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Abstract

A number of British writers have produced accounts of their experiences as residents of Greece. These writings are used here to explore the portrayal of the Greek character and way of life by those who, in many cases, claimed to be "experts." The ways in which residents represented the practicalities of living in Greece, and the changes they described as occurring to the country and its people in the decades since the Second World War, are also analyzed. It is argued that the initial—and to some extent continued—representation of the Greeks as pastoral and non-developed was similar to the "exoticization" of southern Europe promoted by anthropologists working "in the field." This was part of a perceived power-differential between those from the "developed West" and the Balkans. Negative aspects of the Greek character—laziness, corruption, sexual predation—could be blamed on Turkish influence. In this way, even those who claimed to be insiders in Greece had recourse to an "Orientalist" discourse when encountering developments or attitudes that they found undesirable.

Throughout the twentieth century there have been travelers from Britain who have decided to make their stay in Greece an extended one. They have done so for a variety of reasons: from working illegally in the tourism industry, to teaching English, or to represent a foreign government or business (Mestheneos 2002:181, 188). Some stayed for more personal reasons: the most common marriage into Greece has been that of a foreign woman marrying a Greek man (Mestheneos 2002:190). In the decades since the Second World War, Greece has become a popular choice for foreigners as a long term retreat. At one point in the 1960s, as Nancy Spain observed at the time, "the whole world seemed to be on a Greek-island-buying jag" (1964:145). *Athens News*, using figures from the National Land Registry, reported in 2004 that, for example, "some 700 estates (520 acres) are owned by foreigners on the Dodecanese islands of Patmos and Symi" (Angelopoulos, Tzilivakis, Shugart, Madden, and Green 2004). Yet, as Elizabeth Mestheneos suggested in a recent book

on minority populations in Greece, "rather little has been written or researched on how foreigners perceive Greek society" (2002:190).

In Britain, a great many accounts of travel in Greece have been published since the end of the Second World War. Indeed, it has been calculated that fifty-four volumes appeared in the period between 1940 and the early 1970s alone (Wills 2005:Appendix 1). To date, these accounts have been under-utilized as sources for understanding how the people of Modern Greece have been viewed in Britain, and the effects of this representation upon Anglo-Greek relations more generally.[1] Many travel writers claimed to offer their readers the "real Greece": a book by John Sykes, for example—who eventually decided *not* to buy a house and live in Greece—was described as a portrait of "the real life of islands of the Greek Aegean" (1965:cover). However, the accounts of those who became *resident* in Greece were designed to command more attention for the veracity of their portrayal of the country and its people. This was not merely due to the length of their stay, but because of their apparent—and often explicitly stated—ambition to adopt the Greek lifestyle and to immerse themselves in a new culture.

In this paper I critically examine the way in which British residents in Greece have represented their experiences of living in the country and amongst its people.[2] In particular, my aim is to consider whether those who claimed to have gone in order to experience *modern* Greece—rather than to lose themselves in the ancient past through visits to monuments[3]—used their ostensibly superior knowledge from that of an "average" tourist to challenge stereotypes used in the representation of Greece within other discourses. I consider the views of these writers against a historical backdrop of changing touristic practices and expectations, and in comparison to other discourses about the Modern Greek people, principally the accounts of those other long-term residents—anthropologists. I begin, however, with a consideration of the way in which residents represented their reasons for taking root in Greece, and how this may have been imagined to have given them a privileged status and superior knowledge to speak about—and for—the Greeks to their British readership.

Reasons for residency in Greece

In the second half of the twentieth century, Greece experienced the full impact of the rise of mass tourism. Visitor numbers to Greece increased dramatically. In 1938, Greece had just 90,000 visitors (Close 2002:55). By 1960, when the first Greek tourism office opened in London, this had risen to 399,000, then to 1.6 million by the end of the decade (Gibbons and Fish 1990:474; Bray and Raitz 2001:82). By 1992, the figure for

