

PhD SUMMARY

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Title of the dissertation: *The “old papers” of Michel Mitsakis and the books of the others. The publication history of the writings of M. Mitsakis as a challenge to the relationship between editorial practices and literariness through.*

Thesis overview

The dissertation will explore the relation between the question on literariness¹ and print culture² in Modern Greece, in the period between the late 19th century and the first post-war years. More precisely, the study will focus on the ways that aspects of the print culture are linked with the definition of major literary identities, such as *work* and *author*, as well as on the intense relations between institutions, publishers, critics and the public within the literary field³. In order to approach this subject, we chose the case of the writings of Michel Mitsakis, that have been published and circulated throughout the period of our interest. The publishing history of his writings will be presented in three distinct phases: (1) publication of Mitsakis’ writings in the press of his days, while he was still alive, (2) posthumous editions of his “work”, (3) edition and circulation of the writings of his period of madness.

¹ In line with the critical schools of New Historicism and New Bibliography, we consider that all texts, including literary or texts or texts of criticism, are historically and socially conditioned. In this study, the question *what is literary?* will be approached in relation with the historical and material conditions under which literature is produced and perceived, while we will trace aspects of the history of Modern Greek Literature, as an *institution*.

²Print culture is defined as follows by Carla Hesse in her study «Books in time»: “the stabilization of written culture into a canon of authored texts, the notion of the author as creator, the book as property and the reader as an elective public” (στο Nunberg Geoffrey (ed.), *The future of the book*, University of California Press, 1996, p.21. Carla Hesse would however become the first to replace the term with the more adapt *circuit du livre* coined by Roger Chartier. Hesse translates the terms in English as *the civilization of the book* or simply *the modern literary system*.

³ As defined by Pierre Bourdieu in his famous work *The rules of art. Genesis and structure of the literary field*. Stanford University Press, 1996. The bourdieuan concept will be applied on the case of Modern Greek literature of the late 19th century.

The texts by Mitsakis that will be referred to include writings beyond the traditional notion of the literary: letters, journalistic reports, personal notes, scribbles. None of the texts by Mitsakis circulated in the form of a *book* during his lifetime, because their literariness was considered as problematic for the Modern Greek literary canon of the later 19th century. The thesis aspires to demonstrate that the publication (or not) of texts and the specific editorial practices are actually *theory in action*, a critical gesture that defines the *inside* and the *outside* of literature and forms the canon.

Methodological context

The study follows the thread of critical thought exploring the relationship between literature and print, exactly at the moment when the terms of this relationship undergo a major shift. Considering that the Greek bibliography of theory and criticism is deficient in works attempting a theoretical reflection on print culture and how it has been crucial in forming the modern notion of literariness, especially after the 19th century, this dissertation will adopt both a historical and a theoretical stance.

Methodological tools of New Historicism and textual criticism, as represented by Jerome McGann will be used, while we will also consider theoretical works on textual materiality as the ones proposed by Katherine Hayles and Johanna Drucker. An interdisciplinary approach is necessary in order to tackle the issues brought up by the thesis: the Intellectual Socio-cultural History of Roger Charier and Hayden White, as well Bourdieu's sociology will be a constant reference. While adopting this approach, we will also apply the practices of (traditional) post-structural criticism, namely those of Derrida and Foucault, when emphasizing the theoretical implications of book history.

Proposed structure

1. The first chapter will be dedicated to texts by Mitsakis published in periodicals and newspapers during his lifetime. Most importantly, we will refer to (1) texts of criticism on his works published by his contemporaries, (2) Mitsakis's letters and notes where he positions himself *vis-à-vis* the representatives of the literary canon, while revealing his complex relationship (of acceptance/ denial) with book as an agent of institutionalized literature.

2. The second chapter will comment the two posthumous editions of Mitsakis writings by Tagkopoulos (1922) and Peranthis (1953) and the overall endeavor to construct a Mitsakean Work, corresponding to the rules of the Modern Greek national literature.
3. The third chapter will be dedicated with the publication (1956) in French of the writings and notes of Mitsakis written during his madness. This publication by psychiatrist Aggelos Caracalos is a critical gesture that questions the contours of literariness; the theoretical implications of this gesture will be studied throughout this chapter.

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