**What Makes a Film ‘Greek’:**

**Inward Investment, Outward Aspirations and the Case of Jules Dassin’s *Pote tin Kyriaki*/*Never on Sunday* (1960)**

**Introduction: Seeking a Film’s Place in A Nation’s Cinema**

*Pote tin Kyriaki*/*Never on Sunday* (Dassin, 1960) is arguably the most commercially successful film in the history of Greek Cinema. I use the qualification ‘arguably’ as box office records at the time were not always accurate but mainly because the ‘Greekness’ of this and some other films of the time shot in Greece but with international aspirations, most notably *Zorba the Greek* (Cacoyannis, 1963), can be, and has been, questioned. Produced by Melinafilms, a production company established by the film’s star, internationally acclaimed Greek actress Melina Mercouri, *Never on Sunday* was directed by Jules Dassin, a US expatriate filmmaker who had moved to Greece in the mid-1950s permanently. Dassin’s name and reputation were catalytic factors in attracting funding for the film which came from Hollywood major United Artists, via its specialty/art film subsidiary Lopert Films. In exchange, United Artists and Lopert acquired control of the film’s distribution rights around the world, with the exception of Greece.

Shot in black and white and combining English and Greek dialogue, the film tells the light-hearted story of Homer, an American philosopher and Graecophile (played by Dassin himself), visiting Greece and his efforts to ‘straighten’ Ilya, a Greek prostitute (played by Mercouri) who seems to be very happy with her life. In his eyes, Ilya, a fiercely independent but well-liked woman, and her disreputable profession embody modern Greece and all that has gone wrong with the country following the demise of Ancient Greece. The two protagonists are complemented by a host of Greek stars and character actors, while the score of the film was composed by major Greek composer Manos Hatzidakis, whose original song “Ta Paideia tou Peiraia”/”Never on Sunday” won the Academy Award for Best Song in 1960 and reached the top of the music charts in many countries.

The film reached third place in the 1960 theatrical box office charts for Greek films, having sold 184,524 tickets, and found itself behind two other light-hearted comedies: *I Aliki sto Naftiko*/*Alice in the Navy* (213,409 tickets) and *Mandalena/Madeleine* (192,378 tickets) (Kouanis 2001, 253). However, unlike local productions that were rarely distributed outside Greece,[[1]](#endnote-1) *Never on Sunday*, supported by United Artists’ global distribution network and Lopert Films’ expertise in niche film marketing, had an illustrious career in international markets. Within one year of its release, it had grossed globally $4 million (the equivalent of $32 million, if adjusted for inflation in 2016), becoming extremely profitable for its producers and distributors (Landau 1961).

Notwithstanding this success, *Never on Sunday* has retained a rather unusual space in Greek cinema and Greek cinema history more generally: a space of critical marginalisation. Often dismissed as not a Greek film, Greek film historians have tended to make passing references to it without exploring in any meaningful detail its place in Greek film production, while excluding it almost entirely from the canon of films that constitute Greek national cinema. On the other hand, *Never on Sunday* has attracted considerable attention from a number of non-Greek scholars, drawn to it from a variety of perspectives that range from United Artists’ involvement in film industries outside the United States (Balio 1987) to the film’s success in the American theatrical film market as a ‘foreign’ or ‘foreign language’ film (Balio 2000), to its status as a European-American collaboration (Lev 1993). What is interesting in these approaches that have taken place within an Anglo-American film history context is that *Never on Sunday* tends to be treated as a film that is *not* American. Whether labelled “foreign” (Balio 1987 and 2000) or “Euro-American” (Lev 1993), it is clear that for these scholars the film defies a clear-cut categorisation when it comes to its national identity. In this respect, what for many Greek film scholars is, as I discuss later, an example of an American film, for American film scholars *Never on Sunday* is a “foreign” (i.e. non-American) film or a hybrid as the “Euro-American” label implies.

This article examines the arguments from all sides, with a view to expose the assumptions and mechanisms that constructed them before setting off to argue in favour of the ‘Greek film’ label, that seems to be implied in some work by US scholars (especially Balio) but never expressly articulated. As I will demonstrate, Greek film histories often provide unclear or loose criteria for their exclusion of the film from the construction of a Greek film canon (see in particular Soldatos 1999), while Anglo-American historical accounts are either reluctant to perceive it as a Greek film given their lack of interest in the characteristics of the Greek film market (Balio 1987) or are led by efforts to place the film within larger contexts (Lev 1993), which makes them miss the nuances of the particular film and its production process and context.

Against these approaches, I will make the case that, despite the U.S presence in the film (in the shape of Dassin, Lopert Films, United Artists and the use of English as the film’s primary language), *Never on Sunday* is a Greek film. Based on a number of primary sources, I will demonstrate that the film was set up in such a way to lay claim to (but also exploit) the label ‘Greek film production’. Legally, I will argue, there are many good reasons to call *Never on Sunday* a Greek film production and I will support this argument further by looking more broadly at the legal framework that defined what could be considered Greek film in 1960s Greece. Indeed, I will show that key institutions, including the Greek government, factions of the Greek film industry and parts of the national press, were so taken by the film’s ability to attract inward investment and international support while at the same time achieving success outside the national borders that they actively tried to shape the legal framework within which cinema in Greece would operate in the years to come. This was in order to ensure that films like *Never on Sunday*, with some ‘foreign elements,’ could be considered examples of Greek national cinema, thus providing much wanted visibility for the cinema of this small nation in south east Europe.

Of course labelling *Never on Sunday* a ‘Greek film’ on account of its production set up or because a particular government decided so does not automatically make it also an example of Greek national cinema. One the one hand, by the 1960s the Hollywood majors were routinely establishing productions around the world and they often strived to label them ‘local’ in order to benefit from tax breaks and other perks provided by countries’ governments to attract investment and foster film production. In this respect, a large number of films financed and produced by the Hollywood majors in countries outside the United States were not seen as examples of these countries’ national cinemas but rather as Hollywood ‘runaway productions’ (Shandley 2009), set up to exploit favourable production opportunities around the world. On the other hand, national cinema is a category that is always constituted discursively, with a film’s production status and industrial background contributing only partially to national cinema definitions and competing against discourses advanced by other authorised institutions, including: the government and its policies, the media and the ways they construct a nation, the filmmakers who imagine a nation in particular ways, film critics who interpret images and sounds on screen as worthy of entering national canons, film scholars who contribute to debates about cinema and the nation and numerous other agents and stakeholders who lay their own claims on definitions of ‘the national’.