tourists from the United Kingdom alone was 2,154,850, rising to an estimated 2,858,360 a decade later (Greek National Tourism Organization 2003). However, it was not merely the *scale* of tourism that was changing, but its *nature* too. As she anticipated another tourist season's arrivals, the Greek journalist Eleni Vlahos noted the increasingly varied backgrounds and interests of visitors: "[p]oor and rich are drawing near, archaeologists and holiday makers, museum folk and lollers on the beach, serious and frivolous persons" (Vlahos 1959:48). Increasingly, holidaymakers were coming to Greece primarily for "sun, sea and sand," the motive that dominated by the end of the century (Gibbons and Fish 1990:473; Jones 1997:3). As James Pettifer has observed in his history of Modern Greece, "although popular interest in the classical world is certainly great . . . . those with a traditional classical education who provided a hard core of independent travelers are on the decline" (1993:79). By the time the sociologist Selanniemi studied Finnish tourists to Greece in the 1990s, a polarization in travelers' habits and expectations could be seen: those who went to Athens did so "because of its cultural and historic distinctiveness," whilst as a choice of destination Rhodes was "in many ways interchangeable with other resorts in 'the south'" (Meethan 2001:76). A report in a British newspaper recently suggested that "although the country hasn't lacked eager tourists, most are in search of the physical pleasures of its beaches and this year the excitements of the Olympic stadiums rather than the cerebral ones of its culture" (Irvine 2004).

Similarly, those British visitors who elected to make their stay in Greece a more permanent one, and who wrote about their experiences in book form, explained their decision in terms of the lifestyle they were anticipating, rather than the historical attractions of the country. Andrew Hammond has recently described how, in the aftermath of the First World War, many travelers expressed "a heartfelt need to escape the misery and carnage that prevailed during the years of conflict" (Hammond 2003:171).[4] Travel became an "active quest for value and meaning" (Hammond 2003:172). Similarly, it has been suggested that one of the motives for increased travel after the *Second* World War was that British people were "fed up with the grief of war and the rationing that lingered on after it" (Bray and Raitz 2001:22). The stated aims of those who went to live in Greece after 1945 echo these ideas of "escape" from life in the West, which had for them become hectic, stressful, and materialistic. Brenda Chamberlain was fleeing a world of "almost-living," in which people "act under compulsion, at the dictates of a machine-driven existence" (1965:22). Charmian Clift and her family rented a house on Kalymnos to escape the dull British weather and a life in which her husband felt as though he was in a cage where "the bars had become

so close and so numerous that you couldn't see out any longer or remember how the sky looked or whether there was anybody left in the world who walked free" (1958:16–18). By the time Clift produced her second travel book, she was living on another (this time unnamed) island, where she describes each of the other foreign residents, like herself, as "a protestant against the rat-race of modern commercialism, against the faster and faster scuttling through an endless succession of sterile days that begin without hope and end without joy" (1959:19). Four decades later, Fionnuala Brennan was expressing her feelings in strikingly similar terms: "This is real life. All that hustle and bustle, the constraints of the nine-to-five job, that rat-race, the traffic jams, the pollution, the drizzle and the grey, that's only half a life" (1998:33–34). Most recently, but recalling her experiences of the 1980s, Sofka Zinovieff has written that "I colluded with Greek friends to create an image of my country as a sort of Dickensian, fog-bound place, and Greece as a land where the sunny skies reflected personal freedoms and passions" (2004:10).

Some residents portrayed their new life in Greece in quite prosaic terms—as having practical benefits or physical pleasures. Nancy Spain explained that, when she was back in Britain, "I find myself thinking wistfully of the warm beaches where I might perhaps lie and recharge my run-down batteries" (1964:64). Neil Macvicar attributed the influx of foreign house-buyers in the 1960s to "[t]he climate and beauty of Corfu, combined with the, then, low cost of living" (1990:136). In the 1980s, Austen Kark was seeking a "retirement home with a difference. Infinite heart's ease with the wine-dark Aegean as back-drop and Homer (in translation) as companion" (Kark 1994:40).

But this simpler existence was represented by many as being of more profound significance, as more fulfilling than life in "the West." Charmian Clift stated that she was seeking "a source, or a wonder, or a sign, to be reassured in our humanity" (1958:19). Peter Levi explained that he first went to Greece as a young man because he was "very hungry for life" (1983:13). Lawrence Durrell, in his account of his residency on Corfu, maintained that "[o]ther countries may offer you discoveries in manners or lore or landscape; Greece offers you something harder—the discovery of yourself" (1945:11).

Within the marketplace of travel writing, and more specifically travel writing about Greece, accounts written by residents were promoted by both authors and publishers as having greater veracity than those produced by travelers who had visited for only a few weeks. The publisher of *Peel Me a Lotus* maintained that Charmian Clift's account was not "merely another family chronicle of life among the peasants" (1958:cover). As a woman who had lived in Kalamata for ten years as the

wife of a Greek, Sheelagh Kanelli criticized in her book those "fly-by-nights who bask on a sunny island for a few months and go home saying how wonderful Greece is" (1965:30). John Mole's recent book was said to offer "Sun, sheep and sea, ruins, retsina—and *real Greeks*" (2004:back cover; my emphasis).

