

# From 'Made in Greece' to 'Made in China': a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Touring Revival of *Golfo*, a 19<sup>th</sup> Century Greek Melodrama

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## ABSTRACT

*The article explores the innovative scenographic approach of HoROS Theatre Company of Thessaloniki, Greece, when revisiting an emblematic text of Greek culture, Golfo, the Shepherdess by Spiridon Peresiadis (1893). It focuses on the ideological implications of such a revival by comparing and contrasting the scenography of the main versions of this touring work in progress (2004-2009). Golfo, a late 19<sup>th</sup> century melodrama of folklore character, has reached over the years a wide and diverse audience of both theatre and cinema serving, at the same time, as a vehicle for addressing national issues. At the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in an age of excessive mechanization and rapid globalization, HoROS Theatre Company, a group of young theatre practitioners, revisits Golfo by mobilizing theatre history and childhood memory and also by alluding to school theatre performances, the Japanese manga, computer games and the wider audiovisual culture, an approach that offers a different perspective to the national identity discussion.*

## KEYWORDS

HoROS Theatre Company

*Golfo*

dramatic idyll

scenography

manga

national identity

Time: late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Place: a mountain village of Peloponnese, Greece. Golfo, a young shepherdess, and Tasos, a young shepherd, are secretly in love but are too poor to support their union. Fortunately, an English lord, who visits the area, gives the boy a great sum of money for rescuing his life in an archaeological expedition and the couple is now able to get engaged. Shortly after, a new obstacle emerges: the rich Master Shepherd Zisis's daughter Stavroula and her cousin, rich shepherd Kitsos, wish to marry Tasos and Golfo respectively. While Golfo is not affected by Kitsos's woes, Tasos is convinced by Yannos, the village villain, to abandon his beloved and marry Stavroula. As the wedding is in preparation, Golfo half-mad curses Tasos and then poisons herself. Tasos, after a violent fight with his rival Kitsos, regrets his decision and rushes back to Golfo, who dies in his arms. The young shepherd commits suicide next to her. Death has united them.

This is the story of *Golfo, i Voskopoula/Golfo, the Shepherdess* (1893) by Spyridon Peresiadis (1854-1918), a story of betrayed love. This dramatic idyll of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, probably the most performed single Greek play, has reached over the years and well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century a wide and diverse audience of both theatre and cinema, performing rather successfully a national role. At the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, HoROS Theatre Company of Thessaloniki, Greece, an independent group of young theatre practitioners, revisits this emblematic text of Greek culture in a touring work in progress, addressing issues such as national/self identity and collective/childhood memory. This article focuses on the ideological implications of such a revival by comparing and contrasting the scenography of the main versions of the *Golfo* Project (i.e. *Golfo 1.0* [2004], *Golfo 2.0-Reloaded* [2005], and *Golfo 2.3 Beta* [2006–2009]).<sup>1</sup> However, it opens the discussion with a brief introduction to both

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<sup>1</sup> Here is a list of the Project's versions, as given by the company, in the *Golfo 2.3 Beta* programme (2007): *Golfo 1.0* [in a box] was first presented at the National (State) Theatre of Northern Greece Main Stage Foyer on February 23, 2004; *Golfo 1.1* [unplugged], May 2004; *Golfo 1.2* [summermix], June-August 2004; *Golfo 2.0* [reloaded], May 2005; *Golfo 2.1* [popular version], June-September 2005; *Golfo 2.2*, September 2005-April 2006; *Golfo 2.3* [beta version], May 2006-March 2007. A post-2008 *Golfo 2.3 Beta* production survived until 2009, while a *Golfo! Director's cut* version appeared in 2012. All versions toured extensively. *Golfo 2.3 Beta* premiered at the Athens Festival 2006 and was presented at Dialog Wroclaw Festival 2007 in Poland and Gift Festival 2007 in Georgia. The *Golfo* Project was conceived and directed by Simos Kakalas and designed (set, costumes, masks) by Yannis Katranitsas (see, <http://yianniskatranitsas.blogspot.gr/>); Martha Foka replaced him in designing masks and costumes for the post-2008 *Golfo 2.3 Beta* production *Golfo 2.3 Beta* production (see, <http://marthafoka.wordpress.com/>). The production team included Christos Kalos and Babis Venetopoulos (video art) and the *Karaghiozis* player Christos Stanissis. The *Golfo! Director's cut*, promoted as the final version, was presented for the first time in late 2012, when the

stage and cinematic history of dramatic idyll, as well as to its ideological uses as a vehicle of addressing national issues, in order to put the analysis of *Golfo* Project into a wider historical perspective. Since a complete and detailed account of the long presence of dramatic idyll on both stage and screen is lacking in the literature, what follows is only a brief – and most probably incomplete – presentation that tries to extract relevant information from a number of – mainly secondary – sources, which do not necessarily focus on the ideological uses of dramatic idyll.

## STAGE HISTORY

### The emergence of a dramatic genre

*Golfo* is one of the most well-known dramatic idylls, a dramatic genre that flourished for a short period of six years (1891–1897) on the Greek stage. Set in a pastoral environment and written in the verse of folk songs (*demotika tragoudia*), dramatic idyll was born in the context of the study of local customs and folk life (*laografia/folklore*) and its literary rendering (*ithographia/ethography*) (Vitti 1991). Since it employed the vernacular and depicted faithfully the manners of Greek peasants, still untouched by the hostile – as it was widely believed – western civilisation, the genre was hailed as yet another perfect candidate for Greece's 'national drama' (Pipinia 2002: 5–7), the drama that “aims at serving what is promoted and considered each time as a national cause” (Delveroudi 1988: 287–288).<sup>2</sup> Despite the claims for both authenticity and a distinctively Greek character, it is today agreed by theatre scholars that dramatic idyll is in essence a melodramatic sub-genre (Pipinia 2001; Grammatas 2001)<sup>3</sup>. It borrows stock characters, standard plots, patterns and techniques from western melodrama and invests them with Greek folkish elements (Pipinia 2002: 5–7; Delveroudi 1988: 294), while presenting a highly idealized and sentimentalized image of Greek folk life, as seen through the eyes of the contemporary Athenian bourgeoisie (Hatzipandazis 1993: 145–148).

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present article was already completed. Moreover, it differs significantly from the earlier versions since it treats the play as a romantic drama and explores the 'goth' aesthetics. Thus it is excluded from the present analysis.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'national' describes the ideology and not the form or style of dramatic literature. Thus in the 19<sup>th</sup> century – the century during which the Greek state was founded – apart from dramatic idyll, both historical tragedy (Puchner 1993: 133–163) and historical drama, which dramatized episodes from national history (Hatzipandazis 2006), were hailed as national, while during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1905–1922) – a period of excessive warfare and further territorial expansion for the Greek state – national plays took the form of patriotic dramas that put on stage contemporary events (Delveroudi 1988).

<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Spathis (2001: 206) calls dramatic idyll “a substitute for melodrama”.