As my discussion will also demonstrate, despite having tested the limits of such discourses in terms of what could be considered national cinema in Greece, *Never on Sunday* was actually accepted as an example of Greek national cinema by a significant part of the agents and institutions defining national cinema in Greece (with its inclusion in the theatrical box office charts of Greek film releases clearly attesting to this as was the Greek government’s decision for the film to represent Greece in the Cannes Film Festival in 1960, which I will examine later in this article). In this respect, while certain parties, especially Greek film critics and scholars have sought to excise it from a national Greek cinema canon for reasons I explore below, other parties such as the Greek government of the time and many important Greek film producers saw in *Never on Sunday* and its ability attract foreign investment and secure lucrative release deals outside the Greek borders a very welcome opportunity both for the internationalisation of the Greek film industry and indeed the ‘redefinition’ of Greek national cinema as a more “extrovert” cinema.[[2]](#endnote-2)

Such an acceptance, I also argue, took place within a broader context of an ambitious, outward looking discourse about Greece as a country that was experiencing a rapid modernisation following its slow re-emergence in the 1950s after the end of WW2 and a hugely costly subsequent Civil War (1946-9). This modernisation was assisted by the country’s emergence in the late 1950s as a major tourist destination (Killick 1997, 132) and a substantial influx of inward investment following the dramatic devaluation of its currency in the 1950s (Ciment 2015, 322). I examine this outward-looking discourse, focusing specifically on the ways it surrounded Greek cinema in the late 1950s and 1960s. My discussion concentrates on how this Greek cinema discourse looked primarily towards Europe (at a time when other European countries and film industries were also increasingly looking to co-productions and bi-lateral agreements [Bergfelder 2000, 141]) with a view to make the greatly entrenched till that time Greek film industry and Greek cinema more generally part of a more cosmopolitan and international cinema and film culture. Indeed, aspects of this discourse entailed the seeking of co-productions and inward investment, the arrangement of post-production of Greek films in European labs to enhance their technical features, distribution of Greek films outside Greece, the establishment of an international film festival in Thessaloniki, the country’s second biggest city, and other elements.

Due to a cluster of factors that had to do with the volatile socio-political and economic environment in the country at the time and Greece’s historical structural problems, this discourse did not coalesce into a coherent plan of action that could have helped Greek cinema achieve its international ambitions. Indeed, it proved short-lived, with the establishment of the military junta in 1967 putting a firm stop to such aspirations, at least on an institutional level, despite the fact that the country’s broader modernisation project continued in other ways, partly because of the military government’s close relationship to the U.S.

Due to its short duration but also because it drew on films such as *Never on Sunday* that were severely questioned by certain Greek institutions as examples of the nation’s cinema, this discourse is rarely examined in Greek film histories, unless it is with reference to its impact on the local level (in what is routinely referred to as the Golden Age of Greek cinema in the period between the mid-1950s and the mid-1960s), and not for its international ambition. This once again suggests that Greek cinema in Greek film histories remains unnecessarily narrowly defined. In this respect, this article will also expand the definition of Greek national cinema by constructing a detailed account of this discourse and how it became linked to questions of national cinema by a number of agents and institutions in the 1960s. It will argue that *Never on Sunday* played a pivotal role in the development of that discourse and finish with a few words about its larger impact on more recent Greek cinema.

But why discuss questions around national cinema and national film production when recent film scholarship has advanced a number of arguably more sophisticated positions and arguments that place issues around film production and identity within the context of transnational, hybrid, cosmopolitan, international, globalised and other approaches (Hjort and McKenzie 2000, 1)? This is an especially pertinent question given the presence of several such revisionist approaches to cinema in European countries in the 1960s such as Germany (Bergfelder 2000), Italy (Wagstaff 1998) and Spain (Triana-Toribio 2003, especially 38-69) that sought to question the applicability of the term “national” when the emergence of co-productions and bi- and tri-lateral agreements or of the production of certain films for local markets and other for international markets prompted critics to proclaim that “the nation vanishe[d]” (Bergfelder 2000, 139).

In discussing *Never on Sunday* as a Greek film production and example of Greek national cinema, this article has a two-fold aim. First, it is interested in exploring the ways in which a media industry studies approach can contribute to definitions of national identity. Industry studies approaches have been hugely underdeveloped within the context of Greek media research, with just a handful of studies in Greek and English language interested specifically in industrial and economic questions (for instance, Kouanis 2001, Sifaki 2003), and therefore have rarely contributed to definitions of Greek cinema. In this respect, this article explores how the production arrangements for the film tested and redefined what could be considered Greek film production in the 1960s. Second, the article links this redefined articulation of the national to particular debates and discourses about its relationship to forces and agencies located outside its borders (inward investment, proximity to Hollywood, co-production opportunities, etc.) during that period, suggesting that ‘Greekness’ was a much less pure term than what was suggested by Greek film critics, who ostracised Dassin and his work from the Greek canon (Eleftheriotis 2012, 352). In this context, *Never on Sunday* is a seminal film that forced Greek institutions to consider debates about internationalisation, cosmopolitanism and the ways in which they could relate to the concept of the national. For this reason, the article also seeks to insert *Never on Sunday* in the Greek national film canon and in the process argue for the construction of Greek national cinema histories that take into account transnational tendencies.

**Many Labels, One Film: *Never on Sunday* as ‘American,’ ‘Foreign Language,’ ‘Euro-American’ and ‘not Truly Greek’ Film**

Despite the recent critical success and worldwide visibility of certain Greek films dubbed as the ‘Greek Weird Wave’ (Rose 2011), historically, Greek cinema has had very few success stories outside the borders of the country, with art cinema auteur Theo Angelopoulos being the only example of a consistently critically (and more rarely commercially) successful and highly recognisable Greek filmmaker. The reasons for this inability of (a national) Greek cinema to transcend the borders of the country is beyond the scope of this article. What is important to note, however, is that this inability has had far reaching repercussions in terms of both shaping perceptions of Greek cinema as a national cinema for local consumption (with very few exceptions) and structuring the organisation of its industry accordingly. Such an entrenchment, among other things, resulted in a relative lack of dialogue between Greek cinema and other national cinemas and partly explains the almost complete absence of scholarly examinations of Greek cinema by non-Greek scholars. Writing as recently as 2011, Gary Needham argued that studying Greek cinema

is a pursuit that is really very limited in terms of what it has to offer to the non-Greek film speaking scholar. This is mainly for two reasons: first the language barrier and second the availability (or lack) of Greek films, whether in subtitle or dubbed prints” (205).

