

Family, Gender and the Emotional Economy in Tsemberopoulos' *The Enemy Within*

Angie Voela

University of East London

a.voela@uel.ac.uk

Introduction

The Enemy Within/O Exthros Mou (2013) was screened at the 58th London Film Festival (2014), at the Ritzy cinema in Brixton. I remember sitting at the last row, by the exit. The auditorium was full. The plot: a father takes revenge for his daughter's rape, killing the perpetrator. For the best part of the film both the protagonist and the audience are led to believe that the perpetrator was an immigrant. The film explores the frightful balance of misconceptions, paranoid projections and defenses of a 'society under siege'¹. Athens in recent decades has witnessed an influx of immigrants, political turmoil and an economic decline with huge social consequences. Xenophobia and the rise of fascism, as is often the case, followed. The hero of *The Enemy Within*, Costas Stasinou (Manolis Mavromatakis), is a mild-mannered man of progressive leftwing convictions caught up in all these; a tragic figure imploding under personal trauma and pressure to defend an antiquated code of family honor, befuddled by the racist rants of his neighbor and the exhortations of his father in law.

As the lights went on, I noticed the director standing next to me, in the aisle. I gave him an emphatic thumbs up. He whispered 'thank you' and headed for the Q&A. Thinking of the film on the way home, I realized I was bothered by the silence of the women, the mother, Rania (Maria Zorba) and the daughter, Louisa (Ariadni Kavalierou), who thought they could carry on with their lives forgetting the incident completely. In the film's Facebook page the

¹ Bauman (2002) uses the term 'society under siege' to describe how Western societies respond to the emotional uncertainties of globalisation, economic and spatial changes and the influx of immigrants. The term highlights the defensive reaction of the West and the projection of any adverse changes onto the immigrants.

reviews and comments read: 'he had the perfect life' – how about 'they had' or 'she had', and how 'perfect' was their life? 'One moment changed everything' – why not 'rape'? Is it so difficult to say things by their name?

As an event which overwhelms the individual and disrupts family life, the rape in *The Enemy Within* shows how vulnerability after a trauma can lead to extreme or untypical behaviors. A trauma is an event which incapacitates the internal system of care that gives people a sense of control, connection to others and meaning. Shock and denial often follow as the victim's world-view and sense of self are shattered. In such cases, it may be easier to believe that the bad other comes from outside the racial or national group. Trauma also shows how fragile social and family relations can be. The liberal father regresses to patriarchal behaviors which would normally be considered incompatible with his progressive beliefs. The silence of the women, on the other hand, chimes with the continuing reluctance of Greek society to address rape openly as an important issue². These issues should not be overlooked, especially since racism and patriarchal attitudes towards women have common roots in defensive psychic formations³.

The Greek sense of the self is intimately linked to the family⁴ and no one should dismiss the importance of the institution. However, we should try to challenge the fantasy of the ideal family, the happy, safe, private unit set apart from the turmoil of the *polis*. The trauma as *event*, as an unexpected rupture in the normal flow of life, brings to the fore inherent and deeply rooted tensions. The modern Greek family, and by extension any 'normal' family, is a locus of gender conflict, discord as much as consent, secrecy as much as openness, and regressive tendencies as much as amicable dialectical progress. The family is also political, since acts committed in its name are political and the bonds that bind its members are mapped on civic institutions. This is the case of both Costas Stasinou's decision to take the law into his own hands and Louisa's decision to remain silent (both discussed below). In that sense, the 'enemy within' is not the Greek criminal who was mistaken for an immigrant, nor

² Softas-Nall, Vasilias, Bardos, Achilles, and Fakinos, Michael, 'Fear of Rape: its Perceived Seriousness and Likelihood Among Young Greek Women', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34/1 (2010), 190-196.

³ Joffe, Helen, *Risk and the Other* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1999).

⁴ Avdela, Efi, *Dia Logous Timis; Via, Synaisthimata kai Axies stin Metemfyliaki Ellada [In the Name of Honour: Gender Violence, Emotions and Values in Post-War Greece]* (Athina: Nefeli 2002).

‘the little fascist within’ lurking in any progressive man or woman, ready to blame the ‘other’ at a moment of crisis, but the unexamined assemblages of individual agencies and collective socio-political values that crumble under pressure.

The relationship between Greek individuality and family is complex. The former is usually discussed either in comparison to the ‘advanced’ and ‘cold’ individualism of the European north and the United States, or in terms of how traditional kinship bonds were altered by Greece’s long and as yet unfinished passage into economic modernity and urbanisation, which started in the early 20th century. It is rarely examined in terms of the neoliberal values that mature capitalism promotes or erosion of collective values or with reference to the citizen’s relationship to the Law and the State. Admittedly, such relationships are rarely put to the test at times of prosperity. Although the film does not comment directly on Greece’s full blown economic crisis, it does draw on the early signs: lack of resources by the police to investigate the rape properly, poverty in the streets of Athens, the daily struggle of small businesses, like the protagonist’s, to survive.

