

## **Devising political humor: Highlights from a Greek devised theatre comedy festival**

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### **Abstract**

The paper discusses two performances produced for a Greek devised theatre comedy festival. The contributing emerging theatre-makers devised performances inspired by current politics in Greece and addressed issues of governing and leadership, censorship, political corruption, and political correctness. Consequently, this paper wishes to contribute to the dialogue between humor and theatre studies by showing how devised theatre creates political humor. Devising is a method of making performance that is often non-text based while performance material is generated through improvisation, writing, play, research and discussion (Allain & Harvie 2006). Accordingly, the paper will look into a range of discourses and genres on which performances were based to address politics in humorous mode. It will also investigate a range of comedic forms used on the performance level. Humor is thus investigated at both the text and the performance level. For this purpose, a *General Theory of Verbal Humor* (GTVH) framework of analysis is adopted, while a semiotic approach is also complementary and relevant. By pointing out the interaction of verbal, visual, and acoustic signs as well as performance (e.g. kinesic, paralinguistic, musical) codes, the present analysis attempts to inform theoretical propositions to extend the GTVH so as to account for non-linguistic signs as well (Antonopoulou 2003; Tsakona 2009, 2013; Canestrari 2010; Manteli 2011).

**Keywords:** political humor, GTVH, devised theatre, theatre semiotics, (intertextual and performance) parody

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## **1. Introduction**

The paper discusses two performances produced for a Greek devised theatre comedy festival. The contributing emerging theatre-makers devised performances inspired by current politics in Greece and addressed issues of governing and leadership, censorship, political corruption, and political correctness. Consequently, this paper wishes to contribute to the dialogue between humor and theatre studies by showing how devised theatre creates political humor. Devising is a method of making performance that is often non-text based while performance material is generated through improvisation, writing, play, research and discussion (Allain & Harvie 2006). Accordingly, the paper will look into a range of discourses and genres on which the selected performances were based in order to address politics in humorous mode. It will also investigate a range of comedic forms used on the performance level. Humor is thus investigated at both the text and the performance level. For this purpose, a *General Theory of Verbal Humor* (Attardo 2001) framework of analysis is adopted, while a semiotic approach is also complementary and relevant. By pointing out the interaction of verbal, visual, and acoustic signs as well as performance (e.g. kinesic, paralinguistic, musical) codes, the present analysis attempts to inform theoretical propositions to extend the GTVH so as to account for non-linguistic signs as well (Tsakona 2009, 2013; Canestrari 2010; Manteli 2011). After an introduction to the scope and aims of the study (Section 1), a brief account of the specifics, the history and the political aspect of devised theatre will be given (Section 2) followed by a discussion of devised theatre vis-à-vis political discourse and an overview of current relevant research in political humor (Section 3). Section 4 sets both the sociopolitical and theatrical contexts of the devised performances studied, making specific references to the Greek economic crisis after 2009 and the platform of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Neos Kosmos Theatre Comedy Festival in which the performances appear. The methodology and the research tools applied to this work are explained in Section 5. Since my work focuses on theatre performances it will address the humor both on linguistic and non-linguistic levels. As an analytical framework of the former the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) is proposed, while the latter is approached through semiotic tools. Section 6 focuses on the text and performance analysis of the devised shows. Here humor will be discussed on the verbal and performance levels. The concluding section (Section 7) summarizes the main points of the analysis – discussion of the performances and highlights some conclusions with reference to political humor and humor on the performance level.

## **2. A brief introduction to devised theatre**

The paper focuses in the area of performance studies and wishes to show how politics can be humorously exploited in devised theatre. To start with, I should attempt to address in sufficient detail

the particulars of this type of performance. According to Heddon and Milling (2006, p.2) “[d]evising is best understood as a set of strategies that emerged within a variety of theatrical and cultural fields, for example, in community arts, performance art/live art or political theatre.” Despite the fact that several scholars and practitioners see the development of devised theatre as having its roots in the revolutionary 1960s and developing throughout the 70s and 80s, literature related to this, now standard, way of creating theatre for quite a number of smaller- or larger-scale companies in Europe, the U.S.A. and Australia, is little. A forerunner in the field Oddey (1994, p. 1) articulates the significance of collaboration in devising performance defining it as “a process of making theatre that enables a group of performers to be physically and practically creative in the sharing and shaping of an original product that directly emanates from assembling editing and re-shaping individuals’ contradictory experiences of the world.” In short, devised theatre is synonymous with non-text based theatre, collaborative participation of all company members in all stages and aspects of performance-making, improvisation, non-naturalistic theatrical conventions (i.e. non-naturalistic acting and staging techniques), work-in progress, audience feedback, temporally and site-specific performances (Allain & Harvie 2006, p. 145).

In contrast to traditional forms of theatre, where the text and the director’s viewpoint are regarded as authorities, in devised theatre there is no story to start with. Oddey (1994, p. 4) accentuates the issue of freedom in devising theatre practices arguing that devised theatre is an alternative to the conventionally accepted form of theatre dominated by the often patriarchal, hierarchical relationship of playwright and director. Therefore, there is a clear distinction between a theatre which relies upon an independently written text by a playwright, which is then rehearsed and performed by a company of actors under the guidance of a director and a theatre which relies upon the communal creative energies of an ensemble of actors working together to devise a performance from a blank sheet of paper. This means that in many cases the group creates the performance from scratch without a pre-existing script. As a result, anything can become the creative stimulus for a collectively devised performable story which can reflect both the personal ideas and experiences of each member of the company and the collective memory of all members. Experimental methods and alternative theatre-making approaches run through devised theatre, while the texts are often edited during rehearsals with the collaborative participation of the whole company.

From this point of view, devising can be a social expression of non-hierarchical collaboration, a practical expression of political and ideological commitment, an ensemble, a collective, an escape from theatrical conventions, a challenge for spectators, innovative, risky, experimental, non-literary,

etc. (Heddon and Milling, 2006, pp. 4-5). From all the above it becomes clear that devised theatre is rather pertinent to a performance process than a product. Most importantly, it is loosely defined and multi-vocal since it frees up a creative process generated from a variety of resources and allows for a lot of questioning, reflection and re-examining.

### **3. Devised theatre and political humor**

After this brief introduction to the particulars of devising I should now turn to explore how devised theatre engages itself with politics and humor. As stated above, the political aspects of devised theatre are mostly to be found in how this unconventional theatre practice develops “group dynamics, relationships and interaction between people” and how it reflects “questions about personal politics in relation to group politics” (Oddey 1994, p. 9). In addressing politics and ‘the political’ in devised theatre literature usually focuses on the role of the spectator as “an active witness-participant” (Bailes 2011, p. 87) and attends to theatre groups’ experimentations aiming at challenging the relationship between performer and spectator and at representing the subject (see Bailes 2011, pp. 85– 94). Further, notions of how identity, language, the body, and place are represented in devised performances and are often key subjects of examination. On the other hand, to the best of my knowledge, the role of humor in devised theatre has not been given particular attention so far. There is hardly a relevant title in the literature of theatre and performance research. The study will show that political humor may be an integral part of devised theatre. Specifically, it will analyze how Greek devised theatre performances manipulate political humor as a means of criticism against leadership and the ethics of ruling, political correctness, unemployment, and other issues which bear on the current political scene, and Greek society in particular (see Section 6).

Consequently, following current political humor research, this work makes the following hypotheses about political humor:

- Political humor is linked to political discourse (Mulkay 1988, Tsakona 2011). In other words, as Popa and Tsakona (2011, p. 5) argue, political humor can be processed and interpreted provided that one has contextual knowledge on certain political issues. Humor is contextually and culturally bound (Morrison 1992).
- Political humor manipulates the flaws and shortcomings of policies and politicians to criticize dominant ideologies of how politics should be conducted (Popa and Tsakona 2011, p. 6). Humor can also be considered ‘political’ when it achieves the following communicative

function: it gets people to share a common view about certain dichotomies, such as what is useful-harmful, good-evil, just-unjust (Chilton 2004, p. 199).

- Political humor sometimes draws on political allegory. The analysis will show that as regards the construction of its dramatic logic and dramatic discourse<sup>1</sup> devised theatre is comparable to postmodern and postdramatic Greek theatre (Manteli 2011a, pp. 258– 263, 266; Manteli 2012b) in that it also exploits media texts (e.g. blog and newspaper articles) and oral genres (e.g. songs, slogans) in parodic and satirical modes.

#### **4. The sociopolitical and the theatrical context of the devised performances under discussion: Greek crisis and the 2nd Neos Kosmos Theatre Comedy Festival**

As stated above, the study looks into two shows, *The age of snipe hunting (A story of rule)* by ensemble Hah! (Figure 1) and *New World* by ensemble 3+3=7 (Figure 2). The shows participated in the second edition of Neos Kosmos Theatre Comedy Festival *Devising the Performance* (Athens, Greece, 28 May – 3 June 2012). Since its opening in 2009 “the festival has served as a platform for emerging theatre artists without support from either government or other sponsors and who lack a permanent for their work. Neos Kosmos Theatre provides these groups with rehearsal facilities, seminars with experts, and discussions with a committed organizing committee. The festival is competitive, offering opportunities for distinction. A jury of seven selects the ‘most noteworthy’ production that Neos Kosmos will feature in the following winter season’s repertory.” (Manteli 2013, p.120). Not surprisingly, the 2012 festival was a comedy festival focusing on the present sociopolitical situation of the country. The program featured fourteen emerging theatre groups of young artists whose goal was to devise a show inspired by the present economic crisis using a range of comedic forms. The shows discussed here received a positive feedback by the jury and a warm response by the festival’s audience, presumably on the basis that they effectively demonstrated the emerging artists’ aspirations and frustrations about how devised theatre and humor can be jointly manipulated to address the current financial, social and political problems of Greece.