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that this entrenchment of Greek cinema and its film industry led also to a critical entrenchment. With international film scholars unable to intervene meaningfully with informed historical and critical approaches to the study of Greek cinema and with film studies as a discipline emerging in Greece much later than most European countries and the United States (see Delveroudi 2011) it was left primarily to local critics and historians to construct the history of Greek cinema, build a Greek national film canon and shape the agenda of their critical and historical approaches in specific ways.

In such historical accounts, *Never on Sunday* occupied a marginal position, awkwardly presented as a “Dassin film,” “a special case”, and therefore “beyond the scope” of books on the history of Greek Cinema. This is the case in Soldatos’ *Istoria tou Ellinikou Kinimatographou/History of Greek Cinema*, with the author using verbatim these phrases to dismiss the film as non-Greek (1999, 299; my translation from Greek). And if this is the case in one of the so-called ‘popular’ histories of Greek cinema that was written by an amateur historian and film book publisher, certain scholarly histories do not even mention the film, implicitly or explicitly embracing definitions of Greek cinema that exclude a film with the international elements of *Never on Sunday*. For example, Mitropoulou’s pioneering *Ellinikos Kinimatografos/Greek Cinema* places Dassin in a ‘special interest’ chapter at the end of the book as a unique example of a foreign filmmaker that “falls in love with Greece” (2006, 381), explicitly locating the film outside the canon of Greek cinema.

More recent histories written by Greek scholars in the English language have continued this trend, but with some efforts to account for its exclusion. For instance, despite the presence of several elements that point toward the film’s generic identity as a musical, *Never on Sunday* is absent from Lydia Papadimitriou’s otherwise comprehensive critical and cultural history of the Greek film musical between 1955 and 1975 (2006). Papadimitriou brackets the film as one with an “international appeal” together with *Zorba the Greek* but refrains from providing any other discussion about the film’s potential to participate in the Greek film musical genre (2006, 87). Vrasidas Karalis’ recent *A History of Greek Cinema* (2012), goes a step further than other studies, before reaching the same conclusion, that is, that the film is “beyond the scope” of his study too. Karalis considers the history of “cinema *in* Greece” as a “fairer” label than “Greek cinema,” which enables him to include non-Greek filmmakers, such as Hungarian Josef Hepp, alongside filmmakers born and raised in the country (2012, xvi, original emphasis).

However, he then goes to distinguish “‘Greek Cinema’ and the expectations of international audiences” from Greek film production for Greek audiences, claiming that the former was “not determined by films made solely by directors of Greek origin” (ibid). This is where he brings up Dassin’s *Never on Sunday*, which he names as the film that “was particularly responsible for establishing the dominant international image of Greek cinema” and as such, “a topic that deserves further exploration and discussion in separate studies” (ibid). It is unclear why Karalis considers Hungarian expatriate Joseph Hepp “as one of the most prominent filmmakers in the history of Greek cinema” (4) while US expatriate Jules Dassin “does not belong to Greek cinema proper,” (91) other than that the former made films for local consumption while the latter for international audiences, even though some of the films Dassin made in Greece were also popular in that country. However, Karalis provides a partial answer to this question when he considers *Zorba the Greek*, another film made in Greece for an international audience – this one directed by Greek-Cypriot filmmaker Michael Cacoyannis. Karalis writes:

Even Michael Cacoyannis’ celebrated *Zorba the Greek* (1964) cannot really be seen as a purely ‘Greek movie.’ The director notwithstanding, it is essentially an American movie, with an American production and distribution company, performed in English and with an international audience as its target (xvi).

Putting aside his questionable treatment of Cacoyannis as a ‘Greek filmmaker’ given that Cacoyannis was treated by members of the Greek press who did not like his first film in Greece, *Stella* (1955), as a “foreigner in our country” (following his emigration from Cyprus) (Moschovakis 1955, 516),[[3]](#endnote-3) it is clear that Karalis perceives *Zorba the Greek* as an American film. However, while no one would disagree with the above description of the film, like *Never on Sunday*, *Zorba the Greek* also featured a wealth of Greek talent, with its now famous score composed by Mikis Theodorakis, with its screenplay based on a novel by arguably the most widely acclaimed Greek novelist, Nikos Kazantzakis, and with a host of Greek actors supporting the international stars of the film, Anthony Quinn, Alan Bates and Lila Kendrova. In the next section, I will discuss in more detail whether the sum of a number of elements in a film from the same country of origin can lay claim – legally, at least – to a particular identity that can determine the nationality of a film. For the time, I would like to suggest that, for Karalis, a film such as *Zorba the Greek* (and by extension *Never on Sunday*) is considered “not purely a Greek film” and “essentially American,” despite being very much part of a “history of cinema *in* Greece.” As it happens, later in his book, *Zorba the Greek* enjoys substantial attention (101-4), with Karalis calling it “the defining film of the 1960s, indeed of the whole of Greek cinema (for better or worse)” (101). As for *Never on Sunday*, despite acknowledging Dassin’s “crucial contribution to the construction of ‘images about Greece’ and their impact on film production in the country” (91), Karalis spares just two paragraphs on that film (92-93).

One element that brings together all the histories I mentioned so far is their interest in the construction of film canons and of understanding how national (and regional) cinemas contribute to the representation of particular identities and cultures. Writing especially on what could constitute ‘a national cinema in Greece,’ Karalis makes reference to films and artists “who defined public taste, while at the same time connecting with international trends, movements and questions…films in which the depiction of Greek reality has assumed a special and even ‘irregular’ form in an attempt to construct a visual pattern for the Greek experience” (2012, xix). In such a conceptualisation, the Greek reality and experience are located within defined (though unstable given the expansion of the Greek state in the early 20th century) borders, with the ‘national cinema in Greece’ label precluding examination of diasporic and other practices with a strong transnational element, at least until the 1980s when the impact of European union initiatives and the strong force of globalisation made the presence of such filmmaking trends inevitable. In such an approach, the Greek experience is represented as divorced from the country’s ancient past and as based on a linguistic nationalism that was systematically reinforced by strong ideological apparatuses (xviii-xix).