A central concern of the film is the continuous search for answers by progressive individuals to questions like: how to maintain faith in institutions; how to be a good citizen and a good parent; how to instill progressive values to one’s children; how to be hospitable to newcomers and strangers. These questions, or better, this continuous pursuit, is best articulated in the film by Costas’ friend and voice of progressive conscience, Achilleas (Antonis Karistinos). In that sense, *The Enemy Within* is primarily an exploration of contemporary ideological beliefs and ethical pursuits in the face of the unexpected and the traumatic. It reflects both local and universal concerns.

Below I discuss the personal and collective dimensions of the protagonist’s act and his daughter’s silence. I address the political significance of Costas Stasinou’s killing of the rapist with reference to Giorgio Agamben’s (1998) ‘state of exception’, and his transformation from law-abiding citizen to honor-bound killer with reference to psychoanalysis. Louisa’s attitude to rape is discussed with reference to feminist writings which propose that silence can be a form of resistance. My reading of the film concerns both its subject matter and its appeal to the audience. The ending of *The Enemy Within* is poignant and highly symbolic. Despite being the main suspect for the rapist’s murder, Costas Stasinou is never charged,

due to lack of conclusive evidence. In the very last scene he walks free from the police station and finds refuge in the central reservation of the busy street, his face blank with guilt and exhaustion. It is hard not to feel pity for this tragic figure, stranded on the traffic island outside the police station, the symbolic place of the Law, literally getting away with murder. However, I argue, if we give in to pity we take our eyes off the irresolute tensions building up in the film, especially those concerning the specificity of the women's experience. Thus, we can only do justice to the film's complex dynamics of values, politics, trauma and gender if we refuse to be seduced by the failed masculine heroism, the return of patriarchal values and the interminable mourning for their demise.

Fathers and family values

The argument that contemporary masculinity is in crisis is mainstream in Film and Cultural Studies and usually refers to the erosion of traditional hegemonic masculinity⁵. In European cinema masculine vulnerability is often represented as not knowing how to behave 'like a man' in certain circumstances or making desperate attempts to redeem masculinity⁶. In the United States contemporary independent cinema tends to focus on the failure of traditional masculinity⁷ and the demise of the 'strong' man,⁸ while Hollywood continues to promote heroic masculinity, especially when it comes to defending one's family⁹. In films of the latter kind, for instance, a father has to defend his children in the face of an external threat (e.g. natural disaster, invasion, act of terrorism), discovering qualities he did not know he possessed and reaffirming his commitment to the paternal role. The rationale behind such plots is simple; one cannot influence the course of the world, but one can at least defend

⁵ See for instance MacKinnon, Kenneth, *Representing Men: Maleness and Masculinity in the Media* (London: Arnold 2003), and Edwards, Tim, *Cultures of Masculinity* (London: Routledge 2006).

⁶ See Powrie Phil, Davis Anne, Babington Bruce, *The Trouble With Men, Masculinities in European and Hollywood Cinema* (London: Wallflower Press 2004); Robinson Sally, 'Emotional Constipation and the Power of Damned Masculinity', in Peter Lehman, ed., *Masculinity, Bodies, Movies, Culture* (New York: Routledge 2001); Walsh, Fintan, *Male Trouble: Masculinity and the Performance of Crisis* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2010).

⁷ See for instance, *A Serious Man* (Ethan and Joel Cohen 2009); *Beasts of the Southern Wild* (Behn Zeitlin 2012).

⁸ Morag, Raya, 'Defeated Masculinity: Post-traumatic Cinema after the Vietnam War', *The Communication Review* 9 (2006), 189-219; Cisco King, Cecilia, *Washed in Blood: Male Sacrifice, Trauma and the Cinema* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press 2012); Peberdy, Donna, *Masculinity and Film Performance: Male Angst in Contemporary American Cinema* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2011); Benziman, Galia, 'Author, Father, President: Auster's Figures of Invisibility', *Canadian Review of American Studies* 43/3 (2013), 462-479.

⁹ The 2005 version of *War of the Worlds* (Spielberg 2005) is a typical example: when Earth is attacked by aliens, an indifferent father confronts a series of serious dangers in order to protect his children. See also *2012* (Emmerich 2009); *White House Down* (Emmerich 2013).

one's family¹⁰. It chimes with the erosion of collective social values that Lynne Layton¹¹ calls amoral familialism, especially in cases where defending one's family is coupled with vulnerability. The disavowal of vulnerability often takes the form of retaliation which can also be understood as a profound failure in the caretaking environment.

In *The Enemy Within* vulnerability and trauma erupt into ordinary life unexpectedly. Ordinariness, care and affection are introduced early in the film. Costas Stasinou, a horticulturalist by profession, is shown in the opening scene treating an azalea under a magnifying glass, handling the plant with care. Later he meets his wife after work. In the car he treats her to some chocolate. In Achilleas's bar the couple have a quiet drink leaning affectionately on one another. At home they prepare dinner and talk with their son about school. Louisa is late. When she comes back she asks to borrow one of her dad's LPs to lend to a friend, promising to return it without a scratch or finger marks. Costas' and Rania's home is burgled that night.

