful rather than particularly a specific age or another, was encouraged by Vouyouklaki's resolute refusal to proffer any information regarding her date of birth, thus hindering the precise dating of her career progression and deliberately cultivating an air of ambiguity around the question of her exact age. The results of this obfuscation are evident in terms of the number of conflicting estimations concerning her age that, following her death, have still not been definitively resolved. For example, Natsinas' biographical entry on Vouyouklaki in the *Encyclopaedia of European Cinema*, published in 1995, a year before her death, cites 1937 as her date of birth, while her British press obituaries in 1996 offer 1933, and Greek commentator Stelios Poulakis writing in 1999 makes the case for 1934. Even at her funeral, the eulogy delivered by Culture Minister Stavros Benos conflated the fundamental youthfulness of her screen image with the longevity of her status as a national icon. It is evident from this tribute that Vouyouklaki's enduring legacy is an image of cinematic youthfulness imprinted upon the public consciousness from her most successful screen performances as a young woman and reinforced through extra-diegetic commentary and speculation on the maintenance of her cosmetic beauty.

Regardless of Vouyouklaki's precise age, the impression of youthfulness she embodied was encouraged through her association with screen roles that emphasized an even more pronounced focus on teenage femininity. Thus she is often arrayed as an image of burgeoning womanhood within distinct topologies of childhood, such as the domestic space in *Mandalena* (Dimopoulos, 1960), in which she plays a seventeen year-old orphan determined to provide for her large family of young siblings, or the school, in *To Xilo Vyike ap'to Paradeiso/Spare the Rod, Spoil the Child* (Alekos Sakellarios, 1959) in a seminal role as the mischievous and coquettish pupil Liza Papastavrou. Connotations of youth are

further emphasized by the attendant use of diminutive appellations and nicknames that single out the Vouyouklaki character within the diegesis. Thus eponymous titles such as *The Little Mouse* and *The Plaything* serve to quote the nicknames by which Aliki's young orphan characters are referred to both within the films themselves and beyond them in their publicity. The conflation of innocent youth and familiarity in the use of diminutive pet names is also clearly evident in the popular use of the mononym Aliki as a sign for the star – in both the press and in her promotional material – a sign which collapses the boundaries between both actor and character – as in *Aliki sto Naftiko/Aliki in the Navy* (Sakellarios, 1961) – and between the star and her audience.

Innocence is further emphasized through the strong association of Vouyouklaki with popular song and dance. All five of her first Finos Film comedies, *Spare the Rod Spoil the Child, The Plaything*, *Mandalena*, *Aliki in the Navy*, and *Liza kai i Alli/Liza and the Other* (Dimopoulos, 1961) feature the music and songs of popular composer Manos Hadjidakis. While these films are not musicals in the sense that they are not explicitly marketed as such or structured according to the particular generic conventions of the musical film mode, the song and dance numbers that they contain are still moments of musical spectacle that were hugely anticipated and enjoyed by contemporary audiences, as well as still providing a source of kitsch pleasure for modern viewers. The songs primarily served a choral function, illustrating the central thematic motifs of the narrative, while their performance was clearly contextualized as having a firm diegetic motivation. For example, during the school excursion in *Spare the Rod…*, the girls led by Papastavrou (Vouyouklaki) "*put on a number*" to entertain themselves. They sing and dance in unison to Hadjidakis' *The Grey Kitten*, and the anthropomorphic lyrics that paint a picture of a crafty kitten universally adored and the cunning cat that sees beyond her *"pink nose"* and *"silky grey fur"*, clearly allude to the relationship between the cheeky spoilt child and the stern young teacher (Dimitris Papamichael) with whom she has fallen in love. While in *Aliki in the Navy*, another ensemble number, *Full Steam Ahead*, is sung by Aliki and the sailors in celebration of her engagement to one of their colleagues (Papamichael). The song – an exaltation of seize-the-day spontaneity that echoes Aliki's impetuous stowing away onboard a naval battleship for love – is presented as an impromptu performance, with sailors accompanying Aliki on bottles and the architecture of the dormitory such as bunks and ladders used within the choreography of the dance. A sense of spontaneity and naturalness is connoted in the naïve but enthusiastic style of much of the choreography of Vouyouklaki's dances. Again this innocence finds further articulation through the lyrical connotations of childhood in Hadjidakis' music. *The Plaything* and *Spare the Rod…* contain songs that allude to nursery rhymes in their use of charming animal motifs – sparrows and kittens – and also onomatopoeic lyrical representations of bird song and cats mewing, while *Mandalena* contains a

traditional folk song and dance complete with comic actions performed by Mandalena (Vouyouklaki) and all her young siblings. It should also be remembered that the record releases of these Vouyouklaki and Hadjidakis collaborations were hugely popular, particularly with younger pre-adolescent children and their mothers, further emphasizing the discursive articulation of Aliki in terms of youth and innocence.

This impression is further underscored by the manner in which Vouyouklaki was typically costumed, particularly during scenes of music and performance. In *Mandalena*, *The Plaything,* and *Spare the Rod…*Aliki sings and dances barefoot, swaying her flowing blonde locks, and dressed in simple summer dresses or ski pants, she signals an innocent sense of youthful and natural vitality. In addition to her costuming, Vouyouklaki presented a very definite self-image in terms of her makeup, and very early on in her career Vouyouklaki established a clear cosmetic identity that accentuated this image of youth, freshness, and fashion. The brazenness of smoky eyes and red lipstick – see Mercouri's makeup in *Stella* (Michael Cacoyannis, 1955) – was eschewed in favour of the far more subtle palette of pastel shades made available by contemporary innovations in cosmetics manufacture. While in contrast to the young female stars that preceded her in the early 1950s – such as Smaroula Giouli and Elli Lambetti – Vouyouklaki adopted a far more exaggerated use of eyeliner, more akin to that of French stars such as Brigitte Bardot. Thus with her soft pink and peach lips and her richly lined eyes Aliki was the literal image of fresh-faced and wide-eyed innocence, as well as a popular icon of the new chic.