Accordingly, a global aim of the present study is to discuss the performances as products of a specific sociocultural environment. In addition, the study will investigate how key notions, supposedly tackled in devised theatre (see section 2), are represented in the performances. As to the former, one should bear in mind that, due to the Greek government debt-crisis, Greece was then facing acute financial and social problems. The implementation of the IMF’s austerity measures, the PSI and structural changes completion by Papademos’ government in January 2012, poverty, unemployment, social conflict, frustration among the populace, massive protests by trade unionists in

2011 and 2012 as well as large-scale damage and destruction against historic buildings, parliamentary/party/bureaucratic and other property in riots and protests in Athens and other cities all over Greece early in 2012, all these were salient features of the socio-political situation in Greece, producing public and private discourses about the role of Greek politicians/the Greek political elite and the construction of social identities in the era of the recession and the memorandum.<sup>ii</sup>



Figure 1. The performers of *The age of snipe hunting (A story of rule)* imitating the flying of snipes. (Photo: Hah!)



Figure 2. Big Adorable in *New World*. (Photo: 3+3=7)

## 5. Introduction to the methodology and the research tools

Since this paper focuses on theatre performances it will address the humor both on linguistic and non-linguistic levels. Its underlying assumption is that humor is both a feature of the text and of the performance. I will thus analyze not only the verbal humor of the texts (i.e. performance scripts) but also visual and acoustic clues of the performances, paralinguistic and, generally speaking, the performative signs producing humor in the devised performances discussed here. Consequently, this study will attempt to inform theoretical assumptions proposed for multimodal texts to extend the General Theory of Verbal Humor (henceforth GTVH) (Attardo 2001) so as to account for non-linguistic signs as well (see Canestrari 2010; Tsakona 2009, 2011).

### 5.1. A brief outline of the General Theory Verbal Humor (GTVH)

The main theory of humor nowadays, the GTVH, can thoroughly analyze which text is funny (or not), why, and how. Attardo (1994, 2001) presupposes Raskin's (1985) definition, according to which a text can be characterized as humorous if it is "compatible, fully or in part, with two overlapping scripts", while these two scripts offer incompatible interpretations of the text (Raskin 1985, p. 99). In Attardo's (2001, p. 26) terms, "any humorous text will present a SO [i.e. a script opposition]". Other analytical criteria of the theory explaining why and how something is funny or humorous are the following *knowledge resources* (henceforth KRs): the *logical mechanism* (LM), namely the distorted, joking reasoning the *script opposition* (see above) is based on; the *situation* (SI), namely who and/or what is the humorous text about, where the participants are, what they do etc.; the *target* (TA), namely the butt of the joke or the humor of the text (persons, groups, ideas, institutions ridiculed); the *narrative strategy* (NS), namely the genre including humor and/or the speech act performed by the humorous speaker; and the *language* (LA), namely the way the humorous text is actually phrased, the verbal encoding of humor.

### 5.2. Semiotic approach to the performative signs of the performances

Since theatre performances draw on different means and codes to construct their meaning(s), they can be considered a genre of semiotic domain. Like other theatre subgenres, devised theatre performances exploit at least two semiotic modes, the verbal and the visual. Therefore, I assume that humor in these performances can be exploited both verbally and visually. As Dynel (2013, p. 40) puts it "humor in dramatic discourse may also stem from other phenomena, some not recognized in

linguistic humor studies so far.” For this purpose next to a GTVH framework of analysis of multimodal texts (i.e. devised performance scripts), a semiotic approach to the performances will be applied in order to account for their visual means in creating a humorous effect. To be more specific, via a semiotic approach I will examine the role of theatrical systemic and linguistic codes such as: kinesic codes of the performers (conventions governing gesture, movement, facial expression of the performers); vestimentary codes (costumes and props used by the performers), cosmetic codes (make-up conventions), musical codes (musical scores, accompaniments, interludes etc.); rhetorical codes (speech delivery), dialectal, ideolectal codes as well as paralinguistic (i.e. overcoding of voice projection, articulation, intonation etc.) codes of the performers; formal presentational codes (such as conventions of direct address, metatheatrical addresses, attempts to break the mimetic illusion).<sup>iii</sup> I will also discuss intertextual parodic allusions in the scripts and performance parody (i.e. parody activated through theatrical signs).

## **6. Text and performance analysis: Discussion of verbal and performance humor**

### **6.1. *The age of snipe hunting (A story of rule)* by Hah!**

*The age of snipe hunting (A story of rule)* explores the relationship between rulers and the ruled and the supposed gap between them. In addressing its political concepts the performance draws on the biographies of Louis XIV and Marie Antoinette and develops material from the genre of political biography. The story of rule of the two French rulers underlies the performance as a political allegory of the abuse of power and the responsibilities of the people in whatever ruling system. In the devised performance by Hah! ensemble the figures of Louis XIV and Marie Antoinette find their comic parallels as Louis and Marie, the characters of two young children who decide to play ‘king and queen’. On the performance level the devised show is evoked in a series of interpolated silent acting scenes heavily drawing on Jacques Lecoq-inspired physical theatre and mimicry realised in comic and physically exaggerated styles of performance. According to Lecoq’s work performers are encouraged “to work with simplicity and to use their bodies as the primary source of expression” (Allain & Harvie 2006, p. 50). This means that in the show *The age of snipe hunting (A story of rule)* the performers seek to explore rhythm and movement in space, use a lot of mime techniques and clowning, and do a lot of choral work often enacted in choral singing and dancing. The story is devised as Louis and Marie’s dream while its narrative is structured into, what I will call, ‘chorus’ and ‘king and queen’ scenes. Specifically, the former scenes portray the six performers taking up either the role of a cheering populace or of the corrupt elite, whereas in the latter, emphasis is on issues of corruption and greed. In short, *The age of snipe hunting (A story of rule)* is Louis and Marie’s dream story of becoming rulers. The story ends with the characters expressing feelings of

regret about their royal experience, giving up their dream of becoming king and queen ever again, and promising to play other games in the future.

In what follows I will focus on two chorus scenes and a king-and-queen scene to discuss how political humor is signified. The former scenes are metaphors for the people's subservience, their unconditioned devotion to the royals and their vicious ethics; the latter scene depicts the royals' obsession with public recognition, their greed and abuse of power.

The first chorus scene (see Extracts 1 and 2)<sup>iv</sup> is a humorous dialogue between two elite members (count Alfredo and countess Blueblueblue) and two young children (Louis and Marie). At least two political scripts are activated in the extracts: first, the responsibilities of the rulers towards the people, and, second, the supposed royal qualifications and responsibilities. Louis and Marie are exposed to a distorted view of the supposed qualifications of a king and a queen. Eventually, they come to agree with the elite members, thus accepting an incongruous etiquette about royal duties. The scene is humorous as it makes extensive use of distorted views about ruling and governing as well as absurd statements about royalty.

(Extract 1)

ΚΟΜΗΣ ΑΛΦΡΕΝΤΟ. Λοιπόν... Μαρί, τι πιστεύεις εσύ ότι πρέπει να κάνει μια σωστή βασίλισσα;

ΜΑΡΙ. Μια σωστή βασίλισσα πρέπει να κάνει ότι περνά από το χέρι της ώστε ο λαός της να είναι χαρούμενος.

ΚΟΜΗΣ ΑΛΦΡΕΝΤΟ. Πολύ ωραία. Και πώς θα το πετύχεις αυτό;

ΜΑΡΙ. Εεε...

ΚΟΜΗΣ ΑΛΦΡΕΝΤΟ. Άστο! Θα σου πω εγώ. *Κάνοντας πάρα πολλά μπάνια. (J1)*

ΜΑΡΙ. Μπάνια;

ΚΟΜΗΣ ΑΛΦΡΕΝΤΟ. Ναι, μπάνια, Μαρί. *Πρέπει να κρατάς την επιδερμίδα σου στιλπνή και λαμπερή όπως όλες οι προκάτοχοί σου. (J2)* Επέδειξαν τέτοιο αλτρονισμό και αυταπάρηση που κατάφεραν να μείνουν στην ιστορία. Γιατί; *Γιατί έβαζαν πρώτα πάνω από όλα τον εαυτό τους και μετά τους άλλους. (J3)* Όπως η Μαρί η 14<sup>η</sup> ... *Αχ! Εξαιρετική βασίλισσα! Ήταν πρώτα βασίλισσα και μετά άνθρωπος. (J4).* Μαρί, *είχε καταφέρει κάποτε να κάνει 17 μπάνια σε μια μέρα. (J5)* *Είχε φτάσει τον αριθμό ρεκόρ στις 24,352 φούσκες σε ένα μπάνιο, Μαρί. (J6)* Ο πήχυς είναι πολύ ψηλά.

(Extract 1)

COUNT ALFREDO. Well... Marie, what do you think a good queen should do?

MARIE. A good queen should do her best so that the people is happy.

COUNT ALFREDO. Well done. And how are you going to succeed in this?

MARIE. Err....

COUNT ALFREDO. Don't bother! I'll tell you. *You should be having lots of baths. (J1)*

MARIE. Baths?

COUNT ALFREDO. Yes. Baths, Marie. *You should keep your complexion silky and bright like all your predecessors. (J2)* They've demonstrated such altruism and self-denial that they made history. You know why? *Because they've put themselves before others. (J3)* Like Marie 14th. Oh! What a marvellous queen! *First she was a queen and then an individual. (J4)* She once managed to have 17 baths in a day. *(J5)* You know, Marie, she reached the record number of making 24,352 bubbles in a bath. *(J6)* The standard is high.