The burglary and rape sequence is punctuated by the scene of the aftermath at the hospital. Fragments of the traumatic event keep coming back to Costas as flashbacks, showing how the event has already shattered linear temporality: a flashing light in the parents' bedroom, and then a doctor at the hospital asking Costas if he can remember his name. Costas pleading with the intruders not to harm the children, hands being tied behind his back; a glimpse of his son. Asking after his wife at hospital, being told both her and Louisa are alright. Hugging his son in the hospital corridor; cut to the dark interior of the house; Louisa's room, the masked rapist approaching Louisa who tries to escape screaming 'daddy'; cut to Costas crawling on the floor, looking helplessly in the direction of the room, rhythmic thudding coming from inside. At the hospital he asks for Louisa to be examined 'gynaecologically'; cut to the dark corridor, Costas still crawling towards Louisa's bedroom, the rapist exiting and sadistically placing his foot on Costas' face as if intending to crush him. The confusion of the home scene is compounded by close ups of tied limbs, gagged mouths and helpless eyes; off screen sounds, rapid camera movements, medium shots from the perspective of different actors (e.g. the burglars, Costas, the camera-as- external viewer)

¹⁰ Gunn, Joshua, 'Father Trouble: Staging Sovereignty in Spielberg's *War of the Worlds*', *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 25/1 (2008), 1-27.

¹¹ Layton, Lynne, 'Who's responsible? Our Mutual Implication in Each Other's Suffering', *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 19/2 (2009), 105-120.

followed by low angles, like Costa's viewpoint from the floor. Darkness creates a sense of disorientation.

After the event, the family tries to come to terms with the trauma. They increase the defenses of the house, with secure doors and windows, and a burglar alarm – but we all get the impression that it is a bit late for that. Costas reports the burglary to the police, who promise to do their best but admit they cannot guarantee they will catch the perpetrators; too many crimes, not enough resources. Costas feels he has failed his family, but at the bar Achilleas reminds him there is a social dimension to crime. The have-nots try to steal for those that have. So much thought and intellectual labor, he muses, just to end up with a 'fucked up' society. Costas is in no mood for sociological explanations: everything we used to believe in, he remarks, was wrong. In another occasion, Costas will tell Achilleas that after the incident he sees life with 'different eyes', openly accusing the latter that he cannot understand him because he does not have children.

Karyn Freedman¹² speaks of the shattered self and the shattered world view following a trauma like rape. The individual often asks 'what am I to believe?'. One lives in cognitive dissonance, knowing that what happened is unlikely to happen again but fearful for one's safety and thinking that the world is no longer a safe place¹³. Freedman speaks of a sharp division of the self: I used to be/ I am now; feeling estranged from the person one was and knowing that neither escape nor resistance are possible. In such situations the human system of self-defenses becomes overwhelmed and disorganized. Traumatized people feel and act as if their nervous system is disconnected from the present¹⁴. Personal beliefs become volatile, relationships experience tensions and questions of trust and safety arise. The myth of our immunity collapses and one question lingers: could I have avoided it?

Shot in close ups and reverse shots, the bar scene conveys the impression that Costas and Achilleas are now representing irreconcilable world views. The same mood of dissonance and alienation pervaded Costas' travelling through the city: in the metro he stares hard at a young man reading an Albanian newspaper. Annoyed, the man returns the gaze but then

¹² Freedman, Karyn, 'The epistemological significance of psychic trauma', *Hypatia* 21/1 (2006), 104-125.

¹³ *Ibid*, 108.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 109.

looks away. For Costas the city is full of suspects. At home Costas sits alone in the dark, keeping vigil over his family's sleep. He has fetched his father's hunting rifle from the basement, despite his wife's protestations. He admits feeling cut off from an uncaring, indifferent society.

This is the frame of mind upon which the neighbor, Sotiris Logaras (Yorgos Galos), preys. He tells Costas that he has information about the break-in and invites him to his house. The interior of Logaras' house is quaint: windows sealed, yellowish subdued lighting, furniture covered with dustsheets, a large portrait of a woman on the wall, a picture of Alexander the Great, replica of a mosaic, alongside army memorabilia. The Greek audience can decode the Alexander poster as an allusion to nationalist narratives about the glorious past, and the military memorabilia as an allusion to the military dictatorship of 1967-74 and the recent resurgence of right wing extremism in the form of Golden Dawn. Logaras informs Costas that he knows 'who did it' and shows him a surveillance video of their street with two men speeding away on a motorbike after the attack. He speaks of 'them' (immigrants) and the harm they did to the country. Costas identifies one of the perpetrators. Logaras asks him, rather forcefully, what he plans to do with the knowledge.