In fact, most of the contemporary commentary on Vouyouklaki focused on her freshness, often describing her film performances as comedic expressions of cheery optimism, youthful high spirits, and innocent charm. The reviewer S.G. talks of her "fresh and cheerful temperament" (*Eleftheria*, 26 October 1960) in *Mandalena*, while in *Aliki in the Navy*, she offers "two hours of spontaneous joy, freshness, and boundless high spirits" (*Eleftheria*, 22 February 1961). Eleni Vlachou describes the same performance in terms of Vouyouklaki's "joy and coquettishness" (*Kathimerini*, 19 February 1961). What is emphasized in much of this contemporary commentary is the significance of these various signs of vitality and joviality and how they coalesce into a set of coherent star meanings centred about the notion of fresh and youthful innocence. In terms of the film texts themselves, we see repeated instances of the comedic nature of play – with its connotations of childhood games and their suspension of adult order – as well as aspects of the dizzy blonde stereotype in terms of Aliki's chaotic enthusiasm and clumsiness – again emphasizing her youthfulness through associated memories of the awkwardness of adolescence. The clearest expression of the narrative prevalence of play is *Spare the Rod…*, set as it is in the world of a girls' high school. Primarily upon the encouragement of Papastavrou (Vouyouklaki)

the female students enjoy playing a host of games and jokes at the expense of their teachers. They attach denigrating pictures and rolls of tissue paper to the coats of the stuff, run amok in a food fight through the refectory, confuse their gym teacher by inverting his instructions, and even play witty word games in class. When asked while studying Homer if she recognizes the name Pallas Athene, Papastavrou answers that of course she knows both the Pallas and the Rex, two popular Athenian cinemas! In *Mandalena*, Aliki's eponymous heroine and her siblings share a game that involves naming and renaming their donkey after the townsfolk that have offended them, and at one point when sailing against their rival Lambis (Papamichael), Mandalena and her sisters announce their contempt by hoisting an improvised flag fashioned from their young brother's pantaloons. *Aliki in the Navy* opens with a playful scene in which two groups of young friends each out enjoying a yacht ride tease each other over a beach ball and perform a masquerade of a game of pirates. In addition, all three films feature comic instances of Aliki's clumsy impetuousness and the trail of chaos that often follows in her wake; see the sequence in *The Plaything* in which the eager Aliki's visits to Alekos Alexandrakis' shipping firm result in her disruption of his office space and her offending his staff, or the famous scene of Mandalena and Lambis' escalating argument on the prows of their respective caiques that culminates in their falling simultaneously overboard.

We can see how images of youthfulness, the centrality of song and dance, and narrative notions of play are articulated through various filmic and extra-filmic signifying elements such as biographical information, characterization, performance, music, makeup, film criticism, etc. in order to situate the Aliki star sign within the discursive parameters of an idealized innocence. However, as we have already noted, this image of innocent femininity constitutes only half of the Vouyouklaki icon, for what is most striking about her star image – and we might speculate what constituted its mass appeal – was its resolution of an imagined innocence with a contradictory articulation of a knowing femininity in terms of experience, most often expressed in an emphasis on sexuality. Vouyouklaki was very quickly defined in terms of her physical beauty in the writing of contemporary film commentators. It is important to remember that experiences in commercial modelling provided part of the context from which Vouyouklaki entered the movies and of how she was received. Greek critics saw Vouyouklaki as an indigenous Bardot or Marilyn Monroe, arguing for the iconic status of Vouyouklaki in national terms and also explicitly aligning her star image with Hollywood and European modes of screen sexuality exemplified by actresses who also entered cinema from careers in modelling. Vouyouklaki's association with these "sex bombs" is itself heavily conditioned by the terms of the cosmetic construction of the self-image that they share. Both Bardot and Monroe were famous for their dyed blonde hair that became synonymous with the sexualized femininity they came to represent, and which Aliki adopted so as to differentiate

herself from her domestic rivals. And again, the oft-quoted comparison between Aliki and Bardot is particularly instructive. Both stars represented a cross over between "the sexual know-how of the sex-goddess and the charm of the adolescent" (Vincendeau, 2000: 93), and this amalgamation finds its cosmetic articulation in the styling of dyed blonde hair that combines "long tumbling locks traditionally connoting sexuality, with the girlish fringe" (Vincendeau, 2000: 94). This coiffured hybridity also echoes the interplay of Vouyouklaki's physical form and aspects of performance in which she combines a lithe sensuality with a tomboyish physicality. It is important to note that while Vouyouklaki's body was often on display in her films, it was not *overtly* sexualized in terms of its functioning as visual spectacle; unlike Zoe Laskari, for example, who represented a much more explicit kind of *Lolita* sexuality, both extra-textually – in that she was both younger than Vouyouklaki and famous as a winner of the *Star Ellas* beauty pageant – and textually – through her portrayal of a far more transgressive teenage femininity that explicitly displayed Laskari's fuller figure and pouting sexuality. Unlike Laskari, Vouyouklaki was put on display more through what she wore rather than what she took off, so we catch glimpses of her lithe body in bathing suits, gymslips and baby doll nightdresses, in light summer dresses that cling to her hips, slash neck sweaters that reveal her shoulders and chest, or even, as in *Aliki in the Navy*, in an androgynous sailors uniform that still manages to draw the eye and the camera to her pert bottom.

