

MAIN SECTION

The Online Presence of Golden Dawn and the Athenian Subjectivities

It Brings Forward

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this essay is to look at the strategic use of the World Wide Web by Golden Dawn in order to create affect, emotion, and personalised perspectives and therefore to promote their explicitly fascist political ideas. Low-resolution videos, carefully presented as if they were filmed by amateurs, rough, unedited televised spectacles and noisy, impromptu scenes that could happen to anyone seem to have a very powerful reality effect upon their viewers, placing them at the centre of the action. The essay will critically reflect on the use of new technologies in the creation of "situatedness" and "situated knowledges" and it will examine the worlds that such stories bring forward, which are often obscured by the mass media: the world of the immigrant who is chased by Golden Dawn; the world of the refugee, whose presence in the country is often opposed; the world of the Golden Dawn supporter, who is made to believe that the immigrant and the refugee are responsible for the country's recession. This essay argues that the worlds of citizens considered as temporary come forward by their very exclusion from such prejudiced perspectives and asks: what could make a cosmopolitical form of citizenship?

KEYWORDS Athens; Cosmopolitical Proposal; Crisis; Digital Culture; Situated Knowledges;

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Abstraction and High Definition

In his essay "A Global Neuromancer", Fredric Jameson looks back on William Gibson's seminal science-fiction novel¹ written in 1984 and questions the realities that new technologies construct:

The distinction of Neuromancer thus lies in the nature of the form itself, as an instrument which registers current realities normally beyond the capacity of the realistic eye to see, which projects dimensions of daily life we cannot consciously experience.²

Jameson argues that the digital age has become an era in which the play of signs and signifiers leads to abstraction and disembodiedness. Abstraction opposes the real and the image of reality opposes reality itself. The digital raises abstraction to the second degree, according to Jameson, as it does not create merely a mimetic, visual representation, but instead it provides us with a representation of the "unrepresentable," in other words, with a mapping of the innumerable and invisible connections that we are unable to perceive with our bodily senses, in the form of a totality. Jameson argues that this unrepresented totality is that of finance capital itself, in which capitalism takes an increasingly abstract form. Therefore, the new postmodern abstraction is that of information, in which the apparent concrete visual image is abstracted by its spread and reproduction and has become more of a visual commonplace. This abstraction comes to contradict the deluge of high-resolution imagery in the contemporary urban life. With visual communication prevailing and underpinning the production of knowledge in the digital age, vision comes as pure excess and omnipotence,³ presenting us with the illusion that we can see everything from nowhere, raising however questions as to whether such images carry within themselves a reality effect.

Focusing on the tension between abstraction and high definition and reflecting on digital mediation through Donna Haraway's quote: "it matters which stories tell stories, which concepts think concepts. Mathematically, visually, and narratively, it matters which figures figure figures, which systems systematize systems,"⁴ this essay looks at the strategic use of the World Wide Web by Golden Dawn in order to create affect, emotion, and personalised perspectives to promote their explicitly fascist political ideas. Low-resolution videos seem to have a very powerful reality effect upon their viewers, placing them at the centre of the action: these include YouTube videos carefully presented as if they were filmed by amateurs, rough, unedited televised spectacles and noisy, impromptu scenes pre-

^{1.} William Gibson, Neuromancer (New York: Ace Books, 1984).

^{2.} Fredric Jameson, "A Global Neuromancer," in *The Ancients and the Postmoderns: On the Historicity of Forms* (London, New York: Verso, 2015).

^{3.} Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no.3 (1988): 575-99, 581.

^{4.} Donna Haraway, Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2015), 101.

sented as if they could happen to anyone. The aim is to critically reflect on the use of new technologies in the creation of "situatedness" and "situated knowledges," and to examine the Athenian landscapes that such stories bring forward, which are often obscured by the mass media: the world of the immigrant who is chased by Golden Dawn; the world of the refugee, whose presence in the country is often opposed; the world of the Golden Dawn supporter, who is made to believe that the immigrant and the refugee, among others, are responsible for the country's recession.

Citizenship and situatedness are intrinsically linked. Traditionally, citizenship is understood in the context of a statist form of community, of a particular ethnic identity, and of a sense of long-term belonging to a place, out of which all forms of inclusions and exclusions can emerge. Although in recent times the shift of governing institutions to transnational scales along with the mobility and the connectivity promoted by globalisation have prompted the discussion towards new forms of cosmopolitanism and the conceptualisation of a universal citizenship, not everyone is able to participate in such constructions in the same way. Especially in the current context of the so-called "European Refugee Crisis," the distinction between the citizen and the refugee/migrant is commonly used to outline all forms of being in or out of place and the emergence of Europe as a heterogeneous and highly discriminatory space. Sociologist and professor of postcolonial and decolonial studies, Gurminder K. Bhambra argues that although most of European states had not been nation-states in the past, they constructed the status of the "migrant" and the "refugee" as a process to redefine their histories as national and to specify who belongs (and, by extension, who does not) in them. Bhambra sees new political possibilities in the way we engage today with the mass movement of people in Europe and calls for a novel conceptualisation of citizenship through the trope of immigration.⁵ This essay argues that the worlds of immigrants and refugees in Athens come forward by their very exclusion from the prejudiced perspectives of Golden Dawn. By considering urban inhabitance as key to political inclusion,6 this essay asks what a cosmopolitical form of citizenship might involve.

