

As said in chpt 3, we would ask N. Biniaris, who had written the book reviewed by the blog ange-ta in pages 1,2 of the present book, to write something to complete if possible certain things missing from our presentation here. We e-mailed him attachments with what we have seen so far, exactly as we would do if we did not know him personally, but since it just so happens that he is a close friend of ours, and since most of the pages e-mailed he had already received and read, among many other pages too, but one set at a time, when they were being written, I went and found him, and told him what was chosen to put under what title chapter and with what overall plan and hopeful outcome

.....bla-bla-bla.....

...So: If I were an academic cultural historian, which I am not, I would say that the center of weight of this exposition is the analysis of the relevance of the various versions of Christian religion used by various western societies and periods in the formation of their collective psychologies and mental constitutions, and the relevance of such implications for the understanding of various historical events in them, as well as for possibly better understanding of factors that maybe can play a role in decision making here and now. For example the way Christian religion has shaped American mentality or Russian or Greek. To point to values of people like Theodorakis as a model or as a counter-model in the context of a course in humanities is not equivalent to any ability to influence anybody along the directions admired or desired by the expositor, as I said the expositor can only throw it as a random card that might influence a game to a new, possibly interesting but certainly unpredictable, direction; a positive one when compared to impasses and checkmates. Especially, I add the following to thwart my possible influence on anybody imitating that path in life for masochistic or even psychopathological reasons: I remember a poor guy in Berkeley who made a living by Tarot card telling on the sidewalk of Telegraph Avenue and once he put two needles in his eyes because, as he said, he hoped to make a more convincing and more prophet-like sight that way, before starting his preaching, and he even added that he too, like Christ in Gethsemane, had said “No-no-no-no-no-no” when he first thought of it. Theodorakis and the friends he was proud to belong to were not attracted to anything morbid or weird, they were 20-year-olds who felt their blood boiling for life, sex, fight and heroic deeds, in a society where not yet all mainstream media considered martyr conscientious objectors as whackos and where the main rebels did have causes and were not “rebels without a cause” (and above all, where attention by media was not among the main considerations as later in the so called “society of spectacle”). They found a cause worthy of their energies and dreams: e.g. freedom, justice, progress, equality, etc, “a goal worth living and dying for”, and gave their all to it and to whoever shared it with them. So the basis of anything like that was a positive judgment. Right now the attack organized by people trained in economics makes irrelevant and obsolete all traditional fighting like Rumsfeld’s doctrine of bombing without landing made irrelevant all traditional man to man fight, and like the training of Guantanamo guards would make all valiance or solidarity we witnessed in chpt 2b irrelevant and (almost but not quite!) only useful for lectures in humanity courses. New problems need new solutions, Greeks too like Europeans and Americans will have to evolve among them people inspiring trust in their abilities in economics matters too and not just in their values, and Americans and Europeans will have to (re)evolve among them people who do not equate their progress in life with their standard of living or their academic tenure; to that effect a book like the present can help: in America and Europe as part of courses in humanities, in Greece as collective self understanding of our mentality in issues admitting collective mirroring and collective social psychoanalysis to know where our emotional explosions are lucid too and where they are exaggerations unrelated to location and time...

...Nick, since it seems you’re busy let me make your answer both easier and harder, I mean let me save time for you by ridding you of the part I too would think up (actually anybody or almost anybody would think it up if he had a reason to think about it) and leave to you what at least for me would be hard to come by: there’s a serious part and a half-joke-half-serious part. I start from the second: We said there are so many Greeks who started from sciences of rigorous thinking and (after realizing their work there would not be indispensable either for science or for their own satisfaction) continued with humanities or journalism. So? They left the science part, and especially economics, to others who were both more insisting and less humanities oriented and as a result....etc etc? That would have a small grain of truth if we were in a nation which does play a role in wider decision making but we’re in Greece which plays no such role even in its own narrow decision making. So, let’s go back to the serious answer you could give, or could expand on if you think it’s both true and not exhausted by what I’ll now write anticipating yours: For Greeks to go to other proposals too, capable of being “antagonistic” to contemporary concepts of progress, and not just discuss ad infinitum values and ways of life in their leisure as they were doing in antiquity, they should feel sure that the core and substance of what they have to leave for a while still exists solid back there, otherwise they will constantly be looking back over their shoulder either out of nostalgia or out of worry something happened to it; unless they also see it reflected in the new ways or they feel they themselves can breathe it into those ways. This book’s objective was to do exactly those things, preserve some of the best and simplest examples of what we all have lived here, both to feed our nostalgia and to free ourselves from the worry they can get lost, and to translate them into the traditions we may be entering so as to meet them when looking forward too and not only when looking back, thus also changing the others we come in touch with and making, them too, better and happier. So if your “economic progress oriented answer” is delaying because you are wondering what is missing and trying to pinpoint it either in your own thinking soul or somewhere in my pages, think if it lies in the direction I just spelled out and answer either through your paragraphs or through copying-pasting mine and we’ll both feel rested, along with our reader, that the “new brave Greek” who in the name of brave new “progress” focused on the worst scum features of our traditions will just die by fading as the shadow of the clown he really is by just being snubbed and not reproduced as anybody’s model. But I feel rested already since, maybe through my profession, I see all this sounding as commonplace to many high school students...