In fact, Vouyouklaki is exceptional in the actual number of costuming and styling variations she progresses through in each of her movies, connoting, as she does so, an image of sartorial chic and youthful style savvy. In *Aliki in the Navy* Vouyouklaki goes through thirteen different varieties of costume, including a swimsuit, a blue summer suit, a pink gingham dress and frilly petticoat, a lilac shirt and matching hat with white skip pants, a blue floral dress with perfectly co-ordinated white shoes, gloves, and handbag, a colourful Hawaiian shirt and white hotpants, ultimately culminating in a splendid wedding gown. She demonstrates her ease in both casual, less-structured outfits as well as the "coordinated ensemble" (Vincendeau, 2000: 87) showing off both looks in an elegant wardrobe filmed in glorious colour. In *Spare the Rod…*, the number of individual variations is limited by the imposition of school uniform as the predominant costuming mode, yet Aliki's "look" – in particular the blonde hair – remains a primary focus of viewing pleasure. In the out of school sequences she still manages to model a number of fresh, youthful fashions, yet the primary styling alternatives she sports consist of changes in the way she wears her hair, switching from plaits to ponytails, sometimes piling the hair up, other times allowing it to fall free, and still other times wearing a summer hat or cap. Even in a film like *Mandalena,* in which the family of orphans images the poverty of their social world in the torn and ragged breeches they wear, Vouyouklaki presents a stylish exception through the sheer number of costume changes she undergoes.

In a film in which almost none of the other female characters alters their dress more than once, Aliki is shown in at least four different dresses, that though worn and dirty retain a simple unadorned elegance in their flattering flowing lines. Even when the social dictates of ritual-mourning prescribe black, Mandalena's wardrobe astonishingly contains at least another two different black dresses that she customizes with changes of hairstyle or choice of hat or headscarf. Thus even when portraying characters from impoverished and disenfranchised backgrounds Vouyouklaki still maintains a constant level of visual spectacle through the combined effect of the naturalness of her body, flattered as it is by simple, youthful fashions, and offset by the playful expressiveness of subtly shifting hairstyles (see fig 2). This image of youthful chic was eagerly consumed not only in the cinema, but also through its multiplication on the magazine covers and cigarette cards available at every corner kiosk, attaining a level of public visibility that only increased in popularity during the 1960s.

Fig 2 Elegant impoverishment in *Mandalena* (Dimopoulos, 1960)

The skill with which Vouyouklaki co-ordinated her stylistic presentation across a range of media texts is fundamental to the expression of her star image in terms of a knowing, wily femininity one whose articulation as experienced, contrasts with the image of innocence it helped construct. We are witness to the extent of this worldly experience very early on in her career, where Vouyouklaki demonstrated unprecedented business acumen by being the first Greek film star to negotiate a share of the profits of each of her film, in addition, to an individual fee that far outstripped those earned by her contemporaries. In later years she also managed the singular feat of obtaining royalties for all of her movies that were shown on the domestic television networks. These financial coups helped

finance the establishing of her own eponymous theatre troupe and signaled Vouyouklaki as a determined and clever businesswoman, far removed from the dizzy blondes she often portrayed. In fact, Vouyouklaki claims for herself in interviews a firm control over the kinds of parts she accepted (Triantafillidis 1997). She claims much of the credit for instigating particular projects and inflecting them as part of her own personal self-expression, asserting for example, that *Spare the Rod…*was a direct result of her desire to make a high school movie motivated out of a fondness for her own school days. Or, to take another example, her insistence that much of the mass appeal of her most successful movie, was a result of her decision to demoticize the classical allusion of the proposed *Lieutenant Nausica* into the more populist *Natassa* (*Ipolohagos Natassa/Lieutenant Natassa* [Nikos Foskolos, 1970]). It is also important to note that the almost unbroken productivity that characterized her career was itself the result of a political pragmatism that saw Vouyouklaki eschew the kinds of radical opposition that cut short the careers of some of her closest cinematic and musical contemporaries, forcing them into exile. Vouyouklaki, through her own talent for financial and political survival laboured towards a longevity that saw her still appearing on stage and on television matinees well into the 1990s.

As we have seen, the articulation of the Aliki star text is structured around the interplay of both innocence and experience, two opposing semantic poles between which the various signifying elements of the star image are held in discursive tension. Thus, markers of naturalness are displayed as conspicuous consumption through the visual spectacle of youthful chic, while the calculated competitiveness that motors such star success is tempered by the screen image of charm and innocence upon which its commercial popularity was established. It is this ambivalence that enables the star image of Vouyouklaki to be read as an ideological allegory – as "synonymous with Karamanlis" – emblematizing the hegemonic project of the conservative State. As a symbolic image structured upon the holding of its internal contradictions in a constitutive tension, Aliki represents an imaginary resolution to the real contradictions of an expanding capitalist economy, reconciling a modernization articulated in terms of materialism and entrepreneurship with social values such as generosity and collectivity, typically articulated as traditional, or, more fundamentally, as precapitalist. Seen as an allegory of the nation's ideological alignment, this negotiation of contradiction symbolizes an idealized mediation between the atomization of American individualism and the collectivity of Soviet standardization. It is an imaginary resolution mobilized through the deployment of its star embodiment within narratives that endorse the Right's Utopian vision of a western sponsored but nationally sovereign state capitalism. And the engine of this transcendental mediation is the matrix of romance.