According to the GTVH (see sections 1 and 5) Extract 1 contains at least six *jab lines* (see above) which, as I will discuss, share at least three *knowledge resources* (e.g. SO, TA, and NS), thus forming humorous *strands*.<sup>v</sup> In what follows I will apply the GTVH specifically to J1, J2, J4, and J6. The extract is a conversation between a count and young Marie, structured as an exchange of suggestions about a good queen's duties. For the purposes of the analysis I assume that the queen stands metonymically for a (any) ruler. By the end of the conversation the interlocutors have come to agree on the most absurd strategies a good queen should follow to keep her people happy. Consequently, the butt of the joke is selfish rulers.

*J1: You should be having lots of baths.*

SO: a ruler should exercise his/her power wisely for the sake of his/her people/a ruler should take care of his/her own sake (welfare) by keeping an immaculate complexion through bathing

LM: ignoring the obvious

TA: selfish rulers

SI: conversation between count Alfredo and prospective monarch (Marie)

NS: dialogue in a play; suggestion (speech act)

LA: irrelevant

*J2: You should keep your complexion silky and bright like all your predecessors.*

SO: a ruler should exercise his/her power wisely for the sake of his/her people/a ruler should take care of his/her own sake (welfare) by keeping an immaculate complexion through bathing

LM: ignoring the obvious

TA: selfish rulers

SI: conversation between count Alfredo and prospective monarch (Marie)

NS: dialogue in a play; suggestion (speech act)

LA: irrelevant

*J4: First she was a queen and then an individual.*

SO: a good ruler should exercise his/her power unselfishly and self-denyingly for the sake of his/her people/a good ruler should take care of his/her own sake (welfare) rather than his/her people

LM: reversal

TA: selfish rulers

SI: conversation between count (Alfredo) and prospective monarch (Marie)

NS: dialogue in a play; suggestion (speech act)

LA: irrelevant

*J6: she reached the record number of making 24,352 bubbles in a bath.*

SO: a ruler should exercise his/her power wisely for the sake of his/her people/a ruler should take care of his/her own sake by having a lot of baths and making a lot of soap bubbles

LM: reversal

TA: selfish rulers

SI: conversation between count (Alfredo) and prospective monarch (Marie)

NS: dialogue in a play; suggestion (speech act)

LA: overdetermination/overspecification (i.e. emphasis on too specific detail [24,352 bubbles])

Accordingly, in Extract 2 (see below) I will focus on two *jab lines* which, as is shown, share the same SO, LM, TA, SI and thus could be said to form *strands*. Similarly to Extract 1, Extract 2 is a conversation between an elite member and a prospective king about the qualifications of a good king. By means of exaggeration and faulty reasoning the interlocutors agree that a good king is

synonymous to a greedy hunter. In terms of LA J6 contains over-specific information, thus rendering the extract quite humorous. The TA of the extract is monarchs of a specific historical period and by extension rulers or those in power.

(Extract 2)

ΚΟΜΙΣΣΑ ΜΠΛΟΥΜΠΛΟΥΜΠΛΟΥ. Εσύ τι πιστεύεις ότι πρέπει να κάνει ένας σωστός βασιλιάς, Λουί;

ΛΟΥΙ. Ένας σωστός βασιλιάς...

ΚΟΜΙΣΣΑ ΜΠΛΟΥΜΠΛΟΥΜΠΛΟΥ. Ναι...

ΛΟΥΙ. Ένας σωστός βασιλιάς πρέπει να προστατεύει το λαό του.

ΚΟΜΙΣΣΑ ΜΠΛΟΥΜΠΛΟΥΜΠΛΟΥ. Πολύ σωστά. Και να προστατεύει το λαό του πρέπει να του εμπνέει εμπιστοσύνη. Και για να του εμπνέει εμπιστοσύνη θα πρέπει να είναι ένας ικανός μαχητής.

*Και για να είναι ένας ικανός μαχητής θα πρέπει να είναι ένας άριστος κυνηγός. (J7) Όπως ο*

*Λουδοβίκος ο 14<sup>ος</sup>. Αχ, ο χρυσός μου... Κατάφερε να σκοτώνει τριάντα πτηνά το δευτερόλεπτο. (J8)*

[...]

ΛΟΥΙ. Εγώ δεν έχω σκοτώσει ποτέ τίποτε, Αλλά αν είναι για το λαό...

(Extract 2)

COUNTESS BLUEBLUEBLUE. What do you believe a good king should do, Louis?

LOUIS. A good king...

COUNTESS BLUEBLUEBLUE. Yes...

LOUIS. A good king should protect his people.

COUNTESS BLUEBLUEBLUE. Absolutely. And to protect his people he should inspire confidence in them. And in order to inspire confidence he should be a competent fighter. *And to be a competent fighter he should be an excellent hunter. (J7) Like Louis 14th. Oh, my darling Louis... He once managed to kill thirty fowls in a second. (J8)*

[...]

LOUIS. I haven't ever killed anything. But if I have to do it just for the people...

*J7: And to be a competent fighter he should be an excellent hunter.*

SO: a good king of that historical period should be an accomplished fighter/ a good king should be a greedy hunter (or a sportsman)

LM: faulty reasoning

TA: monarchs (and by extension rulers/those in power)

SI: conversation between countess (Blueblueblue) and prospective monarch (Louis)

NS: dialogue in a play; suggestion (speech act)

LA: irrelevant

*J8: He once managed to kill thirty fowls in a second.*

SO: a good king of that historical period should be an accomplished fighter/ a good king should be a greedy hunter (or a sportsman)

LM: exaggeration

TA: monarchs (and by extension rulers/those in power)

SI: conversation between countess (Blueblueblue) and prospective monarch (Louis)

NS: dialogue in a play; statement

LA: overdetermination/overspecification

In another extract (Extract 3) the subject of conversation is highly topical switching to modern Greek stereotypes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Specifically, the two elite members (count Alfredo and countess Blueblueblue) try to entice Louis and Marie to accept the ‘eternal burden’ of becoming king and queen respectively and prove themselves worthy of their glorious predecessors (i.e. Louis XIV and Marie Antoinette) by focusing on a series of anachronistic assets. Consequently, in Extract 3 the humor becomes updated and topical bringing everything to the particulars of 21<sup>st</sup> century Greece, changing the dramatic (narrative) place and time (21<sup>st</sup> century Greece), and exploiting male (power, fame, money, sex) and female (beauty) stereotypes. Moreover, the extract elaborates on the hunting theme, adapting/switching to a stereotypical hunting target in Greece (i.e. snipes). Consider the following:

(Extract 3)

ΚΟΜΗΣ ΑΛΦΡΕΝΤΟ. Λοιπόν πολλά είπαμε. Μπορείτε να φανείτε αντάξιοι αυτών των ένδοξων προγόνων;

ΚΟΜΙΣΣΑ ΜΠΛΟΥΜΠΛΟΥΜΠΛΟΥ. Μπορείτε να σηκώσετε στους ώμους σας το βάρος της αιωνιότητας;

ΚΟΜΗΣ ΑΛΦΡΕΝΤΟ. Είστε σε θέση να γράψετε το όνομά σας στην ιστορία με χρυσά γράμματα;

[...]

ΚΟΜΗΣ ΑΛΦΡΕΝΤΟ. *Η αίσθηση της εξουσίας θα σας κάνει σεξουαλικά πιο δραστήριους και γενικά πιο επιθετικούς. Με την εξουσία θα έχετε ό,τι θέλετε...*

ΛΟΥΙ. Ό,τι θέλουμε...

ΚΟΜΙΣΣΑ ΜΠΛΟΥΜΠΛΟΥΜΠΛΟΥ. *Θα είσαι η πιο όμορφη.*

ΚΟΜΗΣ ΑΛΦΡΕΝΤΟ. *Δόξα... φήμη..., γυναίκες... γη...off-shore εταιρείες... club στην Χαλκίδα... Δες τα Λουί, μπροστά σου είναι. Αυτό είναι το παιχνίδι.*

ΚΟΜΙΣΣΑ ΜΠΛΟΥΜΠΛΟΥΜΠΛΟΥ. *Φορέματα... εξώφυλλα στη Vogue... Θέλετε να είστε με τους νικητές ή με τους χαμένους. Εσείς αποφασίζετε...*

ΚΟΜΗΣ ΑΛΦΡΕΝΤΟ. *Σας αφήνουμε λίγο μόνους να το σκεφτείτε.*

[...]

ΚΟΜΗΣ ΑΛΦΡΕΝΤΟ. *Λοιπόν; Αποφασίσατε;*

ΛΟΥΙ ΚΑΙ ΜΑΡΙ. *Ναι! Θέλουμε!*

ΛΟΥΙ. *Τι πρέπει να κάνουμε τώρα;*

ΚΟΜΗΣ ΑΛΦΡΕΝΤΟ. *Μπεκάτσες!*

ΛΟΥΙ. *Μπεκάτσες;*

ΚΟΜΗΣ ΑΛΦΡΕΝΤΟ. *Ναι, μπεκάτσες.*

(Extract 3)

COUNT ALFREDO. Well, we've said too much. Can you prove yourselves worthy of these glorious ancestors?

COUNTESS BLUEBLUEBLUE. Can you bear the burden of eternity on your shoulders?

COUNT ALFREDO. Can you write your name in golden letters in the book of history?

LOUIS. This sounds pretty heavy, doesn't it?

COUNTESS BLUEBLUEBLUE. Heavy but sweet since the exercise of power sets off the mind, boosts testosterone excretion.