Isabelle Stengers' "Cosmopolitical Proposal"⁷ will frame this discussion: the worlds described are multi-faceted, divergent, and contradictory, and a common world will have to be constructed anew, slowly, and against all the established classifications. Alongside, a multi-faceted, divergent, and contradictory city of Athens emerges through these mediated perspectives,

^{5. &}quot;Taking this history seriously, and transforming its associated concepts of citizenship and rights, would provide the opportunity to develop a more inclusive and just, postcolonial cosmopolitan project in Europe, one that dealt with asylum seekers and refugees on the basis of fulfilling its human rights commitments and extending them." Gurminder K. Bhambra, "The current crisis of Europe: Refugees, colonialism, and the limits of cosmopolitanism," *European Law Journal* 23, no. 5 (2017): 395-405, 404.

^{6.} Mark Purcell, "Excavating Lefebvre: The right to the city and its urban politics of the Inhabitant," *GeoJournal* 58 (2002): 99-108, 105.

^{7.} Isabelle Stengers, "The Cosmopolitical Proposal," in *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, eds. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 994-1003.

a city that calls for a situated rather than abstract, architecture. Stengers rejects the idea of a common world that is already in place by nature—in the case of Athens a common world between the old residents as permanent and the most recent ones considered as temporary—and argues that a "good common world" needs to be constructed anew, with rigour and reservation.⁸ She recognises three key aspects in this new construction of the world: *"our" knowledge*, reflects the ways in which understandings of the world are produced and the forms that placeness and situatedness take in an increasingly complex world; *"our" technical equipment* points out to the devices that produce such knowledges (and, by extension, realities, and worlds), and the role and agency that they hold in this process; and, finally, *"our" practices* raise the question as to how we develop methods and tools to respond to particular situations, realities, worlds.

From the Streets of Athens to Online Platforms

The story of Golden Dawn is a story of multiple appearances and disappearances in the Greek social life. In his book The Black Bible of Golden Dawn, Dimitris Psarras argues that the most accurate way to describe its ideology, organisation, and practice is that of a "Nazi party," instead of a fascist, far-right or a neo-Nazi one.9 Golden Dawn comes after a long tradition of fascist organisations in post-war Greece, with many of its leading members today having participated in far-right politics and being arrested for numerous politically driven assaults in the past. In December 1980, Nikolaos Michaloliakos, the current party leader, along with a group of supporters launched Chrysi Avgi ("Golden Dawn" in Greek), a magazine with a clearly Nationalist-Socialist content¹⁰ which, after a series of transformations became the Golden Dawn Popular National Movement and was officially declared as a political party in 1993.¹¹ Although, in his early articles, Michaloliakos claims Golden Dawn as a Nazi party,12 after considering the party's representation in the mass media, twenty-five years later, in a newspaper article, he calls his supporters to avoid using the term "National Socialism" and to replace it with terms such as "nationalism," "popular nationalism," and "social nationalism" in order to avoid historical connotations, calling, in other words, for the disguise of the party into one with a merely nationalist rhetoric.¹³ With the emergence of the financial cri-

^{8.} Ibid., 995, emphasis added.

^{9.} Dimitris Psarras, Η Μαύρη Βίβλος Της Χρυσής Αυγής [the Black Bible of Golden Dawn] (Athens: Polis, 2012).

^{10.} Psarras, Η Μαύρη Βίβλος, 36.

^{11.} Vassilis Nedos, "Το Κλούβιο «Αβγό Του Φιδιού» [the Rotten 'Snake's Egg']," *To Vima*, 11 September 2005, in Greek, http://www.tovima.gr/relatedarticles/article/?aid=168197&dt=11/09/2005 (accessed 5 June 20017), and Psarras, H Maύρη Bίβλος Tης Xρυσής Aυγής, 38-39.

^{12.} Golden Dawn, "Emeis [Us]," Golden Dawn Magazine, May 1981 (in Greek), and Psarras, Η Μαύρη Βίβλος Της Χρυσής Αυγής, 36.

^{13.} Nikolaos Michaloliakos, "Εθνικιστές ή ναζιστές; Αρνούμεθα το ιστορικό ψεύδος των «καλών» συμμάχων και των «κακών» φασιστών" [Nationalists or Nazist? We deny the falsehood of history of 'good' allies and 'bad fascists'], Εφημερίδα Χρυσή Αυγή, 6 April 2006.

sis, members of the party made their appearance on the streets of Athens and other urban areas and particularly in places of high immigrant population; they developed a social programme to support the ethnic Greek population only (by organising food banks and soup kitchens) and even offered protection against immigrant crime. In November 2009, in the national elections, the party received 19,624 votes corresponding to a 0.29% of the total votes¹⁴ and, in the national elections of May 2012 it entered the Greek Parliament holding 21 seats with 6.97% of the total votes.¹⁵ Ever since, the party seems to have consolidated and expanded its electoral power (18 seats and 6.99% in the national elections of September 2015¹⁶). After gaining popularity and alongside the crisis, Golden Dawn became increasingly active in the streets with members and supporters operating as the "long-arm" of the state, performing violent attacks against migrants and anti-fascists and claiming to rule over entire neighbourhoods in the city centre of Athens. In September 2013 in Keratsini, Athens, in a clash between fascists and anti-fascists, Pavlos Fyssas, an anti-fascist hip-hop artist was stabbed to death by a 35-year-old man who was found to have strong ties to the official Golden Dawn party. This murder initiated a long investigation, which led to the arrests of several founding party members and MPs, including Michaloliakos, and their prosecution to trial. After the arrests, a number of other murders against migrants have been attributed to the party, and since then both members and supporters slowly receded from the city's street life-that is not to say that they have ceased to exist, but rather that they have become more discreet in their activities or they operate under the surface.

