Minos the Minotaur
and
Daedala the Dreamer
The three volumes of this “Greek Trilogy” are entitled:

Part One: *Minos the Minotaur and Daedala the Dreamer*
Part Two: *Daedala’s Journey Throughout Romiosyni*
Part Three: *Professor Helen Sullivan’s Buried Treasure*

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On the front cover, the portrait of the Minotaur and Daedala was painted by Minos Argyrakis in Cyprus and dedicated to Tatiana and Roger Millieux, in 1971.


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AMY MIMS-SILVERIDI

Minos the Minotaur and Daedala the Dreamer

Part One of a “Greek Trilogy”

Athens Greece 2018
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Mother Pasiphae with her Baby Minotaur.
(From an Ancient Greek vase)
Amy Mims, the heroic poetess from Ireland (as well as the daughter of the excellent historian, Helen Sullivan), has offered us her own book, wherein she skillfully “tames” the Minotaur, Minos Argyrakis. We must never forget that Minos Argyrakis was the highest expression of our idiosyncratic Greek “Humour”, unique for the way he painted and used language, fit for a fine playwright and his dreamlike imagination. Amy Mims-Silveridi has won a genuine victory with such an “ally, but also ‘antagonist’”, as Minos the Minotaur.

Hundreds of people should read this book, in order to understand the curse of “internecine slaughter” threatening the destruction of the Greeks. Anyway, you know about this from our Great-Grandfather – Thucydides. Thank God, this Irish writer has come to live in Greece and express her views openly, point blank. I believe she will enjoy another well-deserved victory, when her Readers acknowledge this book as an excellent work of literature.
AUTHOR’S NOTE
by AMY MIMS-SILVERIDI

The Reader may wonder why I’ve chosen the mythological names “Daedala” and “Minotaur” for the two main characters of this book – instead of their actual names: Minos and Amy. The most vital reason: their story – especially during the 1960’s – is not only an isolated, personal experience. The dreams they struggled to put into practice were characteristic of the times, and not only in Greece. Elsewhere as well, all the way from Martin Luther King to the Flower Power youngsters, and all the way from Joan Baez to Leonard Cohen. The shattering of these dreams was also characteristic: in Greece, by the hands of the “puppet dictators”; elsewhere, by the hands of assassins. And with the extermination of Dreams, the inevitable survival of mediocrity. All these elements are far beyond any personal story, with specific personal names.

But then, the critical Reader may ask why most of the Artists mentioned in Part One of this Trilogy are called by their actual names? Why aren’t mythological names used for them as well? Quite simply, because many of them became Myths in their own lifetime. (To name only a few: Manos Hadjidakis, Yannis Tsarouhis, Nikos Gatsos, Odysseas Elytis, Yannis Ritsos and from the ranks of the living, Mikis Theodorakis.) Because of their close friendship with the Minotaur, I had the rare privilege of knowing them, too. Thus, the “mythological” experiences of my own life were enhanced. In rare moments of “ecstasy”, I even imagined that I too might deserve a mythological name.

For example, because of my love for all the poetic Irish ancestors – particularly, Yeats and J.M.Synge, for their mythical poems and plays – I chose the Homeric name Nausica, in a very few pages of Part One. As for Life after the Minotaur, let the Reader turn to Section 6 of Part One, to discover how the name Daedala was adopted by the Minotaur. (However, let me say that Daedala was born first in my own soul, the year before my first encounter with Minos the Minotaur.) And now, in order to silence all possible hyperzealous “Cri-i-i-tics” (who may accuse me of boasting about all the famous
Greek Artists with whom I kept company – especially in those riproaring first seven years of the Sixties) – I have added my own comment in English, here and now, Anno Domini 2015:

“I would never want to be accused of “dropping names”. If anyone attacks my words on the grounds of vanity, I would answer that I truly prefer being unknown – in other words, anonymous. Anonymity seems to me to be the best way for a human being to remain free – free of the burden of having to “live up” to the lofty standards of an eponymous “Image”. Free to observe the World, instead of being observed. But if Readers are still not convinced by the idea of Anonymity, let them at least accept the pseudonym “Daedala”: the unknown female counterpart of James Joyce’s Daedalos, who has been my hero ever since 1960, when I wrote a 70-page “prose-poem” to young Daedala and her septuagenarian mentor. This innocent, absolutely unknown “Daedala” proved to be my truest friend, who has rescued me again and again from the everlasting Greek Labyrinth.

As for the “Minotaur”, he is definitely not the ferocious creature depicted by Picasso. No – he is the lovable human pet, nestling in the maternal embrace of Pasiphae – as in the Ancient Greek vase-painting chosen as the Frontispiece for Part One of this present-day “Greek Trilogy”.

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SECTION ONE

ESCAPE
The Odyssean Soirée in Upper Manhattan

Towards the end of the seven long months of frustrated delays – twenty-eight weeks, more than one-hundred-ninety-six days and even more than four-thousand-seven-hundred-four hours – Daedala had decided to try and become more like Nausica. But “Nausica” was beginning to feel like a ghost of the ghost (or as she preferred to call this in Greek: “to phántasma tou psantásmatos”) This dragged on with Kafkaesque frustrations, until one catalytic night, when she happened to be invited to a literary gathering up at 444 Central Park West. By then, it was already February and Nausica was feeling more “February-jowled” (one of her favourite Shakespearean epithets), than ever before. On the spur of the moment, she accepted the unexpected invitation, although it entailed a trek from one end of Manhattan to the furthest other end. But after all, this gala reception would be in honour of the “Odyssey” - not Homer’s, but the film scenario for Kazantzakis’ “Odyssey”. She had always loved Kazantzakis, so it didn’t matter that the soirée had been organized by the pompous Archbishop of the New Jersey Branch of the Orthodox Greek Church. Fortunately for Nausica, at the very last minute, she decided to make the long trek to the “Odyssey” party, where she was destined to meet her very own Odysseus.

Yes, indeed: a charming latterday Odysseus, lost in New York City, floundering between a twentieth century Scylla and a fin-de-siècle Carybdis. The latter, a peroxide blonde culture-vulture in her fifties, had promised this lost Odysseus everything from Time Magazine “Fame” to the Museum of Modern Art. The latter, a bibulous old biddy by the name of Carybdis, had also promised him all this and heaven too, with the Metropolitan Opera, to boot. Nevertheless, despite all their tempting promises, our modern Odysseus had had his fill of these two old ladies.

So when Nausica appeared in the doorway of 444 Central Park West, this shipwrecked Odysseus was ready for a Homeric haven. Before the host had time to introduce her properly, our latterday Odysseus had grabbed Nausica by the hand and led her into the other room, where the music of Manos Hadjidakis was playing on the record-player. They began dancing cheek to cheek, conversing as if they’d known each other three thousand years. Following this
historic coup de foudre, they couldn’t concentrate on the scheduled reading of the “Odyssey” scenario, (already complex enough in Kazantzakis’ version of the Homeric original, but triply complicated in this cinemascopic version.) So they disappeared into the kitchen, where they swooped down on the goat’s cheese and Delphi olives and vine leaves stuffed with rice and raisins. After taking their seventh round of the best Attica retsina, they were preparing to abscond, when all of a sudden, Carybdis appeared in the kitchen.

Poor old Carybdis Janeway, in spite of being more than sixty, she still tripped the light fantastic and was more highly sexed than many a lass of twenty. Her long tresses, despite a few white strands among the dyed curls, were decorated with gauze butterflies in various shades of purple, to match her transparent purple stockings. She was decked out in a fuschia, gipsy-style skirt and a drooping décolleté revealed what had once been buxom, but were now sadly sagging bosoms. Around her throat, she wore strings of cultured pearls and on her fingers there were four rococo rings. Indeed, only the “bells on her toes” were hidden by her gold-and-silver foxtrot slippers. With Tallulah Bankhead as her model, she had painted her poor old face with beauty marks and mascara the same shade as her eyes and false eyelashes. And to complete the picture, around her shoulders, she had carefully arranged an old-fashioned fur-piece, the tips of which were the heart-shaped photographs of her former lovers. As the pièce de résistance, she’d added a huge brooch of an ancient Greek vase image depicting the Minotaur, but with an innocent expression more like a pet lamb than a vicious monster.

