

Introduction to Greek Television Studies: (Re)Reading Greek Television Fiction since 1989

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The collaboration behind this special issue arose in a perhaps not so uncommon way. We first met one another in December 2016 in the city of Thessaloniki, Greece. At the time, we had both been conducting our doctoral research in Sweden and the United Kingdom, and we were both accepted at the '50 Years of Greek Television' conference to present our work.¹ As we began talking to each other during the conference breaks, we realized how many things we had in common; we both shared the same passion about Greek television with special emphasis on its series and serials, and, ironically enough, we were both studying Greek television fiction outside Greece, thus experiencing a feeling of loneliness, together with a kind of freedom, that such a venture entailed. As we were both interested in this particular sub-field of Greek media and popular culture, we stayed in touch, communicating over emails and informing each other whenever conferences and other academic opportunities came up. And this interaction kept on throughout the last couple of years, resulting – finally – in this special issue.

While inspired by the success of the aforementioned conference that brought

¹ The international conference '50 years of Greek Television' took place between 9-11 December 2016 under the aegis of the Laboratory of Cultural and Visual Studies of the Department of Journalism and Mass Media Communication at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

together scholars from a variety of disciplines to discuss the past, present, and future of (the academic study of) Greek television, and animated by a newly-acquired sense of belonging to a generation of television scholars who feel confident about conducting research on Greek television fiction, we were still surprised to receive a good number of abstracts upon the announcement of the call for papers for this special issue. It became clear that we were not alone and we started to experience the process of this publication as part of a continuum of collaborative work which was marking the beginning of a new era for the study of Greek television.²

Up until recently, when Greek media and mass communication scholars used the otherwise broad term 'television', they tended to engage in theoretical examinations of television's logics, technologies, and effects, and to a lesser extent on its audiovisual content, meaning, and role within society. A handful of studies adopting autobiographic (Karter 2004), historical (Paschalidis 2005; Valoukos 2008) and sociological approaches (Dampasis 2002; Leventakos 2004) have attempted to capture 'the big picture' of Greek television and chronicle the evolution of the medium, as well as its impact on viewers across different time periods and cultural moments. Over the course of time, while specific television material, such as newscasts and political talk shows (see for example the work of Stylianos Papathanassopoulos, George Pleios, and Ioanna Vovou), was gradually deemed 'serious' and worthy enough to become objects of attention in their own right, certain sub-fields still necessitated more time, persistence, and external (academic) influences (Paschalidis 2018) to gain traction. Television fiction certainly fits into this latter category since, unlike other areas of television scholarship, it bore a long history of symbolic and pragmatic annihilation outside journalistic and – later on – cybernetic circles. Journalists and television critics have undoubtedly been some of the first to produce daily and/or weekly columns about popular television shows, thus filling an important gap between television and television criticism. Yet to argue that television fiction has been an object of analysis only by them would circumscribe important initiatives made by a small but non-negligible number of scholars from the 2000s onwards.

During recent years, available studies indicate a turn towards more empirically oriented approaches, zooming in on particular aspects of the medium and providing rich snapshots of Greek television's content. More specifically, academic contributions in the shape of monographs (Kiriakos 2020), collective volumes (Vamvakas & Paschalidis 2018; Vovou, 2010) and articles, such as

² Another important component of this continuum is the working group 'Scientific Encounters on the History of Private Television in Greece' organized and coordinated by Vassilis Vamvakas at the Laboratory of Cultural and Visual Studies of the Department of Journalism and Mass Media Communication (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki). The first cycle of these meetings ran between February and May 2019.