The strategic use of the Internet has played a significant role in the party's gain of popularity in recent years. Although the official party has a quite minimal and tactful online presence—especially after the murder of Fyssas—a whole network of disguised members and supporters are hugely active on websites, blogs, and across the most popular social media. Political scientists Eugenia Siapera and Mariangela Veikou argue that the Golden Dawn official pages as well as the MP's profiles on Facebook and Twitter restrict themselves in posting official party information and planned activities, but around them develops a very complex and close-knit network of accounts, channels, and private groups that cross-reference each other.¹⁷ To avoid being reported and closed down (and after the murder of Fyssas to prevent from facing legal consequences in the "real"

http://ekloges-prev.singularlogic.eu/v2009/pages/index.html?lang=en, accessed 3 December 2018.

16. Source: Greek Ministry of Interior Affairs,

^{14.} Source: Greek Ministry of Interior Affairs,

^{15.} Source: Greek Ministry of Interior Affairs, http://ekloges-prev.singularlogic.eu/v2012a/public/index. html#{%22cls%22:%22main%22;{}}, accessed 3 December 2018.

 $http://ekloges.ypes.gr/current/v/public/index.html \# \{\% 22 cls \% 22 : \% 22 main \% 22, \% 22 params \% 22 : \{\}, accessed 3 December 2018.$

^{17.} Eugenia Siapera and Mariangela Veikou, "The Digital Golden Dawn: Emergence of a Nationalist-Racist Digital Mainstream," in *The Digital Transformation of the Public Sphere: Conflict, Migration, Crisis and Culture in Digital Networks*, ed. by Athina Karatzogianni, Dennis Nguyen and Elisa Serafinelli (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016): 35-59.

world as well), the most active of such profiles are usually presented as independent and of "nationalist" or "patriotic" character, but they are clearly political, sharing videos of actions of the party's members, speeches of its MPs and posting fascist, racist, and hateful content.¹⁸ Then, two Golden Dawns appear online: a formal, remote one, and a seemingly "grassroots" movement, which is much more aggressive, with supporters targeting and fighting, among others, the migrants, the left-winged, and the homosexuals, and promoting hate speech and violence. This latter form of activity appears to have been key in the party's success over the elections after 2009, but also in its recent activity, which takes place secretly. Ilias Kassidiaris, one of Golden Dawn's most popular and recognisable MPs, argues at a local Greek TV channel: "Thankfully, we have in our disposal an enormous weapon; this is the Internet, where hundreds of thousands of our compatriots managed to learn who we are."19 Then the Internet has become not just a tool, but a weapon in the ideological war that aims to construct Golden Dawn's other realities.

Constructed Unmediatedness

Against the generic perspectives of the all-knowing observer, the "informal" Golden Dawn presents personalised ways of looking and highly specific viewpoints that serve the party's purposes. Studying the video production and dissemination of Golden Dawn, sociologists Pavlos Hatzopoulos and Nelli Kampouri identify the "amateurisation" of the traditional media coverage as the tool in this bottom-up approach.²⁰ They argue that the videos that are widely disseminated via YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter are all presented in an amateur-like way, as if they are filmed by lay people rather than professional journalists, using hand-held cameras and abruptly following the main characters of the scene, and therefore adopting "the aesthetics of a first-hand eye-witness," of "someone who seems to just have happened to be there" when then event took place. Indeed, most of the videos appear blurry and shaky, with slogans denoting rage and indignation. A video uploaded by "kastorpolydeukis" in November 2008, shows the "entrance" of Golden Dawn in Agios Panteleimon, a highly contested neighbourhood in the city centre of Athens, where Golden Dawn members regularly targeted and attacked the migrant population.²¹

^{18.} Ibid., 42.

 [&]quot;Συνέντευξη Του Ηλία Κασσιδιάρη Στο Τν-100 Τρικάλων [Interview with Ilias Kassidiaris at Tv-100, Trikala]," YouTube video, 51:20, posted by MelitaInsula, 3 October 2012,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZqCa81BNAPk (accessed 7 June 2017), referenced by Panos Kompatsiaris, and Yiannis Mylonas, in "Web 2.0 Nazi Propaganda: Golden Dawn's Affect, Spectacle and Identity Constructions in Social Media," in *Social Media, Politics and the State: Protests, Revolutions, Riots, Crime and Policing in the Age of Facebook, Twitter and Youtube*, ed. by Daniel Trottier and Christian Fuchs (New York: Routledge, 2014): 109. Translated by the author.

^{20.} Pavlos Hatzopoulos and Nelli Kampouri, "The Cult of the (Fascist) Amateur," Nomadic Universality, https://nomadicuniversality.com/2014/03/05/the-cult-of-the-fascist-amateur (accessed 7 June 2017).