Together, the reasons that many Britons gave for becoming resident—the attractions of the way of life in Greece—and the insistence that their experiences had given them a more informed and insightful view of their adopted country, might lead to the conclusion that their accounts would contain a positive representation of the Greek way of life and of the people themselves. It is this supposition that I intend to examine—and ultimately challenge—in the next section of this article.

The representation by British residents of the Greeks and the Greek way of life

If Greece was to provide an opportunity for escape, it needed to be a place that had yet to experience the ravages of "civilization." In the accounts of British residents, Greece indeed becomes a place behind the times, or perhaps timeless. William Travis's criteria for a place to live were "sea and sunshine, cheap living, picturesque surroundings, unsophisticated neighbours, and a non-industrial society" (1973:50). Until the 1970s, the vast majority of those who wrote about travel in Greece portrayed the lifestyle of the Greeks as essentially primitive, backward, and pastoral (Wills 2003). In a number of genres (travel writing, letters, novels), Lawrence Durrell calls the Greeks "peasants" (1969:32, 194, 229), and he romanticizes their situation as "the naked poverty that brings joy without humiliation" (Durrell 1953:76). Gerald Durrell (writing about his return to Corfu after 21 years) felt that "we were soon enveloped in that curious sense of timelessness that is one of the island's chief charms" (Forte 1964:58). In her 2004 book, Sofka Zinovieff has written of her encounter with people olive-harvesting that "could have been a scene from any time in the last few thousand years" (2004:72). "Here is timeless, rural Greece—catch it before it goes," is the enticement to read John Mole's book of the same year (2004:back cover) (Figure 1). Timelessness was often mentioned in another sense too. Peter Bull "learned that when a time is mentioned, it is purely an approximation" (1967:69). Michael Carroll was unusual amongst residents for commending this "country where the national philosophy wisely maintains that a few hours here or there will make little difference to anyone" (1965:33).

As many recent scholars have noted, accounts of foreign countries do not simply record "reality." Authors' attitudes—and hence their representation in writing of what they see—are affected not merely by

Figure 1. The simplicity and timelessness of Greek building methods: "Manolis and Evangelos bringing up the supplies by donkey to re-build Isterni." From Fionnuala Brennan, 1998, between p. 96 and p. 97. (Reproduced by permission of the author)

their personal backgrounds, but by other discourses: "travel experience involves mobility through an internal landscape which is sculptured by personal experiences and cultural influences as well as journeying through space" (Rojek 1997:53). The idea of Greek simplicity can be related to changes that had occurred in the first decades of the twentieth century to the representation within travel accounts of the people of Greece's neighbouring region, the Balkans. Andrew Hammond has recently shown that the earlier idea of Balkan "primitiveness" did not disappear, but was transformed: "backwardness was often rescripted as simplicity, a signifier of decent, vigorous moral tradition that was indicative more of cultural plenitude than of deficiency" (Hammond 2002:70; cf. Hammond 2003:172). The strangeness of the "other" then became "less the marker of a befuddled and dishonest culture than a vital indication of spiritual depth" (Hammond 2003:173).

The "simplicity" of Greece in British residents' accounts was also reflected in works of another genre—that produced by anthropologists "in the field" in Greece. In the period following the Second World War, there was a new "intellectual curiosity to discover how an anthropologist might approach the study of European society" (Campbell 1992:149),