Through the figure of the vigilante neighbor the film illuminates the individual pathological roots of the xenophobic attitudes. Logaras explains that he hates immigrants because he holds them responsible for a similar break-in into his house and the subsequent mental breakdown of his wife. The military man is unable to mourn his wife's mental decline and to come to terms with his lack of omnipotence. His aggression is exacerbated by the values of military prowess and camaraderie, masculinity and drinking – he always offering Costas *tsipouro*, addressing him as 'ensign', the latter's rank during his military service. Logaras also boasts that he avenged his wife 'like a pro'. Trauma, notes Mari Ruti, has an alienating effect upon the individual¹⁵. This alienation can easily turn into projective aggression and misanthropy.

Layton argues that as cohesive and positive social values are being denied, individuals develop a tendency to hallucinate their way out of tensions, developing two incompatible

¹⁵ Ruti, Mari, 'Reading Lacan as a Social Critic', *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 17/1 (2012), 69-81.

fantasies: of omnipotence and of being 'taken total care of'¹⁶. Re-masculinization, in this context, attempts to soar up male narcissism, reducing masculinity to an id reaction incapable of stopping the wild oscillation between omnipotence and helplessness¹⁷. It is this wild oscillation that attracts Costas to the military man who 'knows what to do', arms his hand and leads him to murder. After the murder, however, it leads to confusion and unbearable remorse. When an elated Logaras congratulates Costas for having accomplished 'the mission' (murder) and asks him if he feels in his gut that he has done something good, the latter shouts 'I don't know!'.

The demise of positive social values is usually blamed on urbanisation. Urbanisation has undoubtedly eroded community relations and local neighborhood support. Costas in fact complains that none of their neighbors came to ask after them. Community alienation, however, is only the more superficial part of the explanation compared to the deeper contradictions generated by the socio-economic system. These contradictions are captured by Costas' plans to make amends to the family of the murdered man. He tells Achilleas that he intends to offer them his shop and business on the proviso of they will leave his own family alone. We could dismiss the importance of the suggestion as the product of a traumatised and confused mind, but the plan reveals the extent to which *homo economicus*, the product of capitalist and neo-liberal bio-politics according to Michel Foucault¹⁸, is accustomed to reasoning ethical dilemmas in terms of monetary value and exchange. The film illuminates that exchange, and even the legitimate juridical notion of compensation, often falter: if the value of a murder is a small business, what is the price of rape? The film shows the absurdity of solutions which just do not 'add up': Costas considers the violation of Louisa's body as irreparable and inestimable, but offers to compensate for his own crime in terms of monetary value. The ordinary man is trapped in the gray area between loss, value and exchange. *Homo economicus* thinks that everything has a price, until he is forced to encounter the meaning of what is actually incalculable and the priceless – not the woman's sexual honor but the fact that the economic discourse is incommensurable to the emotional cost of trauma.

¹⁶ Layton, Lynne, 'Who's Responsible? Our Mutual Implication in Each Other's Suffering', 144.

¹⁷ Layton, Lynne, 'Irrational Exuberance: Neoliberal Subjectivity and the Perversion of Truth', 310.

¹⁸ Foucault, Michel, *The Birth of Biopolitics, Lectures at the College de France, 1978-1979*, transl by Michel Senellart (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2008).

Another important aspect of individuality and family life explored in the film concerns the role of the father in late modernity¹⁹. The symbolic role of the father is to represent the Law without taking advantage of its power for his own gain²⁰. Psychoanalysts often refer to the symbolic Father as 'dead', meaning that the son (or daughter) must assume a healthy distance from the father in order to grown up and become independent subjects²¹capable of separate the symbolic function of the paternal figure from the ordinary dad and his demands²².

The Enemy Within affords a glimpse of the crisis of the Greek Father. The latter is represented by Rania's father, Costa's father in law. Immediately after the break-in he pays a visit to the house, surveys the mess and swears at the immigrant who did this – he takes it for granted that the perpetrators were immigrants – demanding that the house be made secure. He orders everyone around as if they were children. A few days later he is invited to dinner. He sits at the head of the table, as if it was his own house, and asks after Louisa who is absent from the table. It is his grandson who insinuates that something more than a break-in occurred that night, and the old man is finally told the truth. He is furious and berates his son in law for being incapable to protect his family. Ruti argues that irrational, unclear and excessive demands by the Other – in the present case conveyed by the father in law who claims to speak in the name of unwritten laws of honor – can be anxiety-provoking and ruinous. We are becoming uneasy when we do not know what is expected of us and why. The inexplicable demand of the Other creates a feeling of alienation²³. At times, this alienation can become intense, threatening our secure attachment to the symbolic order usually achieved via key signifiers (e.g. moral values, ideological principles, etc.). I would suggest that the fact that Costas is swayed by his father in law belies such a weakening of secure attachments which precipitates a return of the repressed and irresolute tensions underlying the relationship of Greek individuality to family.

¹⁹ See Žižek, Slavoj, *The Ticklish Subject* (London: Verso 1999).

²⁰ Lacan, Jacques, *On the Names of the Father*, trans. Bruce Fink (London: Polity Press 2013), 76-77.

²¹ Lacan, Jacques, *Ecrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge 1991).