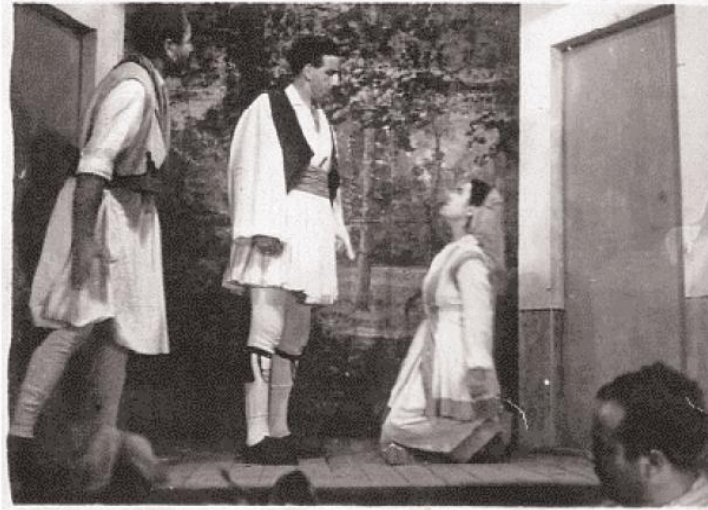
Dramatic idyll emerged in between amateur and professional theatre. It stemmed out of upper class amateur entertainment environment (*kosmiki erasitehnia*) since its founder Dimitrios Koromilas was primarily a writer and director for the amateur theatricals of King George I's Palace (Grigoriou 2009: 261–271). With his *Agapetikotes Voskopoulas/Lover of the Shepherdess* (1891), the first dramatic idyll ever written, Koromilas made his triumphant debut on the professional stage. The genre soon attracted playwrights from rural areas and lower classes, such as Spyridon Peresiadis, the writer of *Golfo* (Georgantopoulos 2003: 11-13). *Golfo* itself, before reaching the Athenian professional stage, was presented by an amateur group at Peresiadis's village of residence. The play had an immediate success and was subsequently performed by every leading group of the day. However, it was the popular touring theatre groups (*bouloukia*) that were instrumental in establishing a long-lasting dramatic idyll tradition until the late 1950's or even the 1960's by offering true popular entertainment to even the smallest village throughout Greek countryside for over half a century.<sup>4</sup> Although written by an individual author, *Golfo* managed to escape its origins and was readily incorporated into anonymous folk tradition,

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<sup>4</sup> The literature on *bouloukia* is extremely limited, as they have been neglected by official theatre historiography, probably due to their popular character and the limited written primary resources (plays or press articles), most of them being memoirs of their members. The conditions of the emergence of *bouloukia* remain unclear, as is the case with all popular theatre of the time (e.g. wordless *Pantomima* shows) (Hatzipandazis 2012: 183-198). However, there seems to be a connection between the consolidation of Greek professional theatre in the 1870s and the emergence of *bouloukia*. While Hatzipandazis (2012) does not speak about *bouloukia* at this early age, Grigoriou (1999) makes the distinction between legitimate and popular theatre in Athens in the late 1870s and stresses the need for popular entertainment in order to speak about the origins of *bouloukia* troupes that toured extensively in the outskirts of Athens, as well as in the provinces. Spathis traces their appearance in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in central Athens (2001: 210); it is only after the establishment of first-rate troupes that the second-rate ones – impoverished and improvised – made their appearance (Spathis 2003: 200). Besides going back to Greek antiquity where he finds the first irregular touring troupes, Hatzidakis (1999) argues that it is in the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that modern *bouloukia* acquired their distinct character, when a synthesis of touring troupes presenting melodrama and touring troupes presenting a variety repertoire (low comedy, improvised comic acts, dance and acrobatics) emerged. Throughout their long life *bouloukia* remained complementary to the legitimate theatre and followed mainstream aesthetics in both staging and repertoire, which consisted of melodramas (with special emphasis on patriotic subject matter), comedies (both one-act and full-length ones) and improvised comic acts. Their gradual decline was completed during the 1950s (although in Northern Greece *bouloukia* tours are recorded until the late 1960s), when they were defeated by their most powerful enemy, cinema (Grigoriou 1999).

probably due to its bucolic and national character (Kamilaki 1988: 277), becoming thus the most performed single Greek play.<sup>5</sup>

### Serving a national cause



**Fig 1** *Golfo*, n.d., Gakidis troupe (*boulouki*), 7 *Imeres –I Kathimerini* (12.9.1999, p. 22)

Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> and throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, both a stage tradition and a dominant ideological framework for performing dramatic-idyll plays were established. Set in rural Greece, incorporating elements of folk life (e.g. songs, dances

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<sup>5</sup> *Golfo's* popularity among diverse audiences is reflected on its various “metamorphoses” into other artistic forms. Soon after its first triumphant performance (1893), it was put into print (1903) and four years later it was made into a novel (1907), which proved to be equally popular. There also appeared an operettic version (1936 or 1938 [Siragakis 2009: 373]) and a radio play (1954). *Golfo's* story served as the basis for the scenario of the very first Greek feature film (filmed in 1914; released in 1915), while a second version was released in 1955. *Golfo* also fuelled folk theatre genres such as *Karaghiozis* (Greek shadow theatre) in the 1930s and *Omilies* (open-air amateur carnival performances in the Ionian Islands delivered in the vernacular and in the verse of folk/demotic songs). In addition, the leading figures of the play (*Golfo* and her lover *Tasos*) have been immortalised by the legendary naïf folk painter Theophilos Chatzimichael. Moreover, there are ‘folk-like verses’ that recite *Golfo's* story, as well as contemporary songs that refer to this legendary heroine (Katsioti 2002). Sideris (1946: 864) also informs us that *Golfo* was adapted – among other melodramatic plots – for the wordless *Pantomima* shows of late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, both the story of *Golfo* and the heroine herself have been used numerous times in *Epitheorisi* (Greek *revue*), which unfortunately remains for the most part unrecorded.

and local customs) and performed in regional and national dress (*foustanela* [white pleated skirt]: the male outfit worn in rural areas of mainland Greece),<sup>6</sup> dramatic idyll was considered to present an 'authentic' image of Greek national life [fig 1]. Hence, it was used as a means of addressing national issues, even if it did not dramatize moments of the nation's past.

*Golfo* more than any other dramatic idyll was present at all the important moments of Greek history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and has embraced the national cause within or outside the borders of the Greek state. It is not without importance that the short-lived dramatic idyll flourished in an age of fervent nationalism that led to the unfortunate Greco-Turkish War only a few years later (1897) (Hatzipandazis 1993: 148). Since the following decades the pursuit of the Great Idea (the expansion of the Greek state into every territory where Greeks traditionally inhabited) remained the major force of Greek political life, dramatic idyll performed actively its national role. It readily lent its dramatic form to a number of patriotic dramas dealing with the Macedonian Struggle (1904–1908) (Delveroudi 1988: 293–294), while, just a few months after the First Balkan War (1912), it is *Golfo* that welcomed Greek Prime Minister Venizelos in the recently annexed major Macedonian city of Thessaloniki and in 1914 celebrated the name day of King Constantine I of Greece (Katsioti 2002: 196). In the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, not only professional theatre, but also amateur productions of dramatic idyll and of *Golfo*, in particular, became a popular vehicle for nationalistic ideology, boosting the national morale of still unredeemed populations under the pretext of financing schools or benefit foundations (Kamilaki 1988: 283–291). Later, performances of the genre would be used in order to financially support the innocent victims (e.g. orphans) of the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) (Kamilaki 1988: 291–293). Even after the 1922 Greek military defeat by the Turkish army in Asia Minor, when the idea of a 'greater Greece' came to a definite end, dramatic idyll amateur productions continued to hold a major part in the school theatre repertoire throughout Greece (Kamilaki 1988: 294–299), in the same areas where the travelling troupes (*bouloukia*) gave their performances. Moreover, at the interwar period,

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<sup>6</sup> *Foustanela*, the outfit worn by the shepherds of the Balkans, was chosen by King Otto, the first king of Greece, as the Greek national dress due to its association with the warriors of the Greek War of Independence (1821–1829) (Mpada 1995; Christodoulou 2002). Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century *foustanela* was worn in rural areas of mainland Greece but, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when dramatic idyll appeared on the Athenian stages, traditional costumes had almost entirely given way to the clothes of western style (*frangika*) (Yiakoumaki-Moraiti 1999). Until today *foustanela* remains a symbol of a unified national folk culture and has never ceased to be present on official occasions such as national celebrations (Droulia 2001: 138).

decentralized urban populations eagerly attended dramatic idyll performances (Mini 2006: 168).