since this was still a time "when teaching was based on 'exotic' classics" (Kenna 1992:160). Many of the pioneers of modern Mediterranean studies felt that their colleagues working in such classic areas for anthropology as Africa did not see the same value in working geographically—or culturally—closer to home. "I was conscious that being a Mediterraneanist was thought rather odd and not 'real fieldwork' by others" (Kenna 1992:155). Those anthropologists who conducted their work in Greece and other parts of the Mediterranean therefore found ways of demonstrating its equality with that based on other areas of the world. In order to show that the way of life they studied was as "primitive as [that of] every other colleague," Mediterranean anthropologists chose "to work in the marginal areas of the region—in the mountains, in the small peasant communities" (Davis 1977:7). The "earliest research carried out by a British social anthropologist in Greece" was that of John Campbell in 1954–55 (Campbell 1992:148). Yet, according to Michael Herzfeld, "the first full ethnography of an *urban* setting in Greece" was not published until 1989 (foreword to Hirschon 1998:xiii, my emphasis). The life of the people in the rural settlements studied by anthropologists was invariably represented as primitive, slow, and unchanging. The inhabitants of Ernestine Friedl's village, for example, used a "pack saddle of wood and leather . . . of a design that has remained virtually unchanged since Homeric times" (1962:30). As a result of the use of pack animals as transportation, in Friedl's village "the pace of movement is always slow" (1962:16). The Greek communities that anthropologists studied were made to conform to a "vestigially survivalist thesis—that is, an argument that treats the values of local societies as relatively simple features surviving from a prestatist era" (Herzfeld 1987:8). Within anthropological studies then, the "modern" Greeks were frozen as the exotic "Other" within Europe. A direct influence of the writings of anthropologists upon the ideas of resident Britons about Greece is difficult to establish: there are no explicit indications within the accounts that I have studied that residents have read or used anthropological works. One link between the two genres of writing is provided by Sofka Zinovieff, who was an anthropologist studying *kamakia* for her PhD, but who later went to live in Greece with her husband and whose account of life in Athens has recently been published (Zinovieff 1991; Zinovieff 2004). Certainly, as I have argued, the representation of the people of Greece is strikingly similar within both types of account, reflecting common beliefs and assumptions about the subject culture.

As I have demonstrated elsewhere (Wills 2003), the Greek people were portrayed in overwhelmingly positive terms within travel writing of the period following the Second World War. In addition to the simplicity of their lifestyle, they were regularly described as friendly, polite,

generous, hospitable, brave, and physically attractive. But in certain matters, especially practical ones, many British residents represented their new neighbours as grasping and maddeningly inefficient. Charmian Clift and her family rented a house on Kalymnos which was cold, had a leaking roof, and lacked running water (1958:33ff). The landlady disappeared with their rent, and the shortage of cutlery and crockery was only solved by generous donations from the villagers (Clift 1958:38ff). Fionnuala Brennan described her landlords as "cheerfully indifferent" to her family's requests for help (1998:61):

> [they] did not seem to consider that it was their responsibility to mend holes in roofs through which rain poured in muddy streams in winter. Nor were they prepared to pay to have the houses whitewashed, or indeed to carry out any maintenance whatsoever. (Brennan 1998:44)

When she arrived in Athens with her husband, Sofka Zinovieff discovered that letting agents were "playing games with us, trying out outrageously hiked-up prices to test the level of our gullibility" (2004:7).

According to the authors of two recent guidebooks to residency in Greece, there were, similarly, pitfalls for Britons who decided to buy or build, rather than rent, a property. Joanna Styles's opinion was that "[r]ed tape and local business practices can make building your own home a nightmare" (2000:135). Peter Reynolds warned that "Greek completion dates vary wildly with our understanding and timing of 'finished'" (2003:80). The accounts by the residents themselves are similarly negative. Austen Kark experienced a "long-winded and sometimes confusing" process to get planning permission for his house in Nauplion (1994:102–103). Nancy Spain had her "romantic island illusions shattered" by workmen "[w]ho will build what they please, when they please, and only if they please. And then charge you any sum they please" (1964:179). Emma Tennant was unusual in forming a more positive impression of the industry of the Corfiot workmen employed to build her parents' house: "I am astonished by the energy of the men, picks in hand, as they dig deep to make their foundations" (2002:27–28).

More generally, Peter Reynolds warned potential residents: "[b]e prepared for the Greek approach of *ávrio* (tomorrow) when it comes to anything remotely involving paperwork" (2003:11). Applying for residency or a work-permit required attendance at the *Aliens' Bureau* which, according to an Athens-published guide for those intending to live in the capital, "is always full, the staff are overworked and swamped with paper, and you will have to traipse from desk to desk collecting signatures and rubber stamps" (Moses 1978:37). Glyn Hughes experienced similar bureaucratic nightmares when he first arrived in Greece and tried to legalize his marriage to his Greek wife:

> we make many futile trips. We go to offices where a clerk angrily sends us elsewhere for preliminary forms before we bother him; to offices where we are rudely told that we have brought the wrong papers or papers improperly stamped; and to offices which are closed, or have removed. (Hughes 1976:51)

When Austen Kark tried to bring his car into Greece, he was left "fuming about the absurdity of the regulations" (1994:265). He was also told that getting a telephone installed might take five to ten years due to the backlog of requests (Kark 1994:105). Emma Tennant found that the fame she had acquired through the publication of her first travel book did not in practice get her very far with the Corfiot authorities:

> my mother's struggle in the government offices to obtain permission to buy a car was lessened by the sudden intervention of the policeman on duty there, who recognised the address and announced proudly that his English wife Kate was reading the book. (None of this prevented another week's wait, as the island had inexplicably run out of number plates, making the car uncollectable.) (Tennant 2003:23)

However, some residents claimed that the Greek authorities were not only long-winded and inefficient, but corrupt as well. Sofka Zinovieff describes the system of connections and sometimes bribery that would speed up the process of application for citizenship (2004:43–44, 73–74). She professes to become "annoyed when Greece lives up to its stereotype as an unreliable, dishonest place" (Zinovieff 2004:157).