Kaklamanidou (2017), Vamvakas and Paschalidis (2018), and Aitaki (2015, 2018, 2019b), have cocreated a climate of academic polyphony which radiates will and inspiration. To identify the exact conditions that made this development possible at the current cultural moment is not an easy task. Our working hypothesis, however, is that this rejuvenation and intensification of research on Greek television (fiction) is the result of a number of different factors within the nexus of Greek television, society, and academia. To begin with, we are convinced that the academic turn towards this area of research is associated with the emergence of new academic voices, bred in the tradition of cultural studies and/or interested in an unapologetic examination of pop culture. As semi-outsiders in Greek academia, we are perhaps not the most knowledgeable people to report on dominant paradigms and logics of exclusion – a brave and demanding endeavor which is being undertaken by colleagues, whose insights and observations from working at Greek universities have started to unblur the picture regarding the invisibility of Greek television as an academic subject. This disentanglement from discourses of ‘low quality’, ‘entertainment’ and ‘commercialization’ (along with their negative connotations), as well as ‘stupefaction’ – as anachronistic as they may sound for people familiar with the trajectory of the ‘popular’ within Media and Cultural Studies – appears to be a contemporary struggle for television studies in Greece. Although it is hard for us to evaluate the logic and the degree of resistance diachronically, this seems to be a fight that we are winning. Our impression is that one of the winning strategies is a pragmatic approach to studying television, encapsulated in the practice of actually watching television content and approaching it with critical eyes, as well as observing and registering contemporary discourses about television, instead of perpetuating and giving in to moral panics or elitist (mis)conceptions.

As a matter of fact, outside the realm of academia, Greek television has been going through noticeable changes. The past decade can showcase a number of landmarks, including low and high points, mournings, and celebrations, disappointments and hopeful beginnings. Such a landmark was the low production rate of domestic television fiction, especially during 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. The economic crisis and its effects on the advertising industry proved detrimental for the budgets available for the production of series and serials both in the cases of the public and private broadcasters. In December 2012, a public discussion coordinated by the Scriptwriters Guild of Greece and led primarily by directors and scriptwriters addressed specifically this development; the reduction of new television fiction programs to rates unprecedented in the history of Greek television and how this phenomenon could be perceived as a sociocultural danger.

Similar discourses circulated in 2016 when MEGA Channel was disqualified from the second round of the license competition initiated by the SYRIZA/ANEL

government. Through a number of trailers of incredible emotional resonance broadcasted both on the channel itself but also circulating through social media, MEGA reminded its viewers of its contribution to Greek television history (including quantitative references to money spent for different productions) and fueled a sense of collective loss which came with the looming farewell to the first private television channel.³ This kind of ‘separation anxiety’ lasted for over two years, with the channel being on life support until the 28th of October 2018 when it finally stopped broadcasting.⁴

In contrast to the gloominess of the above events, the two major private channels, MEGA and ANT1, also celebrated their 30th birthdays in 2019. Once again, the retreat to the historical archive and the nostalgically infused compilation of iconic moments from the channels’ production was used strategically in order to convince about the prominent place of television in collective memory and identity.⁵ These celebratory campaigns – centralizing on many occasions the resonance of television fiction – generated a number of reactions/reflections from popular journalistic criticism, activating once again debates around the sociocultural significance of private broadcasting in Greece during the last thirty years (Kaouki 2019; *To Pontiki* 2019; *To Vima* 2019).

What the above events illustrate is an intense period consisting not only of

³ Here we refer to a series of videos launched under the slogan ‘Με την άδειά σας... συνεχίζουμε/With your license/permission... we carry on’. Among the videos that are available on YouTube, this is perhaps the most well-known one: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ubut4ugRi6Y>.

⁴ On March 2018, 7 months before its closure, MEGA’s creative team launched another creative advertisement entitled ‘Οι σειρές του MEGA... μιλάνε/MEGA series... speak’. Thanks to well-known Greek actors, such as Christoforos Papakaliatis, Pemi Zouni, and Antinoos Albanis who agreed to lend their ‘voices’ to the advertisement, this one-minute project (re)introduced different generations of Greek spectators to some of the most famous television productions of Greece’s first private television channel. However, the advert, aside from a mere elegy on MEGA’s rich cultural archive, also served as an affective/effective communication strategy aiming to send the government and viewers a unified message: that MEGA constitutes a body of older and more recent productions whose ‘life’ in the Greek television landscape still matters.

