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Karagatsis Revisited: The performance *Junkermann* by Dimitris Tarloou

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ABSTRACT

The article examines the performance *Junkermann* directed by Dimitris Tarloou, which was presented initially in 2018-19 at theatre "Poreia" in Athens. The performance is an adaptation of the novel *Junkermann* by M. Karagatsis and constructs a dream-like universe that explores the haunting journey and memories of the novel's protagonist. The article investigates the performance as a case study of adaptation dramaturgy in contemporary Greek theatre. As I argue, the performance proposes a reconfiguration of the novel into a stage spectacle with symbolistic undertones inspired by plays such as A Dream Play by August Strindberg. In order to explore fully the performance, I look into the stage text and the metatext and I analyze the decisive use of stichomythia that is employed in the adaptation. I also underline the antirealistic aesthetics of the director and the renewed stage interpretation of the story of *Junkermann*.

Keywords: Karagatsis, *Junkermann*, Adaptation Studies, Stichomythia, Strindberg.

1. Introduction

The article at hand is the result of my research interest for contemporary Greek adaptation dramaturgy. The raise of adaptation studies in theatre during the last decades has established the field of "adaptury" (that is the dramaturgy that is based on adaptation) as a space of reflection for theory and practice (Barnette, 2018, p. 2; Carwell, 2018, pp. 7-8; Babbage, 2017, pp. 2-6). Recent bibliography, focusing on international case studies of adaptations, has illuminated theatre adaptation as a multifaceted field that connects with intermediality and metatextuality (Murphy, 2013, pp. 1-11; Laera, 2014, p. 121; Reilly, 2017, pp. xx-xxv; Elliot, 2020, pp. 1-20;). The Greek paradigm of adaptation dramaturgy, which has not been explored at length until today, calls for "a systematic investigation that examines multiple case studies" and underlines their "aesthetic and thematic connotations" (Nikitas, 2021, p. 8). In the case of adapting a novel (as is the case in the article at hand) the first usual aspect is the construction of the 'stage text' (the text that will be used in the performance). It is important to clarify that the textual choices made in a stage adaptation can only be understood fully in

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connection with the wider choices of the director and the 'metatext' of the performance. As a result, the exploration of adaptation dramaturgy is illuminated by the examination of directorial styles and contemporary directing. The bibliography in the last decades has produced a series of monographs that focus on directing styles and methods (Ledger, 2019, pp. 1-38; Sidiropoulou, 2019, pp. 1-4). These contributions enrichen our understanding of adaptation dramaturgy through the vocabulary and aesthetics of performance. Much like directing a play, where the director's outlook may range from an approach of radical auterism to interpretative fidelity to the author, an adaptation approach may also vary in a similar way, from a quite precise staging of a novel (and its plot) to a reorganized staging that leads to a vastly different interpretation. Bringing a story from page to stage results also in questions of narratology. The "narratorial strategies" in drama and theatre are becoming the epicenter of a series of articles during the last decade, resulting in a renewed understanding of the field (Jahn, 2001, p. 659-668; Richardson, 2007, pp. 142-155; Fludernick, 2008, pp. 353-362; Claycomb, 2013, pp. 159-179). This approach (which investigates the difference between diegetic and mimetic narrativity) has been widely developed and employed in prose but remains much less explored in drama ant theatre (Nünning, A. & Sommer, 2008, pp. 329-352; Hühn, P. & Christoph, 2014, pp. 1-14).

The performance Junkermann, as I mentioned above, is a stage adaptation of a well-known Greek novel. The dramatization of prose often raises the demand for 'fidelity' to the literary work and it is often criticized as a reduction (Babbage, 2017, pp. 1-2). On the other hand, contemporary approaches to adaptation have led to a vast variety of results, building up a ground for a sense of experimentation (Reilly, 2017, pp. xxi-xxviii). As I argue, the analysis of the adaptation can only be complete in relation to the tools of performance studies. The creative adaptation of the novel by Karagatsis that takes place in the performance introduces drastic changes not only in the length but also the rhythm of the text by structuring a condensed stichomythia that raises the dramatic intensity and establishes a flow between the scenes. The changes in the text, as I will examine, are closely related to the metatext, mostly the acting, the lighting and the minimal scenography that play a decisive role in the hallucinatory universe created by the director. In the sections that follow I look into the history of the publication of the novel and the main themes that encompass the story. Afterwards I pinpoint the shift from narration to performing that takes place in the adaptation and the vital balance between the chosen text and the incorporated metatext. Then I investigate the most important textual aspect of this adaptury, that is the reconstruction of the dialogue into a rhythmic stichomythia, I illuminate the functions of this choice and I analyze two examples, one showcasing the power of persuasion and the other the dynamics of elusiveness. Furthermore, I shed a light on the connection of the adaptation to Strindberg's *A Dream Play* and the transition from a realistic to a symbolistic universe achieved by the director. Finally, the epilogue comments on the way the performance presents the last chapter of the novel..