It is in the late 1920s and in the context of the quest for an indigenous Greek cultural identity (*ellinikotita*/Greekness) – which substituted for the territorial expansion of the Great Idea (Tziovas 1989) – that the Athenian intelligentsia rediscovered the genre of dramatic idyll and occasionally performed it on stage (Mini 2006: 169–170). At the same time, a different ideological use of the genre emerged, as the communist press would rather reluctantly admit the genre's popular/folk character and its potential to address popular audiences (Mini 2006: 168), in the context of the 1934 Fourth Congress of Soviet Writers rediscovery of folk culture and literary tradition as a means of renewing contemporary leftist writing (Dounia 1999: 413–454; Koufou 2008: 301). Since the notion of Greekness was readily appropriated by General Metaxas's dictatorial regime (1936–1940) and formed the cultural basis of its Third Greek Civilisation, *Golfo* was a frequent choice of the EON (*Ethniki Organosis Neoleas*/National Organisation of Youth) propaganda amateur performances that either travelled around Greece or were produced by regional units (Kamilaki 1988: 297–301; Petraki 2004: 253–288). Interestingly enough, the same play was used as an anti-Metaxas manifestation by self-exiled Greeks in Paris (Georgantopoulos 2003: 28).

During Greece's German Occupation (1941–1944), both amateur and professional productions of dramatic idyll took on patriotic connotations. On one instant, a professional troupe mounted an operettic version of *Golfo* in order to avoid censorship, which banned contemporary patriotic plays performed in national dress. This performance in *foustanela* outfit and bucolic setting (alluding to the armed Resistance on the Greek mountains) was unmistakably received as a gesture of resistance against the foreign invaders (Dizelos 1962: 453–456). Moreover, amateur players performed dramatic idylls in the provinces (Katsioti 2002: 197), while EPON<sup>7</sup> included some of these plays in its initial repertoire for want of plays written especially for them (Katsioti 2002: 197).

It is during the Cold War that Left-wing artists embraced wholeheartedly folk culture in general and the dramatic idyll genre in particular. Hence, these plays were used to support not only the Right but also the Left, namely both the opposing political ideologies that polarized Greek political life for almost half a century. Probably the most significant example of leftist ideological use of dramatic idyll is Manos

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<sup>7</sup> *Eniea Panelladiki Organosi Neon*/United Panhellenic Organisation of Youth, the Youth Wing of the leftist partisan movement EAM (*Ethniko Apeleftherotiko Metopo*/National Liberation Front).

Katrakis's *Elliniko Laiko Teatro/Greek Popular Theatre*, which, in an attempt to educate the audiences by employing the aesthetics of folk culture, gave open-air grand-scale performances of both *The Lover of the Shepherdess* (1955) and *Golfo* (1967) (Martsakis, Karegeorgou, Demestihia 2001: 96–97 & 119–121), the latter being performed the summer after the establishment of the military dictatorship in Greece. During the seven-year period of the dictatorship (1967–1974), the *foustanela* outfit – an indispensable element of dramatic idyll aesthetics – underwent severe criticism by the opponents of the regime due to the military Junta's large-scale spectacles of nationalistic ideology and kitsch aesthetics, which included 'foustanela shows' (Van Steen 2010; Raftopoulos 1984/1989) and *foustanela* has been seriously questioned as a theatre costume since. As soon as the regime made attempts at liberalizing political and cultural life (Mavromoustakos 2005: 140–145), the theatre collective *Elefthero Teatro/Free Theatre* produced a musical adaptation of *Golfo*, entitled *Mia zoi Golfo/A Life with Golfo* (1974), which, through allusion, humour and avoidance of any picturesqueness, de-constructed and re-constructed at the same time the image of *Golfo* as a national symbol (Kotanidis 2011: 484).

In the period following the fall of the dictatorship (*Metapolitefsi*), dramatic idyll became a choice for *Ethniko Teatro/the National Theatre*, as well as for regional, state-subsidised theatres. The latter took over the role of the extinct *bouloukia* by addressing provincial audiences (Grammatas 2002: 304–305; Mavromoustakos 2005: 178) and offering them what was considered a familiar spectacle. The former decided to include this until-then neglected genre in its repertoire on the basis of its national character. National Theatre of Greece offered the popular genre of dramatic idyll both high-culture and political legitimization as late as 1992 (when the Macedonia-naming dispute reached its peak) by mounting a high-production-value performance of the *Lover of the Shepherdess* that did not question, in any way, the traditional nationalistic aesthetics.<sup>8</sup> After a gap of over a decade, the first time *Golfo* set foot in a national theatre was in 2004 (the year of the Athens Olympic Games), when the play was performed at *Kratiko Teatro Voriou Ellados/the National (State) Theatre of Northern Greece* by a group of young theatre practitioners that had already formed HoROS Theatre Company. The performance (*Golfo 1.0*) proved an openly critical reading of

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<sup>8</sup> In the first production of a dramatic idyll by the National Theatre of Greece (*The Lover of the Shepherdess* by Dimitrios Koromilas, directed by Giorgos Theodosiadis, 1992) the artistic team included star performers such as the tragic actress Anna Synodinou, the folk song expert Domna Samiou, and the traditional costume connoisseur Ioanna Papantoniou (see Ioanna Papantoniou 2000) (for the production, see: <http://www.nt-archive.gr/playDetails.aspx?playID=280>).

this very popular play and was soon expelled from National (State) Theatre's repertoire only to live an independent life.<sup>9</sup> *Golfo* was included in the National Theatre of Greece repertoire for the first time in the 2012-13 season, as part of the theatre's wider programme, which attempts to answer the poet's question «What is our homeland?» in an age of global economic crisis that devours Greece.<sup>10</sup> At the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the dramatic idyll stage tradition that incorporates uncritically folkloric elements seems to have lost its resonance and is essentially inactive in professional theatre.

## CINEMATIC HISTORY

### The genre of mountain film

Dramatic idyll – and *Golfo* in particular – played a central role in the first steps of cinema in Greece because it did not only offer a well-known and popular story, but also appeared as the most suitable genre in the quest for a national cinema. However, the choice of *Golfo's* story for the first Greek feature film made by Konstantinos Bachatoris in 1914 – perhaps dictated by its popularity among theatre audiences – was not a wise one, since the film turned out to be an economic failure (Soldatos 2002: 17-18). It is only in the interwar period, when the question of national identity (Greekness) came into prominence, that dramatic idyll gained momentum on screen (1927–1933). Thus a new film genre emerged, i.e. 'mountain film', of which cinematic dramatic idyll is a sub-genre, based on the equivalent dramatic genre (Kymionis 2000; Dermentzopoulos 2002).<sup>11</sup> The fact that the first movie filmed in Greece to use the sound-on-film technology is a dramatic idyll [*O Agapetikos tis Voskopoulas/The Lover of the Shepherdess* (Dimitris Tsakiris, 1932)] is indicative of the artistic potential, as well as of the popularity of this characteristic genre of *Palios Ellinikos Kinimatografos/Old Greek Cinema* (Hess 2000; Mini 2006). On the one hand, elements such as rural landscape, natural light, folkloric costumes, folk-like music and

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<sup>9</sup> The *Golfo* Project began as a production of the National (State) Theatre of Northern Greece, but soon led a long lasting independent life. For the initial production, see: <http://www.ntng.gr/default.aspx?lang=el-GR&page=2&production=5851>. *The Lover of the Shepherdess* was also revisited a few years later by the young director Anestis Azas, who articulated a critical comment on the rural populations' superstition (*Epi Kolono* Theatre, 2006; Athens Festival 2007).