CONSTRUCTING THE COUPLE

> *Are not two loves essentially individual, hence incommensurable, and thus don't they condemn the partners to meet at a point infinitely remote? Unless they commune through a third party: ideal, god, hallowed group…* (Julia Kristeva 1987)

In generic terms Vouyouklaki's film output was exclusively romantic. Sometimes that romance was inflected comedically – *Spare the Rod…*, *Diplopenies/Dancing the Syrtaki* (Giorgos Skalenakis, 1966) – at other times melodramatically – *Astero* (Dimopoulos, 1959), *I Daskala me ta Xantha Mallia/The Teacher with the Blonde Hair* (Dimopoulos, 1969) – but always its resolution was guaranteed in the constitution of the love couple. It is the cinematic love couple that functions as a metaphor for social unity and national consolidation, symbolically marrying the working class to the bourgeoisie, the socially transgressive to the advocate of order, the Europeanized *Hellene* to the traditionalist *Romeot*, often in a literal onscreen wedding. While we have deconstructed the interplay of discursive elements that constituted the dominant reading of Vouyouklaki's star image, it is fundamental to an understanding of the success of that image to see its reliance on romance as an organizing principle; one articulated in terms of the inter-relationship of the Aliki star image with its most prominent consort, the figure of Dimitris Papamichael. In addition to the various other leading men she played opposite, Vouyouklaki starred in over a dozen hugely popular and commercially successful films alongside Papamichael. Theirs was a popular dyad that conflated both diegetic and extra-textual romance, embodying a passionate and often rowdy on-screen relationship re-enacted in the well-publicized celebrity marriage that followed. The popularity and prestige of the Vouyouklaki/Papamichael love couple is evident not only in commercial terms – in their consecutive topping of the annual box office – but also in such symbolic markers of cinematic cache as the privileged billing accorded Papamichael's cameo in *Pote tin Kyriaki/Never on Sunday* (Jules Dassin, 1960) or Vouyouklaki's prize for Best Actress awarded at the inaugural Week of Greek Cinema that same year.

As a metaphor for social unity, the love couple functions as an ideological symbol *par excellence*, and the 1950s, characterized as they were by the attempt at establishing right-wing hegemony, saw a massive discursive mobilization of this privileged signifier in support of ideological reconstruction. In terms of popular culture, we witness the proliferating public image of the star duo as love couple across a range of cultural forms, including both the cinema and musical entertainment. In film terms, the immediate precursor to the Vouyouklaki/Papamichael phenomenon was the media attention that

surrounded the public relationship of screen lovers Ellie Lambetti and Dimitris Horn. Associated together, primarily through three popular film romances - *I Kalpiki Lira/The Counterfeit Coin* (Giorgos Tzavellas, 1955), *Kyriakatiko Xypnima/Windfall in Athens* (Michael Cacoyannis, 1954), and *To Koritsi me ta Mavra/A Girl in Black* (Cacoyannis, 1956) - Lambetti and Horn provided an image of youthful love, poetic sensitivity, and cultural sophistication, that was suggested by the quality of their screen performances and their association with such elitist institutions as the National Theatre and a European art cinema mode. In terms of popular music, the 1950s saw the emergence of a number of successful duos, such as Vassilis Tsitsanis and Marika Ninou, *Duo Harma* (Tolis and Litsa Harmandas) and Manolis Chiotis and Mary Linda. Mirroring the success of Vouyouklaki and Papamichael, the most successful musical act of the time was the duo of Stelios Kazantzidis and Marinella, who again constituted a star image of the romantic couple that extended beyond the texts of their performances to find symbolic, as well as social legitimation in a public image of married life. The love couple as a public image was manifest, not only within an imagination of entertainment – such as film and popular music stardom – but also as a social sign within the signifying practice of everyday life. For example, with post war reconstruction came an increase in the visibility of couples displaying public intimacy, a phenomenon that had as much to do with economic as well as social trends. The state's prioritizing of international trade and its emphasis on foreign imports saw an influx of Italian scooters into the capital, providing for the first time an affordable form of youth transport (Panourgia 1995: 42) that also required a level of physical proximity when riding pillion, that, according to Jill Dubisch, gave "modern young couples an excuse to embrace in public" (qtd. in Faubion 1993: 263n). And so since the 1950s the ubiquitous scooter has made the image of the love couple a sign of Athenian modernity in much the same way that the cats of Plaka signify the city's folk identity.

The symbolic currency of the love couple – as exemplified in the wide array of textual forms through which it was manifest – rests on the prevalence and the plasticity of the utopian promise of romance that it realizes. In the constitution of the love couple, the cultural, class and gender specificity of socially and economically disparate and dislocated partners are transcended through the consolidatory middle-class celebration of economic consumerism and political conservatism. "Politics in Greece is erotic," writes Kaplan (1993: 261), and nowhere is the centrality of the romantic logic to the inscription of ideological power more explicitly articulated than in the social imagining of the monarch and consort as emblematic national couple. During the 1950s romance was the engine that motorized the public image of King Paul and Queen Frederica, portraying the royal couple as exemplars of the "soldered together subjectivities" (Ross, 1995: 133) that imaged ideals of national unity in a myth of romantic love. Similarly popular suggestions during the early 1960s of a romantic link between

Crown Prince Constantine, and "the Queen of the Screen," Aliki Vouyouklaki, clearly allude to an aligning of the monarchy as sovereign signifiers of national power with the social intimacy promised by populist images of romance. In Aliki and Constantine the national couple fleetingly approaches its apotheosis, and the failed culmination of this *Prince and the Showgirl* emplotment is transcended by a symbolic nostalgia for the unrealized union. It is a fantasy of a burgeoning middle-class imaginary whose promise of marriage between capitalist modernization and conservative political authority is symbolically reconstituted in the nostalgic sighs of "what might have been" for the film icon and the heir apparent. As an ideological trope, the love couple politicizes romance, in turn cultivating a sentimental symbolic space of shared social intimacy in which the partisan interests of particular ideological positions can be made to appear as natural and as timeless as the fantasies of romantic love.