2. Methodology and research questions

The article at hand looks into the performance *Junkermann* and examines the adaptation strategies employed both in terms of text and metatext. The research questions posed are: How does the source material (i.e. the novel) describe social and personal aspects of mid-war Greece and which are the overarching themes? Why is it important to investigate an adaptation taking into consideration both the text and the metatext (according to Patrice Pavis) of the directing approach as a totality? Which are the main choices of the director in terms of metatext that establish either a "punctum" or the "studium" according to the terminology by Roland Barthes? A series of question at the core of the article focus in more detail on the stage text and the way it is transformed in relation to the novel: How does the poet who adapted the play use the form of stichomythia, a device that was used in Greek Tragedy, French Neoclassicism and European Naturalism and Realism, in order to create a fast-paced rhythm full of tension and ambivalence? What are two examples of dialogue in the performance that illuminate these textual choices, the first realized by reducing the text of Karagatsis and the second by producing new dialogue for the scene? And, moving to the aesthetics of the performance, what were the antirealistic stage challenges that Strindberg faced when he collaborated with diretors who staged his plays with symbolistic undertones such as *To Damascus* and *A Dream Play* at the beginning of the 20th century? And how do these choses correlate with the choices made by Tarloou one century later, at the end of the second decade of the 21st century? Lastly, how did the director tackle the last chapter of the novel balancing auterism and interpretation? Using the performance as a case study of

adaptation dramaturgy the article proposes interpretation tools along with selected use of historical context in order to promote the analysis of adapturgy in contemporary Greek theatre.

3. A novel of Mid-War Greece

The novel *Junkermann* by M. Karagatsis (a pseudonym of Dimitris Rodopoulos) was initially published in 1938, at first in the literary journal *Nea Estia* and then as an autonomous book. It presents the life of a Finnish émigré of aristocratic roots who is persecuted by the Bolsheviks after the Russian Revolution in 1917 and arrives in Piraeus in 1921. Junkermann, as the man is called, is an ambitious and hedonistic self-centered adventurer who succeeds in climbing the social and economic ladder in mid-war Greece while also enjoying erotic relations with a series of women. Polyglot and charming, Junkermann gains the sympathy of powerful employees and friends in order to become successful and knows no moral limitations when it comes to getting money from underground side-businesses. He becomes, at first, a clerk at the Foreign Mail Department of the Bank of Commercial Provision in Piraeus and goes on to occupy various powerful positions such as Manager of a textile business called "Gortys" before finally becoming the Director of the Bank of Commercial Provision, as he had envisioned in his very first encounter with the manager of the bank. It is seminal to point out that Karagatsis, a son of the Director of the National Bank, politician and lawyer Georgios Rodopoulos, was an advisor at an insurance company during the 1930s and he was quite well acquainted with the wealthy upper-class circles he describes in his book. The novel, which is part of the trilogy "Acclimation Under Phoebus" that also includes the previous novels Colonel Liapkin (1933) and *Chimaera* (1936), uses as a backdrop the socioeconomic reality of mid-war Greece (Karakatsouli, 2014, pp. 606-619). In 1939 Karagatsis published in *Nea Estia* two novellas that extended the adventures of Junkermann (titled "The mountain of the wolves" and "The Return of *Junkermann*"). These novellas were included as the second part of the final version of the novel, when it was republished in 1957-58.