^{21. &}quot;Η Είσοδος Της Χρυσής Αυγής Στον Άγιο Παντελεήμονα [the Entrance of Golden Dawn in Agios Panteleimon]," YouTube video, 2:40, posted by kastorpolydeukis, 25 November 2008, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IG0yhtelPeA (accessed 7 June 2017).

The video presents the appalling march of a mob of Golden Dawn members and supporters through the streets of Agios Panteleimon and is filmed by someone who is taking part in it. The viewer cannot focus on anything apart from the density of the crowd, and the excess of Greek flags waved by the people. Slogans are chanted loudly and rhythmically: "foreigners (stay) out of Greece" (0:02), "Hellas, Hellas, protect us too" (0:38), "Greece belongs to the Greek nationals" (0:59), along with the Greek national anthem, inspiring fear and intimidation. It is not clear from the video whether the participants are members of the party or mere supporters or even random residents that welcome the Golden Dawn to "reclaim" the area from its migrant inhabitants, but this is, perhaps, the point: the protagonist here is the viewer, who becomes an active part of the crowd to protest, to terrify, to reclaim **[Fig. 1]**. The viewer is invited to perform their own rage²² by taking the place any of those shown in the video; they could have been a passer-by, a resident, a supporter



FIG. 1 "Η Είσοδος Της Χρυσής Αυγής Στον Άγιο Παντελεήμονα [the Entrance of Golden Dawn in Agios Panteleimon]," 0:21. https://youtu.be/IG0yhtelPeA

Another video from 2011, represents according to its title *The Battle of Agios Panteleimon*, in which a big group of Golden Dawn members fight with anti-fascist activists and the Riot Police over the control of the church square, the main public space of the area.²³ This is filmed from above, from the balcony of one of the residential buildings across the square with the use of a hand-held camera. It begins with something that looks like a community assembly, in which Michaloliakos (elected member of the Athens City Council at the time) declares his support to the residents (0:37), followed an orthodox priest (1:23) and a representative of the residents

^{22.} Hatzopoulos and Kampouri, "The Cult of the (Fascist) Amateur."

^{23. &}quot;Η Μάχη Του Αγίου Παντελεήμονα – 15 January 2011 [the Battle of Agios Panteleimon – 15 January 2011], YouTube video, 36:19, posted by anypotaxtosEllhnas, 16 January 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UMmGzwP4ITI (accessed 15 June 2017).

who accuse the migrants for the degradation of the area (2:57). The video is cut abruptly and on the next scene Golden Dawn members are shown to line up in a military deployment across and ready to confront the Riot Police on the other side, with Michaloliakos commanding them [Fig. 2-3]. The residents stand behind them, as if they are to be protected by them. On the surface of the square, a large-scale inscription in blue reads: "foreigners (stay) out of Greece," "Greece motherland," and "Hellas" [Fig. 2, 3:14]. Within the indistinct noise, only the slogans can be clearly heard: "blood, honour, Golden Dawn" (3:14). Next, we see them fighting with the anti-fascists and the police, using bats and throwing objects (4:48). There is smoke from the tear gas and small fires on the ground [Fig. 4, 9:54]. The residents stay around the square, and once things calm down they return on it, holding and waving their Greek flags and singing the national anthem. The video puts us in the position of the vulnerable and defenceless residents who appear to have lost control of their public spaces. They might be watching from the balconies or from the street, with the sentiment that the official state has abandoned them in the midst of the financial crisis and within an increasingly deteriorating urban context. The Golden Dawn, it seems, is there to protect them.



FIG. 2 "Η Μάχη Του Αγίου Παντελεήμονα - 15/1/2011 [the Battle of Agios Panteleimon - 15/1/2011], 3:14. https://youtu.be/UMmGzwP4|TI

Such videos are presented online with minimal editing and no special sound recordings or effects, which makes them noisy and rather incomprehensible. Chants and slogans emerge from the indistinct clamour to communicate the tone of the gathering. Despite the low resolution and their bad filming quality, however, they manage to produce a form of situatedness, which explains their successful circulation, and it also raises interesting questions in relation to the "situated knowledges" they produce. In *Situated Knowledges*, Haraway argues that knowledge is always body-specific and site-specific, and therefore framed (but also perhaps limited) by the



FIG. 3 "Η Μάχη Του Αγίου Παντελεήμονα - 15/1/2011 [the Battle of Agios Panteleimon - 15/1/2011], 7:58. https://youtu.be/UMmGzwP4ITI



FIG.4"Η Μάχη Του Αγίου Παντελεήμονα - 15/1/2011 [the Battle of Agios Panteleimon
- 15/1/2011], 9:54. https://youtu.be/UMmGzwP4ITI

social position of the subject; their race, gender, class, etc.²⁴ Situatedness becomes key in grounding perception. Positioning takes here a double role. On the one hand, it has to do with learning how to see from another's point of view. Haraway points out that this "other" could even be our own machines, emphasizing on the social, technical, and psychical complexity of our visual systems. Such perspectives that cannot be known in advance open up space for the imaginary and the visionary, against any established and fixed perception. On the other hand, positioning has to do with the place of the observer in relation to the situation observed, and here lies the danger to romanticise and to take advantage of the vision from below: "the positionings of the subjugated are not exempt from critical reexamination, decoding, deconstruction, and interpretation; that is, from both semi-ological and hermeneutic modes of critical inquiry."²⁵ The viewpoint of the

