



HELLENIC LINK–MIDWEST Newsletter

A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC LINK WITH GREECE

No. 63, February–March 2008

EDITORS: Constantine Tzanos, S. Sakellarides

<http://www.helleniclinkmidwest.org>

22W415 McCarron Road - Glen Ellyn, IL 60137



Upcoming Events

The Greek and Balkan Spirit of Comedy in the Cinema of Theo Angelopoulos

On Sunday, February 24 at 3 pm, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents Dr. Andrew Horton, Professor of Film and Video Studies at the University of Oklahoma, in a lecture titled "The Greek and Balkan Spirit of Comedy in the Cinema of Theo Angelopoulos". The event will be held at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel, 10249 West Irving Park Road at Schiller Park (southeast corner of Irving Park Road and Mannheim Road). Admission is free for HLM members and \$5 for non-members.

No one would accuse Theo Angelopoulos of being a Greek Frank Capra, Jerry Lewis, Charlie Chaplin or James Carey or even a Hellenic Jacques Tati. And yet if we embrace a larger world of the "comic spirit", as it has existed through centuries of literature, song and culture in Greece and the Balkans, one can surely identify both "comic" and "humorous" as well as ironic moments throughout the many journeys Angelopoulos's protagonists embark upon. Professor Horton will show clips from *Suspended Step of the Stork*, *Ulysses' Gaze* and *Voyage to Cythera*, to *Eternity and a Day*, and speak on how thematically and in terms of narrative, these "comic moments" contribute to the atmosphere and overall impression these films leave us with. It is a spirit of "tragic comedy", or dark triumph that appears to be an important and reoccurring theme in Angelopoulos's work. And "comedy" is a much wider world than just jokes, laughter, and slapstick. Angelopoulos's dark and joyous sense of the comic will be illustrated within a tradition that can be seen throughout the work of other Balkan filmmakers. In this regard, it is important also to mention a point made in Plato's *Symposium* when Socrates and Aristophanes remark on how often comedy and tragedy cross lines into each other. After all, both tragedy and comedy began as ritual celebrations of Dionysos, the god of wine and drama.

Greece has had a tradition of satirical comedy tackling serious topics ever since Aristophanes' joyous and imaginative farces such as *Lysistrata* and *Peace* that were fully meant as anti-war statements. Although other "players" in the history of the Greek comic tradition will be mentioned, from Karangyosis and Shadow Puppet comedy down to Thanasis Vengos and even recently Lakis Lazapoulos and Renos Haralambidis, the focus will be on Theo Angelopoulos who remains one of the most respected filmmakers in the world today.

Andrew Horton is the Jeanne H Smith Professor of Film and Video Studies at the University of Oklahoma, an award winning screenwriter, and the author of eighteen books on film, screenwriting and cultural studies including, *Screenwriting For A Global Market*, *Henry Bumstead And The World Of Hollywood Art Direction*, *Writing The Character Centered Screenplay*, *The Films Of Theo Angelopoulos*, and *Laughing Out Loud: Writing The Comedy Centered Screenplay*.

He has lived and taught in Greece for over eight years and has written widely on Greek cinema and literature including two books on the films of Theo Angelopoulos and translations including *The Passport And Other Short Stories of Antonis Samarakis*. He leads a study seminar to Greece every year. He is currently writing a film for Greek actor Renos Haralambidis. His films include Brad Pitt's first feature film, *The Dark Side Of The Sun* and the much awarded *Something In Between* (1983, Yugoslavia, directed by Srdjan Karanovic). He has given screenwriting workshops around the world including Norway, Germany, England, the Czech Republic, Greece, New Zealand, Switzerland, and throughout the United States.

Celebration of the Greek Independence Day

In celebration of the Greek Independence Day, on Sunday, March 16, 2008 at 3 pm, Hellenic Link–Midwest will present, Professor Nanno Marinatos in a presentation titled "The Poet of Freedom". Professor Marinatos will read from the *Hymn to Freedom*, the *Free Besieged*, and *Psara*, all renowned poems of the Greek National Poet Dionysios Solomos, and she will comment on the poet's perceptions of the struggle of the Greeks for freedom and his vision of a free Greece. To fully capture the spirit of this struggle, this reading will be supplemented with readings from the work of the Turkish Historian Taner Akçam *A Shameful Act*, the Memoirs of the heroes of the Greek Revolution General Makriyiannis and General Theodoros Kolokotronis, and the work of the poet Aristotelis Valaoritis.

The event will be held at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel, 10249 West Irving Park Road at Schiller Park (southeast corner of Irving Park Road and Mannheim Road). Admission is free for HLM members and \$5 for non-members.

Nanno Marinatos is a full professor at the Department of Classics and Mediterranean Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She studied in the U.S. and Germany.