The themes that are explored in the novel are both personal and social. A prevailing theme is love and its many facets. This is an aspect that is common throughout the prose of Karagatsis (Anagnostopoulou, 2016, pp. 32-44; Kastrinaki, 2016, pp. 239-250) The writer constructs a universe of "captivating femininity" and "overpowering masculinity" (Mike, 2012, pp. 50, 58). Two women, Dina and Voula, offer "different models of sexuality" while the sweeping dynamics of masculinity are reflected in Junkermann but also in his friend Karamanos and the owner of the textile factory Stratis Sklavogianis (Mike, 2012, pp. 50). A second important theme is friendship. Junkermann has a close friend, the famous writer Michalis Karamanos. The two of them spend hours talking about books and philosophizing about books. A strong bond seems to grow between them, as Karamanos challenges Junkermann intellectually in a way that his wealthy surroundings do not. Karagatsis, however, chooses to portray the dissolution of friendship in the name of sexual passion. When Junkermann realizes that Karamanos has a secret erotic relationship with a woman he desires as well, the two of them fight like animals (Karagatsis, 1990, *Junkermann* v. 2, p. 182). A third theme is social mobility. The protagonist of the novel moves in diverse economic surroundings in order to understand the social reality of Greece and gain money and power. Specifically, Junkermann has some connections at the start of the novel with lower working classes when he spends some time with suspect men in Trouba of Piraeus (e.g. G. Mogias and N. Kabouris). Then he spends his time in bourgeois living-rooms of his co-workers at the bank and he visits the houses of wealthy families (e.g. Sklavogianides). Junkermann also travels abroad and enjoys luxurious surroundings populated by famous people such as Hollywood stars. Other aspects, such as the "sleeping humanism" and the aspect of "degeneration and progress" in the novel and Karagatsis' work in general have also been explored (Boel, 2010, pp. 77-83; Pechlivanos, 2017, pp. 365-382). In total, the novel offers a portrayal of a magnetic protagonist who follows his sexual and economic appetites and an overview of the wealthy circles in mid-war Greece.

4. From text to metatext

The challenge of adapting prose into theatre focuses on the following major aspect: moving from *diegesis to mimesis*. The dense, often descriptive text of the novel is restructured in order to achieve a dramaturgy based usually more on dialogue (incorporating the plot rather than describing it).

Third-person narration is a powerful tool of the novel while dialogue is a necessity for character plays. At the same time, theatre performance is structured using not only text but also metatext. Patrice Pavis points out that metatext "is an unwritten text comprising the various choices of a mise-en-scène that the director has consciously or unconsciously made during the rehearsal process" (Pavis, 2003, p. 8). As a result, the performative discourse onstage is created through a plethora of onstage signifiers that go beyond the textual aspect (such as the acting, the scenography and the lighting) which inform the outcome. These elements act as signs open to interpretation that can trigger "physiological, affective, volitional, energetic, and motor reactions" of spectators, resulting to the transformative power of performance (Fischer-Lichte, 2018, p. 17). The final scenic "concretization" of the performance (that is achieved through the blending of the chosen dramatic text and the selected mise-en-scène) is a result of the combination of metatext and dramatic text (Pavis, 1992, p. 33). Analyzing the performance both in terms of text and metatext leads to "decoding the artefact" (Counsell & Wolf, 2001, p. 1) and understanding the "multivocal" nature of the performance (Schechner, 2001, p. 1). At the same time, it underlines the connection with the spectator (Rozik, 2008, pp. 7-14) and stresses the complete "audiovisual, energy and corporal universe of the performance" (Nikitas, 2018, p. 232). Constructing a balance between the reduced textual material of a novel and the effective metatext of the acting and scenographic elements is vital in an adaptation.