<sup>10</sup> For the production directed by Nikos Karathanos, see: <http://www.n-t.gr/el/events/golfov/>. For the National Theatre 2011-2013 repertoire, see: <http://www.n-t.gr/el/news/?nid=919>.

<sup>11</sup> The two sub-genres of mountain film is 'dramatic idyll' and 'mountain adventure' (Kymionis 2000; Dermentzopoulos 2002). Scholars of earlier dates, when referring to the now called mountain films, use the term '*foustanela* films', a widely-used colloquial expression. See Soldatos 2002: 97-99& 241-246; Mitropoulou 2006: 65& 129-131.

local customs were considered as distinctively Greek (Hess 2000; Mini 2006: 164; Stasinopoulou 2000: 363),<sup>12</sup> and on the other, western elements, such as music orchestration, contributed to the European standing of those films. Both Greek and western character were crucial for a future success in local and international markets (Mini 2006: 178-179; Soldatos 2002: 35), since the genre would cater for a variety of possible audiences, i.e. countryside and urban populations, the Athens-based intelligentsia and hopefully viewers abroad (Mini 2006: 180).

As the local cinematic production fell into decline during the 1940s (the war and civil war years), a second flourishing period for dramatic idyll did not come until the years 1955–1974, when a total of approximately 70 'mountain films' were produced. First among them was again *Golfo* (Orestis Laskos, 1955), followed by three versions of *The Lover of the Shepherdess*, with the third one – directed by Elias Paraskevas (1956) – being the first colour Greek film to be released. The extreme popularity of this genre is due to the fact that it embodied central ideological issues of post-civil-war Greek society, giving expression to rural and recently urbanized populations' fears of the emerging industrialization and urbanization of the country (Dermentzopoulos 2002: 91–92; Soldatos 2002: 241-246). In response to that, dramatic idyll films uttered “a plea for consensus, reconciliation with the present social reality and praise of the country's past” (Kymionis 2000: 60). They “created a unified and mythological representation of the past, conveying at the same time an idealized representation of a unified modern Greek society” (ibid.: 56).

### ***Golfo* from New Greek Cinema to New Greek Wave**

By the late 1960s and early 1970s *Neos Ellinikos Kinimatografos*/New Greek Cinema came to challenge Old Greek Cinemas' ideology and aesthetics by considering films primarily as art. The genre of dramatic idyll had no place in this cinema of *auteurs*. However, *O Thiasos/The Travelling Players* (1975), the third film of Theo Angelopoulos, the most prominent director of New Greek Cinema, presents the endless touring around Greece of a troupe of actors performing throughout the period 1939–1952 – what else? – *Golfo*. The film, which appears to be “the first cinematic treatment of Greek Civil War of 1944–1950 [sic] from the perspective of the Left” (Horton 1997: 55), explores socio-political issues of contemporary Greece in a Brechtian, epic way. “Its larger theme is Greek national identity” and modern Greeks' complex relation to their ancestors and their past (Georgakas 1997: 28).

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<sup>12</sup> Maria A. Stassinopoulou referring to the choice of space in the interwar Greek films argues that the predominance of rural landscape over the urban environment “possibly reflected the demographic reality of the period and proposed a vision of a still familiar space to urbanized and semi-urbanized audiences” (2000: 363).

Greek history (between 1939 and 1952), myth (the members of the troupe seem to follow the biography of the members of the house of *Atreus*), and the life of *bouloukia* are intertwined in the film's narrative. Despite several attempts by the travelling players to perform the dramatic idyll of Peresiadis, the performance is always interrupted by real life and History. Thus *Golfo*, in this context, is "useful only as a reminder that nostalgia for a Greece that never was cannot substitute for history" (Georgakas 1997: 35). In terms of staging, the troupe performs "on makeshift stages of every description. Their costumes and props are sufficiently simple to be stuffed into a few trunks. Their only set is an amateurish canvas painting, featuring three sheep, a stream and a hill" (Georgakas 1997: 34) – an accurate description of *bouloukia* practices and aesthetics. Nevertheless, the aesthetics of the film itself "bring to mind the whole artistic tradition of our land, but not in a way that calls for a nostalgic return" (Stathi 2000: 170).

Only a few years later, just after the governmental change of 1981 (when the socialist PASOK came to power), a satirical adaptation of *Golfo's* popular story was released. In *Alalum* (1982), a portmanteau film (directed by Yorgos Apostolidis, Yannis Smaragdis, and Yannis Typaldos and starring the prominent comedian Harry Klynn), *Golfo* and *Tasos* are offsprings of the two most powerful families of a Greek village that are longtime enemies. Not even after their children's wedding do their families stop fighting against each other; in fact, the whole village is drawn into the fight. This popular comedy – a huge commercial success – transforms the given story in order to provide a metaphor for the Greek Civil War and modern Greek character, in other words, for the inability of the Greeks to live in concord with each other.

Not just any performance of *Golfo* but the *Golfo* Project of HoROS Theatre Company (*Golfo 2.3 beta* post-2008 version) is incorporated into *Macherovgaltis/Knifer* (2010), by Yannis Economides, one of the leading figures of New Greek Wave, a choice that might well be perceived as an allusion to Angelopoulos's *The Travelling Players*. A single scene (the *Golfo-Tasos* engagement scene) of the HoROS Theatre performance – in which the protagonist finds himself by accident – is enough to solidify his critical decision to knife his rival and live openly with his wife. In the film's black-and-white universe, the theatre performance, in full colour, is already a fragment of another world. In a world of excessive individualism that modern Greece represents, there rises a moment when the individual and the collective blend. The hero takes his decision of strictly personal nature deeply immersed in the spectacle, the moment he is engaged in the collective act of watching a performance, namely being a member of a collective body, the audience.

## THE *GOLFO* PROJECT

At the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, an age of excessive mechanisation and rapid globalisation, HoROS Theatre Company of Thessaloniki, founded in 2002, introduces itself by producing a series of different versions of *Golfo*. This group of theatre practitioners in their thirties investigates the country's theatrical past and present (including ancient, folk and popular theatre, as well as traditional rituals) in order to trace the elements that constitute an indigenous tradition, which they attempt to revitalize. It is in this context that they revisit emblematic texts of Greek literature (both dramatic and non-dramatic) which form their repertoire (*Golfo 2.3 beta* programme). The tradition of *bouloukia* is their main source of inspiration both in terms of artistic methods (acting style, choice of repertoire and use of space) and production practices (excessive touring).<sup>13</sup> Thus the itinerant spectacle is proposed as a means of renewing the bourgeois theatre, which fantasizes itself as being popular (Efklidis 2010).