Such an understanding of the Greek experience immediately puts a film such as *Never on Sunday* in a peculiar position, irrespective of its production context. First of all, despite the presence of Greek language in several scenes of the film, most of the dialogues is in English. Second, the narrative (and Greece’s representation) unfolds through Dassin’s/Homer’s experience who is the main agent of narration in the film, which suggests that all representation is filtered through his perspective. Third, the film provides a positive representation of a prostitute, indeed, one where Ilya enjoys what she does and is in control of her destiny – a representation that is far removed from the levels of acceptance in Greek society of the time. Finally, *Never on Sunday* represents Greece as an exotic country where passions run wild and where particular codes of behaviour and customs mark it as an under-developed, unmodernised nation that, on the one hand, has definitely lost all points of contact with its ancient past, while, on the other, it is still far behind the modernised, civilised Western nations, as these are exemplified by the refined philhellene Dassin/Homer. In this respect, despite the fact that, as Karalis acknowledges, the film “was particularly responsible for establishing the dominant international image of Greek cinema” this was not necessarily a positive development for the articulation of a nationally specific Greek identity, which was perceived as breaking away from dominant (national) representations, privileging instead, the exotic, the disreputable, the outlandish.

Such an interpretation clearly colours the film as a carrier of cultural imperialist tendencies that might contaminate an indigenous culture, a fear that might have been particularly pronounced in relation to *Never on Sunday*, given that it was the first example of a ‘Greek film’ financed by a Hollywood company and produced by a US writer-director. However, as Higson (2000) aptly argued, there can be other types of interpretation that are much more positive in their perception of the national. For instance, “the introduction of exotic elements may well have a liberating and democratising effect on the local culture, expanding the cultural repertoire” or even “the foreign commodity will not be treated as exotic by the local audience, but will interpreted by an ‘indigenous’ frame of reference” (2000, 69). Indeed, despite the film’s excision from the national film canon by critics, there is substantial evidence that *Never on Sunday* was also interpreted in these two ways by other institutions and agents, which paves the way for a revisionist approach that could see it as an example of Greek national cinema as well as a Greek film production. For instance, the film’s success at the Greek cinema box office charts certainly attests to the fact that a big part of the local audience ‘bought into’ its seemingly ‘un-Greek’ images and sounds, which points to an interpretation of the foreign and exotic by an ‘indigenous’ frame of reference, while (as the last section of this article discusses) its success opened up the doors for similar films both in terms of production and representation, most notably *Zorba the Greek*. It also motivated Greek film producers to seek more actively co-productions in an increasingly cosmopolitan Greek cinema context, helping expand the cultural repertoire in the country.

Locating themselves far from these debates and issues and approaching cinema from an industrial and institutional perspective, there have been several historians who have approached the same film, if not as a Greek film per se, then certainly as a film that is not American. One of the key proponents of industrial film history, Tino Balio saw *Never on Sunday* as an important example of the Hollywood majors’ post WW2 expansion in the international markets; an expansion that besides “marketing American films abroad” and “marketing foreign films in the United States” also involved “investing in production overseas” (1987, 223). Following the decline of the US theatrical market after WW2, the Hollywood studios quickly realised that they had to rely increasingly on the international markets to remain profitable enterprises. In this respect, during the 1950s, they became much more ‘active’ than just marketing and releasing their films outside the US, which explains their strong involvement and investment in other countries’ film industries. Specifically, after establishing strong links with large film markets such as France, Germany, Italy and Spain, the Hollywood majors turned their attention to minor markets such as Greece, with United Artists being the first one to invest in Greek film production. In most cases, this investment was administered and managed through specialty film companies, which the Hollywood majors had partnerships with (such as Columbia and Kingsley International) or which they owned corporately (such as United Artists and Lopert Films).

From that perspective then, films like *Never on Sunday* were non-US productions, financed by the Hollywood majors. Indeed, in his discussion of the film and on account of its great commercial success in 1960, Balio calls *Never on Sunday* the “queen of foreign language moneymakers” (227), clearly denying the film American nationality despite the fact it was financed by US money, distributed by a US company, written and directed by a US national and with English being the main language for most of the film. And even though he never attaches to it the label “Greek film” Balio also considers it a key example of “the Foreign Film Renaissance on American Screens” during a golden 20-year period that spans the 1950s and the 1960s, which also lends the title to Balio’s more recent of his two accounts on the topic (2000).

With some recent exceptions, Greek film histories have steered clear from incorporating the kind of perspective that Balio adopts. Part of the general culture of entrenchment I discussed earlier, Greek film histories have rarely engaged with perspectives of filmmaking activity in the country that sees them as symptoms or outcomes of initiatives that originated outside its borders. Maria Stassinopoulou makes exactly this point when she argues that Greek cultural historians, including ones working in the area of film, have more often than not “used exceptionalism to interpret Greek cultural forms and artefacts” (2011, 131) and accuses them of an unwillingness to recognise “the international/global character of cinema, both as an economic sector and an art form” (ibid). As a result, there has never been a ‘Greek’ interpretation of or response to Balio’s position, while the extensive Greek film scholarship of recent years has yet to place an examination of *Never on Sunday* ‘within the scope’ of “New Film History” (Chapman et al. 2007) or other type of historical revisionist work.

On the other hand, it would also be fair to suggest that Balio was not interested in the peculiarities and particularities of the Greek film industry and market, which perhaps explains his reluctance to call this ‘foreign’ film ‘Greek’. His discussion places *Never on Sunday* firmly under United Artists’ effort to become a major player in worldwide distribution by being “the most aggressive” of all studios in this “phase of the business,” through its specialty film subsidiary Lopert Films (1987, 222), but stops short of providing

any details on the state of the Greek film market, on how the film was set up, or whether the presence of an experienced US expatriate filmmaker in Greece, like Dassin, was a decisive factor for making the investment. Of course, Balio’s key objectives in his two studies had nothing to do with the Greek or other national film markets; rather he wanted to account for United Artists’ conduct of business in the post-WW2 era (1987) and for the increasing presence of world cinema films in the U.S. theatres, partly as a result of the globalisation of Hollywood (2000), respectively. For this reason, engaging with the details of individual film industries in which United Artists was involved, in the first case, and with the film industries all Hollywood majors dealt with, in the second, seemed to be beyond the scope of his own studies. Still, it does beg the question of whether an examination of *Never on Sunday* that took into consideration some of these details could have resulted in a more precise determination of the film’s nationality. In many ways, then, the examination of *Never on Sunday* in the next section picks up from where Balio left and leads it to its logical conclusion: labelling the film ‘Greek’ while also exploring whether this makes it an example of Greek national cinema.

If this is not all confusing enough, there is yet another account originating outside Greece that has engaged with the film to a substantial extent, placing it within a distinct category of films: the “Euro-American art film.” Coined by film historian by Peter Lev, this type of film “attempts a synthesis of the American entertainment film (large budget, good production values, internationally known stars) and the European art film (auteur director, artistic subject and/or style) with the aim of reaching a much larger audience than the art film normally commands”(1993, xii). Citing examples such as *Contempt* (Polanski, 1964), *Blow Up* (Antonioni, 1966), *The Last Tango in Paris* (Bertolucci, 1972) and others, Lev adds a further qualification to his definition, namely that such “big-budget English language film[s]” are made by “European art film director[s]” (ibid.). In this respect, it is rather surprising that he also cites *Never on Sunday* as an example of the “Euro-American art film,” given that it was neither a big-budget production nor was directed by a European art filmmaker.