COUNT ALFREDO. *The feeling of power will make you more sexually active and generally more aggressive. When in power, you will have whatever you want...*

LOUIS. Whatever we want...

COUNTESS BLUEBLUEBLUE. *You will be the most beautiful.*

COUNT ALFREDO. *Glory, fame, women, land, offshore companies, clubs in Chalkida. Go for them, Loui. That's the game.*

COUNTESS BLUEBLUEBLUE. *Dresses, covers in Vogue. Do you want to side with the winners or the losers? It's your decision.*

COUNT ALFREDO. Have some time alone to think about it.

[...]

COUNT ALFREDO. Well, have you made up your minds?

LOUIS AND MARIE. Yes, we have! We want (to be king and queen)!

LOUIS. What are we supposed to do now?

COUNT ALFREDO. *Snipes!*

LOUIS. *Snipes?*

COUNT ALFREDO. *That's right! Snipes.*

In the extracts discussed above Alfredo and Blueblueblue seem to acknowledge Louis 14<sup>th</sup> and Marie Antoinette as royal models albeit for a number of incongruous deeds, such as breaking the record of having 17 baths in a day, making 24,352 bath bubbles or killing 30 birds in a second. Royal benefits include a list of incongruous assets ranging from property to sexual power, from publicity to offshore companies. Consequently, humor is used to ridicule both the institution of royalty and by extension rulers (those in power). It also aims at criticizing the advising role of the ruling elites. It becomes then clear that the *target knowledge resource* (TA KR) can be considered both ideological and political.

Apart from humor on the text level, humor is also produced on the performance level through specific staging and acting techniques. To be more specific, exaggerated facial expressions and gestures, unnatural movement imitating the kinesic codes of counts and countesses (see Figure 3), and an affected articulation of English when pronouncing the word 'hunter' in Extract 3 can be viewed as parodic mechanisms which trigger laughter among the audience. In addition, some interpolated silent acting scenes depicting the French royals also enhance humor by means of choral work, exaggerated mimicry, comic impersonations of animals, and slow motion. In terms of dramatic logic, these scenes represent a change of dramatic situation with the performers playing the roles of Louis and Marie either looking puzzled or contemplating becoming king and queen respectively or relishing their prospective subjects' manifestations of subservience and obedience. In terms of acting, performers exploit grimaces as well as ritualistic gestures and postures rendering the performance particularly humorous.



Figure 3. Comic and physically exaggerated acting by the performers of Hah! in *The age of snipe hunting (A story of rule)*. (Photo: Hah!)

I will now discuss another choral scene (see Extract 4) in the show. The scene evokes political scripts as it targets in a humorous way people's subservience and blind devotion to their rulers. In the first part of the scene Count Alfredo preaches at Louis about the need for the king to keep his people happy and grateful by giving them snipes. In the end Louis acknowledges the importance of snipes to the people's well-being. This is signified in the performer's imitative public speech enacted through exaggerated facial expression and gestures. In the end of his performance Louis concludes as following: "I inaugurate the age of snipe hunting". Interestingly, this is the only audible phrase in Louis's long mute speech, which presumably stands as an extended parody of the kinesic code of politicians when delivering campaign speeches. One could also assume that Louis's speech can stand as a potential mimicry of Hitler's or Mussolini's manipulative proclamations during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. In other parts, this choral scene depicts the cast hunting snipes in the woods and singing a monotonous, absurd song in rhyming couplets (see Extract 4). The song is then followed by comic asides which stand as parodic hymns to the snipes and the king. The whole scene can thus be regarded as extremely humorous.

(Extract 4)

Ηθοποιός. (τραγουδά) Βλέπω παντού μπεκάτσες.

Μπεκάτσες παντού

Θίασος (τραγουδά) Παντού. Παντού

Ηθοποιός. (τραγουδά) Τριγύρω μου μπεκάτσες.

Μπεκάτσες μες στο νου.

Θίασος. (τραγουδά) Στο νου Στο νου.

Ηθοποιός. (τραγουδά) Παντού βλέπω μπεκάτσες.

Μπεκάτσες déjà vu.

Θίασος. (τραγουδά) Jà vu. Jà vu.

Ηθοποιός. (τραγουδά) Τριγύρω μου μπεκάτσες

Μπεκάτσες του λαού

Ηθοποιός. (αποστροφή στο κοινό) Πριν την μπεκάτσα, δεν ήξερα πού πήγαινα στη ζωή. Τώρα; Τώρα ξέρω. Τώρα έχω στόχο. Κάτι να κυνηγώ. Τη μπεκάτσα. Ευχαριστώ, μπεκάτσα.

Ηθοποιός. (αποστροφή στο κοινό) Πριν η μπεκάτσα μπει στο νοικοκυριό μας, το καλάθι της νοικοκυράς ήταν άδειο. Τώρα γέμισε. Τα παιδιά είναι χαρούμενα.

Ηθοποιός. (αποστροφή στο κοινό) Τρώμε κάθε μέρα μπεκάτσα.

Ηθοποιός. (αποστροφή στο κοινό) Ο σύζυγος είναι ευχαριστημένος. Ευχαριστούμε, βασιλιά.

Ηθοποιός. (αποστροφή στο κοινό) Επιστημονικές έρευνες έδειξαν ότι το κυνήγι μπεκάτσας προκαλεί έρωτα, πάθος και πραγματική ευτυχία. Γιατί γεννιέσαι κυνηγός. Αλλά μπεκατσοκυνηγός γίνεσαι.

Ηθοποιός. (τραγουδά) Βλέπω παντού μπεκάτσες.

Μπεκάτσες παντού

Τριγύρω μου μπεκάτσες

Μπεκάτσες του λαού

Μπεκάτσες, μπεκάτσες, μπε-κά-τσε –ε-ες.

(Extract 4)

SONG

Performer I see everywhere snipes

Snipes everywhere

Cast (in chorus) Everywhere. Everywhere

Performer All around me snipes

Snipes in the mind

Cast (in chorus) In the mind, the mind

Performer Everywhere I see snipes

Snipes déjà vu.

Cast (in chorus) Jà vu. Jà vu.

Around me snipes  
The snipes of the people

ASIDES

(towards the  
audience)

Performer 1      Before the age of the snipe, I had no  
idea where I was going in life. Now?  
Now I know. Now I have a goal.  
Something to hunt. The snipe.  
Thank you, snipe.

Performer 2      Before the snipe came into our  
household, the housewife's shopping  
basket was empty. Now it's full. The  
children are happy.

Performer 3      Every day we have snipe for lunch.

Performer 2      My husband is happy. Thank you,  
king.

Performer 4      Scientific research has shown that  
snipe hunting causes love, passion  
and true happiness. Because one  
may be born as a hunter but needs to  
develop as a snipe-hunter.

SONG

Performer      I see everywhere snipes  
Snipes everywhere  
Around me snipes  
The snipes of the people  
Snipes, snipes, sni – pes.

On the performance level humor in this scene is exploited via visual and acoustic signs. For example, repetition, comic speech delivery and rhythmic articulation of the performers in unison along with ridiculous facial expressions are used to produce humorous effect. Besides, the representation of one

performer as a solo singer singing passionately the song behind an imaginary microphone adds an absurd tone to the scene.

I will now discuss a characteristic king and queen scene (see Extract 5) which targets the rulers' incompetence and greed. Louis's vanity is signified in his disappointment at receiving just one single reference to his name in a song and in his decision to inaugurate the age of his omnipotence. The king's obsession with public acknowledgement and the need to be adored by his subjects is systematically parodied in the extract since Louis boasts that he had three cheers on a day while a hundred and six people made a toast to his name.

(Extract 5)

ΛΟΥΙ. Είδες πώς κάνουν για μένα.

ΜΑΡΙ. Με λατρεύουν.

ΛΟΥΙ. Φωνάζουν το όνομά μου

ΜΑΡΙ. Μ' έχουν για θεά.

ΛΟΥΙ. Μ' έχουν σαν θεό... Μ' έχουν σαν θεό... Σαν θεό.

ΜΑΡΙ. Καλησπέρα Λουί

ΛΟΥΙ. Καλησπέρα.

ΜΑΡΙ. Τι κάνεις;

ΛΟΥΙ. Βασιλεύω, Μαρί. Βασιλεύω και μάλιστα πολύ καλά. *Μόνο σήμερα είχα 344 επευφημίες και περίπου 106 άνθρωποι ήπιαν νερό στο όνομά μου (J9).* Καθόλου άσχημα, καθόλου άσχημα.

(Extract 5)

LOUIS. Can you hear them?

MARIE. They adore me.

LOUIS. They're calling my name.

MARIE. They treat me like a goddess.

LOUIS. They treat me like a god... They treat me like a god... Like a god.

(Silent scene)

MARIE. Good evening, Louis.

LOUIS. Good evening.

MARIE. How are you getting on?

LOUIS. I reign, Marie. Indeed I reign very well. *Just for today I received 344 cheers and about 106 people toasted to my name (J9).* Not bad, not bad at all.

In GTVH terms, jab line 9 in Extract 5 could be analyzed as follows:

SO KR: a good king should be loved and adored by his subjects/ a good king should be as vain as to expect that 344 people will applaud him and another 106 will toast a drink to his name

LM KR: faulty reasoning

SI KR: Louis and Marie are having a face-to-face conversation over their private formal dinner

TA KR: the monarch, the king and, by extension, the ruler

NS KR: dialogue as part of a performance (drama) text

LA KR: overdetermination/overspecification

By the same token, the queen's political ineptitude and personal vanity is signified in her talking about the thousands of soap bubbles she succeeded in making and the million of dresses in loquat colour she wants to buy to match the freshly-planted loquat trees (i.e. Chinese plum trees) in the palace gardens (see Extract 6). Royal worthlessness and ignorance is pointed out as Marie confuses the new word "equality" (*ισότητα*) she has just learned with "quality" (*σότητα*)<sup>vi</sup> whose meaning is explained by Louis as following: «*σότητα είναι πουλί από την Αφρική*» ('quality is a bird from Africa').