For its debut, the group chose the most emblematic text of the *bouloukia* repertoire, a strong childhood memory of its members, mainly through the numerous cinematic adaptations of *Golfo* recycled by television. The HoROS Theatre *Golfo* Project (2004-present) significantly diverges from the essentially inactive dramatic idyll folkloric tradition and, by mixing and matching elements drawn from multi-cultural and multi-ethnic traditions as well as various staging techniques, it manages to revitalize this late 19<sup>th</sup> century melodrama and bring it close to the 21<sup>st</sup> century viewers, their aesthetic values and ideological quests. More precisely, by making reference to the world of pop culture and television, the traditions of popular and school theatre, masked performance and national celebrations, and by combining live action and conventional staging techniques with video projections, filmed performers and shadow figures, the *Golfo* Project provides a powerful comment on the notion of self/national identity in a globalized world. Intertwined with this central issue, other issues such as theatre history and childhood memory are also explored.

### Sources of visual reference

In a characteristic postmodern way, the scenography of *Golfo* Project creates a “referential network within the mind of the viewer” by making “references to other productions, to works of art, and to an extra-dramatic or non-dramatic world” (Aronson 1991: 5). Here is a list of the Project's many sources of visual reference:

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<sup>13</sup> The company's activities in the field of theatre research, as well as its contribution to theatrical decentralization, have received great critical acclaim (2007 Greek Critics Association Award). For the company's touring practices, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UKQOqDatfHo>.

### *Bouloukia*

As already mentioned, the travelling players served as the main source of inspiration for HoROS Theatre Company as far as scenography and use of space are concerned.<sup>14</sup> During their long life of more than half a century, *bouloukia* followed a two-fold practice in terms of staging:<sup>15</sup> either they adapted an already existing building so as to meet the needs of performance or they used an improvised theatre of their own. In winter season, they converted the village coffee-shop into a theatre by using the available seating and placing the large wooden tables side by side against a wall, thus forming the 'stage'. The show was lit by limelight portable lamps. In later years, the cinema houses that had spread all over the Greek countryside hosted *bouloukia* performances, as theatre venues were extremely rare in those areas. In summer season and when no building was available, the *bouloukia* troupes erected booth stages on village squares or accommodated their shows in self-contained 'tents', occasionally set up in fairground entertainment environments. These crude improvised theatres had nevertheless elaborate entrances, where brief parade shows took place so as to attract viewers.

The scenography of the *bouloukia* shows was in line with the scenography of popular theatre, but it was considerably less sophisticated. Rudimentary stock scenery was used, consisting of a painted backdrop and side wings depicting generalised locations (such as "the forest", "the front room", "the back room") complemented by a few pieces of furniture where necessary. Despite the realistic aesthetics of their models, there was a certain *naïveté* in the design of the *bouloukia* scenery, due probably to the fact that they were not painted by professional scene painters, but by members of the troupe itself, i.e. professional actors [fig 1].

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<sup>14</sup> A wide range of information on the subject can be found in the many memoirs of *bouloukia* members that have been published and on existing – rather illuminating – photographs. A selection of those has been reproduced in the volume *Bouloukiou Engomion/In Praise of the Bouloukia* issued by the Greek Actors Guild in order to accompany the celebration of Actor's Day 2005, as well as in 'Ta Theatrika Bouloukia/The Theatrical *Bouloukia*' special issue of the newspaper *I Kathemerini* (12.9.1999).

<sup>15</sup> Brooks McNamara enumerates "seven broad categories based on the ways in which space and design are employed by the showman [of popular entertainment]: 1) booths and other arrangements of space by itinerant performers; 2) improvised theatres; 3) the scenography of variety entertainments; 4) the scenography of popular theatre; 5) performance spaces devoted to spectacle or special effects; 6) processional forms; and 7) entertainment environments such as the traveling carnival and the amusement park" (1974: 16–17). Some of them apply also to the case of Greek *bouloukia*.

### *School national celebrations*



**Fig 2** Poem Reciting, *Golfo 1.0* programme, HoROS Theatre Company

While the life of *bouloukia* had ended long before the members of HoROS group were even born, school national celebrations remain a strong childhood memory for all Greeks who grew up in the 1970s and 1980s (as all HoROS members did). Long before that period (the first school celebration was established in 1899) (Mavridou 2010) and to this day, such celebrations – including speech delivery, poem reciting, songs, theatre performances, and parades – have been used as a means of enhancing national consciousness, forming national identity, and boosting ethnic pride of young people and future citizens (Bonidis 2004; Bonidis 2007), shaping just only one of the many ethnocentric strategies of Greek centralized education system (Frangoudaki, Dragona 1997).<sup>16</sup> Every school child, in the context of the National Day celebrations, would step on the raised platform – rudimentary but symbolically decorated, with the Greek flag being the main element – and recite a patriotic poem or act a part in a play celebrating the glorious moments of the long Greek history. Most popular of all, the plays dramatising episodes of the Greek War of Independence against the Ottoman Empire (1821-1829) were – and still are – costumed in ‘traditional’ or ‘national’ outfit with the *foustanela* being indispensable (Bonidis 2004: 80; Bonidis 2007: 5) [fig 2].

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<sup>16</sup> School national celebrations form only a part of a broader celebration scheme, the ‘invented tradition’ (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) of a National Day, which is driven by the state and involves the whole community (Karakasidou 2000).

***Karaghiozis (Greek shadow theatre)***

**Fig 3** Tasos as *Karaghiozis* figure, design by Christos Stanisis, *Golfo 2.3 beta* programme, HoROS Theatre Company

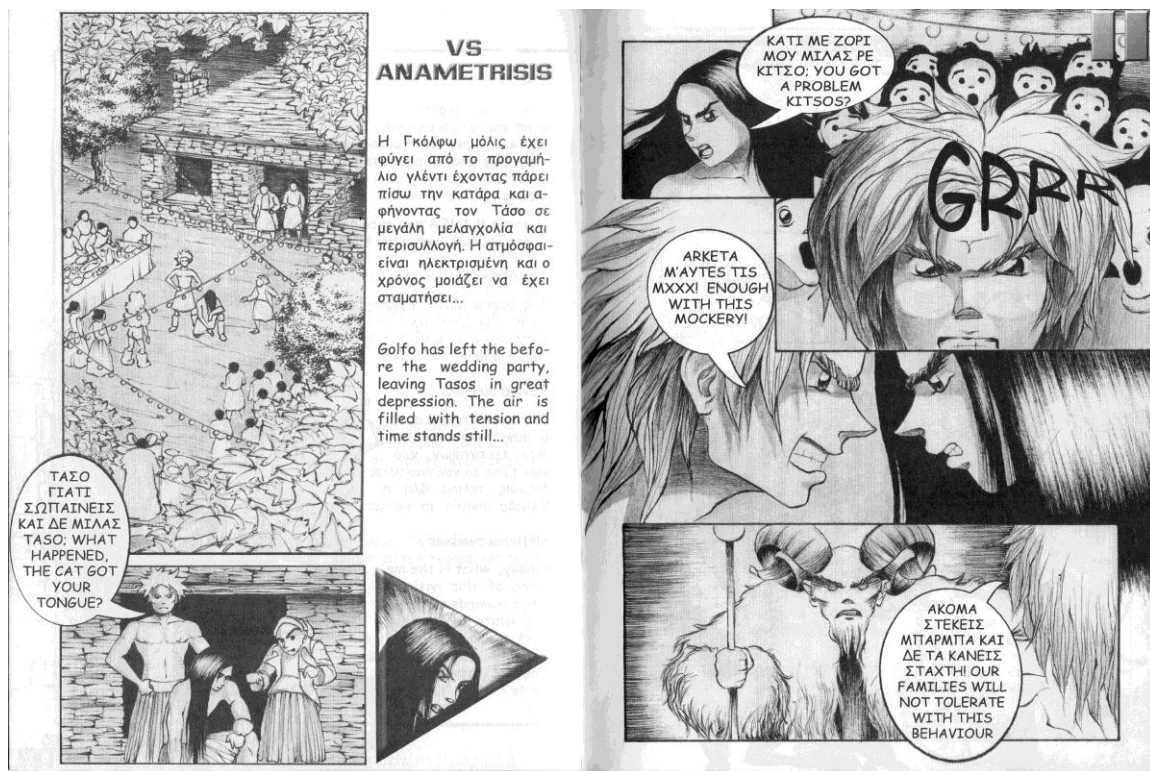
Another childhood memory that was a source of inspiration for the *Golfo* Project is *Karaghiozis*. Despite its Turkish origins back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *Karaghiozis* has been hailed “as genuine Greek theatre and as an expression of our nation” (Mystakidou 1984: 66). However, by the mid-1980s, this traditional shadow theatre has come to be limited to an almost exclusive juvenile audience. Children would regularly amuse themselves by watching *Karaghiozis* shows either in indoors or outdoors venues and primarily on television, where shadow theatre was listed as a children's programme (Puchner 1992: 81; Ioannou 1971: ι-θ). *Karaghiozis* is another form of touring theatre, which uses its own standardized stage with a rectangular white canvas screen lit from behind, on which figures and sets cast their shadow, while the puppeteer remains undiscerned behind the screen. Both figures and sets – the former made of aniline dyed leather or chiselled cardboard and the latter of aniline dyed canvas or cut-out cardboard (Spatharis 1992; Yayannos 1976) – are much admired for their aesthetic quality by contemporary painters (Mytaras 1976; Tsarouchis 1992) [fig 3].