⁵ The celebratory video ‘ANT1, 30 χρόνια είμαστε 1/ANT1, 30 years we are 1’ emphasizes the embeddedness of television in people’s everyday lives, as well as the similarities and differences in the ways that television content speaks to different generations: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43E2d8sopDQ>. Delivered with the voice of popular Greek actress Vicky Stavropoulou and broadcasted via OneTV, the video dedicated to MEGA’s 30th anniversary followed the familiar strategy of compilation of iconic moments/scenes/punchlines from the channel’s programmes, reminding the viewers all the functions it fulfilled throughout the years: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKRUOB1dcoU>.

concrete events which reshaped the local television landscape, but also a number of emotional aftereffects encouraging general audiences, journalists, and academics to reflect on Greek television and the myriad ways it has interacted with individual television viewers and society as a whole. In the meantime, the incessant broadcasting of reruns (Chairetis 2018), followed later on by the relatively recent rejuvenation of Greek television fiction, which is manifested through the channels' investment in new productions, but also revivals (Aitaki 2019a), open up a series of questions concerning the role and status of Greek television and its archive that have yet to be explored. The unexpected and imminent return of MEGA under the direction of Evangelos Marinakis (Anagnostopoulou 2020; Grammeli 2020) should be understood as a powerful reminder that we also need to follow current developments closely, as the Greek media landscape continues to be in state of flux.

The cross-fertilization of the study of Greek television fiction with rejuvenated and exculpated attitudes towards the medium, combined with the aforementioned sociocultural changes, signifies a priority to discuss Greek television's cultural archive, especially concentrating on the context of commercially oriented television. In this sense, the special issue marks a series of 'firsts'. It is, to our knowledge, the first collaborative effort especially dedicated to Greek television fiction, a prime-time staple but, at the same time, one of the most underrepresented sub-fields in Greek media studies. What is more, it is the first time a special issue particularly focuses on Greek private television, attempting a rectification of the paradigm that has for years excluded it on the basis of its 'entertaining' and, thus, low-quality nature. Although we have in no way discouraged or rejected submissions focusing on fiction produced and broadcast by public channels, the temporal indication of our interest for studies focusing on fiction produced after 1989 (the year of the advent of the first commercial broadcasters, MEGA and ANT1) inevitably communicated to our colleagues our wishful thinking to focus on private television.⁶ This special issue is therefore in one way an attempt to introduce the study of Greek television fiction as a worthy scholarly endeavor and naturalize a new paradigm for engaging in what we can call Greek Television Studies.

(RE)READING GREEK TELEVISION FICTION

As it may be evident already, Greek television fiction is a rich archive which happens to constitute the most familiar history for Greek viewers and simultaneously, one of the least studied ones within Greek academia (Chairetis 2019). Therefore, the title of the entire issue as well the one used in this sub-

⁶ In our doctoral dissertations (Aitaki 2018; Chairetis 2019) we have, drawing from separate theoretical frameworks and working with different empirical material, highlighted the epistemological specificity of private television, as well as the intimate emotional relationship we have sustained with it throughout the years.

section mean to rectify this lacuna. Far from a haphazard choice, the verb (re)read reveals a considerable lack, and an opportunity to go back, (re)visit and (re)consume shows and series of previous decades. In addition, the practice of (re)reading also 'betrays' our familiarization and immersion within a British cultural studies background which perceives texts of all kinds, be they literary, filmic or televisual as cultural evidence, able to provide valuable knowledge about the historical and social contexts in which they were (re)produced.

More specifically, within the context of this special issue, we openly express our intention to put to the fore a particular method of reading and thus, a particular methodological framework pivotal to relating with historical texts which have not garnered the academic attention they should have, when they were first made and watched. Prompted by the invisible status that has traditionally characterized Greek television fiction (Aitaki 2018), we propose several understandings and applications of (re)reading as a scholarly practice directed towards producing knowledge about a significant chapter of the cultural history of modern Greece. According to Cambridge Dictionary, to reread means to read something again. Thus, when we reread, "we reconsider, and reinterpret [...] historical descriptions from any viewpoint of any era" (Cambridge 2020). This particular meaning of the verb constructs rereading as a dynamic process which aims to assess something anew giving it a second – and perhaps – better chance. Under this light, (re)reading may refer to the already mentioned process of correction aimed towards rectifying the place of television (fiction) within Greek academia in general and the study of Greek media and culture in particular. As such, the current issue should be understood as an empirical continuation of the very important preparatory work done by Paschalidis (2018) and Vamvakas (2017) in terms of identifying – and vitiating – the conditions of the academic discrimination against a particular facet of popular culture.