(Extract 6)

ΜΑΡΙ. Πολύ ενδιαφέρον, Λουί. Εγώ πάλι σήμερα έκανα 3452 φούσκες. Είμαι πολύ κοντά να σπάσω το ρεκόρ της Μαρίς της 14<sup>ης</sup>.

ΛΟΥΙ. Δεν πιστεύω να σου σκάει καμία;

Μαρί Ποτέ!... Ηλίθιες ερωτήσεις... Λουί, ήθελα να σε ρωτήσω κάτι.

ΛΟΥΙ. Ρώτα με.

Μαρί Ξέρεις σήμερα άκουσα μια καινούρια λέξη. Δεν ξέρω αν ξέρεις τι σημαίνει. Τι λένε, κάτσε να δεις. 'Σότητα', 'σότητα', 'ισότητα'. Και δεν ξέρω αν είναι 'σότητα' ή 'ισότητα'(J10).

ΛΟΥΙ. Το πρώτο.

ΜΑΡΙ. Και τι σημαίνει;

ΛΟΥΙ. Πουλί από την Αφρική, είναι.

ΜΑΡΙ. Αμάν μ' αυτά τα πουλιά σου.

ΜΑΡΙ. [...] Λουί, έχω ένα μεγάλο πρόβλημα. Ο κηπουρός έφερε κάτι καινούριες μουσμουλιές έξω στον κήπο κι εγώ δεν ξέρω πώς να τις φορέσω. Δεν είναι δυνατόν μια βασίλισσα του δικού μου

βεληγεκούς να μην έχει ένα φόρεμα στο χρώμα του μούσμουλου. Πρέπει λοιπόν κάτι να κάνω. (J11)

Τι να κάνω, Λουί, πες μου, πες μου. Πες μου.

[...]

MARIE. Θα παραγγείλω 10,352,000 φουστάνια. (J11) Εντάξει;

ΛΟΥΙ. Καλά θα κάνεις...

(Extract 6)

MARIE. Quite interesting, Louis. Well, I made 3452 bubbles today. I'm quite close to break the record of Marie the 14<sup>th</sup>.

LOUIS. Don't tell me your bubbles break?

MARIE. Never!... What a silly question...Louis, I'd like to ask you something.

LOUIS. Go ahead.

MARIE. *You know, today I heard a new word. I don't know if you know what it means. The word is - just a minute- 'quality'... 'quality'... 'equality'. I don't really know if it's 'quality' or 'equality' (J10).*

LOUIS. The former.

MARIE. And what does it mean?

LOUIS. It's a bird from Africa.

MARIE. I'm fed up with your birds.

MARIE. [...] I've got a big problem, Louis. *The gardener brought some new loquats [Chinese plums] in the garden and I don't know how to wear them. It's not acceptable for a queen of my stature not to own a dress in the colour of loquat. I need to do something. What shall I do? (J11)* Tell me, Louis, tell me. Please tell me.

[...]

MARIE. *I'll order 10,352,000 dresses (J11).* OK?

LOUIS. You'll do fine...

In GTVH terms, the analysis of jab line 11 is as follows:

SO KR: a queen of stature should do something when she has a problem/ a queen of stature should have as many dresses as the number of trees in the palace gardens (or a queen's dresses should be as many and in the same colour as the trees in the palace gardens).

LM KR: faulty reasoning/exaggeration/ignoring the obvious

SI KR: Louis and Marie are having a conversation about the problems they are facing during their reign

TA KR: the monarch, the queen and, by extension, the ruler

NS KR: dialogue as part of a performance (drama) text

LA KR: overdetermination, overspecification

On the performance level the surrealist humor of the above extract is matched with certain paraverbal signals (i.e. the performers' articulation and speedy speech delivery) and visual signals (i.e. mimicry and comic impersonation of animals, for example the representation of the performer's body as a horse, on which Louis mounts to go hunting at the end of the scene). These humorous techniques add an absurd tone and trigger laughter among the audience. Parody is also activated since the whole scene is structured as a private royal dinner between Louis and Marie with the two performers standing opposite each other at a distance which is meant to represent a long dining table, chewing and occasionally spitting on the floor while tasting their supposed meal. This is a powerful image which, seen within a broader context, hints at Greek politicians' socializing habits and represents them as vain, inept and graceless.

To conclude this section, it seems that *The age of snipe hunting (A story of rule)* used humor, satire and parody to warn against monarchs' (and by extension rulers') lack of skills and responsibility and target their tendency to underestimate their role and duties. By choosing to address Greece's current socio-political situation through the devised story of two monarchs from a past era, the devised theatre group Hah! draw a correlation between present and past rulers on the basis of some strong qualifications. These seem to be: Like a king (Louis) and a queen (Marie) of 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century, contemporary politicians too act as absolute rulers who indulge in the lavishness of their lifestyle and act irresponsibly. Consequently, we assume that the script evoked in the show is the following: the present political system reminds that of a regime characterized by arbitrariness and permanence. In addition, the representation of the dramatic characters as greedy and arrogant when coming into power as well as the depiction of a foul relationship between the rulers and the ruled can be regarded as an implicature to the latter's liabilities. The closing scene of the devised performance with Louis and Marie giving up their king and queen roles respectively highlights disappointment and regret as the underlying emotions and suggests political disengagement as an alternative to politics.

## **6.2. Intertextuality and parody in *New World* by 3+3=7: Allusions to George Orwell's 1984**

Structured as a series of skits the devised show *New World* by 3+3=7 drew on stand-up comedy and a neat aesthetic of fluorescent lighting and costumes' details for humorous effect on the performance level (see Figure 4). On the one hand, the humor of the skits targeted public issues such as education,

the conditions of labor and unemployment. On the other, it criticized contemporary trends in diet, dress code and human relationships while addressing the dominant discourses of social media and facebook. Overall, the humor can be called political since not only does it attack social politics, but also satirises common views about what is useful/ harmful, just/unjust, acceptable/non-acceptable etc. (Tsakona & Popa 2011, pp. 5-9).



Figure 4. The aesthetic of fluorescent lighting in *New World*. (Photo: 3+3=7)

The performance text drew on political allegory since it made intertextual references to two classic political novels. Specifically, the title of the devised performance (i.e. *New World*) alluded to Huxley's (2006 [1932, 1946]) dystopian novel *Brave New World* while the ensemble's name (i.e. 3+3=7) implied the complex concept of doublethink in Orwell's (1977 [1949]) *1984*. The story of *New World* is set between the present year 2012 and 2021, presumably a parodic allusion to 1984 (the dramatic time of Orwell's novel) and 1948 (the year the author wrote the novel). The allusion rests on the distinction between real (performance or writing) time and dramatic time (of the show or the novel) and is indicative of the performers' intention to highlight the threatening possibility of a future era resembling such a dystopia as that described in *1984*.

The basic concepts and terms of Orwell's (1977 [1949]) *1984* such as surveillance, Big Brother, public mind control, doublethink, thought crime, memory holes and a totalitarian invasive super state, are recurrent in the devised performance. For example, the narrative character 'O Megàlos Latreftós', literally translated as 'The Big Adorable',<sup>vii</sup> is a parodic representation of Orwell's Big Brother. His picture is displayed in video projection onto the background wall of the set. Each time the performers utter his name, they turn their faces towards the background picture and send their resonant kisses as an indication of worship towards their leader. Other examples of intertextual allusions to Orwellian concepts and terms are the following: In a skit parodying TV game shows (see

Extract 7) doublethink is recalled in the ‘truth serum’ administered to job-seeking female contestants; in another skit school children are supposed to turn in their parents to Thought Police whenever they make a mistake; at school they sit on tin boxes in which realia from the year 2012 are put away; they memorise slogans such as “war is peace”, “freedom is slavery”, “ignorance is strength”; they are taught that they are all equal by being all identical, hence the performers’ almost identical fluorescent costumes and props. All the above parodically allude to *thinkpol* in Newspeak, memory holes and the party’s slogans in Orwell’s (1977 [1949]) *1984*. Therefore, the salient features of the dramatic world (see Extract 7) of *New World* are comparable to Orwell’s *1984* society. For example, surveillance, persecution of individualism, enforcement of ideological correctness, preemptive checking and policing are part and parcel of the dramatic logic of the skit, performed as a formal announcement on the definition of “New World”. As regards the staging techniques, one performer delivers the announcement behind a stand microphone on a dimly-lit stage while the rest of the cast march and repeatedly chant in unison “Neos Kosmos” (i.e. “New World”). It seems then, that visual clues make the method of controlled systematic indoctrination parody interpretation explicit: the scene is set up as an enclosed dark room populated by brainwashed subjects walking in circles and repeating obediently the chief’s formal explanation of what “New World” means, formally announced through a mic. Apart from the performance level, parody is employed on the verbal level too (see Extract 7). The method of controlled systematic indoctrination parody interpretation takes the form of mediated formal definition (“New World means...”) and is couched in the way language is used to mimic the specific register of the regime’s frequent announcements heard over the loudspeakers in the Orwellian society of *1984*:

(Extract 7)

Νέος Κόσμος θα πει: τηλεοθόνες και TV, καλή τη πίστη άνευ όρων αποδοχή, σκέψη διπλή, ευτυχής κρατική καταστολή, συγκρατημένα ανατροπή, η κακή μνήμη έχει εξαφανιστεί, η καρδιά έχει παροπλιστεί, και ο εγκέφαλος έχει αφαιρεθεί.