She is an expert in ancient Greek art and religion and one of the world's foremost experts in Minoan culture. Nanno has taught in the "College Year in Athens" program, she is the author of more than fifty articles, and has published five books that throw important new light on ancient Greek sacrificial ritual and worship, especially in the Bronze Age. She has appeared on the BBC, and on television, including the Discovery Channel, and Norwegian and German television programs

In Brief

Nuclear energy "indispensable" says EU report

In October 2007, the European Parliament overwhelmingly voted in favor of a report stating that nuclear energy will be indispensable if the EU is to meet its basic energy needs in the medium term. MEPs said that nuclear energy would be "indispensable if basic energy needs are to be met in Europe in the medium term". Given that "nuclear energy is currently the largest low-carbon dioxide energy source in Europe, the renunciation of nuclear power will make it impossible to achieve the objectives set for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and the combating of climate change".

MEPs also called on the Commission to table legislative proposals on carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology "so as to respond to the legal issues surrounding the storage and transportation of carbon dioxide." They underlined "that CCS should be fitted to fossil fuel plants at the earliest practical opportunity."

France, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Lithuania (with the collaboration of Latvia and Estonia), the United Kingdom, Poland and the Czech Republic are building new nuclear power plants, or are planning to build them, or are investigating such a possibility. Nuclear energy is currently the largest low-carbon energy source in Europe.

Over one million migrants live in Greece

According to a recent announcement of the Greek ministry of interior, it is estimated that over one million foreign nationals live and work in Greece. Roughly 720,000 illegal immigrants have acquired legal status. About 63 percent of them come from Albania (303,225 legal permits); followed by Bulgaria (27,182); the Ukraine (19,005); Romania (15,884); Georgia (12,990); Pakistan (12,126); Russia (10,704) and Egypt (10,356). The overwhelming majority are young people aged between 19 and 40, while 17 percent are second generation children of migrants (80,860).

Roughly 32 percent of all legal migrants work in construction; 20.5 percent are females employed as

household help; 12.8 percent are employed in manufacturing; 11.6 percent in commerce and repair work; 8.2 percent in hospitality and restaurants, and 6 percent in agriculture.

IAGS Scholars Association Officially Recognizes Assyrian, Greek Genocides

Last December, in a groundbreaking move, the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) has voted overwhelmingly to recognize as genocides the massacres of Assyrian and Greek populations of the Ottoman Empire between 1914 and 1923. The resolution states:

WHEREAS the denial of genocide is widely recognized as the final stage of genocide, enshrining impunity for the perpetrators of genocide, and demonstrably paving the way for future genocides;

WHEREAS the Ottoman genocide against minority populations during and following the First World War is usually depicted as genocide against Armenians alone, with little recognition of the qualitatively similar genocides against other Christian minorities of the Ottoman Empire;

BE IT RESOLVED that it is the conviction of the International Association of Genocide Scholars that the Ottoman campaign against Christian minorities of the Empire between 1914 and 1923 constituted genocide against Armenians, Assyrians, and Pontian and Anatolian Greeks.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Association calls upon the government of Turkey to acknowledge the genocides against these populations, to issue a formal apology, and to take prompt and meaningful steps toward restitution.

Interviews with Areios Pagos and Council of State Presidents

In recent interviews of the presidents of Areios Pagos (Greek supreme court) and of the Council of State President it was said: Since the current president of Areios Pagos took over the post, *he has demanded that sessions be attended by the Supreme Court plenum to avoid instances of absent judges who vote on a case by phone*. Referring to disputed court decisions in Crete linked with the Zoniana village "drug lords", he stated that an internal investigation is underway to determine if there were irregularities in the administration of justice. About 2,000-2,500 cases are outstanding each year before the Council of State, and on December 31, 2006 there were about 30,000 cases pending..

From the Treasures of Hellenic Thought

Excerpts from the Discourses of Epictetus

Epictetus, one of the great Stoic philosophers, lived from 55 AD to 135 AD. Before the rise of Christianity, the Stoics advocated the brotherhood of humanity and the natural equality of all human beings. Their ideas had a strong influence on Christian theology.

... But when you have asked for warm water and the slave has not heard, or if he did hear has brought only tepid water, or he is not even found to be in the house, then not to be vexed or to burst with passion, is not this acceptable to the gods? "How then shall a man endure such persons as this slave?" Slave yourself, will you not bear with your own brother, who has Zeus for his progenitor, and is like a son from the same seeds and of the same descent from above? But if you have been put in any such higher place, will you immediately make yourself a tyrant? Will you not remember who you are, and whom you rule? that they are kinsmen, that they are brethren by nature, that they are the offspring of Zeus? "But I have purchased them, and they have not purchased me." Do you see in what direction you are looking, that it is toward the earth, toward the pit, that it is toward these wretched laws of dead men? but toward the laws of the gods you are not looking.