Despite having been directed by an American, Lev includes *Never on Sunday* as an exception, “an early and commercially successful English language art film” that set “a precedent for later filmmaking” (1993, 45). That precedent, Lev explains, materialised in three particular ways:

First, it showed that American investment in English-language, foreign-made art films could be profitable and prestigious. […] Second, it was among the first Euro-American films to use the meeting of cultures as a central theme as well as a production situation. […] Third, the film paved the way for additional English-language co-ventures between American film companies and Greek filmmakers – e.g., *Zorba the Greek* and *The Trojan Women* (43)

Although Lev correctly identifies all three elements as important precedents for the development of the “Euro-American art film” trend, there are certain elements in this account that are not as straightforward as he presents them to be. For instance, in terms of the first type of precedent, while no one would question that the success of *Never on Sunday* showed that American investment in English-language, foreign-made films could be profitable and prestigious, the question of whether this investment was in an ‘art’ film or not is debatable. Despite the use of this label by Lev (and other historians) *Never on Sunday* can as easily be considered an example of ‘popular Greek cinema’, given its ‘accessibility’ (to use Victor Perkins’ term [1992, 195]) to Greek film audiences (an accessibility further confirmed by the film’s success at the Greek film box office), not to mention the presence of many popular Greek stars and character actors, typecast in roles familiar to Greek audiences from other popular films of the period (Yorgos Fountas, Thanasis Vengos, Despo Diamantidou, Nikos Fermas, Titos Vandis). Furthermore, in terms of the third precedent, although the film did pave the way “for additional English-language co-ventures between American film companies and Greek filmmakers”, *Never on Sunday* was not made by a *Greek* filmmaker and therefore it should not be considered a collaboration between an American company and a Greek filmmaker which led to other such collaborations. This is especially important as on the list of over one hundred Euro-American films that Lev considers in his study (1993, 141-56) Dassin is the only American director to appear, with all the other filmmakers coming from various European countries. In this respect, despite broadly agreeing with Lev’s understanding of the film, I would like to suggest that there is space for manoeuvring in terms of determining the film’s precise identity. Like Balio, Lev does not also engage with the details of the Greek film market, which potentially explains why he considers *Never on Sunday* an example of an art film un-problematically. As it happens, in the more recent of his two studies, Balio also used the label “Euro-American art film” (2010, 242) at one point to describe *Never on Sunday*, which if nothing else points to a degree of kinship in the way the two film historians have approached the film.

As this substantial literature review has demonstrated, ‘American,’ ‘foreign language/non-US’ and ‘Euro-American art film’ are three distinct labels, all potentially applicable to the film *Never on Sunday*, and all problematic. In this respect, and given the absence of a firmly defined “Greek film” label, one can begin to understand why such a commercially successful and influential film has been marginalised by both Greek film critics and historians as an example of Greek national cinema.In the next section, I will make the case for the ‘Greek film’ label, extending Balio’s approach and argument and placing it within a more clearly defined Greek film industry and market than those invoked in existing studies, while at the same time exploring its impact on redefining Greek national cinema.

**What Makes a Film Greek: Testing the Limits of a National Film Industry**

Although Greek film historians have been reluctant to include *Never on Sunday* as an important film in the country’s national cinema canon, this does not mean that the film has not received any attention whatsoever. Both popular film critics and academics have discussed the film extensively as part of other debates, including: its contribution to the star image of its female protagonist (Eleftheriotis 2001); its promotion of a particular (stereotypical) image of Greece (Tsitsopoulou 2000, 79-93 and Strain 2003, 154-174) and, unavoidably, as part of questions around a non-Greek filmmaker’s authorship of a film about Greece (Kolovos 1993, 49-58; Bakoyannopoulos 1993, 17-22). Not surprisingly, the discussion of the last two issues brought up questions about the film’s ‘Greekness’ to the surface, though, as I suggested earlier, these questions were discussed critically rather than within a historical context, with such critics not interested in placing *Never on Sunday* within larger contexts about Greek cinema.

More recently, film scholar Dimitris Eleftheriotis (2012) advanced a theoretically sophisticated argument about Dassin’s authorship under the prism of cosmopolitanism, exposing the weaknesses in arguments that wanted the filmmaker to have become an honorary “Greek” and therefore being able to make “Greek films”. For Eleftheriotis, Dassin can be most productively approached as a filmmaker whose “ontological status as an internationally mobile agent” (before Greece, Dassin lived and made film in the United States and France) manifests in particular textual practices across the body of his work that mark him as a ‘foreigner’ (2012, 340-1). With such practices including, the presence of foreign characters and structures of inclusion/exclusion that often take the shape of betrayal plots, character marginalisation and the placing of heroes in foreign or hostile environment, Eleftheriotis points to *Never on Sunday* as the key film in which all these quintessential characteristics of Dassin’s cosmopolitan authorship align with foreignness (348). In this respect, accounts that want Dassin to have become a Greek subject culturally (Kolovos 1993) or through his perceived understanding of ancient Greek history (Bakoyannopoulos 1993) are revealed as naïve and Greco-centric and confirm once again Stassinopoulou’s view of Greek critics as ignoring the international/global character of cinema in an era of debates about transnationalism and cosmopolitanism.

With such authorship-determined accounts of the film’s perceived Greekness strongly questioned I propose an examination of the film’s production history as a new way to argue about its status as a Greek film. Such an approach starts with Dassin’s well-documented history as a blacklisted filmmaker following the Hearings of the House of Un-American Activities Committee in the late 1940s and early 1950s. As the Hollywood majors refused to employ filmmakers that have been named as Communists in the Hearings, Dassin became “off limits” for them in the 1950s and left the United States seeking work in France. The substantial critical and commercial success of the first film in this phase of his career, *Rififi* (1955), opened the doors to more work that was financed and produced with the help of European companies, with *Celui qui doit mourir*/*He Who Must Die* following in 1957. Shot in the Greek island of Crete and based on the novel by Nikos Kazantzakis *O Hristos Xanastavronete/Christ Is Recrucified*, the film features a host of European actors and a small number of Greek ones, including Melina Mercouri. However, despite the strong Greek presence in the film, *He Who Must Die* was set up as an Italian-French co-production, produced by a consortium of companies from these two countries, with all the production credits taken by non-Greek contributors and with the film’s dialogue entirely in French. As a result the film has never been entertained as a ‘Greek’ production or an example of Greek cinema, with international critics identifying it from the start as a French film (Alpert 1958, 14), and appropriately it has not been considered in histories of Greek cinema.