subjugated is never an innocent one, and Haraway acknowledges that the feminist standpoint epistemology as formulated by Sandra Harding²⁶ is not unproblematic: the process of "naturally" inhabiting such places is neither simple nor unmediated itself. Instead, she turns the science question into the metaphor of vision: "how to see from below is a problem requiring at least as much skill with bodies and language, with the mediations of vision, as the 'highest' technoscientific visualisations."27 According to Haraway, the eyes have always been used as a trope to separate the knowing subject from any condition and situation to the benefit of unlimited power, and thus they are tied to militarism, capitalism, colonialism, and male supremacy; in her writings however, they become a symbol for all sorts of instruments of visualisation and technologically enhanced vision. The "mediations of vision" then stand between the place of the observer and the situation observed, often taking an agency of their own and allowing for "highly specific visual possibilities, each with a wonderfully detailed, active, partial way of organising worlds."28

The critical stance that Haraway holds in relation to the mediating devices of positioning and the Standpoint Theory calls for the re-evaluation of the amateur-looking videos and their power. Here, we are urged to ask, who is the subjugated? And what is the agency of the medium in this seemingly unmediated perspective? The videos present the old residents as threatened and suppressed by the "newcomers" in the city, in a very prejudiced way of seeing the things. The romanticisation comes from the medium itself: within a complex network of users and hundreds of other videos, the videos display very particular perspectives and for this reason they are watched, re-watched and reproduced, contributing greatly to Golden Dawn's influence on people. The bare and straightforward representation along with the clear and distinctive slogans provide simple narratives in an otherwise overcomplicated world. Media theorists Panos Kompatsiaris and Yiannis Mylonas add to that: "the ostensible purity and communicational uncomplicatedness of Nazi imagery can thus offer sensory orientation in a chaotic world of crisis where complexity prevails."29 Repetition plays a very important role too. Posted and re-posted via the social media (the examples presented here have gathered 250,000 and 300,000 views respectively at the time of writing), the videos gain in popularity and participate in an endless circle of digital media that promote xenophobia and racism in the city.

The production of noise and the creation of televised spectacles by the Golden Dawn members play along the same lines and aim to attract the masses, initially electronically by increasing the number of viewers and the

28. lbid., 583.

^{26.} Sandra Harding, The Science Question in Feminism (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press).

^{27.} Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 584.

^{29.} Kompatsiaris and Mylonas, "Web 2.0 Nazi Propaganda," 111.

re-posts across the different social media, and then physically, by encouraging more agents who represent the Golden Dawn ideals to take to the streets and perform in similar ways. Extravaganzas such as verbal and physical assaults during live TV broadcasts inside and outside the Greek parliament, staged attacks against migrant sellers at flea markets,³⁰ and "impromptu" protests against anything that doesn't go along their aesthetics are endlessly reproduced through the electronic media in an attempt to "normalise" such happenings.³¹ These events not only create publicity but they also present the Golden Dawn as fully active in the urban realm and always prepared to respond to any situation. Moreover, Kompatsiaris and Mylonas add, "through posting these 'shocking' events, followed by spectacular titles on Facebook pages such as 'Ellinon Diktyo' [Greek Network], Golden Dawn attempts to present them as natural, as 'practices of friends,' by taking advantage of the 'mediated intimacy' that it cultivates routinely with fans."32 Then "low resolution," not only in visual and technical, but also in conceptual terms, alongside an ostensible spontaneity³³ and unmediatedness become powerful tools of communication and situatedness and stand against any attempt to decipher the increasing complexity of the environment. In a world where straightforward, unmediated, and incontestable facts have become increasingly rare, Golden Dawn promises to their followers simple answers and clear solutions.

It is interesting to juxtapose this constructed clarity and simplicity to a very complex form of representation of a Golden Dawn operation. In the 10th and 11th of September 2018, *Forensic Architecture*, as commissioned by Pavlos Fyssas' family and legal representatives, presented their video report and findings on Fyssas' murder (as mentioned earlier in this text) in the Court of Appeal in Athens, where Golden Dawn is at the time of writing on trial. Forensic Architecture is an agency based at Goldsmiths, University of London, and comprises of an extensive team of architects, scientists, academics, journalists, and technology experts whose aim is to locate incidents in their historical frames by identifying agents, practices, structures,

^{30.} Ibid., 120.

^{31.} At a most recent incident inside the Greek Parliament, Ilias Kassidiaris is heard to strike Nikos Dendias, an MP of the conservative party. "Ηλίας Κασιδιάρης Vs Δένδιας - ΤΟ ΕΠΕΙΣΟΔΙΟ ΣΤΗ ΒΟΥΛΗ με τα κομμένα πλάνα [Ilias Kassidiaris Vs Dendias - the incident in the parliament with all the cut scenes]," YouTube video, 3:51, posted by Awakening Era, 15 May 2017, https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=fBr4bYCri7s (accessed 15 June 2017). The massively circulated video is a clip from the parliament's official broadcast which shows Dendias making his way to the assembly hall exit and passing in front of Kassidiaris, who is at the time addressing the parliament. Kassidiaris stops his talk and aggressively asks him why he passed in front of him while he spoke, joined by more frustrated MPs from his party. As they both lose their temper, the broadcast shows the general view of the assembly that doesn't cover the incident and a sudden snap is heard, followed by an extensive disturbance in the hall, and the Parliament Speaker shouting for the guards to enter the Hall. This video is accompanied by another one which seems to be taken through a hidden mobile phone camera and shows Kassidiaris and other Golden Dawn MPs exiting the Hall, possibly a few moments later. Kassidiaris is heard to shout "I am leaving because I've just screwed a faggot, disgusted by this horrible memorandum that aims to destroy Greece," in "Ηλίας Κασιδιάρης για Δένδια ~ Γάμησα μία αδερφή [Ilias Kassidiaris for Dendias -I've just screwed a faggot]", YouTube video, 0:16, posted by Golden Sotos, 15 May 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRtuNgYbKCY (accessed 15 June 2017).