With all her purple butterflies fluttering wildly, this amazing apparition stormed into the kitchen. Flexing a well-preserved ex-ballerina’s-leg against the kitchen sink, Carybdis began to beg Nausica to leave “her” Minotaur in peace. Now why on earth did Carybdis insist on calling this latterday Odysseus “her” Minotaur? And what was still more inexpicable, why had Odysseus accepted this nickname? For a non-Greek half-baked Americána, the misnomer was not so serious. But shouldn’t “Odysseus” himself have recalled the somber aspects of that omnivorous mythological creature – especially the annual sacrifice of the seven lovely maidens and the seven splendid ephebes? He should have dropped the name, like a hot potato! But he’d become so used to it after so many weeks in Carybdis’ mansion off Washington Square that he never wasted a second thought on all the grim associations with the Minotaur, until much later in his life – after a fellow-artist had compared him to Kronos.

However that may be, Nausica had no sympathy for Carybdis and with all the insolence of a carefree soubrette, she turned her back on the poor old
woman and waltzed off to find her Man. As for Carybdis, Nausica’s only retort had been that the “Minotaur” was old enough to make up his mind by himself – his choice was up to him, not her! Little could Nausica imagine what was brewing inside Carybdis’ mind at this very moment. In the general hubbub of that Odyssean party, the girl’s hat (in the style of Greta Garbo’s favourite hats) vanished mysteriously. But it was time for Nausica to go, it was such a long way from Upper Manhattan to Lower Greenwich Village. So she gave no more thought to the matter.

Nevertheless, this same purple hat was to become the missing link between Nausica and the “Minotaur”. Three days after the Odyssey soirée, when she telephoned the host to thank him profusely for the “lovely party,” he informed her that the Minotaur had just rung up to say that Carybdis – out of sheer spite – had stolen Nausica’s hat at the end of the evening and that he (the Minotaur) had rescued it. Furthermore, he had left the host a phone-number where Nausica could find him.

Nausica was delighted and from the very same phone-booth, without a second’s delay, she dialled the number, trembling with stage-fright. Would Carybdis be the one to answer? Or would her maid answer? (With all those expensive pearls, she must have at least one maid). Or would it be the Minotaur himself? A charmingly resonant voice (with a delicious Greek accent) answered. Nausica was swept off her feet and at first, she couldn’t say a word. But as the Greek voice persisted in asking who it was, finally (after a thirty second pause) she stuttered: “To phantasma tou phantasmatos.” (As the Reader may remember: “ghost of the ghost”.)

That very same evening, laden with a large bunch of radishes, (at that hour, all the flower-shops on the East Side of New York were closed), Nausica reached the tiny garden apartment near the East River, where the Minotaur had moved the same night he met her. And there in the doorway, wearing her purple hat and smiling a smile as big as the sky, was her Man. “God bless you little Nausica,” he welcomed her and that was that! A decade afterwards, Nausica wrote a poem to celebrate that first night.
The Minotaur, Trapped in the Lair of Carybdis Biblesex

On this particular rainy night in New York City, neither the Minotaur nor Nausica could possibly know what the stars held in store for them. They were content just to revel in the rain. Not until the following day, did the Minotaur tell Nausica what had been the sequel to the “Odyssey” soirée. In a word, Carybdis Biblesex had gone berserk. (Not that she wasn’t always berserk!). But after the scene in the kitchen at 444 Central Park West, she went even more berserk.

Her Bohemian berserkness was reflected in the décor of her Washington Square mansion, where Time seemed to have stopped several decades ago. In the intentionally dim shadows of the bizarre candelabra (the sole source of light in this faded Sunset Boulevard salon), the tapestried walls were covered with autographed photographs of all the Famous Personalities Carybdis had ever met. In the very centre of the salon, Greta Garbo brooded with that Mata Hari look of hers. Next to her was Chaliapin in the role of Boris Gudonov and Isidora Duncan in the role of her Self. Carybdis’ Gallery also included Ramon Novarro, Gloria Swanson, Rodolpho Valentino and innumerable poses of herself as a glamorous young vamp (around the end of the 1920’s).

In this same salon, all the niches were filled with 19th century reproductions of ancient Greek statues – including a life-size copy of Praxiteles’ Zeus, above which gleamed a large plaque inscribed with Lord Byron’s trademark: “Zoe mou, s’agapo!” in Greek, in big gold letters. Various other bits of Philhellenic paraphernalia completed the decor of this weird mansion, where Carybdis had decided to invite all that remained of her once-upon-a-time coterie of Famous Artists – although most of them she hadn’t seen for more than thirty years and some had meanwhile gone the way of all flesh. Her secret plan was to bedazzle the Minotaur with all these Celebrities!

After gulping down a goblet full of vodka and decorating her Mae West bosom with the famous brooch depicting the pet Minotaur, Carybdis felt ready to welcome the crème de la crème of Manhattan “Culture”. But first, she tossed a choice titbit to her pet dog, a pekinese whom she’d christened “Tipsy”. Carybdis fed her dog on steak tartare and vodka, just as she herself took baths
in vodka and milk, to keep her skin from sagging. (She also did Isidora Duncan exercises to keep her figure limber.) Next, she selected an old LP record of “Oh Tzitzórnia” to play on her 1890’s phonograph (the kind with the flower-studded “horn” sticking out like an overgrown phallos), and tried her best to tango “seductively” towards the bewildered (but not bewitched), Minotaur. Just before her illustrious visitors were expected to arrive, Carybdis dressed him up in a Grecian robe, which one of her artistic lovers had left behind. (She also allowed him to wear an embroidered silk peignoir, which a famous Celtic paramour had discarded when he abandoned her thirty years ago.)

Up until now, the Minotaur had managed to behave as docilely as the pet Pekinese, but when he saw a bevy of decrepit seventy-year-old snobs and superannuated beldames parade into Carybdis’ already claustrophobic salon, he began to bellow. Not realising that Carybdis was hoping all these luminaries would pay homage to his talent, the Minotaur started cursing them with neo-Hellenic “móúntza”-gestures. Then, yelping like a rabid dog, he rose on his hind-legs and went headlong on the war path, dancing a fierce Pyrricheion from the Pontos, far fiercer than any Apache War Dance. Carried away by his own violence, he attacked the 19th century statue of her Hermes, tore down the Lord Byron plaque, and was about to set fire to the Famous Photographs, when “Tipsy” started barking hysterically. By now, Carybdis’ salon had disintegrated into a shambles and all the guests had vanished. The Minotaur wiped his brow and like a hero who has performed a grand feat, stalked away from the scene of the battle.

This fiasco for Carybdis’ ambitions was only the dress-rehearsal for the final performance at the “Odyssey” soirée. Like a heroine out of Wagner’s “Walkyrie”, she had shrieked throughout the debacle when the Minotaur had ruined everything for her. She had crescendoed to a Wagnerian peak of hysteria, shrieking: “Help! My Dog! Dear little Tipsy! Oh my Minotaur! My Darling! My Tipsy! Help! Help!” But with the desperation of a prima donna not yet ready to retire, Carybdis had insisted on dragging her mischievous Minotaur to the Kazantzakis soirée, where he was destined to meet Nausica.

Well now, after the Minotaur’s delighted cavortings with little Nausica, even Carybdis Biblesex realised the time had come for her to give up. But she certainly did not give up gracefully. After being lugged back to her mansion in a drunken stupour, she’d found an amorous billet doux from the Minotaur’s Parisian mistress, delivered in her absence for her Minotaur. In chorus with her little Tipsy, she too started barking at the Minotaur so loudly that all the neighbours in the vicinity of Washington Square woke up. When five hardboiled
New York City policemen arrived at Carybdis’ door, they at once sized up the situation. Sympathizing fully with the Minotaur, instead of arresting him (as Carybdis was begging them to do), they helped him to escape.