But from where did this stereotype derive? The negative aspects of the portrayal of the Greeks—laziness, inefficiency, lack of timekeeping, corruption—can be seen as part of an Orientalist discourse. Some British residents explicitly noted the "oriental" aspects of Greece: "in my ignorance I had dreamed of a classical Greece, but in fact, this is already the East, another world than that of Western Europe" (Chamberlain 1965:24) (Figure 2). Zinovieff views the system of officials doing favours for people, in return for gifts, as "an old Muslim institution" (Zinovieff 2004:161), that sits alongside other Turkish survivals such as food and language (Zinovieff 2004:224ff). As has been well documented by a number of scholars, Turks have been often portrayed as the antithesis of Europe, having negative qualities including "shiftiness, double-dealing, illiteracy, influence-peddling and rule-bending, disrespect for norms and admiration for cunning individuals who could twist them for their own advantage" (Herzfeld 1987:35–36). In nineteenth century British travel accounts, it became common for the Turks to be "configured as almost pre-historic in their barbaric indolence" (Turner 1999:128). Reinhold Schiffer has recently shown how 1930s travellers to the Middle East, like their nineteenth century counterparts, contrasted the "Protestant

Figure 2. "Turkish" influence in Greece: "Man Smoking Hookah in the Street." From Glyn Hughes, 1976, Fair Prospects: Journeys in Greece. *London: Gollancz, following p. 48. (Reproduced by permission of The Orion Publishing Group Limited, London)*

work ethic, i.e., to work strenuously for their earthly bliss (and, hopefully and indirectly, for their heavenly bliss)," with the Muslim fatalistic outlook which the Westerners saw as leading to apathy (2001:313–316). Penny Travlou has noted how, in recent guidebooks to Athens, it is only the unpleasant aspects of the Greek character—ugliness, or poor service—that are attributed to Oriental influence (Travlou 2002:112). When British residents in Greece encountered what they found strange, undesirable or inconvenient in the Greeks, individually or collectively, they fell back onto familiar literary characterizations of the Middle East.

However, as early as the 1950s, some writers living in Greece were arguing that tourism and modernisation were leading to the end of the static, timeless, way of life. On Cyprus, Lawrence Durrell found that the "peasant was already becoming a quaint relic of a forgotten mode of life" (1957:34). Neil Macvicar wrote of the Greek village at the end of the 1980s that it was "a matter for question how much longer it can survive in its traditional character" (1990:47). By 2004, Sofka Zinovieff was claiming that the closest many Greeks got to the land was a reality television show called *The Farm* (Zinovieff 2004:184). But for many of these British observers, change was not considered desirable. It threatened to bring to an end the Greece that had seemed so attractive to the outsider, and to usher in the worst qualities of the West. Tim Salmon, writing of his life in remote areas of northern Greece (apparently in the late 1970s and 1980s), did not agree with "progressive ideas, for they are the spreaders of concrete, fellers of trees and builders of dams, destroyers of butterflies, birds and spiders in the name of Progress and Development" (1995:141). Zinovieff describes Athens as surrounded by "wound-like cuts of new roads and construction sites" (2004:4). Fionnuala Brennan felt that "[t]hese modern, cement-block monstrosities, bristling with steel rods which poke through the roof, these are abominations" (1998:193). Glyn Hughes, writing in the 1970s, criticized a coast road built by Karamanlis's government:

> I say that a man who loved his country wouldn't have built a road for thirty kilometres all the way at the edge of the sea; he would have taken the road inland here and there, so as to leave at least some part where you can walk or sit untroubled by the vicious life of the road. (Hughes 1976:136)

The sociologist Mark Jones, in his 1997 study of tourism on Spetses, recorded a similar reaction when he informed a British couple that the island's main road had been tarmacked:

> Oh no! That was part of the charm about the island. We like the feel of the dirt road. We like walking. It's best at night just to wander off under the stars and the smell of the pine trees. It's heaven. It's a shame about the road though. (Jones 1997:42)