***Masked performance***

Apart from *Karaghiozis*, another theatre form that has a vital presence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century professional Greek theatre is masked performance. Inspired in part by folk

entertainment and in part by ancient Greek theatre, mask became extremely popular among Greek directors and designers mainly for ancient Greek drama productions, as a means of reclaiming a lost tradition and, at the same time, of renewing the aesthetics of contemporary performance (Fotopoulos 1980). The revival of the mask in Greece parallels similar developments in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Western theatre, when mask – this highly theatrical element with roots in ancient rituals and proto-theatrical forms and with a long history in both Eastern and Western theatre (Ferris 1999; Emich 1999) – came again into prominence after centuries of absence in order to “retrieve a lost tradition [...], to give imagistic, metaphorical resonance to a playwright's ideas, or to serve as a training device for the actor” (Ferris 1999: 246).

**Manga, Television, computer and video games**



**Fig 4** *Anametrasis* [The Rival Scene], designed by Yiannis Katranitsas, *Golfo 2.3 Beta* programme, HoROS Theatre Company

*Manga* are Japanese comics that combine traditional Japanese with western styles of drawing. They took their current form after WWII and deal virtually with all subjects, while addressing a variety of audiences. Nowadays *manga* have acquired world circulation fulfilling their creators' goal to “create a comics style that would be universal, the style of the 21<sup>st</sup> century understood by all readers”, even “ushering in

[...] a transnational culture of 'World Comics'" (Gravett 2004: 157). *Manga* became widely popular in the West through their animated adaptations (*anime*) shown on television. One such *anime*, *Candy Candy* by Kyoko Muzuki (story), Yumiko Igarashi (art), (original run: October 1976-February 1979) enthralled children all over the world, becoming a point of reference in juvenile culture. When *Candy Candy* was broadcast in Greece (Season 1: 1983–1984, Season 2: 1986–1987, Seasons 1 & 2: 1989), it became a major hit among younger viewers of both sexes, acquiring a level of popularity that only television can offer. Set in an Anglo-Saxon environment, the *anime* tells the story of Candy, an optimistic, life-loving and cheerful little girl, who grew up in an orphanage, but managed to get through life's hard times, thanks to her good heart and endless courage. Her passage from childhood to adulthood in a hostile environment of rich relations includes two great romantic love affairs, both of which come to an unhappy ending. The palpable melodramatic quality of this *anime* series is a strong link to *Golfo* [fig 4].

*Manga/anime*, *Karaghiozis* and mountain films (like several other forms of pop culture) were all mediated to young audiences of the 1980s and 1990s through the powerful medium of television. Television became a major force in Greek culture the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (especially after the deregulation of broadcasting in 1989), providing indelible childhood memories to the younger generations. Television along with computers and videogames, which came into prominence internationally at about the same years, came to haunt their lives, providing not only entertainment and visual stimuli but also role models in this global village.

Among the aforementioned sources of visual reference the touring *bouloukia* tradition is present in all versions of the *Golfo* Project. Nevertheless, the *Golfo 1* series focuses on the school national celebration aesthetics, while the *manga* elements are almost imperceptible (confined to some of the costumes) and the mask is totally absent. This version overtly comments on the play's stage and film history, as well as on past ideological uses. The *Golfo 2* series reduces the national celebration references to some limited aspects and, at the same time, it foregrounds and explores extensively the Asian culture aesthetics and the tradition of masked performance. *Golfo 2.0 – Reloaded* deals with the video game and *manga* culture, while *Golfo 2.3 Beta* presents a homogeneous *manga* spectacle (video, costumes, masks, movement, diction)<sup>17</sup> – with the single exception of a *Karaghiozis* scene – putting thus the

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<sup>17</sup> It is interesting to note the overall *manga* design of the *Golfo 2.3 Beta* programme designed by the scenographer of the show Yannis Katranitsas: in it not only *manga*-like portraits of all the characters are printed, but also two entire episodes of the *Golfo* story in *manga* style (the visit of the English traveler and the Tasos vs. Kitsos scene [fig 4]) are included (see the

national identity discussion into a different perspective. It is in this general context that the scenography of the *Golfo* Project can be examined.

## Scenography

### *Stage*

In order to host their touring work in progress, HoROS Theatre company devised an up-to-date low-tech touring stage, which besides the main source of inspiration, the *bouloukia* tradition, incorporated memories of the school theatre platform.

In *Golfo 1.0*, a free-standing raised black box was placed in the midst of the rather pompous National (State) Theatre of Northern Greece Main Stage Foyer (an independent shell within a state building), perhaps as a sign of the production's aesthetic and ideological independency from the official context of a state theatre. The suggested independence was further enhanced at the end of the show, when the ramp leading up to the stage space would ascend, creating thus a fully enclosed stage space, a treasury of dear memories and valuable emotions [fig 5]. As soon as the show was expelled from the National (State) Theatre of Northern Greece repertoire and began touring (*Golfo 1.1* onwards), the box was stripped off its side walls so as to provide better sightlines to audiences of various locations (e.g. village squares), who sometimes formed half a circle around the playing space. Thus a booth stage proper was created with a bare platform and backstage facilities, plus the single surface projection screen of the black box version at the rear of the stage. This basic structure – flexible and easily transportable – was used in all later versions. The 'back-to-the-basics' principle affected the lighting system as well. Instead of contemporary sophisticated lighting equipment, modern low-tension light projectors made in China were used. These lamps, which according to the *Golfo 2.0 – Reloaded* programme alluded to "the old lamps of the troupes", were placed on all three sides of the platform serving as ramp lights. In addition, a huge fan, placed at a small distance from the platform in front of the viewers' eyes, highlighted the overt theatricality of the *Golfo* stage [fig 6].