Blinded by her jealousy, poor old Carybdis had done precisely what the Minotaur had been longing for: Unwittingly, she had given him his liberty. And now, not even capable of playing the Benefactress of the Arts any longer – she remained alone, totally alone in her vast empty mansion. A disarmed helpless wreck. The only slightly ominous note was a deep bass voice resounding in the background. At this point, the Minotaur couldn’t make out if it was one of Chaliapin’s arias or some other celebrated ghost from Carybdis’ distant past. But after all the tumultuous details of this eventful night, the Minotaur was too weary to worry about an unidentified voice in the dark.

Taking with him only his precious dossier of drawings (where he’d hidden Nausica’s purple hat from the eagle-eye of Carybdis), his old duffle coat from the Monastiraki Flea Market, and the long green scarf, which his own Penelope had knit for him before he left Greece, the Minotaur set out at 4:00 a.m. By daybreak, following his instinct alone, he had walked all the way from Washington Square up to the East End of mid-Manhattan. There, only a step away from the East River, a young Greek dancer – a lad as handsome as Adonis, to whom Hadjidakis had given the chance to study at Martha Graham’s School of Modern Dance – offered the Minotaur a corner of his garden apartment, welcoming him there for the next six weeks.
So this was how the Minotaur got free of Carybdis (at least temporarily free). Now how he’d already gotten rid of Scylla, is quite another story. Scylla was a thoroughly different kettle of fish from Carybdis – ultra-modern and ruthless, a typical slick sophisticated touristic bitch, in search of “Romance” she could easily afford to pay for. With her tight Sax Fifth Avenue slacks and her flashy T-shirts and rhinestone bangles and constantly clicking Kodak camera, Scylla reeked of fake jewellery, fake make-up and fake “sex appeal”. In actual fact, she was just as banal as one of those millions and millions of bleached-blonde Americána females (the poor man’s version of Betty Grable – without the legs – or Doris Day, the quintessence of banality.) But despite all her banality, Scylla had managed to lure the Minotaur away from Greece – after latching on to him in the course of a tour of Mykonos, where he’d been commissioned to draw caricatures of the American tourists. She had used all the tricks of the typical rich American bitch – like the original model for D.H. Lawrence’s “Bitch Goddess of Success”. First and foremost, by promising the Minotaur to use all her “connections” to arrange an Exhibition of his Work in a “chic” 57th Street Gallery, near the Museum of Modern Art. She had played every card from pseudo-Success to pseudo-Glamour. (Only her dollars were not pseudo!) This was the trap Scylla had set for the Minotaur, who like many a man before him, had had his fill of poverty, and all the more easily fell into temptation.

Nevertheless, within one week of arriving in Scylla’s push-button, gadget-ridden, plastic penthouse on Fifth Avenue (overlooking Central Park), the Minotaur’s genuine Greek hunger turned to glutted disgust. Scylla’s steely glitter included plastic reproductions of Jackson Pollack (with the picture of his notorious coffee-grounds decorating her kitchen), and of Andy Warhol with his mass-produced advertisements. As the only exception to the strictly Ultra-Modern, a single Kandinsky reproduction adorned one of the ten bathrooms, (Kandinsky was included in Scylla’s aluminium ambience – but Klee, Miro, and even Dali, were all classified as “passé” on Scylla’s “Little List”).

Sheathed in her metallic Sax Fifth Avenue outfits, Scylla did her worst to charm the Minotaur. She mixed him iced Martini after Martini and brought
him tray after tray of the best T.V. deep-freeze dinners. She bought him the
nicest pyjamas with a big “HIS” in phosphorescent letters on the left pocket, in
order to match the phosphorescent “HERS” on the bodice of her nightgown.
(The Minotaur tried to hide under the blankets, he felt so ashamed.) Scylla even
placed a remote control gadget (for the late night T.V. Porno-show), under the
Minotaur’s pillow, in hopes he might at last get turned on. (Instead, he almost
got electrocuted…). At this point, the Minotaur – with a penthouse-quaking
bellow – leapt out of bed and galloped towards the first of the ten bathrooms.
With a shudder of disgust, he tried to sneak out of the windows, or at least,
through one of the umpteen metal doors. But each door was solidly sealed
with a triple lock and a burglar’s alarm. When the Minotaur (on the rampage
now) got locked in the pantry, Scylla had to call the Fire Department and only
their hoses were able to coax a drenched, though still belligerent Minotaurian
Bull out of his hiding-place.

By now, Scylla was afraid she was about to lose her grip. How could she ever
explain to her jet-set circle – how could she ever live down the humiliation?
But Scylla’s motto was: “If at first you don’t succeed, try / try / TRY again!” (as
befitted a “Bitch Goddess of Success”). So – after consulting her Wall Street broker
– she cashed a thousand blue-chip stocks and pressed a few extra buttons. And
suddenly, her plastic penthouse was swarming with dollar bills. The Minotaur
wasn’t impressed. But Scylla grabbed her dollars and her uncooperative Greek
“romance” and led him out on a leash to every store in New York City. After
dressing him like a male mannequin from the display window of Sax Fifth
Avenue, Scylla took him on a millionaire’s tour of Manhattan by Night –
starting with the Plaza Hotel (nextdoor to her own penthouse) and winding
up, of course, with the Stork Club. But the Minotaur was all the more nostalgic
for a tiny taverna on the tiniest Greek island. In fact, towards the end of the
plutocratic “Tour”, all he wanted was to disappear. This time, he thought of
trying to hide inside the enormous statue outside Rockefeller Center – that
titanically gigantic, positively Promethean statue of Atlas, standing there in
the shadow of the RCA skyscraper. As a sympathetic compatriot, maybe this
Atlas would be glad to protect him?

Scylla was nearing the end of her tether. But in one last attempt not to
lose face, she arranged a jet-set party, where she invited all the jounalistic big-
shots shed ever known and any Gallery-owners she could still contact. To the
tune of Time Magazine and The New Yorker, various Reporters appeared in
Scylla’s plastic penthouse, where she introduced the Minotaur as the hottest
new “prospect” on the “Cartoon Market”. With robot-like repetitions, Scylla
kept saying that Steinberg and Chas Adams were nothing compared to the Minotaur. In the midst of all this shallow bibble-babble, the Minotaur began stripping off his Sax Fifth Avenue regalia, till he was left in a corner, stark naked in his stocking feet. By now, the Reporters and the one-and-only Gallery-owner who had turned up, were so stoned on Martinis that they didn’t even notice when the Minotaur tiptoed stealthily towards the fire escape, after vanishing into Scylla’s bedroom, to collect his drawings and few belongings.

Once the Minotaur found himself in his birthday suit, out in the open air outside on the fire escape, his dizziness disappeared and he literally danced down the seventy stories of Scylla’s apartment building. Suddenly, he was safe and sound on a Park bench, down in Central Park South. Ecstatic at finding himself free at last, he burst into the proudest of all Greek dances – the zeibékiko. Blissfully oblivious of the alien surroundings, the Minotaur (who was famous for his wonderful dance recitals back home in Greece), danced and danced. He also had an extraordinary repertoire of songs, which he loved to sing, according to the occasion, ranging from “The Lady in Red” to “Buddy, Can You Spare a Dime?” in English – from “Ne Me Quitte Pas” (hardly the right title just now!) to “Je ne Suis Jamais Seul avec ma Solitude” in French; and from “Evzonáki Gorgó” to “Tsingána Mavromáta” in Greek. Tonight, however, as he gazed ecstatically at the twinkling lights on the south side of Central Park, he recalled a still more appropriate song – “Tonight About a Quarter to Nine / The Stars Will Have a Shimmering Shine” – the words of which he’d learned from a “minor” Beat poet in Paris. Singing this song at the top of his lungs, the Minotaur spent his first happy night in New York City, on that Central Park bench, all by himself. At the end of the song, he wrapped himself up in his Monastiraki duffle-coat and Penelope’s green scarf (which he’d remembered to collect from underneath Scylla’s bed) and fell asleep on the bench, where he had a heavenly dream about a young Greek maiden – just like Nausica’s twin sister – who came and rescued him from the Manhattan Inferno.
The Minotaурian Apocalypse of
“America the Beautiful”

Now, as for Nausica herself, she was not so easy to deal with either. After the first glorious night in the rain, she’d begun to show her weaker side as well. Unlike Scylla and Carybdis, she was not yet jealous of potential rivals. (Anyway, the Minotaur was old enough to be her Father.) But as he often complained (in the words of a popular Greek song), she was “jealous of the very air he breathed”! In other words, Nausica wanted to claim all his time, day and night, all for herself. After the first delirious days, however, he had to spend hours and hours intent upon his painting. This was when Nausica began to fret and fume.