Many writers were critical of what they regarded as the poor taste of the new touristic environment, of the products the shops now sold, and of the atmosphere that had been created. Neil Macvicar described how "his" village had been transformed by tourism: "an unplanned, graceless jumble of hotels, apartments, tavernas, cafes, discotheques, mini-markets and shacks selling souvenirs and sun-tan lotion" (1990:121). Sofka Zinovieff writes that "the once pretty villages are now swamped with advertising hoardings and tasteless new developments" (2004:219). Macvicar, from his position as a homeowner in Corfu, observed of the 1990s building boom: "[e]very landowner, however humble, was either building or about to build, for letting, or investment, or, it sometimes seemed, just to keep up with the Ioannous" (Macvicar 1995:29). Tim Salmon condemned the new blocks of flats:

> they would be noisy and cramped, cold in winter and hot in summer: much less well adapted to their environment than the old stone houses. Yet they were apartment blocks—*polikatikíyes:* magic symbols of progress and the good life. (Salmon 1995:208)

In becoming "modern," Greece would seem to be drawing closer to the "West." John Mole observed that his "villagers were proud of the new illuminated Shell sign, which showed that they were European" (2004:222). However, the representation by British residents of the manner in which this "modernisation" is adopted by the Greeks is, again, part of a discourse of separation, of otherness, from "the West." The anthropologist Michael Herzfeld has written of the British view of Greece at the time of its emergence as a new nation in the nineteenth century, that: "delivered from its oriental yoke, [it] was a child of its antique past, one that had failed to mature in the manner of the West" (1987:55). At the time of its Independence, Greece could be simultaneously respected as the birthplace of European culture, and looked down upon as a primitive backwater in its present state. It was believed that Greece, as an infant nation, would require nurturing, guidance, and possibly discipline, from the Western European Powers. This was similar to (slightly later) attitudes towards the control of the British Empire at its height, at the turn of the nineteenth/twentieth centuries: an "oriental" territory like Egypt was given an "all-embracing Western tutelage," but was also believed to be "something one disciplines (as in a school or prison)" (Said 1985:35, 40). The British argument was that the peoples of the "East" were "childlike," and "did not have it in them to know what was good for them" (Said 1985:37, 40). The people of the West had become the teachers, and this included culturally. In the twentieth century, Ashley Smith (not a resident) commented that the artistic products he saw during his visit to Greece "look as if six-year-old

children could turn them out. Homer drawn in chalks on a plate" (1948:51).

This idea of the Greeks as a child-like people helps to explain the reactions of British residents to the changes they observed in the twentieth century. In building roads, houses, and tourist facilities, the Greeks were adopting the desired standards of "the West." Yet they were, in the eyes of British residents, unable to do so in the manner of the West. Peter Bull, for example, bemoaned that the Greeks had "taken so eagerly to the worst plastic and neon excesses" (1967:26). In contrast, the European people of the West had learned how to deal with such changes. As Vasiliki Galani-Moutafi has observed as part of her work studying the reactions of American students to the consequences of modernisation on Lesvos, there is "an attitude of cultural supremacy, associated with the notion that technological advancement facilitates a mastery of environmental and even social problems" (2001:100). Sofka Zinovieff identifies an identity crisis when she quotes a (Greek) friend as asking "Can Greece become European without losing her soul?" (2004: 158). The *aspiration* of Greece to be "European," and recognized as such, of course has a long history. As early as 1844, the Greek prime minister of the time had apparently declared his country to be "'in the center of Europe'" (Fleming 2000:1232). In the 1990s, a mayor of Athens similarly introduced his city to tourists as "'the historical capital of Europe'" (Travlou 2002:126). But, as Mark Mazower and others have demonstrated, the Balkans and, by geographical association Greece, were regarded as "an intermediate cultural zone between Europe and Asia—in Europe but not of it" (Mazower 2000:9). By representing the Greeks as unable to *successfully* change and cope with Western-style Progress, British residents were challenging the idea of Greece as fully European.