²² Ragland Sullivan, Ellie, *Essays on the Pleasures of Death: From Freud to Lacan* (London: Routledge 1995), 227.

²³ Ruti, Reading Lacan as Social Critic, 70.

This is further illustrated in the film by the Stasinou's exit from Athens. Convinced that the dead man's associates will come after them, and having admitted his crime to Rania and the children, Costas organises a night escape, taking the family to his parents' village in rural Greece. Panoramic shots of the mountains at early dawn suggest that away from Athens the family, who had begun to disintegrate, might reunite and achieve a new perspective of the situation. None of these happen and tensions mount. A highly symbolic moment occurs when Costas visits his parents' grave. The moment is captured by a close up on the headstone with his father's name. It is possible that the son measures himself up against the father. When his son accuses Costas of having 'lost the plot', the latter angrily retorts that even his old father, who was a meek little man, would not abide by his family being sexually assaulted by strangers. A note on Greek honor and honor-related crimes should be made at this point. Avdela shows that in post-war Greece the practice of gender-based honor related violence was abandoned, frowned upon as regressive and incompatible with the modern nation-state²⁴. As modernisation and urbanisation encouraged individualism, the term 'honor' gradually lost the meaning of safeguarding the women's sexual integrity and acquired the senses of shame and self-respect, along with an obligation to behave honorably towards one's family and to show solidarity with its members²⁵. In the film, honor 'returns' as gender-based violence, aided by a mere speculation of what the 'dead' father would have wanted such retribution. The regression to the past attempts but fails to address the rupture in the present. Generational continuity with the past is shown to be broken.

Beyond the obvious conclusion that regressive violence does not bring closure, *The Enemy Within* invites us to think of Costas' crime as a political act pertaining to contemporary *nomos* (Law) and citizenship. Agamben argues that the Law separates *vios* (political life or citizenship) from *zoe* (biological life). He traces the force of the Law to the figure of the sovereign, an equivalent of the Father who founds the Law by an act of exception, drawing an arbitrary line, as it were, which separates *dike* (justice) from *via* (violence, punishment). Thus the Law is founded by an act of exception, the sovereign is its threshold and *nomos* is

²⁴Avdela, Efi, *Dia Logous Timis; Via, Synaisthimata kai Axies stin Metemfyliaki Ellada* [In the Name of Honour: Gender Violence, Emotions and Values in Post-War Greece] (Athina: Nefeli 2002), 211.

²⁵ibid, 213.

the renewal of the threshold²⁶. Agamben also argues that another figure, the *homo sacer*, is akin to the sovereign. The *homo sacer* is a man banned from the city for committing a crime. He is at once excluded (banished) and inside the city, in the sense that the law creates such an idiosyncratic position. What the sovereign and the *homo sacer* have in common, is that they occupy a place inside and outside the law, a zone of indistinction. In modern times *nomos* is upheld through respect and living under the Law; *nomos* and its limit are always to be negotiated in a democratic manner. Agamben further acknowledges that the separation of law from lawlessness and its proper interpretation always lies at the heart of modern democracy and of acting politically²⁷.

Acting politically and the sovereignty of the Law are problematised by Costas committing murder and evading justice. With the murder he renders himself sovereign; he is the man who appropriates the Law and blurs the limits of punishment and impunity. In lieu of a strong system of civic values, he becomes a figure of exception, the subject of the Law having subjected the Law to his needs. At the same time, however, he becomes *homo sacer*, a man at the margins of law-lessness. He oscillates between powerlessness (*homo sacer*) and omnipotence (sovereign)²⁸, representing a symbolic mode of psychic functioning which goes against the grain of democracy. Costas therefore moves into – not to say becomes – a living zone of indistinction. This is aptly represented in the film by the fact that the only space in which this man can live unnoticed is not in rural exile but in the anonymity of the big city, where he is at once *inside* (citizen and victim in his own house) and *outside* (outlaw criminal, stalker of his victim, and external threat to someone else's house). In that space he now inhabits the same zone of indistinction as the illegal immigrant and the stateless refugee who are not 'proper' citizens but modern day exceptions. Considered from a political perspective, therefore, the film illuminates something far more important than the ineffectiveness of the police and the State, namely that the Law is indeed in the hands of its citizens, evoking both the catastrophic and creative potential this condition may entail.

²⁶ Agamben, Giorgio, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, transl D heller-Rozen (Stanford: Stanford University Press 1998) 27.

²⁷ 'Thought is the courage of hopelessness: an interview with philosopher Giorgio Agamben', *Verso Books* <<http://www.versobooks.com/blogs/1612-thought-is-the-courage-of-hopelessness-an-interview-with-philosopher-giorgio-agamben>> accessed 31 January 2015.

²⁸ Layton, 'Who's Responsible? Our Mutual Implication in Each Other's Suffering'.

