
VICKY THEODOROPOULOU: I need to intervene in the social function in a manner which I wouldn't like to differ from that of a hand raised in class.

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Category: Art works. Interview by Michel Fais. Three young authors who have recently published their second novels talk about what inspires them and the fortunes of Greek literature.

They say - and it's the truth - that a writer's most decisive step is their second book. If we consider the first work the equivalent of taking a deep breath, then it is with the second that the ground beneath their feet begins to grow firmer, or, alternatively, to give way. The three authors we have selected all excited the interest of fellow authors and readers alike with their first books. It goes without saying that we hope the same will be true of their next step. The writers are Vicky Theodoropoulou (*Game worth the Candle*, Estia Publications), Spyros Karydakias (*The Night of the Names*, Kastaniotis Editions), and Thanasis Cheimonas (*Broken Greek*, Kedros). We thought it best that all three introduce their recent novels by answering the same set of questions, and by shedding light on certain defining features, both internal and external, of their literary careers to date. It rests with you to read their new books and discern how far their writing chimes with their words. **Michel Fais**



What is your latest book about?

Human survival as a game worth the candle. How and how much it can come to the fore in cases that are possible, though not provable.

How does your second book compare with your first in terms of subject-matter and level of expression? What has been retained, transformed, and abandoned?

I think it continues an externalized inner monologue with a view to investing the case with aspects of group behavior, as in my first novel, *Letter from Dublin*. But it embraces a broader thematic spectrum than the love-friendship dilemma at the core of *Dublin*, and attempts to use the specific situation as a springboard to a more universal take on life, using different expressive means to do so. I can state the latter with some certainty, given that this book deliberately casts aside the sort of holding back politeness usually

imposes on a narrator. Thus, though the rules of etiquette might require a book not to insist on saying certain things when its interlocutor is in the arms of Morpheus, the work in question resolves that the moment has come, and that the interlocutor either stays awake, or moves aside for some other recipient of the things it feels must be said, right here and right now. I really don't know what it transforms; all I can imagine is the possibility of it transforming me into a writer.

Tell me, are there any writers, Greek or otherwise, whose literary imprint on your work has changed between your first and second book?

Look, if this "literary imprint", as you call it, is assessed by someone else, given time I would be able to agree or disagree with them. But it's not an assessment I can make myself. What I can say is that there are many authors, Greek and non-Greek, past and present, who have given me moments of incredible joy. And that the way in which they have managed to express their thoughts and their quests in writing, has already raised the bar discouragingly high for someone who wants to join in that adventure called literature. Fortunately, though, it would seem that man is graced with the audacity required to forget that everything has already been said in the best possible way, and to attempt to talk of things over and over again, in their own words, in their own time.

Why do you write? For the ideal reader? As a form of "self-therapy"? For fame, perhaps?

I think that I write, first of all, because it gives me pleasure, and then out of a need to intervene in the social function in a manner which I wouldn't like to differ from that of a hand raised in class. Of course, I think about the reader, too, when I write, just as when I worked in radio, I would focus on the listeners beyond the microphone. But I'd be lying if I said I write for the reader and not for myself. As for writing as therapy, I must confess to having noticed its healing qualities, though if this is an end in themselves, it would be better for the texts in question to remain in the archives of the therapists involved. Turning to writing as a route to fame, my having chosen such a deluxe profession can only conceal a degree of pandering to vanities of that sort. Even if I say it doesn't.

How do you interpret the fact that modern Greek literature remains *terra incognita* to foreign readers?

If I may, I'd like to answer your question with questions of my own. I have my reasons for doing so. And I'd like to do so using a language that smacks of the birth of SMS monsters. HOW DO

GRK GUVMENTS PROMOTE GRK LIT/TURE ABROAD? WHAT DO WE KNOW BOUT SCHOOLS OF MODERN GREEK STUDIES ABROAD? WHAT HAVE DE GREEK PUBLISHERS DONE BOUT THAT EXACTLY? HOW DO WE GRK AUTHORS IMAGINE FOREIGN READER O OUR WORK? + SINCE THE OPRTUNITY HAS PRESENTED ITSELF, EURO LITRARY COMPETITIONS! HOW 2 DESCRIBE SOME1 WHO SENDS EXCEPTIONAL FILM BY ANGELOPOULOS 2 SHORT FILM FESTIVAL? CARELESS, ABSENT-MINDED, OR SOMETG ELSE?