As I have suggested, in the way that they embraced change during the second half of the twentieth century the Greeks were being written of as a race of children who, in setting out to imitate adults, merely succeeded in adopting all their worst habits. This view extended to their sexual behaviour. Whilst Michael Carroll observed that "a strong puritanical feeling" was the norm in the Greek islands of the mid-1960s (Carroll 1965:143), by the late 1980s Neil Macvicar was commenting upon the "gradual deterioration in standards of behaviour" he observed among the Greeks, including the "new permissive standards of sexual behaviour" (Macvicar 1990:143–144). This change was by some writers attributed to bad habits acquired from or inspired by the tourists of the West:

> The foreign girl who thinks that all Greeks are prepared for anything, does not realise that in places untouched by tourists it is unlikely that a man will make a pass at her . . . . only in those areas more influenced by Athenians

> and foreigners the vicious circle expands, and no one knows who was the first seducer. (Matthews 1968:124–127)

Various resident writers—including Brennan and Kark—noted the activities of *kamakia* (Brennan 1998:26; Kark 1994:121). Kark observed in the late 1980s "a pair of *kamakia*" at work in a taverna: "Kamaki means harpoon, and it is girls not whales who are pursued. The underlying assumption is that Greek girls are untouchable until spoken for—they have parents and brothers—while foreign girls are available" (Kark 1994:121). As part of her anthropological study, Sofka Zinovieff discovered that, from the 1960s onwards, some men in the town of her study had joined semi-formal "clubs," where they compared notes on their sexual techniques and conquests. Zinovieff found that *kamakia* conventionally regarded foreign men as "sexually inadequate, unable to look after their women or to prevent them going off in search of supposedly superior Greek lovers" (1991:212). One Greek woman that Brennan spoke to felt that the local young people "'are only interested in money, pop music, fashion, and making *kamaki*'" (1998:217). But this portrayal of sexual predation is not merely due to the new corruption brought by tourists from the West; it also plays out a Western obsession with the trope of the immoral "Orient" as a place of "dangerous sex" (Said 1985:167). This has manifested itself in recent times, for example, in the film and television characterisation of the "Arab" as "an oversexed degenerate" (Said 1985:287). But since the nineteenth century, "the East" has been believed to contain not merely predatory men, but also the *opportunity* for sex of a "libertine and less guilt-ridden" sort, and many (though mostly male) travelers have written of their search for it (Said 1985:190). Greek men were, therefore, themselves reproducing (and appropriating) an Orientalist discourse, when they claimed to be able to offer better sex than could be provided by lovers from the West.

In her account of her residency, Sofka Zinovieff becomes "tired of hearing the refrain" of the Greeks blaming the Turkish occupation for their own failings: "These centuries became an excuse, a convenient coverall: for unreliability, lateness, corruption, too many 'eastern elements,' too much Americanization, the lack of progress, too much progress" (2004:231). She worries that she "might become one those horrific ex-pats, who only see problems everywhere in Greece" (Zinovieff 2004:19). In his recent novel *Corfu*, Robert Dessaix has a character comment upon resident foreigners who are "complaining about the sloppiness of everything" (2002:13). Some British residents have conceded that not all of the changes generated by increased visitor numbers have been negative:

> In this latest visit to Rovinia, what stands out most is the way the island [Corfu] is changing, thanks to tourism, and how some of the changes, contrary to received opinion, actually improve the way life is lived here, for residents and visitors alike. The airport, once a series of dismal sheds with a sense of hopelessness induced by a frequently broken luggage carousel and toilets which can only be described as old-style Greek, is now huge and gleaming. (Tennant 2003:22)

Over thirty years earlier, Lawrence Durrell had similarly felt that "many of the changes bemoaned by others have only added amenities that the country sadly lacked before—the inter-island telephones for example, the new roads, the little tourist hotels" (1969:286). Such facilities—telephones, airport infrastructure, modern plumbing—were approved of by residents as representing positive Progress, because these were of direct benefit to themselves. It was thought desirable for Greece to reform *some aspects* of itself, to meet certain expectations of those from "the West." A metaphor for this process can be found in the story recounted by Sofka Zinovieff of a hotel that was being refurbished so that it was "brought into line with EU directives on hygiene" (2004:35).

Conclusion

English-speaking residents of Greece, like many other writers of travel accounts, attempted to distance themselves from "mere" *tourists*, preferring to give themselves a more elevated status as "'nonexploitative' visitors, motivated not by the lazy desire for instant entertainment but by the hard-won battle to satisfy their insatiable curiosity about other countries and peoples" (Holland and Huggan 1998:2). This is shown, for example, by the times when they attempted to align themselves with the local people to bemoan change and the effects of increased tourism on Greece: "the old men have nowhere to play backgammon and the noise from nightclubs and restaurants keeps the villagers angrily awake until dawn" (Brennan 1998:216).[5] As *insiders*, British residents claimed more weight for their opinions and their representation of the Greeks than the travel accounts produced by other, more fleeting, visitors. Brennan, for example, argued that "islomanes are a special breed," who "belong[ed] to Paros as her adopted children" (1998:208).