When a person asked him how a man could be convinced that all his actions are under the inspection of God, he answered, Do you not think that all things are united in one? "I do," the person replied. Well, do you not think that earthly things have a natural agreement and union with heavenly things "I do." And how else so regularly as if by God's command, when He bids the plants to flower, do they flower? when He bids them to send forth shoots, do they shoot? when He bids them to produce fruit, how else do they produce fruit? when He bids the fruit to ripen, does it ripen? and when to shed the leaves, do they shed the leaves? and when He bids them to fold themselves up and to remain quiet and rest, how else do they remain quiet and rest? And how else at the growth and the wane of the moon, and at the approach and recession of the sun, are so great an alteration and change to the contrary seen in earthly things? But are plants and our bodies so bound up and united with the whole, and are not our souls much more? and our souls so bound up and in contact with God as parts of Him and portions of Him; and does not God perceive every motion of these parts as being His own motion connate with Himself? Now are you able to think of the divine administration, and about all things divine, and at the same time also about human affairs, and to be moved by ten thousand things at the same time in your senses and in your understanding, and to assent to some, and to dissent from others, and again as to some things to suspend your judgment; and do you retain in your soul so many

impressions from so many and various things, and being moved by them, do you fall upon notions similar to those first impressed, and do you retain numerous arts and the memories of ten thousand things; and is not God able to oversee all things, and to be present with all, and to receive from all a certain communication?

"But I cannot," the man may reply, "comprehend all these things at once." But who tells you that you have equal power with Zeus? Nevertheless he has placed by every man a guardian, every man's Demon, to whom he has committed the care of the man, a guardian who never sleeps, is never deceived. When, then, you have shut the doors and made darkness within, remember never to say that you are alone, for you are not; but God is within, and your Demon is within, and what need have they of light to see what you are doing? To this God you ought to swear an oath just as the soldiers do to Caesar. But they who are hired for pay swear to regard the safety of Caesar before all things; and you who have received so many and such great favours, will you not swear, or when you have sworn, will you not abide by your oath? And what shall you swear? Never to be disobedient, never to make any charges, never to find fault with anything that he has given, and never unwillingly to do or to suffer anything, that is necessary. Is this oath like the soldier's oath? The soldiers swear not to prefer any man to Caesar: in this oath men swear to honour themselves before all.

... For if we had understanding, ought we to do anything else both jointly and severally than to sing hymns and bless the deity, and to tell of his benefits? Ought we not when we are digging and ploughing and eating to sing this hymn to God? "Great is God, who has given us such implements with which we shall cultivate the earth: great is God who has given us hands, the power of swallowing, a stomach, imperceptible growth, and the power of breathing while we sleep." This is what we ought to sing on every occasion, and to sing the greatest and most divine hymn for giving us the faculty of comprehending these things and using a proper way. Well then, since most of you have become blind, ought there not to be some man to fill this office, and on behalf of all to sing the hymn to God? For what else can I do, a lame old man, than sing hymns to God? If then I was a nightingale, I would do the part of a nightingale: if I were a swan, I would do like a swan. But now I am a rational creature, and I ought to praise God: this is my work; I do it, nor will I desert this post, so long as I am allowed to keep it; and I exhort you to join in this same song.

(to be continued)

From The Riches Of Our Cultural Heritage

Ποίηση Αριστοτέλη Βαλαωρίτη

Ο Αριστοτέλης Βαλαωρίτης γεννήθηκε στη Λευκάδα το 1824 και θεωρείται ένας από τους κυριότερους εκπροσώπους της Επτανησιακής Σχολής. Καταγόταν από διακεκριμένη οικογένεια αγωνιστών. Σπούδασε νομικά στην Ιταλία και τη Γαλλία και το 1848 επέστρεψε στην πατρίδα του όπου αναμείχθηκε ενεργά με την πολιτική, ως βουλευτής της "Ιονίου Πολιτείας" και—μετά την ένωση των Επτανήσων—ως βουλευτής στην Αθήνα. Λυρικός ποιητής, έχει επηρεαστεί έντονα από το Σολωμό αλλά ρέπει παράλληλα έντονα προς το δημοτικό τραγούδι και το ρομαντισμό. Τα θέματά του είναι συνήθως "ηρωικά", απορρέουν από τα κατορθώματα των αγωνιστών της Επανάστασης του '21 και περιέχουν έντονα υπερφυσικά στοιχεία. Η πρώτη ποιητική συλλογή του Βαλαωρίτη, "Στιχουργήματα", δημοσιεύτηκε το 1847. Ακολούθησαν τα "Μνημόσυνα άσματα", "Κυρά Φροσύνη", "Αθανάσιος Διάκος" και "Φωτεινός". Το τελευταίο είναι το σημαντικότερο έργο του, το οποίο όμως έμεινε ημιτελές εξαιτίας του θανάτου του το 1879.