(Extract 7)

New World means: tele-screens and TV, bona fide unconditional acceptance, doublethink, felicitous state suppression, self-contained subversion, bad memory has disappeared, the heart has been dismantled and the brain has been removed.

Another parodic allusion to the Orwellian concept of surveillance is evoked in the humorous opening skit of *New World* with the performers supposedly disclosing absurd personal data about the audience (see Extract 8). Text humor is based on the clash between the following scripts: (a) “deeds” and “trivia” (b) “what can be regarded as decent” and “what can be regarded as obscene”; (c) “what is real” and “what is fabricated”; (d) “what goes in reality” and “what is kept secret”; (e) “what can be regarded as an embarrassing situation” and “what can be regarded as a soothing or delightful situation”; (f) “what may happen in reality” and “what may be part of somebody’s imagination”.

(Extract 8)

Κάποιος εδώ μέσα φοράει τρύπια κάλτσα. [i]

15 από εσάς νιώθετε άσχημα με τη μυρωδιά της μασχάλης σας. [ii]

Και 3 τσεκάρετε τη μυρωδιά της μασχάλης σας αυτή τη στιγμή. [iii]

6 από εδώ σκαλίζουν τη μύτη τους όταν νομίζουν ότι δεν τους βλέπει κανείς. [iv]

4 από εδώ φοράνε το ίδιο βρακί με χτες. [v]

Και τρεις δεν φορούν καθόλου. [vi]

12 δεν έχουν σκουπίσει ποτέ το καπάκι της τουαλέτας. [vii]

Και 8 δεν έπλυναν τα χέρια τους μετά την τουαλέτα. [viii]

Ενώ 11 έχουν τρεις μέρες να πλύνουν τα δόντια τους. [ix]

20 βλέπουν τούρκικα και δεν το λένε. [x]

45 γράφουν ότι γνωρίζουν άπταιστα αγγλικά ενώ έχουν μόνο Lower. [xi]

13 ψήφισαν αυτό που τους είπαν οι γονείς τους. [xii]

4-5 από εδώ απατούν το σύντροφό τους. [xiii]

Και 5 τσεκάρουν το σύντροφό τους αυτή τη στιγμή. [xiv]

6 χάρισαν πρόσφατα. [xv]

13 θέλουν κάποιον και δεν του το λένε. [xvi]

6 ανέβαλαν μια δουλειά για αύριο. [xvii]

Και όλοι βάζουν το ξυπνητήρι συνεχώς σε αναβολή. [xviii]

17 θα κόψουν το τσιγάρο από αύριο. [xix]

23 ξεκίνησαν γυμναστήριο και ύστερα από ένα μήνα το έκοψαν. [xx]

40 θα αρχίσουν δίαιτα από Δευτέρα. [xxi]

40 αγόρασαν κάτι που δεν θα το φορέσουν τελικά ποτέ. [xxii]

35 νιώθουν ότι αφήνουν τις μέρες να περνάνε έτσι. [xxiii]

28 μελαγχολούν με τη βροχή. [xxiv]

(Extract 8)

Someone's socks are in holes. [i]

15 of you feel embarrassed with their armpit's odor. [ii]

While 3 of you are checking their armpit's odor right now. [iii]

6 persons in here are picking their nose when they think nobody is watching them. [iv]

4 persons in here are wearing the same underwear as yesterday. [v]

And 3 are wearing no underwear at all. [vi]

12 persons have never wiped the toilet's seat. [vii]

And 8 did not wash their hands after using the toilet. [viii]

While 11 persons have not brushed their teeth for three days. [ix]

20 of you watch Turkish soap operas on TV and don't tell anyone. [x]

45 persons claim they speak English fluently although they have only been awarded the FCE certificate. [xi]

13 voted what their parents told them. [xii]

4 or 5 persons in here cheat on their partner [xiii]

while 5 are checking their partner right now. [xiv]

6 broke up recently. [xv]

13 fancy someone and don't dare to tell them so. [xvi]

6 put off something they had to do tomorrow. [xvii]

And everyone sets the alarm clock in postponement. [xviii]

17 persons will give up smoking tomorrow. [xix]

23 persons took up work-out classes and gave up a month later. [xx]

40 persons will go on a diet next Monday. [xxi]

Another 40 persons have bought something they will never put on. [xxii]

35 think they let time go by. [xxiii]

28 get the blues when it rains. [xxiv]

Incongruity in utterances i ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii, viii, ix may be explained through the following script oppositions between "deeds" and "trivia" (see *a* above) as well as "what can be regarded as an embarrassing situation" and "what can be regarded as a soothing or delightful situation" (see *e* above). Script opposition in utterances ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii may also rely on the clash between "what can be regarded as decent" and "what can be regarded as obscene" (see *b* above). Humor in utterance x depends on the script opposition between "what goes in reality" and "what is kept secret" (see *d* above), and reminds the Greek audience of the devised performance of the high popularity of

Turkish soap operas avidly watched by Greek TV audiences, who may be frowned upon usually by more sophisticated TV watchers (or even by equally low quality soap opera lovers but more racist Greeks). The same script opposition (see *d* above) underlies the humor of utterances xi and xii. The incongruity in utterance xi may also rely on (see *c* above) (i.e. “what is real” and “what is fabricated”). For the purposes of the present study utterances xiii to xv, thematically linked to someone’s status of being in a relationship or being single, are not particularly valuable in terms of script opposition. However, it can be assumed that their humorous effect is produced by the LA KR, which, throughout the extract, heavily exploits random figures with no supported evidence. Nonetheless, the NS of the extract could fall under the genre of statistics or survey. The LM KR which explains the script oppositions proposed here is either exaggeration or juxtaposition of insignificant details (mostly private or even intimate). The TA of the utterances varies significantly including Greek TV audiences (x), people in a relationship (xiii, xiv, xv, xvi), adulterers (xiii), moody and psychologically sensitive people (xxiii, xxiv), prospective applicants for a job (xi), young people patronized by their parents (xii), the institution of Greek family (xii), body-sensitive or obsessed with physical training people (xx, xxi), smokers (xix), consumers (xxii).

Humor in the skit is also enhanced on the performance level, mainly through kinesic and paralinguistic codes. Specifically, all five performers are seated in a row facing the audience and using a monotonous speech delivery. As they take turns in disclosing this kind of trivial information, they use meaningful facial expressions while bending forwards and backwards. As already pointed out, they also exploit certain paralinguistic signals, particularly speech delivery (especially a monotonous, robot-like enunciation) as well as reassuring or surprising muttering at the end of each and every ‘disclosure’.

### **6.3. Intertextuality and parody in *New World* by 3+3=7: Allusions to Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World***

I will now discuss intertextual relations between the devised performance *New World* and Huxley’s (2006 [1932, 1946]) *Brave New World*. Major themes from the latter, such as sleep-learning and the power of knowledge, freedom and individuality, reproductive technology and the transformation of human relationships, are parodied in the devised performance. I will elaborate on a skit about school education in which pupils have to memorise “New Knowledge” (see Extract 9). In the extract, script oppositions relate to obscene/non-obscene, good/bad, high/low stature while the LM KR pertains either to juxtaposition of insignificant acts, details, events etc. rendering it particularly humorous.

(Extract 9)

ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ

Στην αρχαία Αίγυπτο όταν πέθαινε μία γάτα, ο ιδιοκτήτης της ήταν υποχρεωμένος σε ένδειξη πένθους να ξυρίσει τα φρύδια του.

Πριν από το 1800 δεν υπήρχε ξεχωριστό παπούτσι για το δεξί και το αριστερό πόδι.

Τα δόντια του Τζορτζ Ουάσινγκτον άνηκαν πριν σε έναν ιπποπόταμο.

Ο Χίτλερ ήταν χορτοφάγος.

Ο Τσάρλυ Τσάπλιν, ο αυθεντικός, βγήκε τρίτος σε έναν διαγωνισμό σωσιών του Τσάρλυ Τσάπλιν.

ΖΩΟΛΟΓΙΑ

Οι μέλισσες μπορούν να μυρίσουν με τα γόνατά τους.

Οι χελώνες μπορούν να αναπνεύσουν από τον πρωκτό τους.

Η ψαλίδα, το ζωύφιο, έχει δύο πέη.

Τα κουνούπια ελκύονται περισσότερο από τη μυρωδιά των ανθρώπων που έχουν φάει πρόσφατα μπανάνα.

(Extract 9)

HISTORY

When a cat died in ancient Egypt, her proprietor was made to shave her eyebrows to signify loss.

Before 1800 there were no separately designed shoes for right and left foot.

George Washington's false teeth formerly belonged to a hippo.

Hitler was a vegetarian.

Charlie Chaplin himself once came in third in a Charlie Chaplin Look-Alike contest.

ZOOLOGY

Bees can smell through their knees.

Turtles breathe through their anus.

Earwigs have two penises.

Mosquitoes are more attracted to the scent of people who have recently consumed bananas.