Secondly, if we take as a given that television fiction in Greece has not been examined in all its breadth and depth within academia, (re)reading may be also conceptualized as a reparative method, one that gives justice to particular television material whose meaning may appear to be 'doomed' and/or locked in time. Hence, (re)reading may serve as a useful remedy for ex-failures and elisions because it contributes towards re-understanding, and as a consequence, rejecting a closed-book understanding of the past (be it remote or relatively recent). In this way, the act of rereading may proffer two different points of departure: one which uses the past as a startline for reconsidering the place of particular television products within their sociocultural context and another which takes the vantage point of today to expand the understanding of how specific texts may have initially been perceived and enrich how they may presently be read in the light of their resemblance to more contemporary productions (Chairetis 2018).

At the same time, it goes without saying that the practice of (re)reading presupposes the active involvement of subjects behind the reading processes attempted upon texts who may 'compile' a variety of identities, including that of the viewer, fan, scholar, critic, and producer. Of course, television research is no stranger to hybrid positionalities and multiple agendas; see for example the 'collaborative' approach which highlights the value of dialogue between media industries and academia (Hill 2019), as well as the practice of reading television as 'acafan' (Jenkins 2011). Such an argument however, puts into serious question the potentiality of producing 'objective' and 'reliable' history and analysis in the first place. And although in many parts of the Anglophone world there is no longer the need to defend the status of television research against the charge of personal involvement and bias, we consider that television research in Greece has still a lot to learn from television research produced in other parts of the world. Thus, rereading Greek television fiction may also serve as an act of coming-out since individuals are more than welcome to step beyond their academic statuses and expose different positionalities, identities, belief systems, and ideologies. In this way, not only the different ways of rereading television become evident, but the ways in which they might reveal academic, affective, personal, intimate, and unknown sets of 'facts' are also illuminated.

PERSPECTIVES ON GREEK TELEVISION FICTION SINCE 1989

The research articles gathered in this issue derive from both early-career and well-established scholars and initiate a fruitful and much-longed discussion about a number of popular series which emerged after the privatization of Greek television. At the same time, they reveal the highly interdisciplinary character of the academic field of television pointing to the multiple methodological frameworks and analytical tools through which television fiction can be approached, understood, and analyzed.

Vassilis Vamvakas' 'Modernizing Tradition: Love, Friendship, Family and De-Urbanization in Greek TV Fiction (1993-2018)' opens this issue and employs top-down approaches to examine trends and tendencies in Greek TV series in a 25-year span. Employing a thematic and frame analysis of the 30 most popular TV series of the given period, and investigating both intertextual and extratextual factors, Vamvakas maps out some of the prevailing themes that have dominated Greek television fiction's thematology, with paradoxical love, multidimensional friendship, family crisis, and the urban/rural tension serving as the basis axis around which the series in question revolve. Furthermore, drawing on John B. Thompson's theoretical insights, the author highlights the interplay between tradition and modernity, revealing the ways in which series of the past may render tradition a modern force or even a means to tacitly undermine and sabotage its value.

Ursula-Helen Kassaveti and Athanasios Papoulis, traveling back to the early 90s shed light on the ways in which the genre of crime fiction made its appearance within the then newly born Greek private television. Using Manousos Manousakis' *Tmima Ithon/Vice Squad* (1992-1995, ANT1) as a case study, Kassaveti and Papoulis show how *Vice Squad* introduced and familiarized Greek spectators with subjectivities that lived on the margins of society. Against the backdrop of the 19th century European paraliterature, the 1960s-1970s Greek crime literature and the American radio and television genres, which had been popular in Greece in the 90s, Kassaveti and Papoulis dissect *Vice Squad* through qualitative and quantitative analyses, both of which serve as a springboard to decode and categorize the characters/social outcasts represented in the program. Kassaveti and Papoulis' article thus forces us to acknowledge the complexity – and even arbitrariness – of traditionally rigid categories by exposing how *Vice Squad* blurs the boundaries between normal and other(ed) identities.