However, at the same time, British residents in Greece chose to separate themselves from the natives. Fionnuala Brennan explicitly stated that "we foreigners will always be outsiders on Paros" (1998:208). In their writings, this distancing was achieved through the representation of the characteristics and lifestyle of the people, at least at first, as simpler and unchanging; descriptions of the ways in which foreigners were treated by Greeks, including landlords, builders, and officials; and,

at times, a rather patronizing attitude towards the "modernization" of the country. Britons claimed to be going to Greece to start a new life, yet many apparently wanted the Greek lifestyle only on their own terms. John Mole confessed that "the English sense of tradition is nostalgia for an imagined past and not the discomfort and inconvenience of the real thing" (2004:4–5). Neil Macvicar believed that some "changes were overdue," but he cites ones which were desirable not merely to the local people but were expected features of his own comfortable (Western European) lifestyle—piped water, electricity, and a telephone (1990:135). Changes to the infrastructure of Greece that were regarded as negative—roads, ugly or shoddy buildings, tacky souvenir shops, nightclubs—were explained in terms which reduced the Greeks to the status of children who didn't know better. Some aspects of the portrayal of the Greeks reproduced and perpetuated stereotypes of "otherness"—of laziness, corruption, sexual predation, and the lack of a sense of time—which were related to representations of Turks and Balkan peoples more generally.

In *The Independent*, a British newspaper, George Kassimeris reviewed the reporting in the media of the preparations for the 2004 Olympics in Athens: "When was the last time there was a positive headline about the Athens Games? From day one, the story has been about delays, missing roofs, power outrages, over-runs, political clashes, corruption" (Kassimeris 2004). In a magazine article, Kate Collyns similarly suggested that "the British press decided several years ago that the Greek Games would be a comic disaster, and are unwilling to change their view" (2004:9).[6] Greek corruption and inefficiency were likewise the major themes within the media reporting of the British planespotters brought to trial for espionage in 2002. *The Guardian*, for example, reported at the time that the scene in the courtroom resembled either "a Greek tragedy or a farce" (Smith and Wilson 2002). As I hope I have demonstrated, some of these stereotypes of Greece and its people have been reinforced and reproduced by the very people who professed to know their subjects best—not distant journalists, but those who lived among them.

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NOTES

[1] There has yet to be published a full-scale study of travel writing about Greece of the twentieth century. Eisner (1991), Cocker (1992), and Calotychos (2003) include chapters about selected authors. Wills 2003 (unpublished) covers the period from 1940 until the early 1970s.

[2] I have characterised a travel writer as a "resident" if it appears from their account that they have spent a year or more living in Greece, having one main abode during that time (rented or bought), although they may have also traveled around the country more extensively. The main published texts by British residents in Greece I have used in this study are: Brennan (1998), Bull (1967), Carroll (1965), Chamberlain (1965), Church (2002), Clift (1958), Clift (1959), Durrell (1945), Durrell (1953), Durrell (1957), Hughes (1976), Kanelli (1965), Kark (1994), Levi (1983), Macvicar (1990), Macvicar (1995), Matthews (1968), Matthews (1971), Mole (2004), Salmon (1995), Spain (1964), Tennant (2002), Tennant (2003), Travis (1973), and Zinovieff (2004). It should be noted that Kanelli was born in South Africa, though educated in England; Clift was Australian, but her immediate motivation for going to Greece was to flee from London where she was living and working; Brennan is Irish.

[3] For more on the reactions of travelers to specific ancient sites in Greece see Wills 2004 (Olympia, Delphi and Mycenae) and Wills 2005 (Athens and Sparta).

[4] Helen Carr agrees with Hammond that "one of the most pervasive moods in travel writing of the inter-war years is a certain world-weariness" (2002:81). Paul Fussell, in his pioneering study of travel writing, viewed the prime motive for travel in that period as *escape*, from a dull and exhausted Britain (1980:16ff).

[5] I cannot here consider at length Greek perceptions of the touristic changes around them. Cornelia Zarkia (1996) provides a useful case-study in English of local reactions to tourism on Skyros.

[6] Brian Church, long-time resident of Athens and self-confessed fan of the Modern Greeks, predicted in an update to his column for *Athens News* that "the Athens Games will be an enjoyable success" (2002:97). Following the Games, the same newspaper reported a "definitive shift in global media opinion," as "the flagships of the world's mainstream press plead 'Sorry' for their past doubts about a successful Athens Olympics" (Yannopoulos 2004).

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