Dassin followed *He Who Must Die* with another French-Italian co-production *La Legge/The Law* (1959). Featuring major European stars such as Gina Lollobrigida, Marcelo Mastroianni and Yves Montand, and helped by a storyline that revolved around sexual passions, the film was a major success in Europe. With Dassin’s career outside the US developing rapidly and with the enforcement of the blacklist in Hollywood weakening, American television and film producer Lew Kerner approached Dassin in early 1959 (after *The Law* was released in France and Italy) with a view to produce together films that would be financed and distributed by United Artists (“Kerner, Jules Dassin Join to Produce Films” 1959, 49). Witnessing Dassin’s success in Europe, United Artists was prepared to be involved through its then recently acquired Lopert Films division, which, as Balio demonstrated, signals the major’s perception of these films as non-US/foreign film productions.

A few months later, in a memo from Charles Smadja, United Artists’ head of European Production to Arthur Krim, co-president of United Artists, the basic parameters of how the first of these films, *Never on Sunday* (originally entitled *The Happy Whore*) were revealed: The film’s star, Melina Mercouri would establish her own company through which the film will be produced, with Dassin assuming writing and directing roles as well as one of the other two starring roles. The deal would take place on standard United Artists terms through Lopert Films and the film’s maximum budget would be set to $175,000. Mercouri’s new production company would hold the rights for the film’s distribution in Greece, with United Artists (always through Lopert) reserving the rights for the rest of the world in exchange for financing the picture, bar $50,000 that would be raised by Dassin and Mercouri (Smadja 1959a).

What is immediately clear from this memo, is that from the very beginning the film was set up as a Greek production, produced by a Greek corporate entity, which would also hold the film’s distribution rights in the Greek market. In this respect, it is quite easy to see how as a production *Never on Sunday* is entirely different from Dassin’s previous film in Greece, *He Who Must Die* that was co-produced by French and Italian companies. The details of the final deal as revealed in a letter from Smadja to United Artists executives, weeks before the beginning of the film’s shoot on 1 October 1959, make an even stronger case for the film’s Greek production status, while also outlining some of the benefits of such an arrangement for the Hollywood major:

Melina Mercouri and her brother, Spyros Mercouris, are forming a Greek company for the production of this picture. Therefore the nationality of this picture will be Greek, which is an advantage for all of us, not only for licences, quotas, etc., but also because Greek pictures obtain satisfactory prices in Greece. For this reason, and until all the contracts are signed, Julie [Dassin] does not want us to announce that Lopert Film is in the deal (Smadja 1959b).

The letter leaves little to the imagination while confirming fully Balio’s argument that for United Artists (and the other Hollywood majors), films such as *Never on Sunday* were not American productions, strictly speaking. As local productions they were much better placed to exploit a host of elements that were different in the structures of each national film market as these were evolving in the late 1950s/early 1960s. For instance, one of the key benefits for *Never on Sunday* as a film of ‘a Greek nationality’ in the Greek theatrical market is that its profits would stand to be taxed at a lower rate compared to the rate they would receive if the film was an import (“Greek Market Has Big Admish Lump” 1964). Furthermore, such benefits would also extend to Dassin, whose Swiss-based film production company Anstalt Jorilee Productions would buy the film’s world distribution rights from the Greek production corporation Melinafilm and licence United Artists to exploit *Never on Sunday* around the world and in the United States via Lopert Films (Smadja 1959b).

If such a legally determined avenue to understand a film’s origin seem to point to convenience and exploitation of a particular country’s market specificities, it would be instructive to examine what the Greek law considered a Greek film to be at the time. As it happens, at the time of the production of *Never on Sunday* there was no relevant legislation in existence. As Greek film production after the end of WW2 was exclusively practiced by local film companies, there was no perceived need for a law to determine legally the nationality of a film. However, as from the mid-1950s onwards certain Greek films achieved awards in international film festivals and received some distribution outside Greece, and as non-Greek filmmakers like Dassin started making films in the country such a need became imperative. Indeed, reports in the Greek press at least a year before the film’s release were mentioning the government’s increasing interest in fostering Greek film production through an emphasis on a “cinema of quality”, defined against the “commercial” popular cinema that dominated Greek theaters (Ploritis, 1959; author’s translation from Greek).

This interest by the government was taking place within the context of debates by both the left and the right in terms of what can be considered representative of ‘Greekness’, especially given the increasing visibility of some Greek productions such as *Stella* in international film festivals. Afraid that ‘bad’ representations will distort the image of Greece internationally and will embarrass the nation, contributors to these discourses were becoming increasingly sensitive to questions of representation of Greek identities (Stamatiou 1956; Oikonomou, 1958), while also questioning the extent to which “foreigners,” with more advanced skills than indigenous filmmakers, were capable of producing authentic representations of the national. This included Greek-Cypriot émigré Michael Cacoyannis who was accused of having a “limited understanding of Greek reality” as this was represented in his film *To Telefteo Psema*/*A Matter of Dignity* (Savidis, 1958; author’s translation).

On the other hand, though, there was also strong consensus among critics that cinema in Greece was at a very low level technically and therefore with very few exceptions it could embarrass the country when competing against films from other more advanced national cinemas. In this respect, the Greek government did not steer clear of excluding the possibility of accepting ‘foreign’ filmmakers working in Greece and making films with a ‘Greek interest’ in competent technically and entertaining productions that could attract attention in festivals. In this context, the government’s selection of *Never on Sunday* as the country’s submission to the 1960 Cannes Film Festival was a major decision that had significant repercussions. For all these reasons and to a great extent because of the debates that *Never on Sunday* brought to the forefront, a year after its release, the Greek government finally introduced legislation about cinema in the country under the title: *Peri metron dia tin anaptixi tis kinimatografias en Elladi/About Measures for the Development of Filmmaking in Greece* (No 4208, published on September 19, 1961). Article 13 of that Law stated that Greek films were those that *cumulatively* were characterised by the following elements:

1. The screenplay to be written by a Greek citizen
2. The production to be undertaken by a corporation based in Greece and administered by at least one Greek citizen
3. The motion picture to be produced in Greece in the Greek language but without precluding also the use of other languages
4. The director to be of Greek origin, though foreign directors could also be allowed if they are of an international calibre and approved by a specially formed committee.
5. For black and white motion pictures three quarters of actors and key production personnel to be Greek.
6. All members of staff employed for the shooting of the motion picture in Greece must be citizens of Greece.
7. All Greek members of staff to be insured in the [state-run] Institute for Social Security
8. Film stock development and the print making to take place in Greece or abroad, by exception, for colour films and 16mm films
9. The motion picture should not be made for the purposes of advertising
10. Motion pictures made outside Greece could be considered Greek if they deal with a subject that is of special interest for the nation (quoted in Soldatos 1999, 163-4, author’s translation in summary form).