Ο βράχος και το κύμα

«Μέριασε, βράχε, να διαβώ!» το κύμα ανδρειωμένο λέγει στην πέτρα του γιαλού θολό, μελανιασμένο.
«Μέριασε! μες τα στήθη μου, που 'σαν νεκρά και κρύα μαύρος βοριάς εφώλιασε και μαύρη τρικυμία. Αφρούς δεν έχω γι' άρματα, κούφια βοή γι' αντάρα, έχω ποτάμι αίματα, με θέρειψε η κατάρρα του κόσμου, που βαρέθηκε, του κόσμου που 'πε τώρα: «Βράχε, θα πέσεις, έφτασεν η φοβερή σου η ώρα!» Όταν ερχόμουνα σιγά, δειλό, παραδαρμένο, και σο 'γλυφα και σο 'πλενα τα πόδια δουλωμένο, περήφανα μ' εκοίταζες και φώναζες του κόσμου, να δει την καταφρόνηση που πάθαινε ο αφρός μου. Κι αντίς εγώ κρυφά-κρυφά, εκεί που σε φιλούσα, μέρα και νύχτα σ'έσκαφτα τη σάρκα σου εδαγκούσα και την πληγή που σ' άνοιγα, το λάκκο που 'θε κάμω, με φύκη τον επλάκωνα, τον έκρυβα στον άμμο. Σκύψε να ιδείς τη ρίζα σου στις θάλασσας τα βύθη, τα θέμελά σου τα 'φαγα, σ' έκαμα κουφολίθι. Μέριασε, βράχε, να διαβώ! Του δούλου το ποδάρι θα σε πατήσει στο λαιμό...Εξύπνησα λιοντάρι...»

Ο βράχος εκοιμότουνε. Στην καταχνιά κρυμμένος, αναισθητος σου φαίνεται, νεκρός, σαβανωμένος. Του φώτιζαν το μέτωπο, σχισμένο από ρυτίδες, του φεγγαριού, που 'ταν χλωμό, μισόσβηστες αχτίδες. Ολόγυρα του ονειράτα, κατάρες ανεμίζουν και στον ανεμοστρόβιλο φαντάσματα αρμενίζουν, καθώς ανεμοδέρνουνε και φτεροθορυβούνε τη δυσωδία του νεκρού τα όρνια αν μυριστούνε. Το μούγκρισμα του κύματος, την άσπλαχνη φοβέρα, χίλιες φορές την άκουσεν ο βράχος στον αθέρα

ν' αντιβοά τρομαχτικά χωρίς καν να ξυπνήσει, και σήμερα ανατρίχιασε, λες θα λιγοψυχήσει.
«Κύμα, τι θέλεις από με και τι με φοβερίζεις; Ποιος είσαι συ κι ετόλμησες, αντί να με δροσίσεις, αντί με το τραγούδι σου τον ύπνο μου να ευφραίνεις, και με τα κρύα σου νερά τη φτέρνα μου να πλένεις, εμπρός μου στέκεις φοβερό, μ' αφρούς στεφανωμένο; Οποιος κι αν είσαι μάθε το, εύκολα δεν πεθαίνω!»

«Βράχε, με λένε Εκδίκηση. Μ' επότισεν ο χρόνος χολή και καταφρόνηση. Μ' ανάθρεψεν ο πόνος. Ήμουνα δάκρυ μια φορά και τώρα κοιτάξέ με, έγινα θάλασσα πλατιά, πέσε, προσκύνησέ με. Εδώ μέσα στα σπλάχνα μου, βλέπεις, δεν έχω φύκη, σέρνω ένα σύγνεφο ψυχές, ερμιά και καταδίκη, ξύπνησε τώρα, σε ζητούν του άδη μου τ' αχνάρια... Μ' έκαμες ξυλοκρέβατο... Με φόρτωσες κουφάρια... Σε ξένους μ' έριξες γιαλούς... Το ψυχομάχημά μου το περιγέλασαν πολλοί και τα πατήματά μου τα φαρμακέψανε κρυφά με την ελεημοσύνη. Μέριασε βράχε, να διαβώ, επέρασε η γαλήνη, καταποτήρας είμαι εγώ, ο άσπονδος εχθρός σου. Γίγαντας στέκω εμπρός σου!»

Ο βράχος εβουβάθηκε. Το κύμα στην ορμή του εκαταπόντησε μεμιάς το κούφιο το κορμί του. Χάνεται μες την άβυσσο, τρίβεται, σβήεται, λιώνει
σα να 'ταν από χιόνι.

Επάνωθέ του εβόγγιζε για λίγο αγριεμένη η θάλασσα κι εκλείστηκε. Τώρα δεν απομένει στον τόπο που 'ταν το στοιχείο, κανείς παρά το κύμα, που παίζει γαλανόλευκο επάνω από το μνήμα.