Louisa's silence

Sexual violence against women is more prevalent than cancer²⁹. Gender based violence is universal³⁰. A recent study in Greece³¹ shows that the fear of rape is significant and consonant with other countries. Rape is a weapon of war and has been used systematically alongside genocide, ethnic cleansing and political conflict. It took one Greek woman fifty years to break her silence after being raped during the civil war³². Rape inaugurates its own temporality of silence and deferral. The reluctance to report rape is common across cultures³³. Disclosure depends mainly on culture and family³⁴.

At this point we could perhaps repeat Freedman's description of the aftermath of rape. We could reiterate the shuttered world view and the sense of alienation, and even guilt. Louisa cries 'I killed him' thinking herself responsible for the death of her rapist by her father's hand. Yet Louisa and her mother want to forget and carry on with their lives. Is it because these women do not know how to talk about rape as a shameful and taboo subject, or is it because silence is the best option compared to masculine obsession? Silence teems with unanswerable questions: Is it the case that the girl's experience is not important enough to merit more cinematic time compared her father's, or is her invisibility the only way to convey her predicament? Does the director duplicate – unintentionally perhaps – the silence of the community by focusing on the male protagonist, or does he subtly raise the very issue of female vulnerability? What Louisa did, is it what all Greek Louisas are doing?

²⁹ Herman, Judith, 'Recovery from Psychological Trauma', *Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences* 55 (1989), 145-150.

³⁰ Simister, John, 'More than a Billion Women Face 'Gender Based Violence'; Where are most Victims?', *Journal of Family Violence* 27/7 (2012), 607-623.

³¹ Softas-Nall, Bardos, and Fakinos, 'Fear of Rape: its Perceived Seriousness and Likelihood Among Young Greek Women'.

³² Boeschoten, Ricky Van, 'The Trauma of War Rape: a Comparative View on the Bosnian Conflict and the Greek Civil War', *History and Anthropology* 14/4 (2003), 41-54.

³³ Kelly, Theresa, and Stermac, Lana, 'Underreporting in Sexual Assault: a Review of Explanatory Factors', *Baltic Journal of Psychology* 9-1/2 (2008), 30-45.

³⁴ Huong, Nguyen Thu, 'Rape Disclosure: the Interplay of Gender, Culture and Kinship in Contemporary Vietnam', *Culture, Health and Sexuality* 14 (2012), 39-52, and also, Konishi, Takako, 'Cultural Aspects of Violence Against Women in Japan', *Lancet* 355/9217 (2000), pp. 1810-4.

Vivian May³⁵ differentiates between two coping strategies after rape: willful and strategic ignorance, the former mostly adopted by communities who do not wish to know, the latter by individuals who realise that speaking out only exacerbates the problem. She points out that the rhetorical spaces available to women are often limited, adding that the personhood of victims that is often affected, as one is reduced to a sub-person, tainted, shamed and turned into an object of curiosity³⁶. Louisa echoes this argument when she complains to her father that he should have asked her directly if she had been raped, without instructing the doctors to probe her 'like an animal'. The girl considers her body violated by the medical examination as much as by the rape. From a classic feminist perspective she seems to conform to existing cultural practices of silence and shame. However, it is hard to deny that the very same act questions the medicalisation of rape and the objectification of the victim³⁷ often following such an experience. In that sense, the refusal to disclose the rape can be read as an act of resistance and a way of maintaining integrity and alterity against dominant definitions which are denigrating and derogatory³⁸.

From a political perspective, *The Enemy Within* opens up a zone of indistinction for women, between willful and strategic ignorance. Louisa inhabits that space. She wants to forget for her own reasons, while Costas advises her not to say a word to her friends, exposing herself to awkward comments. At the same time, he pressures his daughter to remember any little detail about the intruder. 'But he was wearing a mask' she protests. Annoyed by her father's overprotective behaviour after the rape, Louisa throws it to him: it was not 'my first time' (of having sex). Although the equation of sex with rape is problematic, it could be suggested that such a pronouncement challenges the patriarchal construction of virginity as virtue and the equation of sexual integrity with the whole of a woman's personhood. Costas does not openly make that connection at any point in the film. However, Louisa responds to a lingering connection of sexual activity and chastity in contemporary Greece.

³⁵ May, Vivian, 'Trauma in Paradise: Willful and Strategic Ignorance in "*Cereus Bloom at Night*"', *Hypatia* 21/3 (2006), 107-135.

³⁶ Ibid, 110.

³⁷ Ibid, 112.

³⁸ Ibid, 117.

Regarding Costa's persistence to know more about the rapist, however, it could be argued that Louisa resists the male phantasy of assuming responsibility for a woman as a whole. Despite his progressive ideas, Costas seems to be treating his daughter's wellbeing, sexual integrity and personhood as one concept, creating a phantasy of loss which, in turn, supports and justifies his own choices and course of action. Slavoj Žižek explains that a phantasy owes its effectiveness to inventing a temporal succession of events which promises to narrate things 'from the beginning'³⁹. By creating a beginning in time, the phantasy posits a concrete 'moment' at which an object, Louisa's sexual honor in the present case, was lost, veiling the fact that it had already been lost – or better, was always irrelevant. The narrative sequencing occludes the paradox that such an object is first posited-created and then lost⁴⁰. The film shows that Costas' reaction is built on an absence of consent by his daughter, which makes him the sole beneficiary of his revenge effort. The elision of the particular, of personhood in this case, is akin to a totalitarian way of thinking which, in extreme forms, reduces citizens to bare life and *vios* to *zoe*.