^{32.} Kompatsiaris and Mylonas, "Web 2.0 Nazi Propaganda," 118.

^{33.} Dimitris Dalakoglou, "Beyond Spontaneity: Crisis, Violence and Collective Action in Athens," *City: analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy, action* 16, no. 5 (2012): 539.

and technologies and reconnecting them to their contexts.³⁴ Their work on Fyssas' case combined audio-visual footage from security cameras, radio recordings from Athens Police and the ambulance operation centre, and witnesses' statements in order to spatially and temporally reconstruct the incidents that led to the murder. The video is indeed fascinating **[Fig. 5]**: by interweaving simulation, audio-visual recordings, temporal and spatial diagrams, it specifies the time of the murder, it demonstrates the organised nature of the attack, and it raises questions on the failure of the police to act effectively at the time. Low resolution here (which is very common in most footage taken for security purposes) becomes a field for further investigation and careful analysis. Unlike the YouTube videos discusses earlier, Forensic Architecture's representation is highly mediated and manifold; it brings together many situated knowledges and attempts to tell a story that nobody on the scene could construct on the whole.

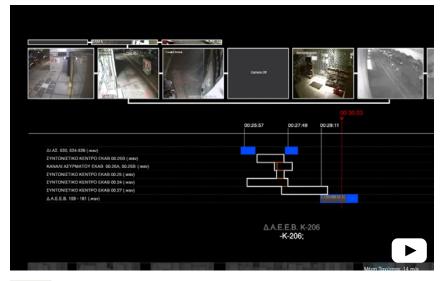


FIG. 5 "The Murder of Pavlos Fyssas, 18 September 2013," Forensic Architecture, 2:34. https://youtu.be/tD0wH3T8wT8

The Other Athenian Realities

The Athenian landscape that emerges through Golden Dawn's videos is that of urban decay and of people exhausted by the financial crisis. It is also a place of absolute (almost military) order, and homogeneity, and of a population of a single origin and religion, and a place where the other, the non-Greek, the non-Christian, is to blame for the country's cultural, social, and financial decline. On a video on YouTube by "lerax GD,"³⁵ members, supporters and MPs give out food to those—of Greek nationality—who are in need, in Attiki Square. Similarly to Agios Panteleimon Square and not very far from it, Attiki Square and its surrounding neighbourhoods is another district of high immigrant population in the city centre, which

^{34.} Eyal Weizman, Forensic Architecture: Violence at the Threshold of Detectability (New York: Zone Books, 2017), 9.

^{35. &}quot;XPYΣH AYFH - Διανομή Τροφίμων στην πλατεία Αττικής" [Golden Dawn - Dissemination of food in Attica Square], YouTube video, 2:19, posted by lerax GD, 13 November 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSLYGZZVxrU (accessed 13 June 2017).

has been overlookedin the past few decades.³⁶ In the video, the square is dominated by two big banners that read "against the junta of the memorandum-nationalism now-Golden Dawn" (0:10), and "Golden Dawn-for the motherland and the people" (0:12), alongside the meander, the party's symbol. The video shows members wearing black T-shirts with the party's logo to unload cartons full of groceries on the square (0:26) and then the place is swarmed by hundreds of people [Fig. 6] who patiently wait to get registered in some sort of catalogue (0:49) in order to be given their provisions [Fig. 7]. Another video, published in 2014, shows Ilias Kassidiaris and Ilias Panagiotaros paying a visit at Varvakeios, the central market of Athens, at the time when they were candidates for mayor and regional governor, respectively, at the local elections³⁷. Both vendors and clients at the market welcome them with content [Fig. 8]; people greet them and take photos with them. There seems to be a very pleasant and all-embracing atmosphere within the crowded market. Following to the surrounding streets and to the vegetable market, they engage in small conversations with the passers-by. A woman from a stall hugs and kisses Kassidiaris [Fig. 9] and shouts "They envy you! You are the best! You've got to show them all!" (2:23-2:27) while someone else is heard from the back: "this is the (future) Mayor of Athens." Then Panagiotaros is shown to speak with a group of people: "(...) all problems can be solved, as long as there is good will ('by everyone concerned' emphasises Kassidiaris) and love for the motherland" (2:30-2:37). Finally, a video from 2013 shows a mass gathering of supporters in Eleonas metro station in Athens, protesting against the mosque that is planned to be built in the area.³⁸ The video is filmed by someone who is in the midst of the crowd and the camera focuses on the sea of Greek flags that dominate the view to any direction. The city can hardly be seen in the background, and only a signpost for the metro entrance places us in some context, on a video that could otherwise be anywhere. A big red banner that reads "Golden Dawn" can also be discerned at the front [Fig. 10], where a speaker addresses the crowds. The crowd from this viewpoint appears enormous; but then another 8000 people have watched this video and it has been re-posted and watched over many more times, gathering a crowd of supporters by itself.