Apart from the intertextual allusions to Orwell's and Huxley's dystopian novels already discussed in *New World*, a variety of texts such as blog texts, newspaper articles, EU working documents and government directives as well as classified ads in free magazines, seem to have generated material for a number of skits on political correctness, censorship and employment. Specifically, political correctness becomes the target in the "list with fifty banned words". Presumably, the skit parodically alludes to a list issued by New York City Department of Education in 2012 which proposed that

loaded words and phrases should not be accepted in standardized school tests.<sup>viii</sup> The skit goes as follows (see Extract 10):

(Extract 10)

Κυρίες και κύριοι, καλησπέρα σας! Για πρώτη φορά στη δημοσιότητα ο κατάλογος με τις απαγορευμένες λέξεις που αγγίζουν σήμερα τουλάχιστον τις πενήντα.

Χορός: η λέξη ‘χορός’ είναι πολύ έκφυλη επειδή φέρνει στο νου σέξυ χορό. Γι’ αυτό προτιμάται η λέξη ‘μπαλέτο’.

Γενέθλια: τα γενέθλια μπορούν να θίξουν τα αισθήματα όσων για θρησκευτικούς λόγους δεν γιορτάζουν αυτές τις μέρες.

Φτώχεια: δεν πρέπει να χρησιμοποιήσετε τη λέξη ‘φτώχεια’ γιατί μπορεί να στενοχωρήσετε κάποιον μαθητή ο πατέρας του οποίου εντάχθηκε προσφάτως στις τάξεις των ανέργων του Νέου Κόσμου.

Διαζύγιο: ο όρος ‘διαζύγιο’ μπορεί να προκαλέσει διαταραχή στα παιδιά οι γονείς των οποίων έχουν πρόσφατα περάσει από αυτή τη θέση.

Σκλαβιά: η λέξη ‘σκλαβιά’ μπορεί να προσβάλει τα αισθήματα των έγχρωμων Νεοκοσμιτών.

Δεινόσαυρος: ο δεινόσαυρος κατά τη γνώμη των ειδικών είναι δυσάρεστος στο αυτί για τους οπαδούς του Δαρβίνου. Θυμίζουμε ότι ο Νέος Κόσμος δημιουργήθηκε από τον Μεγάλο Λατρευτό και φυσικά απορρίπτουμε τη θεωρία του Δαρβίνου.

Πίθηκος: Για τον ίδιο λόγο απαγορεύεται και η λέξη πίθηκος.

Ακολουθεί ο πλήρης κατάλογος με τις απαγορευμένες λέξεις:

Άστεγοι, ροκ εν ρολ, παράσιτα, μυρμήγκια και κατσαρίδες, υπολογιστές στο σπίτι... Υπολογιστές στο σχολείο και στη βιβλιοθήκη είναι αποδεκτό.

- Αχ, αγάπη μου!

(Ηχος από κουδούνι)

- Ανακοίνωση! Οι λέξεις ‘αγάπη μου’, ‘μωράκι μου’, ‘κουρκουμπινάκι μου’, και τα λοιπά καταργούνται. Εφεξής η προσφιλή αντίστοιχη λέξη είναι...

- Ετερόφυλε μη εξ’ αίματος συγγενή μου;

(Extract 10)

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen! For the first time the list with the banned words is publicly announced. The words amount to fifty at least.

Dance: the word ‘dance’ is very lecherous for it recalls in the mind sexy dance. Thus, the word ‘ballet’ is preferable.

Birthday: birthdays may insult the feelings of those who do not celebrate these days for religious reasons.

Poverty: you shouldn't use the word 'poverty' because this may cause embarrassment to students whose fathers have recently joined the unemployed breeds of New World.

Divorce: the term 'divorce' can cause disorder to children whose parents have recently undergone this case.

Slavery: the word 'slavery' can insult the feelings of coloured New World citizens.

Dinosaur: According to experts the word 'dinosaur' is unfavourable to the ears of Darwin's supporters. It is reminded that New World was created by Big Adorable and, of course, Darwin's theory is rejected.

Ape: For the same reason the word 'ape' is banned.

What follows is the full list with banned words:

Homeless, rock 'n' roll, parasites, ants and cockroaches. Computers at home. Computers at school and in the library are allowed.

- Hey, my love!  
(Buzz sound)
- Announcement! The words 'My love', 'baby', 'sweetheart' etc. are abolished.  
Henceforth, a valued alternative is...
- My heterosexual, non-related by blood, relative?...

On the performance level the use of a stand microphone parodies the formality of public announcements and mocks the seriousness of the issue, while the sound of a buzzer each time a banned word is uttered, can be taken as another humorous mechanism raising audience's attention to the creative explanation and funny alternative given by the performers as regards the banned word.

On text level, Extract 10 is humorous because the LM KR underlying the explanations and alternatives given for the banned words is 'exaggeration' while the target (TA) of satire is political correctness and censorship. The skit ridicules a cultural stereotype according to which modern societies should be as tolerant as possible to any minority and should avoid biased discrimination. The implicature seems to be that modern societies are perhaps absurdly preoccupied with issues of tolerance, political correctness and linguistic determinism.

Furthermore, in another skit, evocative of Orwell's totalitarian state, the Oceanian joy camps and Huxley's society of knowledge, the performance *New World* targets labor issues and the high

percentage of unemployment among young graduates. In the skit, three female players contest for “a position in unemployment” in a TV-game show, as the TV presenter announces. The show is structured in three rounds of nine questions each which have to be answered very quickly by the contestants. Part of the skit goes as follows (see Extract 11):

(Extract 11)

(Πρώτος γύρος)

ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑΣΤΗΣ. Ερώτηση 1. *Ποιό είναι το παγκόσμιο ετήσιο ρεκόρ στις απλήρωτες υπερωρίες;* (J12)

(Όλες οι διαγωνιζόμενες μαζί). *1440 ώρες.* (J12)

[...]

ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑΣΤΗΣ. Ερώτηση 4. *Ποιός ανακηρύχθηκε ο πιο τεμπέλης εργαζόμενος όλων των εποχών;* (J13)

ΜΑΥΡΗ ΜΑΜΠΑ ΝΤΑΛΙΑ ΧΗΡΑ. *Ο Λεονάρντο ντα Βίντσι.*

ΣΕΞΟΒΟΜΒΑ. *Μαντόνα.* (J13)

ΠΟΛΥΠΤΥΧΙΟΥΧΟΣ. *Στηβ Τζόουμπς.* (J13)

[...]

(2<sup>ος</sup> γύρος. Ο γύρος του ορού της αλήθειας)

ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑΣΤΗΣ. Ερώτηση ένα. *Σεξοβόμβα, τι σημαίνει ορθά αμειβόμενος εργαζόμενος;* (J14)

ΣΕΞΟΒΟΜΒΑ. *Αυτός που δεν ζητά τα δεδουλευμένα του.* (J14)

ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑΣΤΗΣ. *Αυτό που απάντησες... είναι ψέμα.*

[...]

(3<sup>ος</sup> γύρος εννέα ερωτήσεων που πρέπει να απαντηθούν σωστά σε ένα λεπτό από την μέχρι τώρα νικήτρια Πολυπτυχιούχο)

ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑΣΤΗΣ. Ερώτηση ένα. *Πολυπτυχιούχε, πες μας σε παρακαλώ τι σημαίνει ορθά αμειβόμενος εργαζόμενος για σένα;* (J15)

ΠΟΛΥΠΤΥΧΙΟΥΧΟΣ. *Δεν χρειάζεται καν να μιλάμε για αμοιβή.* (J15)

[...]

ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑΣΤΗΣ. *Μα αν την ώρα που σας χρειαστούμε, εσείς έχετε βιολογικές ανάγκες;* (J16)

ΠΟΛΥΠΤΥΧΙΟΥΧΟΣ. *Εμείς δεν έχουμε βιολογικές ανάγκες.* (J16)

ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑΣΤΗΣ. *Τι θα ήθελες λοιπόν να δώσεις στην εταιρεία σου;* (J17)

ΠΟΛΥΠΤΥΧΙΟΥΧΟΣ. *Το σπίτι μου.* (J17)

(Δίνει μια μινιατούρα σπιτιού στα χέρια του παρουσιαστή.)

ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑΣΤΗΣ. *Δος το!... Θα σε ειδοποιήσουμε.*

ΠΟΛΥΠΤΥΧΙΟΥΧΟΣ. Ναααααα!...

(Extract 11)

(1st round)

PRESENTER. Question one. *What is the world annual record for unpaid overtime?* (J12)

(All contestants in chorus). *1440 hours.* (J12)

[...]

PRESENTER. Question four. *Who was proclaimed the laziest employee of all times?* (J13)

BLACK MAMBA WIDOW DAHLIA. *Leonardo da Vinci.* (J13)

SEX BOMB. *Madonna.* (J13)

MULTI-GRADUATE. *Steve Jobs.* (J13)

[...]

(2nd round. The truth serum round.)

PRESENTER. Question one. Sex Bomb, *what does a properly compensated employee mean?* (J14)

SEX BOMB. *Someone who doesn't ask for his wages.* (J14)

PRESENTER. *What you have answered...is a lie.*

[...]

(3rd round of nine questions which have to be answered correctly in one minute by the standing winner, the Multi-graduate).

PRESENTER. Question one. *Please tell us, Multi-graduate, what does a correctly paid employee mean to you?* (J15)

MULTI-GRADUATE. *There's no need to talk about wages.* (J15)

[...]

PRESENTER. *But what if we call for you when you have biological needs?* (J16)

MULTI-GRADUATE. *People like us don't have any biological needs.* (J16)

PRESENTER. *What would you like to offer to your company?* (J17)

MULTI-GRADUATE. *My house!* (J17)

(She hands a dollhouse to the presenter.)