NICK'S ANSWER:

...To add whenever he feels inspired and motivated for it and whenever **he** too feels there is real reason for it...

*In the meantime let's see some other, parallel, correspondence:*

Athens, September 12, 2011

Dearest Andy Croft,

it's been almost two years since we met, on the (November was it?) 2009 event on Yiannis Ritsos in Perissos Athens, you had told me that in the year after that you possibly would also be doing something about Sikelianos on whose "March of the Spirit" I had made a translation that you had seen and liked. I don't know if you finally did what you had in mind; neither had I myself done anything more about Sikelianos until two years later, namely now: I entered that translation in a wider context titled "Neruda and Sikelianos as gospels of freedom", Theodorakis' term signifying that it is a presentation of his reading of the two poets and, of course, that it will include links through which one can listen to the way he put to music each part of Sikelianos' "March..." and Neruda's "Canto...", and also will include biographical details about Theodorakis, possibly related, at least poetically, with the two such "gospels". That text itself is one chapter of a wider book titled "The teaching of humanities after the 1999-2011 events".

I will only be very happy to send you the whole thing in case you are interested, but for now I only send you what I've just sketched to avoid overloading either your mail or your attention or both. I am very interested in your feedback and I will be very happy and very grateful to hear of it whenever you get a chance to take a look (and a listening, since it's music too).

With the greatest esteem  
John Alevizos  
[johnalev@gmail.com](mailto:johnalev@gmail.com)

*September 12, one hour later*

Dear Ioannis,

Thanks for this. But I am afraid that I am having to cut back on Smokestack's publishing programme in the current economic situation, and I am simply not in a position to consider new work at the moment. I only publish ten titles a year (I run Smokestack in my spare time), and Smokestack's provisional programme is still full until 2015. Meanwhile, bookshop sales are collapsing, Waterstones have stopped ordering new titles, Central Books have started charging for unsold stock in the warehouse and the Arts Council cannot support Smokestack for more than twelve months at a time (and of course even this is now very uncertain). Many of the much bigger arts organisations whose application for Portfolio status were recently declined will be competing with Smokestack for GfA money at the end of the year.

Best,

Andy Croft  
Smokestack Books  
[www.smokestack-books.co.uk](http://www.smokestack-books.co.uk)

*One more hour later*

Dearest dearest Andy!!!: Please believe me that I didn't write you as to an editor but as to a friend whose lecture I had admired as quite inspired and inspiring, whose ideas I share, and whose vehicle of education to people, i.e. poetry, I believe in, especially when sung too. My books just circulate free of charge. To publish them would be an impossible cost anyway since I make use of e.g. photo material that would cost a fortune to print and to read and are zero cost on the screen. So please just read some time what I sent you and send me your response as Andy Croft the thinker and poet who went all the way to Greece to attend 3 days on Ritsos. Best of luck with Smokestack and with all else you do for the ongoing situation/John Alevizos

PS: Andy if I knew what the situation you mentioned was, then there is another attachment that I would have sent you, two pages from something I had written in 2007 and completed with some 2011 remarks some time ago. So please see...

*We had seen that in pages 32, 33 of chpt 1 but let's re-insert those pages here and now:*