^{36.} The wider area on the north of Omonoia Square has constituted a middle-class residential district which thrived in the 1950s and 1960s, when the Athenian city-centre expanded to the north. In the decades to come, many of these residents moved further to the north and towards the developing suburbs of Athens and they were progressively replaced by immigrant populations who arrived in Athens during the 1990s mainly from the Balcans. After 2000, and as we get closer to the years of recession, the increasing immigrant population and their presence in the city's public spaces in combination with the declining social conditions of the older residents have led to the depreciation in terms of land value of the area but also, and perhaps more importantly, to the neglect of these areas on behalf of the City Council and the governing authorities. These have been followed by a significant deterioration of the urban fabric and the public space in the area.

^{37. &}quot;Παναγιώταρος Κασιδιάρης Στην Βαρβάκειο Αγορά [Panagiotaros Kassidiaris in Varvakeios Market]," YouTube video, 3:25, posted by 4HELLASONLY, 12 March 2014,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQ73SU8qpWkfBr4bYCri7s (accessed 15 June 2017, no longer available).

^{38. &}quot;Οχι Τζαμί Στην Αθήνα: Εθνικός Ύμνος - Ύμνος Χρυσής Αυγής [No to the Mosque of Athens: National Anthem and Golden Dawn Anthem]," YouTube video, 2:03, posted by xryshayghcom, 14 December 2013, https://youtu.be/sGwuZG92e7U (accessed 13 June 2017).



FIG. 6 "ΧΡΥΣΗ ΑΥΓΗ - Διανομή Τροφίμων στην πλατεία Αττικής" [Golden Dawn Dissemination of food in Attica Square], 0:39. https://youtu.be/_9EKa-nErMg



FIG. 7 "XPYΣH AYFH - Διανομή Τροφίμων στην πλατεία Αττικής" [Golden Dawn - Distribution of food in Attica Square], 0:50. https://youtu.be/_9EKa-nErMg

The protesters sing the national anthem followed by the Golden Dawn anthem. Then the speaker calls the audience to shout with him: "Long Live Nationalism!" "Long Live our leader!," "Long Live Golden Dawn!" (1:58-2:00)

These videos clearly illustrate some of the pathologies that have come to the surface due to the deep recession and the social crisis in Greece. Such systematic and persistent representations construct, among others, the immigrant (especially the undocumented one) as a menace and a possible danger for the city. Most recently, the European refugee crisis has intensified such perceptions. Indeed, the precariousness that the financial crisis has created has interwoven with the anxiety over the arrival of populations from Africa and the Middle-East and their entrapment within the country. These phenomena led to the spread of increasingly conservative attitudes that range from the consolidation of the gender and race divisions of labour, to the exacerbation of gender hierarchies, and the progressive acceptance and the "normalisation" of the discrimination of the



FIG.8 Still from "Παναγιώταρος Κασιδιάρης Στην Βαρβάκειο Αγορά [Panagiotaros Kassidiaris at Varvakeios Market]," 0:40.



FIG. 9 Still from "Παναγιώταρος Κασιδιάρης Στην Βαρβάκειο Αγορά [Panagiotaros Kassidiaris at Varvakeios Market]," 2:32.

"other" in the city³⁹. As mentioned above, Agios Panteleimon, Attiki Square, Varvakeios Square, and Eleonas are all neighbourhoods of downtown Athens which have been dramatically downgraded in the context of the crisis. They are also places of the highest immigrant population in the city (Agios Panteleimon and Attiki as residential areas and Varvakeios and Eleonas as workplaces) and this is one of the reasons why they have become major fields of operation by Golden Dawn. Their public space is highly active because of the presence of immigrants who work or live there: children of all backgrounds play in the playgrounds, ethnic shops saturate street life, and local businesses flourish in a place that would otherwise be empty due to the financial crisis. Such activities are however nowhere to be seen in the videos, revealing the people's rejection by those who have been there before them. These videos, apart from placing us in the position of those who turn to Golden Dawn, also reveal the situation of those who are absent from them. On the other side of each one of these filmed perspectives,

^{39.} Dina Vaiou, "Is the Crisis in Athens (Also) Gendered? Facets of Access and (in)Visibility in Everyday Public Spaces," *Crisis Scapes: Athens and Beyond*, eds. Jaya Klara Brekke, Dimitris Dalakoglou, Christos Filippidis, and Antonis Vradis (Athens: Crisis-scape.net, 2014): 86.



FIG.10 Still from "Οχι Τζαμί Στην Αθήνα: Εθνικός 'Υμνος - 'Υμνος Χρυσής Αυγής [No to the Mosque of Athens: National Anthem and Golden Dawn Anthem]," 0:28. https://youtu.be/F3kMxVVX1II

an immigrant or a refugee feels unwanted in public space and urged to live a more restricted and private life. A series of different realities emerge here: the reality of the immigrant who is targeted by Golden Dawn; the reality of the refugee, whose presence is opposed not only by transnational and national policies but by the locals themselves; the reality of the Golden Dawn supporter who is made to see the "other" in the city as a threat. To these, many more realities could be added: the reality of the state that has become radically impoverished as a provider of social services and securities; the reality of a city that has become a testing ground-for Europe and perhaps for the rest of the world-for discipline, austerity, and tighter surveillance measures; but also the reality of the emergence of new kinds of citizen-led initiatives and civil actions in the city to fill in the voids of a state that has become radically impoverished as a provider of services and securities. Clearly these realities cannot be easily bridged and brought together into a single, common world. This condition makes Stengers' "Cosmopolitical Proposal"⁴⁰ highly significant here.