The adaptation of *Junkermann* focuses on the dialogues of selected chapters, subtracting third-person descriptions. In this way, each scene corresponds to a chapter incorporating sparse text and a metatext of elliptical gestures, low-key acting and quick pace. The environment of each scene is insinuated by the minimal scenography and the lighting. For example, a piece of furniture such as a desk or a bed, make clear that we are located in an office or a hotel room. Blue light stresses the fact that we are at sea, onboard "Kleopatra", the ship that transports Junkermann from Dardanellia to Piraeus in the very first chapter of the novel. Red light along with a mid-war type microphone signifies that we are at an erotic cabaret, as it happens e.g. in the chapter "Cabaret 'Arizona' – Budapest". The transition from one scene to the next is realized in a fluid fashion and sometimes actors break character in order to become narrators and set up the upcoming scene. This directorial choice is seminal in framing the scenes with useful information without burdening the performance with a descriptive tone that would lead to a slow pace. Most of the scenes include two characters who exchange thoughts and move the plot forward in a concise way. The overall aesthetic is minimal, sharp, poignant. The performers abide to a quite realistic acting style within the scenes but acquire a more symbolistic style in the short narrative transitions. This playful movement between realistic characters and mesmerized figures is one of the most magnetic aspects of the performance, connected closely with the overall metatext. By striking a balance between "punctum" and "stadium" (according to the terminology of Roland Barthes in his book *La Chambre Claire: Note sur la photographie*) the director achieves to engage the spectator's subjectivity through the disruptive sense of the dramaturgy and the "pricks" of the protagonist's acting while also maintaining the overarching narrative that interests the wider audience who came to see the dramatized version of the novel (Barthes, 1980, pp. 7-24).

5. Stichomythia: Reconstructing the dialogue

One of the decisive factors in the quick pace of the performance is the reworking of the novel's dialogue by poet Stratis Paschalis, which leads to a condensed and rhythmic exchange of words, almost musical in a sense. The actors talk mostly in short, clear sentences that convey their energy and attitude even more so than the meaning. As a result, the viewers face an onstage stichomythia. Stichomythia is a device produced by "rapid verbal exchanges between two characters" including "a few lines or sentences" and resulting often in a dramatic overtone (Pavis, 1998, p. 370). It is a mechanism that was used in Greek and Latin theatre, resurfaced in the French neoclassical period during the sixteenth and seventeenth century and then was employed once again as a device in plot-based 'Well-made plays' and naturalistic drama that was based on psychological acting during the 19th century (Pavis, 1998, p. 370). Although it is customary to think of stichomythia mainly as a convention connected to scenes of tension and excitement, mostly because of the interpretation that was given by Adolf Gross in 1905 (Gross, 1905, pp. 7-22), the function it served in Greek tragedy, neoclassical tragedy and realistic drama varied greatly in technique and purpose. For example, Aeschylus used it in order to illustrate e.g. an argument or a prayer (Ireland, 1974, pp. 509-524) while Euripides used it in order to showcase the

persuasion of one character by another or in order to demonstrate how one comes closer to the truth before moving away again (Schwinge, 1968, pp. 9-27). Antoine de Montchrestien, a founder of 17th century French drama, was very fond of stichomythia, e.g. in his tragedy Hector (1604) where it is used in order to stress Hector's vigour in contract with Andromache's elegiac expression (Smith, 1015, p. 142) while Racine also employed it at times, e.g. in his final play *Athalia* (1691) (Pocock, 1973, p. 291). Henrik Ibsen, going even further than Greek and French tragedians, used in plays such as the *Wild Duck* (1884) an even more fragmented approach that led to "sentences without verbs, clauses that come to nothing, adverbial exclamations and cryptic interrogations" (Innes, 2002, p. 108).

In the adaptation of *Junkermann* the choice of stichomythia creates a linguistic microstructure that transforms the dialogue of the novel, which flows within the context of the third-person narration, into the basis of the stage text (which is spoken in bursts by the characters) and compliments the metatext. The device is used in order to fulfill three major purposes: persuasion, seduction and elusiveness. To begin with persuasion, Junkermann uses his witty and decisive sentences, so that he can impose his will on the characters (mostly men) he comes across in his professional and social life. For example, when he talks with a colonel he exchanges just a few sentences in order to convey that, although he is a lieutenant, he not just a subordinate soldier but a man who deserves respect and is focused on becoming wealthy. When he talks to a man at the dock of Piraeus he offers a proposal for easy money through a side business without wasting many words and changes his tune when his possible partner-in-crime hesitates. To continue with seduction, Junkermann becomes a more slow-paced man of serene words when he meets women that attract him and his elusive sentences become charming inquiries in order to make them love him. For example, when he spends some time with Voula in a café, he chooses glances and elliptical phrasing, that make the young woman complain that she knows nothing about him. To end with elusiveness, when Junkermann wants to hide his past or present endeavors from other people, he uses his cryptic and ironic words in order to appear talkative while remaining guarded. The character of the protagonist as a ferocious, woman-loving, egomaniac man, who travels within his Greek surroundings while retaining the "otherness" of his aristocratic roots from Finland, is built through the mechanism of stichomythia that breaths energy and rhythm into the adaptation.