Twenty years ago Russell Jacoby wrote “The Last Intellectuals”, of which a central point was that the solution of the making-a-living problem for intellectuals through becoming academics meant the end of their essential contact with the public in general, and the end of the role they could play in illuminating the public in special. In other words, to illuminate the public about anything or to be illuminated by the public about anything, to be a “public intellectual” as Jacoby put it, was not allowed under the conditions of academic propriety and peer review for tenure set by universities; and Jacoby convincingly argued on how this point explained why no Mumford-like intellectuals succeeded the Mumford-like\* intellectuals of the previous generation. This point, unfortunately, does explain the numbness of the intellectuals twenty years later, i.e. now, a numbness explaining many of the very bad features of our days but it doesn’t explain why, fortunately, twenty years were not enough to make this numbness more effective and even worse, e.g. brainscape-mutilating and total. The answer is of course internet combined with optional paying, i.e. the solution to the problem, of direct contact between the public and the intellectuals, that was provided by sites in the internet sustained by optional contributions but not needing a fee to enter. And since, by indicative coincidence, Michael Albert and his friends started ZNet twenty years ago, we can consider the existence and role of all such sites as an explanation of how the chain and function of those intellectuals was never broken and Chomsky-like intellectuals\*\*, plus Chomsky himself, continued to function. Let’s elaborate a little on that to apply its core and its moral to another similar context where it might be badly needed. If we got that point by Russell Jacoby right, in prewar years prices, payments, demand etc were such that one could live on book reviews and book writing (in the proverbial “genteel poverty” of the thinkers, of course) and in live contact with the public, both in the sense of mutual mind-feeding and in the sense of almost direct payment of a thinker by the public to live and think and give back substantial books, a process that helped thinkers keep functioning independently of conditions set by intermediaries of this relation, like bossing promoters, institutions etc, but later one could not function in this way and had to either enter the academia or (physically) die, and to enter the academia one had to publish or perish, and to publish one had to address peer specialists, not the public, and to meet their quotas for being effective and useful, not the public’s, i.e. to (metaphorically) die (in the sense of entering a closed group “writing articles for each other in order not to be considered as not expert-enough”, a self-feeding circularity which ultimately only helps in keeping some jobs in existence) and refrain from publicly expressing opinions as citizen rather than as specialist. Can the “ZNet way”, i.e. what we called above “the internet combined with optional paying, way” help return to the idyllic (=bookreview-freethought-bookwriting) days before the academia way? What can book writers do to be sustained (if e.g. they don’t happen to have had a training in a field that one can e.g. teach in a high school? (e.g. physics which, by the way, is the present author’s way to go by)) now that not only books but even book reviews need an editor? Open a site and ask every once in a while for donations to have free time to write more books? Even if this made sense, which it doesn’t, how would their site be known at all to begin with? OK, book reviews of people that the public doesn’t know by people that the public knows, would break this circle but wouldn’t earn anybody a living (and could also end in mutual paid blowjobs merely disorienting the public). How can one repeat, now too, whatever it was, in the past, that helped the public find, reach and sustain directly a live circle of thinkers reaching out to it? Maybe the only thing that has changed is the, now, pimp-like mediation of an editor (either of regular books or of electronic books), or the selfpimp-like intervention of pimpeditor-like criteria and goals and values of authors themselves. If the above external mediation and internal intervention were absent, things might be much closer to the idyllic days or even better. Namely:

One can write short, leaflet size, abstracts or samples of one’s books, include in a kit inside them a CD with the full version of his pages (with a number of photos or even music etc that no editors, now or in the past, could ever finance) and have them distributed in stands, and kiosks and consenting bookstores at charges of the order of pizza-delivery fee by offices of young bikers etc. The charge for the reader of the longest epic in this format would be not more, but maybe less, than comics and Mickey/Donald etc stories. To make payment really optional could be assured by writing on the back cover of these leaflets the site where one could download the whole thing (the CD) for free (in case the leaflet was distributed not in a bookstore but in a stand, in which the back cover might not be visible, the site’s name could be written on the front cover or on the stand itself if the kiosk agreed). Or one could distribute just the CD, at even lower price, either through bookstores or through music-CD

\*We say “Mumford-like intellectuals” instead of just “Mumfords” in the plural because we believe that Mumford himself would still be unique and singular even if no end of the chain of intellectuals through absorption into universities had taken place.

\*\*We say “Chomsky-like intellectuals” instead of just “Chomskies” in the plural because we believe that Chomsky himself is still unique and singular since, among other things, no weakening in his role as public intellectual took place through his being a regular academic too. For such additional extreme uniqueness a good expression about him might well be “Chomsky-for-all-seasons for our season”.