For example, the long gestation period when the Minotaur was conceiving his most powerful synthesis of all, connected with the American mechanisation of human beings. In this particular drawing, entitled “Anthropóphagos” – with its television brain, its skyscraper teeth, its automobile body, and its belly stuffed with falling figures of moribund, no longer human beings – the Monster removes one of its “teeth” and grinds another ex-human-being into a piece of rubbish. In order to find the concentration needed to conceive each detail of such a complicated drawing, the Minotaur needed Time and above all, Peace of Mind. But instead of understanding this, Nausica rebelled against playing second fiddle to his work and she started to sulk. Naturally, the Minotaur kicked her out. He was as gentle as a lamb and as loveable as a child – singing and dancing and smiling all the while – as long as he was able to do his work. But if anybody – even his own mother Pasiphae – tried to interfere with his creative work, he became ferocious.

For several days after her banishment, Nausica moped in despair, eating her heart out for the Minotaur. Furthermore, she had come to identify with the victims of the Anthropóphagos and wherever she drifted during the days of her banishment, she couldn’t stop thinking about the Monster. After four days, she was no longer able to stay away, so she tried a fairly innocent feminine ploy. She knew that the Minotaur adored jasmine. (Pasiphae always used to send him a sprinkling of fresh jasmine buds inside the envelopes she
posted to him, wherever he happened to be travelling). So Nausica found the closest thing to jasmine she could find on the American side of the Atlantic: jasmine tea all the way from China (not from China Town, which she avoided like the plague; but from one of those Jewish delicatessens sprouting up on almost every sidewalk of the City). Together with a winsome little note in her best Greek and a green-and-yellow paperback edition of two Shakespearean Comedies (“The Tempest” and “All’s Well That Ends Well”), she won her way back into the Minotaur’s good graces. Except that this time, to make sure there would never again be such a scene, the Minotaur made Nausica agree that she would leave him in peace to draw his drawings and in return, he would permit her to write “Scenarios” (or whatever other form of writing she might choose) based on his drawings – just as long as he could be free to do his own work.

This was the beginning of a fruitful collaboration, the first sequence of which was inspired by the Minotaur’s caustic caricatures of “America the Beautiful”, as he entitled them – with consummate irony. Starting out with the parody of “The Statue of Liberty”, which the Minotaur had portrayed as a grotesque Mrs. America, full of ugly wrinkles and sagging chins, clutching a cheque-book in one hand and in her other hand – instead of the traditional torch – her milksop husband. This apocalyptic series floodlighted the void of Mr. and Mrs. America’s “life”. The drawings were so powerful in themselves they needed no “scenario” to accompany them. Indeed, in retrospect, Nausica admitted that the words she had worked on so hard during those first days of their “collaboration” were no more than captions.

Indeed, no words are needed for the hippopotamian American matron with her Casper Milktoast spouse tiptoeing timidly behind her. Or for the hideous, shark-toothed American female, so domineering that her almost invisible, one-legged husband has become literally glued to her side. Especially when there is the backdrop of other characteristic nightmares of New York City, such as “Claustrophobia” with its helpless distorted figures crushed between the skyscrapers; such as the “Subway Centipede” with its scurrying businessmen worming their way into a single body with a hundred blank faces and a hundred identical briefcases; such as “Telephone Electrocution”, with its tangled jangle of wires disconnecting the skeleton skyscrapers; such as “Window Peeping”, with its intricate network of windows and behind each of the windows, a different example of Big City misery; such as the “Street Walker”, with a lonely figure drifting like a ghost in a nightscape, far below the top of a skyscraper, whence a man is hurtling downwards from his penthouse; and such as an air-conditioned limousine “hearse”, bedecked with plastic...
bouquets, nylon tears and a neon sign advertising “Funerals on the Installment Plan”, with the Minotaur’s own caption:

“DIE TODAY / PAY LATER!”

As well as all these nightmares, the Minotaur went on delving deeper and deeper into the inhuman void of Mr. and Mrs. America. Against the 666 Madison Avenue skyscraper for BIG Business, we see an androgynous couple: an empty corset with a red Cadillac for a head and a clock-hand “body”, riding a tricycle along the New York City skyline. In another drawing, entitled “Transplant”, the two figures are portrayed in a shattered state, with all their innards scattered pell-mell – including misplaced wombs and instead of genitals, a watch-chain. And the most terrifying of all, Mr. and Mrs. America without any faces at all – only holes. Furthermore, Mrs. America, although sporting a mink coat, has only holes where her heart and her sexual organs should be. As for Mr. America, underneath his tuxedo, he too has only a hole where his phallos should be.

Out of these powerful portraits, perhaps the most unforgettable is “Gloria Biblesex” – based on Carybdis and partly on Scylla, although the surname is his own invention. This sex-starved American female is portrayed on the eve of a Caribbean cruise, in search of a swarthy Latin Lover. The old hag is positively panting for a man, with her eyes bulging with lust and her sexless husband dangling from a rhinestone necklace, around her thick neck. The male counterpart of Gloria Biblesex’ husband is the T.V. Zombie: that All-American idiot, the middle-aged, middle-class, middle-west moron, with his hydrocephalic T.V. screen instead of a head. This “Zombie” is permanently stuck to his armchair in sloppy slippers – too lazy even to dress up for his wife, let alone make love to her. Hence, the starvation of Gloria Biblesex.

At first, Nausica had been thrilled to “collaborate” with the Minotaur in capturing all these monsters. But after several weeks, she could no longer stand their inhuman ugliness. She had had enough of anthropophagous skyscrapers and 666 apocalypses, quite enough of Beelzebub and Biblesex and all the other American minions of Mammon.
As February melted into March and spring began to show its first signs, Nausica began to visit the furthest tip of Manhattan, a stone’s throw from Battery Park. Although still trapped in the labyrinth of this most labyrinthine megalopolis, she preferred to spend her time down there, like a lonely orphan-of-the-storm, instead of uptown, in the heart of Manhattan trying to find a rational way out. Before she met the Minotaur, she used to set herself other mad challenges – like walking all the way from the very start of Broadway, number 1, miles and miles, all the way up to the very end of Broadway, at the other tip of Manhattan. But now that she’d met the Minotaur, she preferred to sing the sweetest of his songs, a song for which he himself had written the words and the music in the original version, (although Manos Hadjidakis wrote the music for the second, more widely known version):

“I’m on my way to tell the sky
I’m on my way to tell the cloud
The swallow can’t be caught
The swallow won’t be lost
Way up there above the sky.”