6. Two examples of dialogue

6.1 The persuasion towards the employer

The first example of dialogue within the performance I will examine illustrates the power of persuasive charm possessed by Junkermann. The scene adapts the chapter titled "Bank of Commercial Provisions" (Karagatisis, *Junkermann* v. 1, pp. 97-104). In this chapter the writer presents Junkermann, who has noticed a classified ad that offers a clerk job at a bank and wants to apply for the position. The job demands a multilingual employee, who will work at the Foreign Mail Department in contact with the USSR, and offers a satisfying salary. The chapter also includes information on other professional and nonprofessional lucrative endeavors debated by Junkermann (such as pharmaceutical trade, gambling and sex trafficking) in a third-person narration, which is omitted in the performance that focuses on the encounter with the bank's manager. Karagatsis describes that, when meeting the manager, self-confident Junkermann understood that he was facing "a majestic nothingness" and felt in complete control (Karagatsis, 1990, *Junkermann* v. 1, p. 102). This sentiment is not described but it is clearly conveyed in the performance through words and gestures. The dialogue of the chapter is adapted in order to become even more concise and fast-paced. These changes of Paschalis epitomize his adaptation strategy and are evident in the following table:

Novel (v. 1, pp. 102-103)	Theatre adaptation
[Manager:] Good morning Mr. Count, said the Manager, in French. Take a seat, please. How can I be useful? […]	Manager: How can I be useful Mr. Count?
[Junkermann:] I saw that you are asking for a polyglot clerk. Maybe I have the relevant qualifications. For my people, the Finnish aristocracy, the education of the children in	Junkermann: I saw an ad that you are looking for a polyglot clerk. I think I have the relevant qualifications. My parents. Count and Countess von Junkermann zu Rottenburg gave me a

foreign languages is the rule, sine qua non. My parents – Count and Countess Von Junkermann zu Rottenburg – gave me a cosmopolitan upbringing, analogous to our social and economic position. I went to the army because of family tradition. As you know, the Russian army had an aristocratic structure. […]	cosmopolitan upbringing.
	Manager: I know, I know. Most of your people came from the upper class, that was damaged severely by the Bolsheviks.
[Junkermann:] You realize, sir, that as much as I have degraded, I have not lost the conscience of my social position and my personal value. In any case, I am not pressured by imminent economic need. I managed to save quite a good amount of money, that allows me to live, for a few years, carefree. So, I have all the time in front of me, in order to create a professional position that is up to my standards. I do not know what exactly this position is… […]	Junkermann: Do not think that I am poor. I have managed to save quite a big amount of money that allows me to live for the next years carefree. I merely want to secure a professional prospect, so I was interested in this position. But tell me, what exactly is it?
[Manager:] Without a doubt, Mr. Count, much lower than your value; but I will try to bring it up to your standards. Do not forget that Napoleon started as a second lieutenant… […]	Manager: Without a doubt, lower than your value and position. But I will try, in time, to bring it up to your standards.
[Junkermann:] Do you think I could have the same evolution as Napoleon? Could I become… Commissioner of the Bank of Commercial Provisions?	
[Manager:] All is possible, my dear, in Greece…	
[Junkermann:] Then it is not ruled out that I may be your successor in the management when you retire because of age limit… […]	
	Junkermann: What exactly is it?
[Manager:] Let us talk positively. The position that I offer you – yes, yes, I offer to you! – is at the Foreign Mail Department. The bank works closely with the Commercial Delegation of the USSR and we need a Russian-speaking clerk. The salary is 350 drachmas per month; 400 for you.	Manager: It is a position at the Foreign Mail Department. We work often with the Commercial Delegation of the Soviet Union and we need a Russian-speaking clerk with a salary of 350 drachmas per month.