Evangelia Theodoridou's paper calls attention to yet another show which similarly borrows heavily from the tradition of crime but hardly fits within a specific genre category. Among the many successful television productions directed by Panos Kokkinopoulos, Theodoridou examines *10 Entoli/10th Commandment* (2004-2007 and 2015, ALPHA) through the conceptual framework proposed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari on desire and the normative role of the family in capitalism. By creating a 'typology' of characters who appear on the series and conducting a meticulous analysis of the underlying narrative structure of the respective episodes, Theodoridou exposes the ambiguous ways in which generic type characters are constituted within a specific sociocultural context, thus opening up the door to read Kokkinopoulos' hybrid work(s) through psychoanalytic lenses.

Another significant contribution that this issue makes to the study of television fiction is that it highlights the value of comparative approach in research with the ultimate aim to examine texts, phenomena, and cultures, which are similar and yet differ in some ways. Through the case of *Un Gars, Une Fille* (1997-2003, Radio Canada), Irene Photiou, Panayiotis Charalambous and Theodora Maniou's article demonstrate how the analysis of the Greek-Cypriot and Greek adaptations of the Canadian format can help us better understand the circulation of different gender roles and broader understandings of femininity and masculinity available in Cyprus and Greece. Adopting a framing analysis of various multimodal devices, the authors deliver a study of how gender stereotypes are constructed by and manifested in televisual discourses. Furthermore, the use of qualitative interview research methods with production personnel in Cyprus adds an extra layer to this methodological framework and serves as a pathway towards exploring how actual subjects involved in the making of these shows make sense of

representations as perceived on the production side of the spectrum.

Finally, Ioanna Vovou delves into an investigation of the status of actuality in Greek television comedy. By addressing the presence of 'real life' events as a symptom, rather than an analogical representation of the 'real', Vovou focuses on Greek television comedy produced during the years of the economic crisis and shows how the infiltration of real life events in the multimodal discourse of fiction is in fact a multilayered strategy which can be used as metacommentary, as pretext, and as credibility. Drawing from the notion of symptom and its central position in the work of François Jost, Vovou combines an empirical multi-case analysis with the more theoretically informed endeavor which investigates the general question of the relationship between reality and fiction through the application of particular generic and temporal filters – television comedy in the years of the economic crisis.

Apart from the original research articles described above, this issue is also very proud to be hosting a reflective piece written by Jo Frangou, one of the first persons in Greek academia to write a PhD on the genre of soap operas, at a time when research on television fiction had not been a 'sexy' topic. In addition, Frangou worked at MEGA Channel for many years and has first-hand experience of the logics and decisions which have diachronically defined the channel's entertainment content with a particular emphasis on locally produced television fiction. By utilizing her unique insider perspective, Frangou brings to the fore an unknown history of MEGA shedding light on a number of areas concerning production logics and practices. Adopting the dual role of TV practitioner and researcher, Frangou exposes the promises of personal testimony as a vital analytical tool to perceive history. This semi-personal semi-academic work aims at utilizing the case of MEGA as an entry point into the socio-political conditions which surround and interact with the operation of commercial broadcasters in Greece, as a representative case of the production culture which characterizes commercially oriented media, and as a cultural institution with a rich history, whose traces have been feeble and hard-to-find.

TV REVIEWS: GREEK TELEVISION CRITICISM REVISITED

Apart from the five research articles and the reflective piece focusing on Greek television fiction since 1989, this special issue of *Filmicon* hosts – for the first time in the journal's history – television reviews. Film reviews have been a part of the journal since the very first issue as a means to provide a scholarly informed assessment of recent cinematic production. We thought that the special character of the sixth issue as the first ever journal publication particularly dedicated to Greek television fiction would be a good opportunity to explore the possibility and value of a platform for reviewing local televisual production. This comes at an especially optimistic moment for the Greek television landscape,

with television fiction reclaiming its place as the 'queen of prime time' following a rather anaemic production during the years of the economic crisis. In tune with this hopeful ambiance, the incorporation of television reviews should be read as a sign of excitement and engagement on behalf of local academia. As such, the general aim of this issue's television reviews has been to highlight some key productions of 2019 and to register their cultural and scholarly relevance.