These innocent words gave Nausica courage to face the world. “Incurably romantic”, the Minotaur called her (in the words of the famous French song). But he too was profoundly romantic. Indeed, together with their passionate desire to return to Greece, this is what united the two of them most strongly. Nausica longed to change whatever was ugly into something beautiful – even little things, like picking a sprig of yellow forsythia to bring sunlight into a bleak room. Hadn’t the Minotaur done the same during the Nazi Occupation (as in the grim concentration-camp at El Daba, picking a yellow cactus flower of the desert every day to decorate the prison cell.) Likewise, Nausica enjoyed singing a cheerful song: “A tisket, a tasket, a green and yellow basket”, to charm away the grey cement of the smothering skyscrapers and even in the remotest section of the city, she would always look for something beautiful – like the
handful of old houses with new moons carved on their shutters, still standing in Greenwich Village, near the Cherry Lane Theater – whose very name, redolent of flowering pink branches on a spring day, gave her courage to face all the other ugliness. And taking courage herself, she was able to give courage to the Minotaur, in return. Nausica was sometimes as fresh and aethereal as Goethe’s Margarethe:

\[
\begin{align*}
Frisch weht der Wind & \quad \text{The wind blows fresh} \\
Der Heimat zu, & \quad \text{Towards Home} \\
Mein Irisches Kind, & \quad \text{My Irish child} \\
Wo weilest du? & \quad \text{Where are you now?}
\end{align*}
\]

At other times, she became as heavy-hearted as that same heroine in another mood:

\[
\begin{align*}
Mein Herz ist schwer & \quad \text{My heart is heavy} \\
Meine Ruhe ist hin & \quad \text{My peace is gone} \\
Ich finde sie & \quad \text{I cannot find peace} \\
Nimmer nimmer mehr. & \quad \text{Ever again, not ever.}
\end{align*}
\]

But she had a very good heart – always longing to find the best of all possible worlds. Her only problem: she was never ever at peace. As one of her favourite mottoes, she often repeated Dionysios Solomos’ words:

“My very vitals and the sea are never ever at rest”

Nevertheless, for all her restless nature, the Minotaur loved his Nausica and adored her way of transforming even the greyest mid-Manhattan district where he was living into an oasis. Instead of a miserable East River nightmare, she called his neighbourhood “The End of the Fiftieth Street” and he was so delighted that he drew her a little sketch. In a miniature “Park” looking out on the East River, accompanied by soothing sounds of foghorns and gently lapping waves, Nausica and the Minotaur created their own Wonderful World, with a wonderful décor, painted by the Minotaur. The human beings inhabiting this World included an 80-year-old flower lady who sold tulips; a “Boz Arts” bartender who served bright green mugs of beer; a fishmonger who sold oysters “as fresh as daisies”; a monkey-trainer with two pet “chimpanzees” the size of marionettes; a young hotdog-vendor with brightly coloured bowls
full of mustard and onions and piccalilli; and a sailor from the Staten Island ferryboat who had tickets printed with the words: “The cheapest longest boat-ride in New York City and all for a nickle! Step right up, folks! Only five cents! For the time of your life!”

In the early days of their love, Nausica and the Minotaur played delightedly in this make-believe World. After Nausica’s magic wand had transformed the monsters of the Big City, a happy interval followed. But all too soon, an ominous bass voice began to leave threatening messages for the Minotaur, on the telephone’s answering-service, bringing them back to grim reality. Meanwhile, the Greek dancer had gone back to Greece, leaving the Minotaur all on his own in the garden apartment. And one fine evening, Nausica and he came back to find the flat ransacked and looted. Luckily, whoever the culprits were, they were not Art-lovers. So all the Minotaur’s drawings were intact. Nevertheless, the damage had been done. Their oasis was invaded, their make-believe décor was torn down, and for their very survival, they were forced to flee.
The Minotaur’s Pact with Daedala to Help Them Back to Greece

Henceforth, dear little Nausica and the Minotaur were reduced to making love in lonely lofts on the lower West Side of Manhattan, or in the freezing precincts of “Hell’s Kitchen”. Oh, those howling draughts and dripping taps and foul toilets and oh, the chill that came over them after walking down from one of those 7th floor walk-up lofts polkadotting the lower regions of Manhattan. And oh, those out-of-work longshoremen lounging about the port, or those Bowery bums stretched out “blotto”, on the cellar gratings, dead drunk at daybreak (or any other hour of the day), on California sour-grapes “wine”, more acrid than vinegar.

Some time after the icicles had thawed and the early April rains had begun, Nausica and the Minotaur found themselves in one of the most sordid of all the sordid joints they’d visited in the course of prowling around “Hell’s Kitchen” (not far from the “White Horse Bar”, where Dylan Thomas used to hang out during his last days in New York). Down there at Jack’s-off-Jane Street, they were having a melancholy round of drinks with a hunchback midget, a red-haired whore and the foulest of the foul-mouthed drunkards, when all of a sudden, the Minotaur burst into tears. The proverbial “drop that made the glass overflow” (in American lingo: “the straw that broke the Minotaur’s back”).

A blind Greek sailor had just limped into the Bar and started begging for a hand-out. The Minotaur was reminded of the saddest song in his musical “repertoire”: “Buddy, Can You Spare a Dime?” (“Once I had a railway / I made it run / Race against Time / Now it’s done! / Buddy can you spare a dime?”) The first stanza, and each stanza thereafter ended with that heartbreakingly sad leit motif: “Buddy, can you spare a dime?” When the Minotaur witnessed the humiliation of this blind old sailor, this once-upon-a-time proud descendant of Odysseus, reduced to a beggar, it was too much for him.

He turned decisively towards Nausica and told her he could stand no more. He must find “Help!” He must at all costs get out of this awful maze of the U.S.A., this godawful ugly Labyrinth, where not even Ariadne herself could do the trick with a ball of twine. Anyway, as the Minotaur added, look what
happened to poor Ariadne (despite her splendid marriage in Naxos). He wouldn't want anything like that for his Nausica! Instead, he asked her if she would play Antigone to his Oedipus in Colonos and in this guise, lead him back to the sacred soil of Athens? He must get back to Greece, come hell or highwater. But on second thought, this septuagenarian version of Oedipus – this “tattered coat upon a stick” (compared with the former figure of Oedipus in his glory), had gone to the sacred grove on the outskirts of Athens, only in order to die. Whereas he, The Minotaur, wanted to live – yes indeed, another fifty years, at least. And anyway, like Ariadne, Antigone was not strong enough to save him from America.

No! In order to free himself from the American Maze, he needed all the skill of the original Artificer, the godlike Man who created the first Labyrinth. Only Daedalos himself could get him out of this mess. But if possible, a female Daedalos – indeed, just like his Nausica’s favourite heroine, Daedala, to whom she’d written her first prose-poems. Anyway, because of the Minotaur’s passion for Women, a female Daedalos suited him perfectly. So he promised Nausica to use her own name – Daedala – if only she could find a way – any lawful way, short of murder – to get herself and him back Home to Greece. As an added incentive, irresistible to ex-Nausica, he also promised to paint her a painting of Europa enthroned triumphantly on the finest of Zeus’ Bulls (Zeus in one of his umpteen disguises – a god after the Minotaur’s own heart, a god who could assume any disguise he chose, in order to woo each new mistress.) The Minotaur vowed that – as a genuine Cretan descendant of King Minos – he would create a much finer Bull than the Catalan Picasso. And as for Europa, she would make miracles for ex-Nausica.

With such tempting incentives, Daedala immediately set about finding a solution, although till this very moment, she’d been incapable of finding even one boat to carry herself back to Greece (24 freighters had passed her by). But now – with the Minotaur’s plea for Help – she sprang into Action. After donning her thinking-cap, she had a brain-storm. Why not aim for the stars? The Minotaur’s amazing caricatures of America would make a fabulous exhibition. Furthermore, the Minotaur always spoke of Paris with nostalgia. Why not try to get his drawings exhibited in the very heart of Paris? All he needed to do was to telephone a well-known Greek dynamo in Paris, a lady from Asia Minor with a famous little Gallery on the Rue des Beaux Arts, in one of the most colourful corners of the Left Bank.

This Princess of Greek Galleries had already played a role in making the Minotaur quite a celebrity in Paris, enhanced by his brilliant sketches of the so-
called “*Picasso Party*”. So Daedala’s proposal seemed feasible and the Parisian Greek Princess suggested the earliest possible date in May for a Gala Paris Presentation of the Minotaur’s “*Apocalypse*” of New York City. In the same envelope, she also sent a luxury first-class ticket for Le Havre, aboard the most elegant French steamer, (appropriately named “LIBERTÉ”), a splendid omen for the Minotaur’s Liberation from America.
The Mysterious “Mr. Murphy” and the Minotaur’s Persecution Complex

Just before midnight, on the last night prior to the Minotaur’s departure for Paris, a strange little man with a deep bass voice appeared out of the blue, near the Statue of Atlas, where Daedala was waiting for her Man. As soon as the Minotaur came up to her, the strange little man approached them and in a deep bass voice, offered them a ride around town, “just to pay their last respects to Manhattan”. Since the Minotaur was feeling a million miles away from Scylla and Carybdis, safely on his way home to Ithaca, and since the good ship “Liberty” wasn’t scheduled to sail until the next day, he accepted the unexpected invitation and arm-in-arm with Daedala, they set off. The little man sat at the wheel, without saying a word. Anyway, Daedala and the Minotaur were absorbed in their own plans, and they paid no attention to him, not even noticing the strange vibrations of that deep bass voice. But when the stranger screeched to a stop outside Saint Patrick’s Cathedral, they were jolted out of their indifference.