As it becomes evident, the tactics of persuasion by Junkermann are based on his ability to appear socially and personally superior, even when he is professionally inferior. The character appears to *choose* the job rather than *need* the job. With a flair of confidence, autonomy and cultural refinement Junkermann persuades the manager without appearing needy or anxious. With a mentality of a winner, he conquers what he wants. The adaptation of the novel's dialogue into a more concise stichomythia is evident in the table. Two are the major factors that lead to this transformation. Firstly, the subtraction of the text. Phrases of five to six sentences in the novel become phrases of one to two sentences in the performance. The adaptation leaves out descriptive information, musings and boastings of Junkermann on his origins (his confidence is portrayed through acting, not words) as well as slight deviations from the subject at hand, such as the joke on Napoleon. The condensed dialogue of the performance functions as a rapid exchange of energy. Junkermann overpowers the manager with his decisive charm, clear voice and mysterious allure, as he walks around the office (as though he already belongs there) turning his back to the static and enthralled manager while talking and building up his case. Secondly, the way the dialogue is spoken promotes even more the sense of the stichomythia, as even the longer sentences are often spoken at once, without any punctuation marks taken into consideration. The

performance produces a dialogue of high energy, with Junkermann and the manager talking with excited 'vibrato', starting their sentences even before the other one finishes his own. This is a well-rehearsed dialogue with two men who seem to develop mutual respect. But in reality Junkermann is the instigator of the conversation who persuades with his mannerisms and aristocratic charm.

6.2 The elusiveness of the lover

The second example of the dialogue I will investigate takes place between two women, young Voula and her sister Nitsa, and showcases the elusiveness of Voula who searches for real love when she is 'interrogated' by Nitsa for her night walks. In the novel, Voula, a girl from Mytilene, gets engaged with a man she does not love, Giorgos Mazis. Mazis studies in Vienna and does not visit her for several years. She falls in love with Junkermann and wants to abstain from her future marriage with Mazis. The dialogue comes from the chapter "When the rays of the moon slide on the bed" where Voula, who lives still with her family in the quite conservative society of Mytilene, returns home very late after meeting up with a young man. Her sister hears her arriving and talks to her in order to get information on her whereabouts. The chapter describes the sexual awakening and the "Dionysian eroticism" of the young girl who is frustrated in the provincial town where she lives and longs for love and freedom (Karagatsis, 1990, *Junkermann* v. 1, p. 168). As Karagatsis makes clear in the novel, Voula longs for "the sweet touch of a man" (Karagatsis, 1990, *Junkermann* v. 1, p. 166). The writer also describes the bankruptcy of her family because of an unsuccessful commerce choice of her father, an owner of a soap factory, and the subsequent move of the whole family to Piraeus. The adaptation omits all this information and focuses on the elusiveness of the frustrated "beautiful" girl, who does not want to reveal her erotic and psychological adventures to her "ugly" sister (Karagatsis, 1990, *Junkermann* v. 1, pp. 166-167). Here Paschalis chooses a different strategy in order to structure a dramatic stichomythia. Not only he condenses the preexisting dialogue but he also writes new dialogue with short, one-sentence, phrases. His choices become apparent in the table that follows:

Novel (v. 1, pp. 164-165)	Theatre adaptation
[Nitsa:] What time is it, she asked. […]	Nitsa: What time is it?
	Voula: What?
[Nitsa:] Where did you go? asked Nitsa.	Nitsa: What time is this, I tell you. Where were you?
[Voula:] At the café, in the entrance of the port, under the rock. We were alone.	Voula: At the café, Dina.
	Nitsa: Oh. With that guy?
	Voula: Yes with him. Nitsa: And what were you doing? Voula: Nothing. We sat and talked. Nitsa: You talked. Voula: Yes Dina, we talked.
[Nitsa:] What does he tell you?	Nitsa: And what does he tell you?
[Voula:] What everyone says. That he loves me, that he will marry me. But what does it all matter? It is not as if I believe it.	Voula: What everyone says.
[Nitsa:] Then?	Nitsa: So, why do you go?
[Voula:] Then? As if I know. I like to hear these words, the same way I like a music piece at the piano. I want to have the illusion that someone loves me…	Voula: Just because. Because I like it.
[Nitsa:] Doesn't George love you?	Nitsa: And George? Voula: What about George? Nitsa: George, I tell you, George. Doesn't George