Applying this law retrospectively to *Never on Sunday*, it is clear that the film gathers all the relevant elements with the exception of the screenplay. Its foreign filmmaker is allowed under this law as is the fact that part of its post-production took place in France (under h) [“Untitled” 1960]). Significantly, compared to *Zorba the Greek*, a similar production with international aspirations financed by a Hollywood major, *Never on Sunday* utilises a much larger body of above- and below-the-line personnel, which, according to the law, would make it ‘more Greek’ than Greek-Cypriot Cacoyannis’ film. In this respect, it is clear that the status of *Never on Sunday* as a Greek film production had a catalytic effect on the Greek state’s efforts to expand and redefine Greek national cinema, so much so that the relevant legislation and legal definitions were made to fit the ‘extroverted’ and internationalised outlook of Dassin’s film.

**Conclusion: Expanding the Greek Cinema Canon, Revising Greek Film History**

The Greekness of *Never on Sunday* has been invoked, though not discussed, in another historical account of Greek cinema by international film scholar Stratos Constantinidis (2000, 1-12). Constantinidis places such films as *Stella*, *Never on Sunday* and *Zorba the Greek* within the so-called “Third Period of Greek Films” (1950-1975), a period that saw a booming film production in the country (2000, 5). It was during that time that certain Greek films achieved international visibility and Constantinidis cites the above three titles as key examples of this trend. For Constantinidis, the presence of a non-Greek filmmaker on this list does not seem to be a problem, though the lack of further probing on his account implies that Dassin’s presence in Greek cinema was a happy historical happenstance at a time when some Greek films started having aspirations that transcended the borders of the country. Apropos to a conclusion, I would like to explore further some of the conditions that allowed the booming Greek film production of the time to become more aspirational than before and that paved the way for productions of Greek films with an international appeal. As I will demonstrate, despite the Greekness of *Never on Sunday* serving what Peter Lev has called “the distributor’s convenience or legal advantage”(1993, xi), the film’s finance and production deal attracted the attention of several local film industry players who were also actively seeking similar arrangements to develop their business further and who became another party, alongside the Greek government and certain critics and intellectuals interested in redefining Greek national cinema as a cinema with an outward looking profile.

Besides the auspicious conditions during this period that Constantinidis noted, as I mentioned in the introduction to this article, the late 1950s/early 1960s in particular was a period of intense developments in Greek cinema that created a discourse that sought to place it within a more cosmopolitan and international film culture than before. This discourse can be contextualised within broader developments that have to do with the modernisation of the country as a whole following its integration into the Western sphere of political influence after the end of the Greek Civil War that was marked by the defeat of left-wing forces. As Papadimitriou notes, by the 1950s, the country started to experience significant financial growth that was developed primarily through American aid and especially “the encouragement of commercial activities in the context of a free market economy,” with tourism and the service sector in particular recording substantial growth. This growth helped raise living standards significantly, especially in metropolitan areas that continued to expand through massive urbanisation throughout the 1950s and 1960s and inevitably created an affluence that manifested culturally in a “significant increase in consumerism and …the adoption of Western lifestyles” (2006, 5-6).

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that cinema played a pivotal role, not just as a medium that (literally) projected the benefits of modernity and therefore expanded the cultural dimensions of Greek identity in an age of intense social transformations, but also as a business with a potential to contribute substantially to the state’s balance sheet. This was especially in the 1960s when Greek cinema reached its peak years with an average production of approximately 100 films per year (Valoukos 1984) and cinema-going became the main leisure activity for the Greek population, especially in big cities, where expanding audiences continued to patronise theatres playing foreign films while also watching Greek films in large enough numbers to sustain such a level of production, at least in the short term.

Writing specifically about the development of a distinct film culture in Athens in 1962, well-known American literary critic Leslie E. Fiedler, describes the Greek capital as a city that lives and breathes cinema, suggesting that the country has become “as much a fact of the cinema as it once seemed to be a fact of literature” (1962, page not available). With the country’s second biggest city, Thessaloniki, also moving along similar directions, mainly through the cultural organisation and cine-club *Tehni* (established in 1955), which introduced to the city’s cinephiles films from around the world and old and silent Hollywood films (Papadimitriou 2016, 96), it was clear that this outward-looking discourse was neither localised nor minor.

Furthermore, even some of the perennial problems about the lack of facilities that prevented Greek films from achieving high technical qualities had started being addressed, with Soldatos emphatically highlighting that 1958 was a landmark year for Greek cinema as it saw the opening of Studio Alpha, the facilities of which were of an international standard (1999, 392). Around the same time, the Greek government introduced the Greek Cinema Week, a film festival that was originally a sidebar to the 25th International Thessaloniki Trade Fair. The festival, which later was renamed the Thessaloniki Film Festival, was envisaged from the start as an international event that would provide opportunities for the promotion of Greek cinema beyond the borders of the country, with Papadimitriou describing the Festival as “extrovert and ambitious from the start” and as “ a nurturing environment for Greek quality cinema through institutionally sanctioned exposure [that] would also bring it into closer contact with international developments in the art of cinema” (2016, 96).

Within all these developments it is not surprising that factions of the Greek film industry at the time wanted an outward looking Greek cinema, especially when the news of inward investment from Hollywood for *Never on Sunday* became known. In an article that appeared in *Film Daily* as *Never on Sunday* was still in production, Halsey Raines described the interest of many Greece-based producers in a Greek cinema that transcended the Greek borders. Their interest stemmed from the fact that the Greek theatrical market was very limited in terms of the financial returns it could offer for the producers of Greek films, with $100,000 seen as an impenetrable ceiling in terms of how much a Greek film could gross (Raines 1959). With no other ancillary markets available in the country (terrestrial television did not arrive until 1967), there was little incentive for large investments, which explains why budgets (and quality) for Greek films remained generally very low, even during these booming times, with the *New York Times* identifying Greek films costing as low as $15,000 (Raines 1960).