The strange little man ordered them out of his convertible and into the cavernous Catholic Church. Before reaching the altar, the little man stopped short. Looking back to see if they were following him, he now led them to one of the innumerable Confession booths, where tomorrow, the Catholic priests would be listening to all the little “sins” of all the sheepish old ladies. Just outside the cubicle, the little man rolled a mini-cigarette, took a few puffs (it had an unmistakeable stench) and then, with a menacing expression, stubbed it out on what appeared to be his professional business card, which he stuck on the door of the booth for the priest to read.

By now, the Minotaur and Daedala were beginning to be alarmed and they asked the little man to drive them to the Waterfront, as soon as possible. In the course of depositing them in a Bar not far from the pier where the S.S. “Liberté” was anchored, the strange little man handed the Minotaur a replica of the business card he’d also left in Saint Patrick’s Cathedral. Before the Minotaur had time to read the name on the card, the little man with the deep
bass voice (by now, beginning to sound familiar), wished him a pleasant trip and a “Happy Return to his Native Land”.

Now – and only now – the Minotaur scrutinized the card and was startled to read: “Mortimer Murphy, Private Detective” and underneath, “With the compliments of Carybdis Biblesex” (scrawled in purple ink above a seal with the vase-painting of the pet Minotaur.) Even a man not haunted with a persecution complex would have frozen in his tracks. As for the Minotaur, who had had a persecution complex from the age of nine months, when the Turks had chased his Asia Minor nurse, all the way from Aidini to Smyrna, he was nonplussed. After he had registered the full significance of the name “Murphy” – the same name dogging his footsteps ever since he’d abandoned Carybdis (including a mysterious phone-call to a chili con carne restaurant, in the Porto Rican sector of Manhattan, and that nasty invasion of his oasis at the End of the 50th Street), the Minotaur imagined other dangerous events which Mister Mortimer Murphy might cause. So he bolted up the gangplank without taking the time to wave goodbye to Daedala, down on the pier.

Several hours later (safely out of the clutches of “Mr. Murphy” and Carybdis Biblesex), the Minotaur ventured out of his deluxe cabin. Heading for the first-class dining room of the “Liberté”, the Minotaur took a deep breath when the maitre d’ hotel led him to a table full of thoroughly ordinary-looking Americans from Kansas– eager beavers on the lookout only for dime-a-dozen postcards of the Eiffel Tower and “April in Paris”, to send back to their Folks. However, when everyone at the dinner-table got round to swapping names, the Minotaur did a double-take when the person sitting next to him shook hands and introduced himself as who else? John Murphy. (Well, at least, he wasn’t Mortimer).
Daedala’s Farewell to Mama America and Her Arrival in Europa

Two weeks afterwards, back on the pier of the Manhattan Waterfront, Daedala appeared to be back where she’d started out seven months ago. But with one great difference: The Minotaur’s love and his trust in her to act as his very own Daedala. By now, all the Elements were working in her favour. Yuri Garagarin was scheduled to be launched into Space soon after the Minotaur’s departure and within 24 hours, Daedala finally found the right freighter bound for the right port at the right time. She was so excited by her imminent departure that she even began to identify her voyage with Gargarin’s, whose spaceship would be launched on the very day of her own departure – April 14th. Indeed, Daedala was so overjoyed that she began to imagine herself as a kind of fellow traveller with the first Human Being, who would be able to fly to the Moon.

As soon as Daedala found herself alone in her cabin, she heard a burst of resilient laughter from somewhere high up on the upper deck. And as though reborn, she darted out into the fresh air to listen to the piccolo and tuba duet (as if they’d been orchestrated by Stravinsky), with the tiny tugboat’s shrill “peep-peep” and the big boat’s basso “poop-poop” flying back and forth in a comical dialogue. The million lights of Manhattan, like a billion Christmas-tree candles shining in the night, pinpointed the skyscrapers of the Big City. Just then, a shooting-star soared up above the moon and Daedala felt so elated she sang her favourite nursery rhyme, the one she remembered best from her childhood – about the cat and the fiddle and the “Hey-diddle-diddle” chorus of the Moon. And there, only a stone’s throw away, stood the Statue of Liberty, with her right arm holding her torch aloft. A Negro sailor, who was swabbing the upper deck, stared at the statue:

“Dat dame gotta get paid overtime. Dat’s real hard work, with her arm like dat, all de way up to de sky, 24-hours a day!” With a laugh as sparkling as her ruby-red earrings, Daedala was also staring at the Statue, gloriously lit up near the sea. For a moment, she wondered if the Minotaur had exaggerated the ugliness of America in all the ultra-satirical sketches he’d made of New York. But after one last glance at the Empire State Building flashing its meteor-bright lights on the Manhattan sky-line, she waved farewell to the Statue of Liberty.
and her laughter turned to tears. Half-an-hour later, way out in the harbour, all the lights had dimmed and a pitch-black sky had swallowed up New York City. So she closed the door of her now empty cabin – empty of her past, empty of the West, empty of everything which linked her to her birthplace. Only then, she fully realized that she was leaving Mama America for ever.

She’d been all alone for ten whole days on this vast Trans-Atlantic voyage and every night before she fell asleep, she whispered the words of that old Negro song:

“Sometimes I feel like a motherless child
A long long way from home, oh so very long.”

But on her last night aboard the “Zenobia Martini”, Daedala went back to the upper deck. From there, she could see the coast of Portugal – EUROPA, at long last – brightly outlined in the light of the full moon, with all the constellations cavorting gaily, in harmony with Gargarin’s spaceship. By now, Orion had climbed back to his old place in the firmament and as this night of nights moved on towards dawn, the morning star began to twinkle – yes, Venus (alias Aphrodite) glimmering with all the Chagallian colours of the rainbow. All the Elements of Nature were bright as fireflies, dancing a Celtic jig of welcome for Daedala, a welcome to her future-of-many-moons in Europa. Daedala was holding the talisman the Minotaur had given her the night before he left Manhattan – the painting of Europa and the Bull. Except that in the Minotaur’s painting, Europa – instead of sitting enthroned atop the Bull – was standing upright on the waves and playing the flute to enchant the Bull, with Poseidon’s white head in the left hand corner of the sea. This precious image was to protect Daedala, keeping her forever safe in Europe, far from the impossible impasses in America. Now she was ready to set sail for an everlasting home in Greece. Yes, she’d have sailed all the way to Ceylon or even to the Tierra del Fuego, in the outermost circle of Antartica – anywhere, she was willing to sail, in order to find her Minotaur.
SECTION TWO

NOSTOS
Zeus, disguised as a Bull, takes Princess Europa of Phoenicia to Crete – where she gives birth to their three sons: Minos, Rhadamanthes, and Sarpedon. (Another Ancient Greek vase)
Yes indeed, Daedala might well have “sailed on to Ceylon”. But in actual fact, when the “Zenobia Martini” finally reached its destination – Portugese Lisboa – she refused to go on even as far as nextdoor France. After twelve long days across the “lone Atlantic” (the monotony broken only by a single fishing-boat in the Azores, where she chose a rainbow-coloured handwoven bag to feast her eyes on for the rest of the voyage), Daedala began delaying as soon as they landed in Lisbon. Instead of rushing straight into the arms of the Minotaur, why oh why was she delaying their encounter?

Of course, there was a plausible reason for some of Daedala’s delays – especially for her odd reaction to pain, which meant so much to her. First of all, because when she’d first met the Minotaur in New York, she was working hard on translating Kazantzakis’ marvellous book about Spain into English. In order to help her appreciate the difficult Cretan words in Kazantzakis’ vocabulary, the Minotaur had made a List embellished with charming little sketches of the more difficult nouns. By way of expressing her gratitude for the Minotaur’s help, Daedala had promised him never to visit Spain until they could go there together. This promise was particularly hard for her, because she’d inherited her adoration of Spain from her own Mother, who had written a magnum opus connected with Spain and had spent a whole year there on the eve of the Spanish Civil War. So Daedala was brought up on her Mother’s inspiring words about Spanish History and Literature.