According to Stengers, the all-embracing, "one cosmos" has disappeared forever, and cosmopolitics have become a practice to deal with the world's complex multiplicity. The cosmopolitical proposal does not intend to put anyone into agreement with anyone else,⁴¹ but rather to suggest that if there is to be a common world, then this needs to be constructed anew, slowly, and by all parties together. Against the "mononaturalism" of peace, comments Bruno Latour on Cosmopolitics, he prefers war: "by war I mean a conflict for which there is no agreed-upon arbiter, a conflict in which what is at stake is precisely what is *common* in the common world to be built."⁴² Against the presence of an expert and a "supreme authority" who may come from the outside as a detached spectator to negotiate things and

^{40.} Stengers, "The Cosmopolitical Proposal."

^{41.} Ibid., 1003.

^{42.} Bruno Latour, "Whose Cosmos, Whose Cosmopolitics? Comments on the Peace Terms of Ulrich Beck," *Common Knowledge* 10, no. 3 (2004): 455, emphasis in original.

come up with a solution based on some form of a universal truth, Latour emphasises on the place of conflict as the starting point for a new, "same world" to be slowly composed. In Latour's constructivist approach, the realities that the humans bring forward carry within themselves their own mediations, so that realities and mediations together are made by diversified components and histories. These realities are always open to new interpretations and further mediations, extensions, and even failures,⁴³ and they become tools for the construction of the new world: "the common world must be free to emerge from the multiplicity of their disparate links, and the only reason for that emergence is the spokes that they constitute in one another's wheels."44 Then against any form of simplification and any deductive differentiation about what may be important and what may not, the cosmopolitical proposal calls for complexity and for all difficulties to be maintained and to take part in the new construction, which brings us back to Haraway's call for "stories (and theories) that are just big enough to gather up the complexities and keep the edges open and greedy for surprising new and old connections."45 This call for complexity stands against the simplistic and straightforward narratives promoted by Golden Dawn, and most generally perhaps, against the abstraction of our times. But perhaps the same videos that promote such perceptions can also become tools for the construction of the aforementioned new worlds. Extending Latour's line of thought, the videos promoting Golden Dawn convey yet another form of situatedness: they can situate us to the place of conflict, in this case to the much disputed public spaces which could form a new beginning for the city. The Agios Panteleimon plaza, Varvakeios market square, Attiki square, are some of Athens' most contested public spaces. They are at the same time, however, the spaces where many of these different realities are registered and performed on an everyday basis (and also filmed and digitally re-animated in many ways). It is perhaps upon these specific spaces that we should draw our attention. Between the transnational scale triggered by globalised processes (which often intensifies conditions of exclusion) and the smaller, local scale that often takes on site-specific ethnic and cultural characteristics, the urban scale arises as the most appropriate in defining the political community. Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's Right to the City, geographer Mark Purcell calls for the urban inhabitant as an agent in the making and living of the contemporary city and the urban scale as the site for the definition of citizenship.⁴⁶ For Lefebvre, the "right to the city" is the "right to urban life,"47 which opens up the shaping of political life beyond nation-state citizenship and national

^{43.} Ibid., 458-9.

^{44.} Stengers, "The Cosmopolitical Proposal," 999.

^{45.} Haraway, Staying with the Trouble, 101.

^{46.} Mark Purcell, "Excavating Lefebvre".

^{47.} Henri Lefebvre, "The Right to the City," in *Writings on Cities*, eds Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008): 147-159, 158.

identity.⁴⁸ It is instead to those who are active and present in the life of the city to participate in its making. Purcell argues that this process does not come without struggle and risk,⁴⁹ and the conflict illustrated through Golden Dawn's YouTube videos can clearly illustrate this. But although this process is one of contingency and indeterminacy, it is also one that involves greater participation and the opening of new possibilities. Then, how could we formulate a cosmopolitical citizenship in this context? Both Stengers and Haraway call for a "becoming with" and a "making with" in order to stay with the trouble, in times of trouble. This call is about letting the "old" and the "new" go—and with them the "temporary" and the "permanent"—and about making space acknowledging each other's presence and learning how to respond and to adapt in environments of symbiosis and sympoiesis.

Positioning the cosmopolitical proposal in the context of political ecology, Stengers calls for a political engagement of researchers with the things and towards the construction of an active memory.⁵⁰ This active memory becomes a key tool for new worldings but also for recording the failures, the deviations, and even the constraints of the process. It is also about processes that are based on the elaboration and the transformation of all fundamental differences in ways that may leave no one unaffected. And it is, finally, about looking closely into the spaces of symbiosis and sympoiesis, in this case into the urban space of Athens through a wide range of media in order to decode, deconstruct, and re-interpret every possible subjectivity and perspective.

^{48.} Mark Purcell, "Excavating Lefebvre," 105.

^{50.} Stengers, "The Cosmopolitical Proposal," 998, emphasis in original.

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