	count?
[Voula:] Oh, he loves me. But he never tells me that. And those emotionless postal cards get on my nerves. And after all he is far away. In Vienna. Very far.	Voula: But he is in Vienna.
	Nitsa: Yes, but he sends letters to you. Voula: He sends them to mum. Nitsa: He sends postal cards to you. Voula: I got bored with his postal cards. Nitsa: You got bored? Voula: Yes Nitsa, I got bored. Nitsa: You chose him. Voula: I was a little girl back then.
[Nitsa:] And what about him? asked Nitsa. What is he?	Nitsa: And this one?
	Voula: Who? Nitsa: Don't tell me who. The one you meet secretly. Voula: Ok, what do you want to know? Nitsa: What is he?
[Voula:] Just a plain university student. Just a kid, young and shy.	Voula: A medicine university student.

The adaptation of the dialogue in this scene constructs an even more concise stichomythia between the two characters. Functioning as a vibrant 'staccato' the dialogue of the performance conveys the tension between the two sisters, with Nitsa being the interrogator and Voula the interrogee. However, Voula does not appear as a frightened girl but a self-confident (soon-to-be) woman who pushes back. She is elusive and reluctant to reveal any information to her sister, who cannot share her drive and emotions. Voula is guarded and unapologetic. Her tactics diffuse eventually the situation without exposing anything. The adaptation, once again, shortens the phrases from the novel, choosing one sentence instead of three or four. The metatext (mainly the acting) compliments the sentiment of this stichomythia, as Nitsa hovers over Voula, while she is sitting up in her bed, full of nerve. Raising her voice, Nitsa tries to persuade her sister to reveal whether the young man she met touched her in a sexual way and Voula ends up saying that she kept her distance but may not resist next time. The stichomythia of the adaptation keeps the interest of the viewer and intensifies this short scene. At the same time, the performance, by extracting the third-person narration of the novel that is full of lyrical undertones about the moonlight in the room, presents Voula's sexual awakening without a romanticized veil. The cold white light that is shed on her bed, while the rest of the stage remains dark, creates a more clinical atmosphere that resists the need to awaken the emotion of the spectators through melodramatic tones. Details of the plot are also altered in the dialogue of the performance in order to create a dramatic arc that is understood by the viewers without depending on the plot of the novel.

7. Dream Play(s): From Realism to Symbolism

The adaptation of Junkermann transports the realistic story of the novel into a symbolistic onstage universe that connects with antirealistic milestones of European Drama such as Strindberg's *A Dream Play* (1901). This aspect was pointed out in the positive reception of the performance (Ioannidis, 17.12.2018). The director is more interested in creating a fragmented performance that corresponds to broken flashes of memories that haunt a man rather than narrating a story about mid-war Greece with theatrical means. This reframing of the novel is achieved through the text adaptation and the metatext. The connection with the aesthetics of *A Dream Play* and the desire to create a 'dream-play' of Junkermann's haunting past is underlined at the start of the performance. In a short scene (that does not exist at the start of the novel, but follows towards the end) an old and broken down Junkermann returns to the house where he was born and meets the maid. He claims that he returned to die at home

while furious sounds like screams of the Furies, the female chthonic deities of vengeance, are heard in the darkened stage. This first scene, frames the totality of the performance that follows as a remembrance of a life that has been already lived. The director chooses to start with a glimpse of the downfall of the protagonist that ensues in the novel, before presenting his journey to the top. Junkermann appears in this first scene as man who has come in terms with his end, tough, experienced and intense. He lacks the virility of youth that he showcases in the very next scene, the start of his journey. The change in the body language of the acting makes this distinction clear to the spectator.