stores. One could also have book review magazines circulating in this format (since regular book-review magazines might want to include or exclude books distributed that way, but might be themselves much more expensive than the books they reviewed). Senior, well known, book reviewers sending readers to the sites of, initially, less well known authors, might be intellectuals that just hold in esteem the content of those books and the role of this content for the individual reader and for society's brainscape. But sites are kept at trivial cost, so why is the leaflet for a price needed at all? Well, some people have a bad feeling of being watched by invisible electronic big brothers when they download and some, both among the same and other, people do feel like rewarding/helping the writers and the distributors for their effort; also like rewarding/helping the editors too, if any of them show up to work under these rules. These rules are not anything new, they're the rules by which sidewalk performers (musicians, magicians, acrobats, actors, ....) pass around the hat: all bystanders watch the show, some pay; more than the ones who pay are affected by it (just like fewer than the people who do pay an expensive theater's ticket are affected by a play). So no complaint from anybody. Well, on sidewalk one pays according to how much he can afford and how much he liked what he watched, not in advance. But a comics is so cheap that one just has to say, in retrospect, that if he liked it very much he just buys more than one and gives the rest as gifts to friends (of course he can also give copies he himself makes of the CD he bought or he was given by somebody else for free). The plan just proposed, which if shared by many authors is of course a plan for "publisher suicide for the sake of free, or at least less expensive, and higher quality education for wide audiences", goes hand in hand with a proposal in the direction of making cheap book-shape laptops without a keyboard, with only page-change button, as easily useable as a book one leafs sitting in an armchair, i.e. laptops that are friendly to e.g. people of the non computer-friendly generation (and also are friendly to their pocket. Maybe "old timers" do not want to also buy technology they're not going to need if they only want to use a PC for reading CD's. Without reference to keyboard & modem wouldn't such reading be cheaper?) Also, one doesn't need to be an old timer to prefer to use less paper and to want to be more educated, less expensively, and by less profit-oriented authors and publishers. Also, rewritable CD's, for books and newspapers, are more easily recycled than paper. Overall, this is not a proposal for suicide to publishers, just a proposal for suicide of many functions of them. They can very well be reborn in new form and stay alive, we repeat. So the reading gadget proposal is a proposal to all editors and concerning all books. Technical upshot: A reading gadget can help towards the return of the idyllic days before "the end of the intellectuals" (almost) as much as the contents of the books to be cheaply read through it.

Acknowledgements:

R. Jacoby's "Social Amnesia" was given to me, decades ago, by Eleanna; and his "The Last Intellectuals" was given to me, some days ago, by Vasilis (the same friend whom I have thanked in other pages for giving me Mumford books). For their so illuminating reading suggestions, also timed so meaningfully, whether as criticism or encouragement or education, I have the warmest gratitude.

John Alevizos 2007

2011 PS1: Both the similarities and differences of the above functions with the ones performable by "Kindle" are obvious. Same goes about iPad. Also we hear DVD-readers' prices have gone down to below one tenth of laptops'. Also with a little help from one's friends who have a PC and an internet connection one can have pdf-s downloaded to, finally, a DVD readable on TV. Last but not least: We thank our friend Hernán of p.15 for not only telling us about Kindle but also gifting us one!!! .

***Final Upshot: The above technicalities are now obsolete by way of being long known, so let's just concentrate on 1. finding what of substance does exist and must be propagated, not on how to propagate it 2. what is missing and we must find if we can, or propagate if we can locate someone who finds something substantial. But let's also give a brief and simple recapitulation of "genteel poverty", "beggar's fee" etc to take the chance to add what qualification might be needed with the crisis that did not exist in the above 2007 date:***

...A site or blog can be free-of-charge as far as downloading is concerned but accept donations to help the blogger subsist (in genteel poverty) or at least have some free time to find things he considers substantial to the reader. The reader can think after some time if whatever points remain with him/her and still offer him/her something were due to the sources of the blog e.g. Theodorakis or Chomsky or ...and, after looking them up, he/she may send them, or their editors, or their orchestras etc a buck or euro or more. If they think they owe something to their expositor too, and if they also think that expositors should be entitled to such privileges, then they can send him what they feel pleasure to send (never so much that pleasure stops being pleasurable!). In a time of crisis, if one thinks that the blogger just has the luxury to be spared difficulties on others' expenses like a parasite, then he/she should just not send the blogger anything at all even if he/she has some spare change....

PS: Andy when you read the note I just sent you, tell me and I will add a PS idea-suggestion to editors who are also thinkers and poets like you. What you told me about collapsing book sales brings idea upon idea but not in one piece, so I started PSs, maybe some of them are worth your attention...

*Next day:*

Final PS: OK Andy, let me add that and get done with it, for whenever you read it, I'll be happy to add explanations whenever you want:

An editor who also thinks and writes poetry and has values and a fame trusted and respected by an audience has another way of floating as editor: he can offer both to writers who write for donations and to public who donate, his book reviews, i.e. suggest what's worth reading to the public who know him. And ask for some (equally optional) donations for him too. If he proposes trash he will soon lose his name both among readers and writers. Same goes for writers who write trash. And I'm sure that readers will want to reward enough for their sites to survive the writers-and-editors-at-no-cost who post for free for people to download and to suggest or to forward and to donate if they wish and can. Of course this makes a sum meaningful only on international scale, but let globalization as offer some of the means of her own undoing and not only of the undoing of the people she reaches...

PS: And it's just on today's news that in US kids are given iPads to read their schoolbooks. So!...