How could Daedala ever have imagined that the 25th freighter she would finally find to help her return to Greece would leave her at the threshold of Spain? Such a temptation! But Daedala was determined not to break her promise to the Minotaur and on her way to France, she traversed Spain by train, without actually setting foot on Spanish soil. Even when she heard the magic place-names she’d heard as a child (such as Guernica and Salamanca), she remained chained to her third-class seat on the train, instead of rushing impulsively to kiss the ground of Spain, at each new station. However, Daedala did give in to the temptation of extending her stay at the Portugese border, as
well as the French. This way, she could get two glimpses of Spain, albeit from afar.

At the Portuguese border into Spain, she stayed at a place called Fuente los Vaqueros. Around twilight, as she strolled along the deserted border of Portugal – only a stone’s throw from Spain – she read out loud (to the wilderness) her favourite poem about Cyprus, while gazing every so often at the handsome Spanish guards. But Daedala restrained herself from trying to cross the border, although the next day when she boarded the train again (theoretically (!), straight for Paris), she cast her favourite pair of earrings out of the window, as the locomotive approached the last Spanish railway station, and added her own fervent prayer that some day, she would return there together with the Minotaur.

On the French side of the Spanish Border, at the border-town of Hendaye, Daedala had intended to spend only one night. But instead, she dilly-dallied seven whole days with insipid excursions to nearby Biarritz and silly pilgrimages to the most fraudulent monument of Catholicism: Lourdes. She even tried to stray as far afield as the Land of the Basques in the neighbouring Pyrenees, in a misguided attempt to celebrate Mayday in “revolutionary” style. But fed up with her own whimsicality, she only got as far as the outskirts of Hendaye. After walking up a narrow path in the shade of huge trees, she reached a rustic lodge, where a group of elderly bourgeois businessmen (with their septuagenarian spouses) were engaged in their annual Mayday shindig. Why, oh why did Daedala continue delaying? Was she afraid that the Minotaur would be too strong for her? Did she fear she might lose her own freedom? Was her need to be free really her strongest need? Daedala was all too aware of her own contradictions: particularly her longing to take root in a permanent relationship, but at the same time, her burning desire not to be trapped by such permanence.
At the nadir of ambivalence, Daedala finally woke up and rushed to the nearest express train for Paris. The Minotaur, after six straight days of waiting for her at the Gare du Sud, was about to go on the rampage. When Daedala telephoned him from Hendaye, the day after Mayday, he bellowed at her that if she ever wanted to see him again, she’d better get to Paris “post-haste!” He’d arranged the vernissage of his New York drawings just in time for her birthday on May 9th and he needed her presence for last-minute details. He also warned Daedala not to expect the Gallery he had tried to arrange from Manhattan. Iris Clert had moved from her old Rue des Beaux Arts premises to an elegant Gallery on the Right Bank and was opening with an Exhibition of forty-two portraits of herself by forty-two eminent painters. (The forty-second portrait of Queen Iris was a telegram from the famous Pop “Artist”, Rauschenberg, who was all the rage at the moment. His telegram was pasted above several pieces of rubbish, which informed the spectator:

“This is a Work of Art, because I say it is!”

In these circumstances, the Minotaur preferred to remain true to his former Rive Gauche connections with the Rue de Seine, and had decided to show his drawings in a tiny bookshop frequented by genuine Art-lovers. Disillusioned by his Odyssean adventures in New York, the Minotaur had no appetite for the “chic” atmosphere of a Paris vernissage. So he thought up a way of being present, without actually appearing: He would pretend to be dead! So he stretched out on a wooden plank in the miniature vitrine of that Rue de Seine bookshop and folded his hands like a corpse in a coffin. Daedala, who had arrived in Paris just in time to participate in the “fun”, brought a Chinese kimono and a fin de siècle “telephone” for the Minotaur to keep in touch with Saint Peter. While the spectators gaped at the scene, he pretended to be happily asleep inside his mock “coffin”, until Daedala poured a glass of water on him. At which point, the Minotaur stood up and waltzed off with her, while the old-fashioned phonograph played an old Greek song entitled “Kill me or cure me!”.
As soon as the Minotaur and Daedala were free of the crowd, inside the Gallery, they headed for a little Square known as “La Place Fürstenberg”, full of 19th century gaslight lamps and mist-dampened iron-benches. The moment they entered this miniature Old World Square, Daedala was reminded of the Minotaur’s poetic play – “The Paramour of Heaven” – which she promptly began to enact right then and there, in the heart of Paris. Since it was her birthday, in order to please Daedala, the Minotaur played the role of the old Greek beggar, who falls in love with the heaven-sent concubine. Just then, who should appear but Marcel Marceau, whom the Minotaur had recently visited in the mime’s country home, as well as in his magic garden near Notre Dame. Marceau recognized the Minotaur and made a graceful pirouette by way of greeting him, while Daedala curtseyed, completing the scene from “The Paramour of Heaven”, oblivious of the presence of this greatest of mimes. In total silence, Marceau just stood there in the dim light of the street-lamp, applauding in pantomime, before he tiptoed out into the night.

* * *

Yes, that was how Daedala and the Minotaur celebrated Daedala’s Mayday birthday in Paris, after the “death scene” at the Rue de Seine vernissage. And the birthday girl felt so elated she wept for joy; yes, that girl with the green scarves and the sea-green eyes actually wept for joy, as she danced round and round the old iron lamp-post in the Place Fürstenberg, in her clackety high heels, tak-a-tak-takking till daybreak, when she went back with the Minotaur to their Paris garret on the Rue Ci-Gît-le-Coeur, back to their Hotel Navarre on this same “Here Lies Our Heart” Street, just around the corner from the “Impasse des Deux Anges”. Here in their bright garret full of flowers and pineapples and tiny apricot and strawberry tarts, their window looked out on René Clair “Sous Les Toits de Paris” rooftops and from the highest rooftop, a hole-riddled white curtain behind which the peeping Toms could peer into the bedrooms of the Hotel Navarre.

And oh for the orgies on the Rue Ci-Gît-le-Coeur and oh those groans of pleasure from the nextdoor courtyard of the Beatniks’ Hotel, with the black man’s enormously long legs sticking out of a window on the fourth floor and threatening to slither down five whole flights of fire escapes, down to the rez-de-chaussé dormitories, where the Beatnik poets (including Gregory Corso and Allen Ginsberg) were making love with their Bootnik friends; and Sinclair Beillis had just been “ launched” into “Space”, to welcome Yuri Gargarin to
the Moon. This was the heyday of Paris for the Beats and also the heyday for long-established artists – Beckett (rehearsing his “End Game” at the Gaiétè Montparnasse, with Roger Blin as metteur-en-scène and Christine Tsingou as the mother in the rubbish-bin) – and Brendan Behan (dancing his tragi-comic Dublin jig, in and out of bistro after bistro) – and Giacometti (sitting all on his own at the Dôme Café).

And oh so many vernissages, and the scintillating Exhibition at the Louvre, where throughout this particular month of May, all the paintings of Theophilos (collected by Thériade) were on display (although Daedala wondered if this penniless Greek painter, who painted his chefs d’œuvres only for his daily bread, would have wanted his work to amuse Gallic snobs at the Louvre?) Nevertheless, despite her negative thoughts, this particular month of May was truly a divertimento and should have filled Daedala with sheer joy. But something seemed to be missing and as the not altogether merry month of May petered out, Daedala was becoming more and more restless.

Yes, before the end of that first May of being together, Daedala had already begun to kick against the pricks. Throughout the interval in Manhattan, when they’d been forced to face the Big Bad Bogeyman at every turn, she had stood staunchly by the Minotaur’s side, never shilly-shallying. But now that they were living together, free of Carybdis Biblesex and Mortimer Murphy, without interference from a single soul, both Daedala and the Minotaur – instead of rejoicing – began to reveal contradictory streaks.