The idea to include television reviews was in the first place inspired by an established practice visible in a number of international scholarly journals such as *Flow*, *The Popular Culture Studies Journal* and *Critical Studies in Television*. In *Flow*, short 'think pieces' focusing on specific television shows appear regularly, responding to the journal's general orientation towards time-sensitive column-style writing which combines academic and journalistic discourses. *The Popular Culture Studies Journal* has published reviews of individual episodes capturing the significance of watching television closely but also providing ideas about how to integrate popular texts into pedagogical contexts. Last but not least, the blog section of *Critical Studies in Television* regularly features pieces on popular television establishing itself as a prolific platform of television criticism running in parallel with a traditional journal dedicated to promoting and advancing television as a distinct academic discipline. We believe that such practices serve an important function in that they highlight scholarly journals' capacity to produce and host a wide variety of critical writing modes, addressing both the scholarly community and general audiences. Our intention, therefore, has been to incorporate similar writing into this special issue; writing that is not necessarily the result of long-term research projects, but rather more spontaneous reflections on recently concluded or ongoing television fiction balancing between academic and popular/journalistic criticism.

Secondly, our endeavor has been inspired by a collection of essays entitled *How to Watch Television* edited by Ethan Thompson and Jason Mittell. The publication constitutes, in our opinion, an important step towards a concretization of what television criticism is and what it does or can/should do outside the simplistic 'thumbs up/down' model. Television criticism, according to Thompson and Mittell, is not interested in promoting a singular reading of a television text perpetuating assumptions of authority; rather its intention is

... to open up a text to different readings, broaden our experience of a text and the pleasures it may produce, and offer a new way to think about that text. Criticism should expand a text, rather than reduce it, and it is seldom concerned with simplistic good or bad judgments. (Thompson and Mittell 2013, 2).

In addition to the above, Thompson and Mittell make a convincing case for the importance of actually watching television before writing about it as a simple yet

vital prerequisite for the fair and productive evaluation of the cultural production by a medium which has historically been framed as a 'bad' object of study. Our vision has been to let the aforementioned principles inform the television reviews included in this issue, by inviting scholars to thoroughly watch television and to "apply a model of thinking in order to expand our understanding and experience of it" (Ibid.: 1). As such, each television review featured in this special issue focuses on a particular case of contemporary Greek television culture as the empirical focus for the explication of a particular television theory or concept.

Along the same lines, our motivation to include television reviews has been informed by our excitement at the status of contemporary television criticism as it nowadays appears in popular media internationally. Some have spoken about it as a paradigm change, encouraging

... an understanding of contemporary television criticism not simply as a platform to present, recap, and review television programmes, but rather as an increasingly elaborate genre which utilizes visual analysis, close reading, and ideological criticism to provide more nuanced readings of contemporary television, while often using the programmes as springboards to address more abstract concepts and topics (Seitz 2013).

Our aim has been to invite Greek television scholars to engage with this model of critical writing by providing them with the space to write pieces that do not necessarily have to adhere to the logic of recapping (as the established format of reviewing television internationally) nor to the practice of reporting on happenings and intrigues within the industry (as the primary *modus operandi* of Greek television critics).

The current issue hosts four television reviews focusing on fiction produced and broadcast in 2019. These reviews, unlike the articles which included in the special issue, are written in Greek. This prioritization of the Greek language over English stemmed from our willingness to engage as wide an audience as possible, and the scholars who were invited to write their own pieces accepted the 'Greek-language restriction' with pleasure. Nikitas Fessas has contributed a piece dedicated to *Agries Melisses/Wild Bees* (2019-present, ANT1), a recent television sensation that has mesmerized critics and audiences alike, revitalizing the notion of quality in popular discourse. By reflecting on the show's generic categorization as a soap opera, Fessas unpacks the gendered layers of *Wild Bees* in various reception contexts, including popular TV criticism, audiences, as well as participating actors. Georgios Ziogas writes about *Eteros Ego - Hamenes Psyhes/The Other Me - Lost Souls* (2019, Cosmote TV), an eight-part police/crime series based on the 2017 Greek crime film *The Other Me* directed by Sotiris Tsafoulias. Through a parallel reading of recent crime TV literature and in