Upon closer examination of the film's women, a network of silences emerges. Two of them stand out: Rania's decision to conceal the truth from her own father, the uncompromising patriarch, and the silence of the Romanian spouse of the rapist (Vezela Kozakova) who witnessed the murder but refused to formally identify Costas as the murderer. The police inspector tells Costas that she was shocked at the news that her husband made a habit of assaulting women. Whether her silence was her way of punishing her husband or the result of fear, or even gratitude towards Costas for not identifying her own brother as one of the accomplices, we will never know. But all these women converge in a state of exception: inside and outside language, tracing a new civic boundary between the Law and the effective suspension of their *civic* rights (*vios*) and *logos*, in exchange for the privilege of inclusion, be that the acceptance by the social group or the right to remain in the country. In that sense, these women hover between the repressed and the ineffable, in a zone similar to the *homo sacer*, neither killed nor sacrificed but simply abjected.

³⁹ Žižek, *The Plague of Phantasies*, (London: Verso 1997), 11.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 13.

Pity, sympathy and beyond

The Enemy Within illuminates aspects of contemporary Greek reality in the form of the troubled relationship between the individual, the family and social change, often veiled by the well-meant intention to maintain the sanctity of their bond. The fact that neither the individual nor the family can withdraw from the pressures of the changing world indicates an urgent need to reconsider the strength of existing cultural assumptions. Beyond the local and the parochial, cinema raises universal issues. The lack of resolution at the end of the film leaves the spectator with something akin to trauma, a lack of catharsis which is a little more uncomfortable than the familiar trope of the open-ended ending of art house or politically engaged films. Beyond gender, racism and silence, this ending invites us to think about the end of times⁴¹ where reparation and catharsis are no longer at all possible. Jean Baudrillard⁴² thinks that the present cultural and socio-economic capitalist system has reached such a stage via in-distinctness, in-difference and the capacity to assimilate opposites and conflicts – just like the big city which absorbs murder and rape and renders them invisible. We are exposed, Baudrillard continues, to a *mélange* of categories and concepts⁴³ amid dejection and abjection⁴⁴. In that sense, the dejected, stranded Costas Stasinou at the end of the film is not just the misguided Greek father who collapses when pondering the enormity of the act of having taken the law into his hands, but the citizen who contemplates the monstrous ease with which order and disorder collude in silence. The new order is no longer political but *trans-political* offering an illusion of mastery and a space for everyone to play out their own drama, improvising their own fantasies⁴⁵. This is the true political and individual terror Costas Stasinou faces in the end, and the one we are invited to contemplate.

Psychoanalysis sees a 'way out', advocating a healthy individualism and envisaging a subject that does not become enslaved to the desire of the Other; an individual that resists compulsive loyalty, incomprehensible demands, delusions of self-importance and racist paranoia. This individual does not withdraw into a fictional familial safe haven but faces the

⁴¹ Žižek, Slavoj, *Living in the End of Times* (London: Verso 2010).

⁴² Baudrillard, Jean, *Fatal Strategies*, trans by P Beitchaman (Cambridge Mass: The MIT Press 2008).

⁴³ *Ibid*, 82.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 83.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 87.

attempts to reconsider family bonds under the current socio-economic and political conditions, not to zombify the family by turning it into an exception within an exception. But, more important, the challenge is how to rethink community. As Ruti suggests, at such moments individuals need to rediscover their social values, restore faltering connections with social ideals⁴⁶ or imagine a different world by forming new alliances⁴⁷. It is more likely that such efforts and such alliances will emerge from the disempowered and the silent, like the women of *The Enemy Within*, rather than the established masculine order. This is the reason why pity is perhaps not an appropriate response to the film's powerful ending. *The Enemy Within* introduced us to trauma, a break of time, a pause. Re-starting time, waiting if necessary but not remaining entrapped into the eternal present of patriarchal loss, is our task and our challenge. Nothing sort of rethinking existing collective values.

References

Avdela, Efi, *Dia Logous Timis; Via, Synaisthimata kai Axies stin Metemfyliaki Ellada* [In the Name of Honour: Gender Violence, Emotions and Values in Post-War Greece] (Athina: Nefeli 2002).

Agamben, Giorgio, *Homo Sacer; Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. D Heller-Rozen (Stanford: Stanford University Press 1998).

Baudrillard, Jean, *Fatal Strategies*, trans by P Beitchaman (Cambridge Mass: The MIT Press 2008).

Bauman, Zygmunt, *Society Under Siege* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002)

Benziman, Galia, 'Author, Father, President: Auster's figures of invisibility', *Canadian Review of American Studies* 43/3 (2013), 462-479.