And yet the symbolization of King and Queen in terms of romance is but one instance of the possible articulations that an appropriation of the modes and markers of social intimacy to win popular assent might take. For example, the interpellation of political subjects might seek to bridge the gap between politician and public, articulating a structural position of dominance within the established patron client network of the political party alongside a symbolic position within a party political discourse characterized by the adoption of intimate social codes. This is plainly illustrated in the rendering of the relationship between political leaders and their followers in terms of the familial images of paternal authority traditionally associated with the governance of the patriarchal home. Received notions of the roles and responsibilities of fathers and the authority and influence of fatherhood are both inferred and deferred to whenever images of political leaders as benevolent "Good Fathers" or disciplinarian "Strict Fathers" are mobilized to justify their policies and ideologies. The plasticity of the paternal signifier can be seen through its adoption and efficacy in the often-conflicting political ideologies of Greek liberalism, monarchism, and fascism. Political figures as contradictory as Eleftherios Venizelos, King Constantine, and Ioannis Metaxas have all successfully fostered and encouraged images of paternalistic identification, the sophistication and success of which is evidenced by the following testimony. Let us take for example this message sent to King Constantine in 1916 by the Reservists of the Peloponnese, who:

> ...express to their god-sent King and sweet father limitless devotion, and declare that they are ready to sacrifice themselves to the last realization of the national ideals, and the defence of His laurel-growing Throne. To you the living image of the Nation, to you the Ruler agent and executor of the will of the state, to you the King of Kings, in whom we firmly believe the

> national ideals and the majesty of the Fatherland are concentrated. (Mavrogordatos 1983: 61)

In this example the supporter no longer recognizes the hierarchical relationship between himself and his charismatic leader as one of patron and client but has fully identified with the potency of the paternal signifier and sees the relationship now as that of father and son.

The familial dyad re-figures the public and political space into one of privacy and domesticity in which the connection between the two participants is expressed intimately. It is however still strictly hierarchical as is emphasized through the scriptural allusions with which the two extracts reverberate. The conjuncture of references to an earthly and a heavenly father maintain and strengthen the inherently asymmetrical power relations while peppering the political discourse with the trappings of religious fervour and fulfillment. The paternal signifier operates not only at the level of political discourse but also forms the basis of the actual structure of political participation. Familial connections themselves help to organize the political landscape along a dynastic model of paternal lineage. Eleftherios Venizelos' sons and grandsons followed him into politics, Georgios Rallis followed in the political wake of both his paternal and maternal grandfathers, and Georgios Papandreou preceded his son Andreas' and his grandson Giorgos' political ascension (Clogg 1992: 111). Through this prevalence of dynastic relations of influence and nepotism family names accrue new layers of meaning as the decline of one generation is followed by the ascendancy of the next creating a series of family resemblance's advancing diachronically through the history of Greek politics.

While we have seen how a national imaginary of rival political patronage was shaped by this diachronic paternal signifier, the social and symbolic reconstruction required in the aftermath of the Civil War necessitated an ideological turn able to consolidate national consensus, a task to which the factionalism inherent in the patrilineal rhetoric of political genealogy was poorly suited. It was around the monarchy and the synchronic snapshot of family life offered by King Paul, Queen Frederica and their three children, that a new national imaginary would articulate itself – an imaginary that would elicit and evoke popular support through the symbolic institution of the royal family as a cohesive domestic group with a vibrant maternal influence.

It was this view of King Paul and Queen Frederica as not only a royal couple but as a national couple that functioned as an image of ideological unity in the face of the divisive conflicts of the civil war. A decade of protracted fighting had left Greece riven with social, economic, and political antagonisms, and it is no surprise to see the project of the post-war Right as one of political consolidation

and social stabilization with little regard for, or commitment to, political or civil liberties. It was in this environment that the reactionary ideals embedded in the supposedly liberal 1952 constitution – its espousal of the Hellenic-Christian civilization, its defence of 'country, family, and religion', its commitment to the dominance of the 'established social system' – could be enforced through repressive technologies normally only associated with totalitarian regimes (Tsoukalas 1981: 102) and embodied in the shadowy offices of the state's concomitant 'paraconstitution'. It was in the 'emergency measures' of this paraconstitution – the outlawing of the Greek Communist Party *(KKE),* the harassment of Leftist groups and individuals, the incarceration of political prisoners in concentration camps, the anti-Communist purges of the state bureaucracy, the regressive education policies, the expansion of the powers and function of the military, the inscribing of 'national conviction' within all aspects of social interaction – that the state sought to expand its ideological discourse into a dominant social horizon. And unlike during the inter-war years, where the monarchy issue was a major contributing factor in the national schism between Venizelists and anti-Venizelists, the State's post-war mobilization of the royal family as an ideological element sought to efface the splitting of the political landscape between the ascendant Right and the defeated Greek Left behind an image of national unity. Rosalind Brunt has highlighted the monarchy's capacity to act as a vehicle for national consensus in her study of the British royal family during the Second World War. Brunt begins her argument from the assumption that "families are what bring people together and classes are what divide them" and goes on through an analysis of British wartime newsreels to argue that these mass cultural documents sought to demonstrate "that royals and their subjects can unite as one big national family":

> The national family transcends class division because it is composed essentially of individual families, of which the royal family is only the most exemplary. (Brunt 1996: 7)

In post-war Greece this concept of the national family with the King and Queen at its head functioned as an engine for political rehabilitation and social reconstruction. While the monarchy had been absent from the country's political landscape during their wartime exile in Egypt, with their return to the geographical landscape of Greece after the war, the royal family quickly became incorporated as another ideological element within the statist discourse of communist suppression and capitalist development. For example, the monarchy occupied a central structural position within the symbolic organization of the political de-programming enforced at the Makronisos concentration camp (see fig 3). The official rhetoric of the camp posited opposition to the State as "the dishonourable fight against, Country, King, and Family" (Fourtouni 1986: 169), clearly demonstrating the way in which these three distinct socio-cultural

markers were conflated into the single floating signifier of the national family, a signifier embodied in the very persons of King Paul and Queen Frederica. "Long Live the King!" was inscribed upon the landscape of the island in giant whitewashed letters, while portraits of the royal couple adorned the walls of the camp (Fourtouni 1986; Hart 1996). A *National Geographic Magazine* feature on Makronisos describes the scene when in 1947 the King and Queen visited the camp:

> A Queen's Triumphal Ride.
> When Queen Frederica visited Makronisi, these men lifted her to their shoulders and paraded her through the camp. Some conservatives humped their eyebrows when the picture was published, but the multitude have taken the petite, hardworking queen to their hearts. (Hart 1996: 259)

Fig 3 The love couple as engine of ideological interpellation

The image of the King in full military uniform and the stylish Queen with her fur stole riding atop a wave of jubilant soldiers and sailors demonstrates the enjoyment with which the reformed Communists identified with the fantasy of the national family. "Perhaps the most profound satisfaction that Royalty provides is that it gives us a Paradise to inhabit," writes Virginia Woolf (qtd. in Brunt, 1996), and it is this paradise that is momentarily caught in the photograph in which antagonistic opponents of the state have been transformed into loyal and penitent subjects united and indivisible from the King and Queen with which they are physically intertwined.

WITH THE WRONG MEMBERS IN CONTROL

> *At about the period mentioned, then, the child's imagination becomes engaged in the task of getting free from the parents of whom he now has a low opinion and of replacing them by others, who, as a rule, are of higher standing.* (Sigmund Freud 1909 [1991])

As we have seen, the paternal signifier is clearly fundamental to the ideological hegemony of a state eager to reconstruct civil society in its own conservative image. So, while the 1950s clearly demonstrated a marked re-articulation of the relationships between political subject positions – with a pronounced shift away from authoritarian father figures towards the reciprocity of the nation as couple – it is precisely through its constitutive functioning in the construction of the love couple as social symbol, that the paternal signifier ultimately retained a position of symbolic authority. Three romantic comedies starring Aliki Vouyouklaki and Dimitris Papamichael will serve to illustrate the process by which the authority of the father is inflected anew through the matrix of romance. *Spare the Rod…, Mandalena,* and *Aliki in the Navy* all posit the Vouyouklaki figure as a carnivalesque disruption to a social order upheld by paternal authority. The three films image contemporary society through microcosmic representations of enclosed communities, within the structured confines of which, most of the narrative action unfolds. *Spare the Rod…*is set primarily within a girls' high school, *Mandalena* within the island community of Antiparos, and *Aliki in the Navy* is set for the most part in and around the military communities of the naval base and the battleship; three communities each governed by institutional authority figures – the headmaster, the village president, and the admiral – that hold responsibility for maintaining the social order against which the disruptive Aliki rebels. In fact, in contrast to the ordered microcosms that primarily constitute the diegetic worlds of these films, all three movies open with comedic images of freedom and play that establish a very different fantasy space of idyllic enjoyment. The school life of the girls in *Spare the Rod…* is one of riotous abandon and excess. The authority of the teachers – and in particular the headmaster – is constantly undermined and flaunted through the frivolous pranks and tricks that the mischievous girls play upon them, with the Aliki character positioned as both the ringleader and most proficient exponent of such comic disobedience (see fig 5).

Fig 5 Carnivalesque transgression in *Spare the Rod…* (Sakellarios, 1959)

Mandalena is set on the island of Antiparos and presents a community split into two comically exaggerated factions, each supporting first two different priests, then two different millers, and finally two boatmen. The daughter of one of these sailors, Aliki's eponymous heroine works alongside her father and leads an idyllic island life of playful bickering, sentimental song, and festive dance, in which work and play are happily intertwined. The opening of *Aliki in the Navy* also emphasizes the comedic in its depiction of a holiday idyll within which a blossoming romance is played out. The construction of a carefree and celebratory screen space can be seen in the flirtatious pirate masquerade acted out by Papamichael with his impromptu eye-patch and hat of folded newspaper, in the joyful desire of Aliki's song *I Wish Every day Could Be Like Today*, performed against a picturesque backdrop of fruit groves, white-washed houses, and donkeys in straw hats, and in the playful self-reflexivity of the movie's beginning in which its status as one of Greece's first domestic colour productions is jokily announced by the opening image of a multi-coloured beach ball. Thus each film offers at its outset a utopian screen space – figured in the visual pleasures offered by the *mise-en-scène*, music, and performance that define their depiction – in which fulfillment of desire is unrestrained and access to enjoyment unfettered.

However, these initial fantasy screens of anarchic freedom are shown to be only fleeting and temporary diversions from the authoritarian institution of social restriction and hierarchical order represented by the headmaster, the president and the admiral. If Aliki represents the apotheosis of playful desire then the provisional nature of the utopian beginnings in which she enjoys her pleasure is narrativized through the arbitrariness of the events that menace her enjoyment. The arrival of a new teacher, the sudden death of a loved one, or even just the end of weekend holiday break, all suddenly threaten to restrict Aliki's pleasures

and obstruct her desires, and subject her once again to a punitive paternal authority reinstated through the imposition of a prohibition. Having returned to her bourgeois Athenian home in *Aliki in the Navy*, the success of Aliki's first date with Costas is immediately threatened by her father's refusal to allow her out that evening, and by the refusal of Costas' commanding officer to grant the cadet weekend leave. Aliki's desire to be with Costas is further confounded when it is discovered that his commander and her father are, in fact, the same person (the admiral) so that the dictates of military decorum and the fear of an official reprimand force Costas to avoid Aliki's attentions. In *Mandalena* it is the authority of social tradition that weighs upon Aliki's character. After the death of her father, social convention (as espoused by the village president) dictates that Aliki find a husband to provide for her and the rest of her orphaned family, and there is much opposition amongst the conservative villagers to Mandalena's irregular self-determinist desire to continue working for herself. Similarly, moral propriety and vocational ethics (values embodied by the school headmaster) interject between Aliki and the fulfillment of her romantic desires in *Spare the Rod…*When Aliki's capricious schoolgirl coquettishly flirts her new found object of desire – Papamichael's handsome teacher – she gets an admonishing slap across the face, a violent reprimand that signals a libidinal obstruction hitherto unimaginable to the spoilt teenager. The punitive paternal order – absent from the unconstrained playful abandon of the utopian beginnings – is restored, yet, in a further narrative undulation the newly established social order is almost immediately undercut once more.