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publication *Golfo 2.3. beta* in <http://yianniskatranitsas.blogspot.gr/>). For the *Director's cut* version a whole booklet designed by Eli Ketzi has been published.



**Fig 5** Kitsos – Golfo – Giannos – Tasos – Stavroula – Village Fool, *Golfo 1.0*, 2004, HoROS Theatre Company



**Fig 6** *Golfo, Golfo 2.0 – Reloaded*, 2005, HoROS Theatre Company

Moreover, elements alluding to school theatre on national days complemented the booth stage proper in all versions: it is the Greek flag bunting hung across the stage in *Golfo 1* version, while two Greek flag poles, placed on either side of the back projection screen, substituted for the absent Greek flag bunting in *2.3 Beta* version. Thus national symbols were always present on this rudimentary stage.

It is in the context of the dialogue with tradition that a Greek shadow theatre stage made its appearance on the *Golfo* touring stage. For the Tasos vs. Kitsos rival scene in *Golfo 2.3 beta*, the back projection screen – used until then exclusively for *anime* projections – was lit from behind, and two black-and-white cardboard shadow figures dressed in *foustanela* would fight for *Golfo's* heart against a background of rudimentary *Karaghiozis* sets. It is as if behind the *manga/anime* surface there lies a powerful source of indigenous tradition.

In short, HoROS Theatre Company created a highly “theatricalized” space (McNamara 1974: 17), a place that – in the context of popular theatre – stands for Theatre itself. Upon this stage not only the story of some fictional characters is to be performed, but also the history of a nation is to be enacted.

### *Props*

On this bare platform only an extremely limited number of props, with multiple connotations, made their appearance. On the one hand, the plush toy sheep, which were used in large quantities in *Golfo 1.0*, are unmistakably children toys, objects from the age of innocence. At the same time, they can be read as symbols of the nation, alluding to the country's recent bucolic past (note the Greek flags attached on them). Moreover, as they were used as substitute for money, the plush toy sheep were functioning as symbols of wealth and power in a world of globalized economy (note the American flags attached on them) [fig 7]. On the other hand, the use of flags, the main element of national iconography, highlights *Golfo* as 'national drama'. Greek flags of various sizes were omnipresent on the *Golfo* Project stage (note the Greek flag bunting of *Golfo 1.0*). However, it is the Greek flag of *Golfo 2.0*, which came as an accessory of *Golfo* herself and had the most interesting story to tell. *Golfo*'s personal story as expressed through the Greek flag, waving proudly at the beginning, bloody after the couple's 'engagement', torn after Tasos's betrayal, run parallel to the story of all Greeks in the twentieth century from rural life to urban environment and from there to the global village, as a reviewer brilliantly pointed out (Kaltaki 2005) [fig 8].

### *Video projection*

The video projections, which substituted for traditional painted scenery, were an important vehicle for the *Golfo* Project's revitalizing scheme. This versatile new medium, which can easily accommodate various forms of pop culture (in this case video games, *manga/anime* and television) was more than a mere background: it provided a response to the course of the onstage action in a number of different ways.

*Golfo 1.0* uses multimedia elements in a video-clip aesthetic. An almost continuous flow of monochromatic filmed images of natural elements (mostly clouds in blue/green palette) is interspersed by computer-generated images that indicate wealth and power (such as dollar signs and flocks of sheep). In a melodramatic manner, the environment is affected by the heroes' adventures and feelings. Here are two such instances: when *Golfo* is heartbroken by Tasos's betrayal, a multi-storey building block collapses on screen to accompany her breakdown; similarly, when death comes at the end of the play, the cloudy sky starts pouring snow [fig 9].



**Fig 7** Golfo – Tasos, *Golfo 1.0*, 2004, HoROS Theatre Company



**Fig 8** Golfo, *Golfo 2.0 – Reloaded*, 2005, HoROS Theatre Company



**Fig 9** Golfo, *Golfo 1.0*, 2004, HoROS Theatre Company

A more complex mixture of computer-generated and television images is employed in *Golfo 2.0 – Reloaded*. The computer generated-images, alluding to the video game culture of generation Y, evoke childhood memories to both the target group audience and members of HoROS Theatre Company. The standard projection of *Golfo 2.0 – Reloaded*, i.e. the pastoral landscape (a mountain view with an ancient temple and a sheep), in crude design that reflects the *naïveté* of popular scenography, is reminiscent of the early video games of the 1980s with bright colours and large pixels [fig 10].



**Fig 10** Golfo – English Traveller – Tasos, *Golfo 2.0 – Reloaded*, 2005, HoROS Theatre Company

A more elaborate design is employed in the rival scene (Tasos vs. Kitsos), which is presented this time as a video game. The rival scene draws directly from both actors' and spectators' childhood memory of actively participating in such games. Thus, a moment of identification of the viewer – who is now a video game player – with the stage hero – who is depicted on a video game screen – emerges, as the melodramatic nature of the play asks for. Video technology provides a powerful comment on other issues raised by the staging. For example, the accumulation of digital sheep on screen (like the plush toy ones of earlier versions) symbolizes wealth and power once more. The same theme is treated with a different technological means at a single moment of the production: the Master Shepherd Zisis's encounter with Tasos, which is presented as a video conference "live from Paris", uses computer-based communication facilities so as to add to the status of this figure of power *par excellence*: Master Shepherd Zisis without flesh and blood resembles god.

What is more, video projection of *Golfo 2.0 – Reloaded* mediates the image of the nation. While the computer-generated landscape stands for the 19<sup>th</sup> century image of the nation (bucolic Arcadia along with ancient glory), the television clips,

incorporated in this version, articulate a critique on contemporary Greece and the country's image as a host of the Olympic Games 2004, only a few months after the event. Pseudo-slogans that parody the official slogans, used by the Greek National Organization of Tourism and the Olympic Games 2004 Committee, deconstruct not only the nation's self-image but also the image of contemporary Greece as constructed by the mass media. Advertisements, news titles, reality shows, dance shows, and documentaries were combined in a clip of television images that stages the wedding preparation scene. In this clip, the dichotomy of modern Greece between the East and the West, religion and secular culture, antiquity and (post)modernity, high and low culture, folk life and the media world is magnificently expressed. In *Golfo 2.3 Beta* video projection all thematic comment is absent. A photo-realistic *anime* landscape of serene beauty follows imperceptibly the action, passing from light to dark, from spring to winter. The other-world quality of the final image, when sunrays blind the viewers, is so powerful that it sticks to their mind [fig 11]. This *anime* universe acts as a flipside to the standard image of the Greek nation.



**Fig 11** Golfo – Tasos – English Traveller, *Golfo 2.3 Beta*, 2006–2008, HoROS Theatre Company

In short, video projection (which draws on television, computer, *manga/anime* and video game culture) in the *Golfo* Project has found ways to activate the emotional engagement of the spectator, exploiting not only the melodramatic techniques inherent in the original text, but also activating indelible childhood memories. At the

same time, video projection foregrounds the main themes (love, wealth and power) and central issues of the production, i.e. national identity and childhood memory.