Boeschoten, Ricky Van, 'The trauma of war rape: a comparative view on the Bosnian conflict and the Greek civil war', *History and Anthropology* 14/4 (2003), 41-54.

⁴⁶ Ruti, Mari, 'Reading Lacan as a social critic', 76.

⁴⁷ Giroux, Henry, 'The Terror of Neoliberalism, Rethinking the Significance of Cultural Politics', *College Literature*, 32/1 (5005), 1-19.

Cisco King, Cecilia, *Washed in blood: male sacrifice, trauma and the cinema* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press 2012).

Cisco King, Claire, 'The man inside: trauma, gender and the nation in the Brave One', *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 27/2 (2010), 111-130.

Edwards, Tim, *Cultures of Masculinity* (London: Routledge 2006).

Foucault, Michel, *The Birth of Biopolitics, Lectures at the College de France, 1978-1979*, transl by Michel Senellart (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2008).

Freedman, Karyn, 'The epistemological significance of psychic trauma', *Hypatia* 21/1 (2006), 104-125.

Giroux, Henry, 'The terror of neoliberalism, rethinking the significance of cultural Politics', *College Literature* 32/1 (2005), 1-19.

Gunn, Joshua, 'Father trouble: staging sovereignty in Spielberg's War of the Worlds', *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 25/1 (2008), 1-27.

Herman, Judith, 'Recovery from psychological trauma', *Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences* 55 (1989), 145-150.

Huong, Nguyen Thu, 'Rape disclosure: the interplay of gender, culture and kinship in contemporary Vietnam', *Culture, Health and Sexuality* 14 (2012), 39-52.

Joffe, Helen, *Risk and the Other* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1999).

Kelly, Theresa, and Stermac, Lana, 'Underreporting in sexual assault: a review of explanatory factors', *Baltic Journal of Psychology* 9-1/2 (2008), 30-45.

Konishi, Takako, 'Cultural aspects of violence against women in Japan', *Lancet* 355/9217 (2000), pp. 1810-4.

Lacan, Jacque, *On the names of the father*, trans. Bruce Fink (London: Polity Press 2013).

- Lacan, Jacques, *Ecrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge 1991).
- Layton, Lynne, 'Irrational exuberance: neoliberal subjectivity and the perversion of truth', *Subjectivity: International Journal of Critical Psychology* 3/3 (2010), 303-322.
- Layton, Lynne, 'Who's responsible? Our mutual implication in each other's suffering', *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 19/2 (2009), 105-120.
- MacKinnon, Kenneth, *Representing Men: Maleness and Masculinity in the Media* (London: Arnold 2003).
- May, Vivian, 'Trauma in paradise: willful and strategic ignorance in "Cereus Bloom at Night"', *Hypatia* 21/3 (2006), 107-135.
- Morag, Raya, 'Defeated masculinity: post-traumatic cinema after the Vietnam war', *The Communication Review* 9 (2006), 189-219.
- Peberdy, Donna, *Masculinity and film performance: male angst in contemporary American Cinema* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2011).
- Powrie Phil, Davis Anne, Babington Bruce, *The Trouble With Men, Masculinities in European and Hollywood Cinema* (London: Wallflower Press 2004).
- Ragland Sullivan, Ellie, *Essays on the pleasures of death: from Freud to Lacan* (London: Routledge 1995).
- Robinson Sally, 'Emotional Constipation and the Power of Damned Masculinity', in Peter Lehman, ed., *Masculinity, Bodies, Movies, Culture* (New York: Routledge 2001).
- Ruti, Mari, 'Reading Lacan as a social critic', *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 17/1 (2012), 69-81.
- Simister, John, 'More than a billion women face 'gender based violence'; where are most victims?', *Journal of Family Violence* 27/7 (2012), 607-623.

Softas-Nall, Vasilias, and Bardos, Achilles, and Fakinos, Michael, 'Fear of rape: its perceived seriousness and likelihood among young Greek women', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34/1 (2010), 190-196.

Walsh, Fintan, *Male Trouble: Masculinity and the Performance of Crisis* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2010).

Žižek, Slavoj, *Living in the End of times* (London: Verso 2010).

Žižek Slavoj, *The Plague of Phantasies* (London: Verso 1997).

Žižek, Slavoj, *The Ticklish Subject* (London: Verso 1999).

'Thought is the courage of hopelessness: an interview with philosopher Giorgio Agamben', *Verso Books* <<http://www.versobooks.com/blogs/1612-thought-is-the-courage-of-hopelessness-an-interview-with-philosopher-giorgio-agamben>> accessed 31 January 2015.

Films

A Serious Man (2009), dir Ethan and Joe Cohen.

Beasts of the Southern Wild (2012), Benh Zeitlin.

The Enemy Within (2013), dir Giorgos Tsemberopoulos.

War of the Worlds (2005), dir Steven Spielberg.

White House Down (2013), dir Ronald Emmerich.

2012 (2009), dir Ronald Emmerich.