But even before the news of United Artists’ investment in *Never on Sunday*, some of the major players in Greek film production had started exploring, and not only at a discursive level, the possibility of extending their business outside Greece. Leading film producer Finos Film co-produced art Greek film *The River* (Koundouros, 1959) with the American Justin Wilson Productions, while the highly-publicised production of 20th Century Fox’s *Boy on A Dolphin* (Negulesco, 1957), starring Alan Ladd and Sophia Loren in Athens and the nearby island of Hydra, prompted a number of Greek producers to start exploring the possibility of co-productions with the Hollywood majors. This was especially as the presence of Greece-born Spyros Skouras at the helm of 20th Century Fox was perceived as a major opportunity for arranging such deals given that Skouras himself set up *Boy on A Dolphin* as a runaway production in Greece, reportedly in an effort to help his homeland (Alifragkis 2014, 34).

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that Greek producers and filmmakers, started pressing for developments in both these directions. On the one hand, as Raines reports, some of the leading producers in Greece, including Yiorgos Zervos, Yiorgos Tzavellas, Theofanis Damaskinos and Victor Mihailidis identified distribution outside Greece as one of the key objectives of Greek cinema:

the answer to the relatively little returns from the Greek market…is in pressing constantly for a wider distribution, making deals for dubbing in France, Germany and Italy, seeking co-production with companies in those countries and in America, and in pressing for more quality films (Raines 1959, 3).

Coming from unambiguously Greek filmmakers and industry figures, such an agenda clearly locates Greek film production outside the narrow parameters that had defined it so far, while the simultaneous emphasis on co-productions and deals with other countries suggests a much looser emphasis on representations of Greekness for the evolution of Greek national cinema. On the other hand, Finos Film, the most successful film producer in Greece in the 1950s and 1960s, pressed primarily for the establishment of an institutional framework that would make foreign production in Greece easier and less bureaucratic (Valoukos 2011, 26), an argument also made by other industry players such as the director of Studio Alpha, who had leased the facilities to Robert Aldrich for his 1959 film *The Angry Hills* (Germanos 1958). From that perspective the Greek industry stood to benefit as a whole through the production of services, personnel and the development of transferrable skills for Greek practitioners. In the end, it was the latter approach that was easier to implement, which explains the increasing number of runaway productions in 1960s Greece, which in their turn helped further the development of the discourse of cosmopolitanism and internationalisation in Greek film culture: *The Angry Hills*, *Surprise Package* (Donen, 1960, Columbia), *The Guns of Navarone* (Thompson, 1961, Columbia), *It Happened in Athens* (Marton, 1962, Fox), *The 300 Spartans* ([Maté](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0005789?ref_=tt_ov_dr), 1962, Fox).

Hollywood runaway productions continued to come to Greece in the rest of the 1960s but inward investment and co-productions with major international companies were limited to Dassin and especially Cacoyannis who, besides *Zorba the Greek* for 20th Century Fox, made *Electra* (1962) for United Artists and *The Day the Fish Came Out* (1967) again for Fox, while at approximately the same time as *Never on Sunday* he had produced *Eroica* (1960) for Warner Bros. This is because, all the above positive developments never coalesced into a coherent Greek film policy that with the support of the state could have catapulted Greek cinema in the international arena. The country’s volatile socio-political and economic environment, together with the continuation of the organisation of large factions of the Greek film industry in artisanal ways put huge obstacles in the realisation of such efforts. Even the Greek Film Week/Thessaloniki Film Festival’s international dream proved extremely short-lived with 1966 being the one and only year in which the festival featured both Greek and international films in competition. In the following year, and under a newly established military junta (1967-1974) the festival’s directors decided to make it exclusively Greek in its orientation and content, with foreign films shown only out of competition (Papadimitriou 2016, 99). As a result, this particular effort towards internationalisation and cosmopolitanism was suppressed, while the advent of television in the same year (1967) would start mounting significant competition to the films that continued to be produced for local consumption and quickly lead to the dismantling of the Greek film industry in the 1970s.

It would take almost three decades for Greek cinema to recapture some of the success of the 1960s and produce a critical mass of films that would connect with Greek audiences. Of course, by that time the forces of globalisation and neoliberal capital had swept Greece alongside every other country in the filmmaking world and Greek national cinema would be an elastic, multi-faceted concept that would include local productions, co-productions and even diasporic productions. The latter two would routinely include non-Greek actors and other creative personnel, while the language would often be other than Greek. An increasing number of Greek films would participate in a proliferation of film festivals, often winning key awards and signing distribution deals with companies in territories the world over. In such an environment popular film critics and scholars have been much keener to question and explore the parameters that define Greekness in cinema in order to be able to deal with the complexity of film production and of what constitutes ‘the national’ in the 21st Century.

With Greek film studies now well established, perhaps it is time to look back at ‘exceptions’, films that did not fit narrowly defined norms and therefore were placed ‘beyond the scope’ of otherwise important studies. This article expects that will make a modest contribution to this effort, having argued that Jules Dassin’s *Never on Sunday* can be seen as a Greek production that pioneered a Greek national cinema of international ambition that for a variety of reasons was initially short-lived until it re-emerged in recent years. In doing this, the article also exposed the limitations of Greek film history and criticism that had remained oblivious to the idea that national cinema has always been a fluid discursive category rather than a set of practices defined by fixed rules, approaches to representation and the nationality of the filmmaker, especially when it operated within a culture that was becoming increasingly cosmopolitan and internationalised, as was the case of Greece around the time of the film’s release.

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Notes

1. Turkey represented one of the few options for foreign distribution of Greek films, with Skopeteas and Litsa showing that Greek box office hits with Aliki Vougiouklaki such as *Htypokardia sto Thranio*/*Love in the Classroom* (Sakellarios, 1963) were shot at the same time with Turkish actors in the other parts and with the dialogue in Turkish in order to be distributed as a Turkish film (2015). [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. A recent event that brought together members of the Greek film industry with financiers in order to explore new potential funding avenues for Greek films used the word “extroversion” to label intensified efforts of a national film industry to secure transnational funds or co-production opportunities: “Extroversion through Greek Cinema” (Onassis Cultural Center, 29 March 2016, organised by the Wharton Club of Greece and the Hellenic Film Academy). I would like to thank Lydia Papadimitriou who brought the event and the term to my attention. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Indeed, *Stella* was disliked by many Greek film critics for representing Greece as an exotic place where passions run high, an accusation that was also thrown at Dassin’s film. And yet, for Karalis *Stella* is unambiguously a Greek film, irrespective of the representations it puts forward. See also Hadjikyriacou 2011, 187.

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