juxtaposition with international crime TV fiction, Ziogas comments on how the case in point produces a particular view of the world, crime, and the police. Spyridon Chairetis reviews the new cycle of *S'Agapo M'Agapas/I Love You You Love Me* (2019, Cosmote TV), a revival of the homonymous MEGA classic. Touching upon the different media through which *I Love You You Love Me* has been aired and taking into consideration the time lapse between these two productions, Chairetis attempts a rereading of the comedy's enabling potentialities and gender dynamics. Finally, Georgia Aitaki delivers a review of *Logo Timis: Eikosi Xronia Meta/Word of Honor: Twenty Years Later* (2019, SKAI), another TV revival of an iconic production of Greece's first private TV channel. Aitaki applies an 'age reading' with a particular emphasis on the visual strategies operationalized to encode representations and evaluations of ageing and midlife.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The curation of this special issue, with its research articles, reflective piece, television reviews, and book reviews all directed towards engaging with and producing critical perspectives on television, marks an ambitious attempt to create a platform where scholars may discuss, compare, and contrast their assumptions and ways of perceiving the messy, complex, yet interesting past, present, and future of Greek television fiction. Yet, this issue does not claim to have provided a comprehensive examination of the Greek television landscape since 1989. Instead of considering those areas and research subjects that this issue did not address satisfactorily, we would like to take a step back and reflect on the status of Greek television studies and what we expect from the field in the years to come. Although there is no doubt that the sub-field of Greek television studies is still a new area of research, we cannot dismiss the important work that has been produced so far, continues to emerge, as well as all the works that are in the pipeline.⁷

In order to be able to move beyond its introvert character (Aitaki 2018) and come up with even more interesting and motivating arguments for further and deeper research, Greek television fiction needs to be established once and for all as a legitimate object of study. Consequently, we believe it is high time we stopped playing the 'there-is-not-enough-television-research-conducted-in-Greece-so-far' card and instead search for, address, and motivate actual academic lacunas and areas of research that require further examination. To keep Greek television studies updated and going, it is important to keep an attentive eye on research developments taking place in other parts of Europe and the rest of the academic world. Greek television research has a lot to gain from this critique

⁷ Right before this special issue was submitted to the publisher, we were informed about yet another relevant publication; Christina Adamou's *Syghrones Tileoptikes Spoudes/Contemporary Television Studies* (2020) addresses a big gap in Greek-language bibliography and provides an updated overview of television theory and analysis.

because, although the specificities and idiosyncrasies of Greek television are important to be remembered and taken into account, it may remind us that our work runs the danger of reproducing the ‘insulation’ from which it wishes to get away. Thus, a good balance between a close observation of Greek media and society and global changes and continuities may be difficult to attain but highly beneficial and much needed. Television changes, audiences change, and television scholars globally are staying on top of things, registering and interpreting the consequences of these developments. In fact, there is a series of social and cultural changes occurring at an international level that should be taken under serious consideration; the advent of Netflix (Jenner 2018), as well as the active participation of television viewers through various cybernetic outlets (Spigel 2009) corroborate the status of contemporary television in the era of media convergence (Jenkins 2006) while also signifying an era of television abundance, known as ‘peak TV’ (Loock 2018). All of the above, even if not always applicable to the case of small nation characterized by an introvert television culture (at least not with the intensity that they appear in other contexts), should be kept at the back of our minds and (re)visited whenever needed.

As a final word, we would like to sincerely thank all authors for joining our enthusiasm, trusting us with their work, and engaging in a fruitful dialogue regarding our take on Greek Television Studies. We would also like to extend our thanks and gratitude to the editorial board of *Filmicon: Journal of Greek Film Studies* and Maria Chalkou for the continuous guidance and support in every step of the process until the publication of this special issue. Special thanks go to Jalex Noel, LGBTQ+ artist, whose graphic illustrations adorn our project. Finally, we wholeheartedly thank the reviewers for their generosity in terms of the time and effort they put into providing constructive feedback to the authors and valuable reflections to us as editors; yet another proof of the collaborative dynamics which make ambitious projects possible and an encouraging indication of a vibrant community of Greek television scholars in the making.

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