Aliki's response to the prohibitions imposed upon her is a comically defiant carnivalesque inversion of both the authority and the order to which she adamantly refuses to acquiesce. The primacy of play is once again emphasized as Aliki's opposition to the prohibitive rule of law is figured as a disruptive game through which she ridicules paternal authority and offers a parodic inversion of the social order it seeks to impose. Within this carnivalesque, the paternal figures representative of social authority and order (the headmaster, the village president, and the admiral) are systematically teased, mocked, and manipulated while Aliki instigates an inverting of normal social relations and conventional orders and hierarchies in which, as in the films' openings, life becomes a game. Liza Papastavrou manipulates both her parents, convincing each of them in turn to exert their influence over her toadying headmaster. The spurned student teaches the teacher a lesson, first getting Mr. Floras (Papamichael) fired and then almost immediately, having him reinstated. The authoritative redundancy of the headmaster that Aliki illustrates in her manipulation is echoed in *Mandalena,* in which Aliki demonstrates the social impotence of the village president for whom her self-determination is a source of social embarrassment. Mandalena ridicules the president by renaming her donkey after him and makes a mockery of his authority when he demands the chief of police arrests her for her disrespect.

Here again Aliki's eponymous heroine revels in a game that reveals the emptiness of these traditional authority figures, showing the redundancy of the punitive threat of the president and his chief of police. Arrested by a constable who cannot afford handcuffs, Aliki plays at being restrained by imaginary manacles, while her stint in the village gaol becomes an excuse for her young siblings to play at outlaws, secretly passing food through the prison bars with even the constable complicitly playing at being asleep at his post. *Aliki in the Navy* sees the disruption of military order aboard the battleship with Aliki's stowing away instigating a celebratory explosion of feasting, singing, dancing, and cross-dressing, while the authority of the admiral is gently mocked by his daughter who, having stolen his glasses, teasingly impersonates a sailor during an inspection safe in the knowledge that the myopic admiral cannot even recognize his own daughter without his glasses.

And yet in a melodramatic narrative reversal the inversion of social order is once again righted as Aliki ultimately resigns herself to the authority she has been tilting at, surrenders her transgressive resistance, and renounces the object of her romantic desire. In *Mandalena,* Aliki's heroine finally abandons both her attempts at providing for her family and her secret love for Lambis and grudgingly accepts the marriage proposal of a wealthy village suitor for whom she feels no emotion. In *Spare the Rod…* the moment of Aliki's refusal of her own desire comes when Papamichael finds a letter addressed to him amongst her possessions. The note is a love letter expressing the full extent of her affections and yet at the very moment the letter is to be received by its addressee, Aliki pulls back and reclaims the letter unopened. It is at this point that Aliki's character finally assumes her sanctioned position within the intersubjective network of the student/teacher relationship; she abandons her "inappropriate" dreams of romance and instead commits to a programme of study and revision that sees the hitherto hapless student successfully pass her final exams. It is crucial to the ideological economy of the film – the interplay between the ideological and the utopian – that the resumption of social order and the abandonment of the utopian carnivalesque that challenges, it does not, in fact, signal an affirmation or validation of the patriarchal figures in whom this impotent social authority is invested. The headmaster and the village president have, as we have seen, absolutely no impact upon either Papastavrou or Mandalena, and thus the girls' renunciation of social resistance is a result not of the interventions of these father figures but of an utterly unexpected encounter with a completely contingent and dislocating shock; a traumatic eruption of a violent force beyond the social order – the return of the Real – that collapses the carnival. For Mandalena the traumatic encounter is the terrifying house fire that engulfs her home, an expressionistic conflagration of noise and flame that razes her dreams of romance and self-respect forcing her to finally acquiesce to a marriage of convenience. For Liza Papastavrou the violence is emotional but just

as unexpected. When asked by Floras to translate a romantic passage of Homeric literature before the rest of the class the young woman comes face to face with the real of her feelings and breaks down, and it is this traumatic realization of the depth of her love and the emotional violence of its impossibility that forces her to abandon her dreams of romance and to seek Floras' recognition through academic achievement.