### *Costumes and masks*

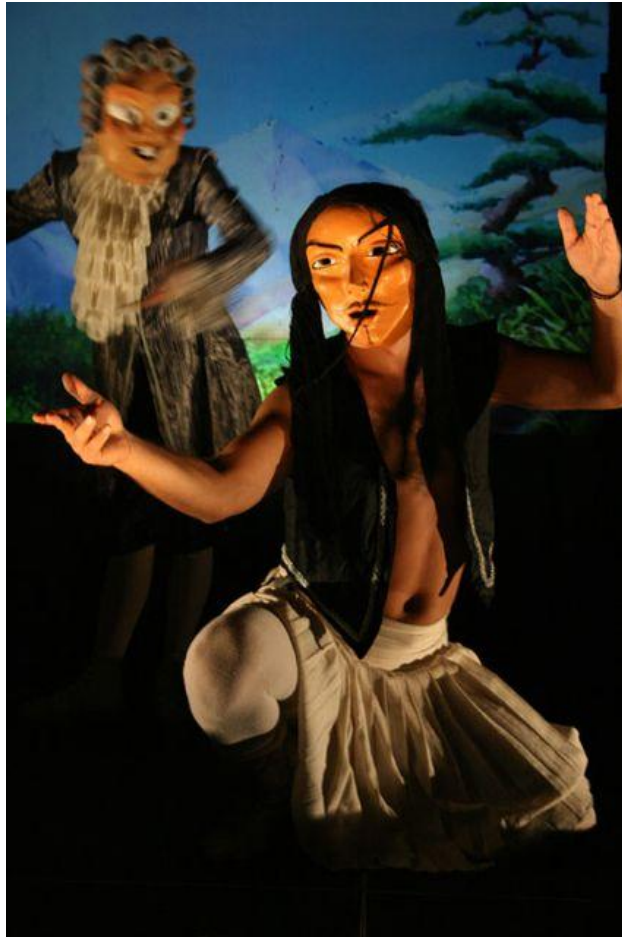
Rather than adopting the standard costumes for performing dramatic idyll (regional and national dress) – a choice that would have almost certainly led to parody – the production team opted for a series of costumes that provide an explicit critical comment on the national identity issue. The *Golfo* Project costumes at times include specific elements of national dress and incorporate national symbols, while – with the help of the movement and voice of the actor – bringing to life the Japanese *manga*, a flipside to the image of the Greek nation.

The much discussed and discredited *foustanela* is not totally absent from the *Golfo* Project. In all versions almost every Greek male character wears a kind of white skirt, very similar to the Greek national dress. Designed in a *manga* style, accompanied by white leggings and boots and leaving the torso for the most part undressed, this costume is effectively freed from the unwanted folklore connotations [fig 12]. This post-modern *manga foustanela* not only supports the sense of belonging to a community (the bucolic community of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. the Greek nation), but also creates a transnational universe we all live in (the global village of the 21<sup>st</sup> century). This is the universe of *Golfo 2.0* versions, in which all characters are dressed in *manga* style.



**Fig 12** Tasos, *Golfo 2.3 Beta*, 2006–2008, HoROS Theatre Company

When it comes to the foreigners, the English lord(s), who travel around Greece in an archeological expedition, are not given individual characteristics either; rather, they are portrayed as representatives of their nation. In *Golfo 1* and *Golfo 2*, flags (both British and Scottish) printed on T-shirts and hats, Scottish kilts (Scotland's national dress that resembles the Greek *foustanela*) and the overall red-blue-white colour scheme of the British flag suffice to denote the national identity of the wearers and distinguish them from the indigenous population [fig 10 & 11]. After accepting the Lord's money in *Golfo 1*, Tasos wears this same Scottish kilt – a piece of garment that singles him out of his community and his class: not only he is no longer poor, but also he will soon be fatally attracted to Zisis's and Stavroula's wealth [fig 7]. It is the dimension of wealth that is stressed by the choice of the outfit of an 18<sup>th</sup> century gentleman – a different image of Englishness – for the English lord in *Golfo 2.3 Beta* post-2008 version [fig 13].



**Fig 13** English Traveller – Tasos, *Golfo 2.3 Beta*, 2009, HoROS Theatre Company

In a similar way, Golfo's image passes through various metamorphoses in the Project's different versions; what stays intact and denotes unmistakably her national identity is the blue and white – the Greek national colours – palette. In *Golfo 1* she wears the school parade outfit: shirt, vest, knee-high skirt, plus a Greek flag budge pasted on her vest, alluding directly to the national celebrations. However, vinyl boots and long and loose sleeves provide a hint to the *manga* aesthetics [fig 9]. In *Golfo 2.3 Beta* original version her overall image – from the mini skirt to the vinyl boots, from the long pigtails to the silk ribbons that highlight movement – is of *manga* style; with the addition of the mask, she is transformed to a genuine *manga* heroine, a Greek Candy [fig 8]. In *Golfo 2.3 Beta* post-2008 version the otherwise *manga*-like Golfo opts for the navy outfit, an international type of uniform [fig 14].



**Fig 14** Golfo – Village Fool, *Golfo 2.3 Beta*, 2009, HoROS Theatre Company

Exclusively in *Golfo 2.0* versions, masks complement costumes designed all according to *manga* aesthetics.<sup>18</sup> Undoubtedly, these masks allude indirectly to the indigenous and foreign traditions of masked performance. Nevertheless, with their exaggerated facial features, such as huge eyes and eyelashes, thick eyebrows and pointed nose, exhibit a unique originality contributing greatly to the overall *manga* appearance of

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<sup>18</sup> Masks first entered *Golfo* Project in order to meet practical needs, since the company was reduced to four members who had to play all eight parts of the adapted play. The company extended the use of mask in future projects (e.g. *Liomeno Voutiro/Melted Butter* by S. Serefas, 2008-2012; and *Erofilii* by V. Kornaros, 2010-present).

the characters [fig 8, 11 & 12]. The standard facial expressions that are crystallized on them are in line with the melodramatic stock characterisation, but are unable to follow sudden changes of emotional status. In solely one instance of the whole production – an instance that proves to be a major clue in the melodramatic manner – does a change of mask occur: when Golfo is betrayed by Tasos, she replaces her happy face with a sorrowful one. In the *Golfo 2.3 Beta* post-2008 version, new masks by a different designer that better reflect the light, replace the older, less flexible, ones [fig 13 & 14]. However, in *Golfo 2*, there exist moments of unmasked delivery, when feelings are very strong and passion prevails: this is the case with love confessions, pleads and curses, and the leading couple's final words.

Costumes, more than any other single element of the production, deal with the national identity issue. By replacing the image of 19<sup>th</sup> century Greek shepherds and shepherdesses, which has been crystallized as the image of the Greek nation, with the image of Japanese *manga* heroes and heroines of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, the production unmasks the pseudo-folk character of dramatic idyll plays and, quite unexpectedly, proves the inter-changeability of national traditions in a globalized world. From 'made in Greece' to 'made in China'!

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the *Golfo* Project of HoROS Theatre Company holds an important position in the stage and cinematic history of this emblematic text, by actively revitalizing an essentially inactive tradition and by proposing a post-modern reading that makes this old dramatic idyll accessible to 21<sup>st</sup> century audiences. The *Golfo* Project, through the language of art and to a great extent in the visual field, argues for the hybrid nature of national identities in the contemporary westernized and globalized world. Despite the official claims for the authentic character of each unique national culture, foreign traditions – either eastern or western – are shown as playing a decisive role in shaping a nation's ultimately hybrid identity. Authenticity is found instead in childhood memories, a precious tank of genuine emotion, which alone forms one's self identity: we are what we remember.

[Trailer of *Golfo 2.3 Beta* (2006-2008), HoROS Theatre Company:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDvprvdYAWQ>]

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