PRESENTER. *Give it to us! ... Multi-graduate, we'll let you know!*

MULTI-GRADUATE. *Yees!!!*

In GTVH terms, incongruity in Extract 11 relies, in broad terms, on the following SO KR: three female candidates are contesting for not getting a job rather than getting a job. The SI KR refers to a simulated job interview as three female interlocutors are supposed to take part in a TV game show in

which they contest for “a position in unemployment”. One of them, namely the Multi-graduate, is clearly ahead in the contest. The LM KR underlying the SO opposition may be pertinent to ignoring the obvious (J14, J15, J16), false analogy (J13, J14, J15, J17) or exaggeration (J12). It seems that the TA KR probably identifies companies and employers in modern societies (J12, J14, J15). But the skit may also target young educated job seekers who claim excessive availability and flexibility to unjust working conditions (J14, J15, J16, J17). The NS KR in all job lines is dialogue as part of a job interview/TV game show. The LA KR in J12 and J13 is based on overdetermination/overspecification.

Humor in the extract is enhanced as on the performance level humor is activated via different signs and codes: speed in the actors’ speech delivery and movement, acoustic signals (i.e. the buzzer signalling the wrong answers), paralinguistic codes (i.e. the animator’s mimicry of a ticking clock), visual signals (i.e. a fluorescent prop representing the truth serum, the dollhouse Multi-graduate freely gives to her prospective employer), as well as staging codes (i.e. the dramatic characters of the Presenter, the Animator, and the three female contesters bearing the funny proper names Black Mamba Widow Dahlia, Sex Bomb, and Multi-graduate). With specific reference to proper names Antonopoulou (2004b, p. 220) has discussed their contribution to the humorous effect of job lines.

To conclude with, *New World* by 3+3=7 devised its political humor from dystopian literature, media texts and directives and used extensive parody to modern sociocultural stereotypes and contemporary social plagues. At the end of the performance as the actors break away from their dramatic roles and address questions about the meaning of time, individuality, and human relationships, the concept of an alternative to the “New World” is suggested. It can thus be argued that the devised performance *New World* uses humor to address a political discourse which both criticizes current social phenomena and entertains the audience (Tsakona and Popa 2011, pp. 7– 8).

## **7. Discussion and conclusions**

This study discusses a less typical use of political humor and expands the research of the intertextual links political humor develops to the domain of theatre and performance. More specifically, it contributes to the study of devised theatre as it shows how this theatrical genre manipulates its themes to create political humor performances. The analysis of both devised performances shows that devised theatre manipulates humor to criticize leadership and the ethics of ruling, totalitarian societies, as well as contemporary sociocultural problems (e.g. unemployment, education, censorship). The evoked script of totalitarianism in both performances analyzed suggests that

performance texts may draw on intertextuality (see the parodic exploitation of Orwell's *1984* and Huxley's *Brave New World*) and political allegory to create political humor. This is particularly reflected in the satirical representation of the rulers in *The Age of Snipe Hunting. A Story of Rule*) and the salient features of the society in *New World*). The analysis of the political aspect of the performances has shown that the emerging artists broadly address the following as Greece's current acute problems: the rulers' lack of political skills and responsibility, their greed and corruption; unemployment and unwarranted labor conditions for young highly qualified employees; censorship, poor education.

The dramaturgies and the political narratives of the devised performances draw on material from literature, media texts and formal documents (*New World*) and adapt historical data and cultural assumptions from (political) biographies (*The Age of Snipe Hunting. A Story of Rule*). As the analysis of the performance texts has demonstrated (see particularly Extracts 4, 7, 10), devised theatre, like postmodern and postdramatic Greek theatre (see Manteli 2011a, pp. 258–263, 266; Manteli 2012b), may construct its dramatic logic and dramatic discourse by exploiting media texts (i.e. blog- and newspaper articles) and parodying oral genres (i.e. songs, slogans). Besides, the analysis has shown that this theatre genre may also use intertextual references and/or parodic allusions to the concepts and salient features of the dramatic world as well as the dramatic characters of political allegories (i.e. dystopian classics). I contend that through their particular intertextual choices, the performers-authors of the devised shows meant to address certain links between the present political system and sociocultural situation of Greece and the undemocratic conditions evocative of a regime depicted in the constructed societies of Orwell and Huxley's novels as well as the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> monarchies.

What is the effect of the performances' humor then? How does it relate to politics? *The Age of Snipe Hunting. A Story of Rule* thematizes issues of ruling (governing) as well as the ethics of political responsibilities. The devised story of Louis and Marie seems to warn against an arbitrary system, its corrupt rulers and the ruled. The end of the performance suggests that retaining one's childhood and disengaging oneself from politics can be an alternative. On the other hand, *New World* attacks totalitarian systems and satirizes dominant discourses and practices. It focuses on issues of private and social freedom, censorship and labor rights foregrounding the threats of a totalitarian (i.e. capitalist) society. At the end of the performance the actors break away from their stage characters and directly address to the audience questions about the meaning of time, individuality and human relationships, thus suggesting that the audience should try to raise their awareness and stop being

manipulated. I contend that it is not accidental that each devised show concludes with what may be regarded as a political message to the audience.

This study has adopted a revised look to GTVH to accommodate for the analysis of multi-modal texts (i.e. devised performances). As shown humor in the devised performances studied is activated both on the text and the performance level, i.e. humor in the performances is activated through the interaction of verbal, visual, musical and paralinguistic signs (cf. Manteli 2011). The discussion of issues relating to visual and acoustic clues of the performance (i.e. performance cues) is relevant for the GTVH development as it adds to work which has already proposed the extension of the theory as to account for non-linguistic signs as well (cf. Antonopoulou 2003; Canestrari 2010; Tsakona 2013). Specifically, in the devised performances studied here, semiotic signs and codes producing humor, such as the performers' kinesic and vestimentary codes, may fall into Canestrari's (2010) Meta-Knowledge Resource (Meta KR) and particularly into the category of *non-verbal* signals (Canestrari, 2010, p. 339). By the same token, musical codes and sounds as well as rhetorical codes and paralinguistic features employed by the performers may fall into the category of *para-verbal* signals (Canestrari, 2010, p. 339; Tsakona, 2013, p. 41). Following the above, the significance of such cues for humor production in (devised) theatre performances favors an interdisciplinary approach of humor and hopefully adds to the existing literature of studies proposing an expansion of the GTVH.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the performers of the *Hah!* and the  $3+3=7$  ensembles who granted me permission for reproducing the photos from their devised performances.

I am grateful to the reviewers for their helpful and analytical suggestions as well as constructive and illuminating criticism on earlier versions of this work.

### Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> For the terms 'dramatic logic' and 'dramatic world' in the semiotics of theatre and drama see Elam 1980.

<sup>ii</sup> For a concise overview/ a 'calendar' of Greek crisis in 2012' see Mavrogenis (Athens Voice, 17 January 2013), also available online <http://www.athensvoice.gr/article/city-news-voices/%CF%83%CF%87%CF%8C%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%B1/%CE%B7-%CE%BA%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%AC%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B1%CF%83%CE%B7-%CF%84%CE%B7%CF%82->

[%CE%B5%CE%BB%CE%BB%CE%B7%CE%BD%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE%CF%82-%CE%BA%CE%BF%CE%B9%CE%BD%CF%89%CE%BD%CE%AF%CE%B1%CF%82-%CE%BC%CE%AD%CF%83%CE%B1-%CF%83%CF%84%CE%BF-2012](#) Retrieved 8 April 2015.

<sup>iii</sup> For a semiotic analysis of theatrical communication and the theatrical codes see Elam 1980, pp. 49-87.

<sup>iv</sup> All theatre texts/extracts discussed were transcribed in Greek and translated into English by the author for the purposes of the present study. Following the GTVH the following abbreviations were used:

J: jab line

SO: script opposition

LM: logical mechanism

SI: situation

TA: target

NS: narrative strategy

LA: language

<sup>v</sup> Strand is “a non-necessarily contiguous sequence of (punch or jab) lines formally or thematically linked” (Attardo 2001: 83).

<sup>vi</sup> To compensate humor loss I have transferred the Greek lexical morpheme “σότητα” [sóteta] as “quality” and the Greek word “ισότητα” [isóteta] as “equality” to produce the punning effect of the near homophones of the source text. The former morpheme (sóteta) has no semantic content whatsoever, whereas the latter (isóteta) carries semantic meaning. I have tried to reproduce the textual humor of the performance text in analogous linguistic terms: while the punning effect in the Greek source text is produced by detracting a vowel (or a syllable) and producing a morpheme with no semantic content, I have reproduced humor by adding a vowel (or syllable) to a semantically meaningful word so that another one (also semantically meaningful) is produced.

<sup>vii</sup> The English equivalent unfortunately does not reproduce the humor produced by the punning (i.e. rhyming) effect between the original *Μεγάλος Αδερφός* [Megálos Aderfós] and *Μεγάλος Λατρευτός* [Megálos Latreftós]. On the categories of punning as well as on punning and translation, see Delabastita (1996) and Antonopoulou (2004a: 81-97).

<sup>viii</sup> See <http://www.tanea.gr/kosmos/article/?aid=4706726> Retrieved 19 December 2012; [http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/out\\_of\\_the\\_question\\_YegJJGCOo33j0CQsccdZuL](http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/out_of_the_question_YegJJGCOo33j0CQsccdZuL) Retrieved 19 December 2012;

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<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2120870/Political-correctness-run-amok-New-York-City-schools-ban-terms-like-dinosaur-Halloween-tests.html> Retrieved 19 December 2012;

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/50-plus-banned-words-on-standardized-tests/2012/03/30/gIQANuqJkS\\_blog.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/50-plus-banned-words-on-standardized-tests/2012/03/30/gIQANuqJkS_blog.html) Retrieved 19 December 2012.

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