How then are we to reconcile the redundancy of the impotent authority figures depicted in these films with the prominent structural position accorded the figure of the symbolic father within the narrative and ideological economy of popular film? Put another way, how is the construction of the love couple, through which the symbolic authority of the father figure is traditionally consolidated to function in these narratives of obstructed desire and romantic denial? Both *Spare the Rod…* and *Mandalena* resolve this impasse by imaging a splitting of the father figure in two, or rather, by expressing the fundamental divide between the real father and the symbolic father. While the titular authority of the fastidious headmaster and sanctimonious president is derided, disobeyed, and constantly undermined, real authority is shown to reside in the figure of a second father who occupies the real centre of the social order. And it is through this structural position that the symbolic father is able to resolve the ideological disruption and guarantee narrative closure by sanctioning the constitution of the love couple in marriage. In *Mandalena* the real centre of the island is the Church, and therefore it is the village priest (whose paternalistic gaze has watched over Mandalena's plight throughout the film) who finally intercedes halting the marriage of convenience and instigating the romantic wedding that unites Aliki and Papamichael in a productive union. The ideological function of the marriage as an imaginary resolution of economic modernization and traditional social values is clearly expressed in the final scene where Lambis' recently purchased motorized vessel breaks down and must be towed by his wife's now obsolete sailboat. And if it is the priest and the Church that occupy the structural centre of *Mandalena* then in *Spare the Rod…* it is Aliki's industrialist father and the capitalist free enterprise he embodies that guarantee narrative and ideological resolution. Arriving at the school in his chauffeur driven automobile to collect his daughter on her last day (and therefore her last day of contact with Mr. Floras) Papastavrou Snr. hires the young teacher to become Liza's personal tutor, thereby sealing the constitution of the love couple and enabling its economic rather than erotic consummation. In *Aliki in the Navy* however the split that we witness in the paternal signifier is figured by the admiral who serves to humanize what is the real centre of the film's ideological edifice; the unswerving and impeachable institutional apparatus of the military, symbolized by the monumental battleship. So we see how, as a father and commanding officer, the navy-as-individual (the admiral) is disobeyed and disrespected yet both Aliki's domestic disobedience and Costas military

misconduct are brought to light by the navy-as-institution, through the investigative efforts of the two nameless intelligence officers whose sole function is to regulate the social order aboard the ship. It is therefore the admiral's structural position as the symbolic head of this institutional network and its intersection of both military and domestic authority that ultimately holds the narrative together. Having discovered Aliki's presence on board the battleship and Costas' culpability in the continued deception the Admiral finally makes good his threat to *"hang the both of them,"* not through domestic punishment or military discipline but in the clearest expression of the symbolic authority of the navy-as-institution, the ceremonial pageantry of a military wedding.

In contrast, however, it is the very distance between the two fathers, the one of titular authority and the other of real power, that allows both *Mandalena* and *Spare the Rod…* the space from within which to perform one final carnivalesque inversion, and in both films the final moment of romantic resolution is undercut by an explosive eruption of excess. In a marked allusion to the opening fantasy screens of utopian play it is the same groups of children that in these early scenes enjoyed an unfettered and unrestrained sense of social abandon that at the close of the films perform one final carnivalesque gesture of irreverent enjoyment. In *Mandalena,* it is the rest of the young siblings that undercut the romance of Mandalena and Lambis' final embrace, as, in a cacophonous eruption of enjoyment they trumpet their embarrassment on conch horns. In *Spare the Rod…*the constitution of the love couple – Liza and Floras' driving away into the summer together – is witnessed by the rest of Aliki's classmates who stroll along behind the car and perform a raucous recital of sentimental *"love conquers all"* classical verse. Of course what the girl's recital emphasizes is an ironic foregrounding of the ideological function of this romantic logic; in the context of post-war reconstruction it is not love that conquers all but capitalism – the Law – as embodied by the industrialist Papastavrou, the symbolic Father who alone guarantees the very resolution of this myth of classical, i.e. timeless, romance. What we see in this shifting interplay between a conforming to the social order and the transgressive carnivalesque inversion that structures the narrative is a moebius structure of the ideological and the utopian. The social order and its transgression are constitutive of one another – as are the ideological and the utopian – they each form both the cause and the symptom of the other – transgression of the social order as "the condition of the latter's stability" (Žižek, 1994: 55) – and it is in this sense that we can say that the carnivalesque star image of Aliki functions ideologically. She mirrors the conservative and capitalist hegemony of the post-war state – "is synonymous with Karamanlis" (Georgoussopoulos 1995) – precisely in as much as she assumes the position of transgressive, utopian double to the paternal signifier that figures this Rightist social order. Identification with the Aliki star image becomes therefore not a gesture of transgression or resistance, but the profoundest form of ideological

interpellation. As Žižek argues apropos of Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque, it is not identification with the Law regulating the "'normal' everyday circuit" of a political community that binds it together, "but rather *identification with a specific form of transgression of the Law, of the Law's suspension*" (Žižek 1994: 55).

What this performance of transgression in the popular cinema ignores is the true transgressive split within the public Law itself, the fact that the establishment of social order is grounded in an actual suspension of order and therefore upon the eruption of violence; "the obscene 'nightly' law that necessarily redoubles and accompanies as its shadow, the 'public' law" (Žižek, 1994: 54). In the socio-political domain of 1950s Greece what is this nightly law, this obscene double if not the repressive shadowy "paraconstitution" that accompanied and maintained the authority of the liberal, democratic, public Law. It is this constitutive split in the Law that we see in the form of the final witnesses to the constitution of the love couple in *Aliki in the Navy*, which comes, as we have said in the admiral's promise to *"hang the both of them,"* and is figured by the pomp and circumstance of a naval wedding replete with honour guard and raised swords salute. Commenting upon the ideological resolution of the narrative romance are not the utopian, comedic youths of the opening carnivalesque, but the two nameless naval officers that have been investigating Costas' and Aliki's infringement of military procedures. But if the playful pirates of the film's utopian opening are absent – transformed into the elegant bride and groom of a military wedding – then it is in the two intelligence officers and their punning play of the punitive threat of "hanging from the yard arm" (the violence upon which naval order is maintained) with the image of marriage as a "noose that ties together" (the maintenance of social order), that we witness the condensation of the pirate imagery of the film's romantic opening with the language of buccaneer violence that returns at the moment of narrative resolution. The allusion to the pirate motif is transformed however from its comedic articulation at the outset of the film into an illustration of something more threatening, an expression of the sinister enjoyment of these two shadowy figures – repeatedly imaged surreptitiously observing Aliki's chaotic transgressions – that serve as the menacing instruments of the ideological apparatus itself, the disciplinary agents of the "nightly Law" that supports the comic bluster and benevolent paternalism of the Law's public face as presented by Lambros Constandaras' admiral.

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