Drawing inspiration from Strindberg's A Dream Play appears as a suitable reference point for the result the performance stives for. In this play, moving away from his naturalistic endeavors, Strindberg moved towards the exploration of "the inner states of the soul and the activities of the subconscious mind" (Styan 1983, *Modern Drama* v. 2, p. 43). As he made clear in his preface, the writer wanted to investigate "the disconnected but apparently logical form of dream", a territory where "everything is possible and probable" and "time and space do not exist" (Styan, 1983, *Modern Drama* v. 2, p. 43). This celebrated play opened new aesthetic horizons becoming a "forerunner of expressionism" and the "precursor of all modernity" (Styan 1983, *Modern Drama* v. 3, p. 24; Stockenström, 1996, p. 72). The antirealistic endeavors of Strindberg, which had began three years previously with his play To Damascus had raised a series of questions (and subsequent solutions) on the aspect of staging them with the suitable style of directing. For example, the production of To Damascus in 1900 by Emil Grandinson used electric light and employed space and lighting in order to achieve a "hallucinatory quality" (Schumacher & McCormick, 1996, p. 316). The staging of A Dream Play in 1907 by Victor Castegren presented "a permanent set with various locations, in and out of which the action flows" (Schumacher & McCormick, 1996, p. 318). These solutions are very similar to the choices made in the adaptation of *Junkermann*, where space and lighting are the main tools that are used in order to create fluidity. At the same time, the simple scenography employs only selected furniture and avoids any sense of photographic realism. Another reason that connects the adaptation of *Junkermann* with A Dream Play is the common theme of sexual hunger. *Dream Play* incorporates sexual symbolism such as the image of the blossoming chrysanthemum while Freud's psychoanalysis is an important part of the novel. Similarly, Junkermann's sexual journey (in his life and possibly his uncosnscious) is evident in the performance (Hill, 1991, p. 187). Inspired by stage and text techniques that fueled Strindberg's antirealistic experimentations, the performance *Junkermann* revisits Karagatsis' novel with an aesthetic vision.

8. Epilogue

The performance *Junkermann* is an inventive adaptation of the novel that restructures the text of the novel choosing a concise stichomythia and proposes a dream-like aesthetics that create symbolistic undertones. This reconfiguration of the novel into a functional and rhythmic stage language allows for a performance that sheds a different light on the novel and separates itself from a descriptive, mechanical adaptation of the text. In this performance, the metatext (mostly the scenography and the acting) along with the conduced stage text built a different universe than the one that is portrayed by Karagatsis. The director, Dimitris Tarloou, seems to call for his audience to experience onstage a recollection of memories and fragments, not to listen and watch a narrative on the social structure of mid-war Greece. This quality produces a transformative performance for the viewer of now, not for the reader of yesterday. Breaking away from the fidelity to the novel, but without deconstructing it completely, the performance extracts one of the core themes of the novel: the journey of a man through life in order to conquer money, fame, love. It is the deeper Odyssey of Junkermann that is illuminated in the performance, rather than the sociopolitical details of the novel, which are just insinuated through period costumes. The protagonist, portrayed by the actor Giannis Stankoglou in a balanced performance, rises as an archetypical figure who represents the thirst for life. The decisive aesthetic reinvention of the elaborate novel into a performative spectacle of minimalism breathes new life and meaning into *Junkermann*.

In the closing scene of the performance, all the ghosts of Junkermann's past are gathered on stage and the protagonist faces the voice of his conscience. On a dimly lit stage, the one love of his life, fragile Voula, sings a song dressed in white while his other love, glamorous Dina, talks to him wearing a

black mask. Junkermann, old and walking with a stick, seems divided and indecisive about the erotic choices that marked his life. But the deeper love Junkermann longed for seems to be that of his mother. His old friend Karamanos approaches him and claims "I had a mother in life Vasili, you had a mother in death" and Junkermann enters his mother's boudoir, leaving his last breath laying on the body of a Dina. Presenting the last pages of the novel, the finale of the performance closes the curtain of the passionate journey of Junkermann through offices in powerful banks and women's embraces. One last detail of the metatext differentiates it from the final words in the second part of the novel. Karagatsis describes how Dina pushes away the rigid body of Junkermann (Karagatsis, 1990, *Junkermann* v.2, p. 420). The same happens in the performance but at the very last instance, before the stage goes dark, *Junkermann* seems to regain, once more, his senses and reclaim life before surrendering to death. His everlasting hunger for life and his unwavering pathos is stressed with a vital punctum. The performance *Junkermann* in this very last scene, and throughout the three-long hours adaptation makes clear that theatre and literature are two different artistic means that are at their best when using their respective tools in order to achieve the desired effect. The director stives to produce a long cinematic shot, not a descriptive narration of the novel. He strikes a balance between the auterism of directing and the interpretation of the source material. Junkermann comes to life onstage as a man performing flashes from his life and calling the audience to enter his dreams and memories.

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