Indeed, the very first day Daedala had arrived in Paris (after ten days’ delay), not finding the Minotaur still waiting for her at the Gare du Sud, she had gone off in a huff to look for him. To calm her unjustified bad temper, she stopped at the outdoor market near Saint Grégoire de Tours, and chose a bunch of bright flowers and a basket of strawberries from a wheelbarrow. As it was still so early in the morning, she decided to leave a note for the Minotaur, asking him to meet her two hours hence at the entrance to Notre Dame. But after climbing six flights of stairs to his friend’s room, where he was staying till her arrival, she overheard his voice through the door and ran impulsively, straight into his arms.

After so many days of waiting, the Minotaur was worn out and after a hasty lunch, as soon as he took Daedala to the Hotel Navarre, he fell sound asleep. Daedala was so upset by his apparent indifference that she rushed out of the Hotel, leaving him a note to say she’d gone to the café closest to Notre Dame, where she intended to read “Moby Dick”. And would he kindly come and find her there, before the afternoon was out? Around sunset, when the Minotaur
had not appeared, Daedala returned to the hotel and found him still sound asleep. This was too much! Donning her magenta dress and her daffodil-yellow coat, Daedala headed for a Bar, anywhere to get away from the sleeping Minotaur.

In the cloudy corners of the “Nuages” Bar (where the Minotaur had told her he used to enjoy his rendez-vous with his Parisian mistress), Daedala met an unknown Spaniard and spent the rest of the night talking with him. But around daybreak, she decided to leave and in order to avoid any further delays, she staggered out into the street – la Rue du Vent-du-Midi, she would recall the name of this street until doomsday: the Street of the “Wind from the South” – and in a semi-dazed state, she headed blindly towards the Railway Station of the “South Wind”, where the Minotaur had been waiting for her so patiently six whole days.

Since yesterday’s arrival in Paris, Daedala had heard that Gregory Corso had just invaded Cannes for a week, and in her angry mood, she decided to visit him there. Recalling all the wisterical images she associated with Gregory, she rested her head on a bench of the Gare du Sud waiting-room, dreaming of Gregory’s red rose and the tryst they’d planned for her twenty-first birthday. Around 8:00 a.m., Daedala actually boarded the next train for the Riviera. But – by one of those odd quirks of fate – Daedala wound up (instead of in Cannes) in the room of a Greek friend, who tried to tell her that the Minotaur was only tired and when a man is tired, he must rest! Then the same friend handed Daedala a copy of Gregory Corso’s most recent book (“American Express”) and advised her to get some sleep herself. And when she woke up five hours later, still hugging Gregory’s book, there was the Minotaur, standing by the bedside.

This opening night of their life together was only the first of several such scenes. The Minotaur and Daedala had come into one another’s orbit at two different stages, only partly explainable in terms of their nineteen years’ difference in age. The Minotaur had already enjoyed as many women as any self-respecting Greek male could be expected to have enjoyed. He was still susceptible to the temptations of a new relationship– especially, with someone half his age. But he had warned Daedala almost from the start:

“Even if I had the choice of making love to Marylin Monroe every single day, day in, day out, after a few weeks I’d be fed up. It’s like being offered caviar and champagne every single day. After a while, you get sick of it!”
Needless to say, Daedala was furious and burst into one of her volcanic bad moods, which made the Minotaur even more distant. In order to appease the Minotaur’s wrath, Daedala then wrote a poem entitled “Amnesia”, where the leit motif was:

“o Cellini me a gilded goblet I need never fill”

In this same poem (which she dedicated to the Minotaur), she also prayed to turn her volcanic eruptions into lava pouring into poems alone. She also vowed to wed her angel to her demon. However, Daedala’s plea to tame her demon may have been admirable, but another verse in the poem:

“winding in and out between the empty sheets
on the Impasse-des-Deux-anges”

expressed her all too real dilemma.

Indeed, how Daedala and the Minotaur were able to live together creatively, for seven whole years, amounted to a miracle. It must be that their love (sui generis from its very beginning) was so strong that it could transcend everyday problems. Maybe their sacred Pact in New York City – that Daedala would help the Minotaur return to Greece and he would give her his finest painting of Europa and the Bull, as a talisman for her to remain for ever free of America – maybe this vision gave them the strength to go on and on together – at least until some inexorable external force – an Earthquake or a Flood, or both – would sever them for ever. Until that time, they would remain together, for better or for worse. Anyway, as the month of May drew to its close, they decided to leave Paris – despite its offering such a lovely divertimento.
The Minotaur and Daedala en route for Greece  
(From Assisi to Meteora)

In order to set forth for Greece with a flourish, the Minotaur chose a memorable date for their long journey – May 29th, which as every Greek knows, was the momentous day in 1453 when the City of Constantinople fell to the Turks. Perhaps because of his Asia Minor roots, the Minotaur chose this date. But he counteracted any sad memories, by chanting the famous verse from the Ballad:

“Once more, after years to come, the City will be ours!”

And with genuine delight – unequivocal delight this time – he and Daedala set out together for their very own “Nostos” – their longed for “Repatriation” in Greece.

Their first stop was Spoleto, where the Minotaur had been commissioned by his Athenian newspaper to write a journalistic account of Gian Carlo Menotti’s “Festival dei Due Mondi”. A Greek play by a famous Greek poet was to have its première there. And another treat was Richard Strauss’ opera, enhanced by the superb drawings of Ben Shahn and by the splendid Negress singer impersonating Salome. From Spoleto, the Minotaur carried Daedala off to La Spezzie, where six years earlier, he’d had the pleasure of visiting the private secretary of Bernard Berenson, who had expressed interest in his paintings. Then on to Assisi and the breathtaking frescoes of Giotto – Daedala had always especially loved Giotto’s Saint Francis feeding crumbs to the sparrows and for other reasons of his own, the Minotaur also particularly loved this fresco. (Although he never boasted of it, he’d made a series of illustrations for Kazantzakis’ book about Saint Francis – “The Mendicant of God”.)

He and Daedala had a hard time tearing themselves away from Assisi, when they had to catch the boat from Brindisi for the last stage of their “Nostos”. Along the way, the Minotaur almost missed the train, when he got off at a small provincial station for a drink of fresh water. Daedala had to screech in rusty Italian: “Aiuto! Mio marito, mio marito!”, in order for a scornful official in a
Minos the Minotaur and Daedala the Dreamer

gorgeous uniform to put her Man back on the train. An extremely disgruntled Minotaur climbed back aboard, with a shamefaced expression. No Greek can stand being made a fool of in public – especially in the presence of a blustering Italian policeman.

By now, they were in such a hurry to reach Greece at long last, that they didn’t even pause to taste the gastronomic specialty of the port: *patsás*-soup, made out of pig’s feet and tripe, doused in garlic-laden vinegar. In fact, at Brindisi, they were barely in time to board the ferry-boat, which the Minotaur had arranged in Paris on that historic date of May 29\textsuperscript{th}. They just managed to race up the gangplank before it was lifted. A few hours later, the ferry was due to arrive in the port of Corfu.

As soon as he got his first glimpse of the Ionian Archipelago, the Minotaur’s eyes filled with tears and he began to whisper those most musical verses of Dionysios Solomos – the ineffably beautiful (but alas, untranslateable) syllables about the babbling, gurgling, rippling sounds of the Greek Sea:

\(\text{“Καθαροφλοίσβηται νερά, ασύγκριτη ομορφιά”}\)
\(\text{“clearly-gurgling waters, incomparably lovely”}\)

Daedala also had tears in her eyes, not so much at the sight of the Archipelago as at the sound of the Minotaur’s melodious voice, reciting over and over again these heavenly words of Dionysios Solomos, the Patron Saint of 19\textsuperscript{th} century Greek Poets. Soon after disembarking at the port of Igoumenitsa, the magical sound of water again greeted them, from the Lake in Yannina, where the Ali Pasha’s mistress was drowned. According to “the famous Ballad”:

\(\text{“A thousand times a thousand grams of sugar”}\)

cannot make the waters of that Lake taste sweet. For it is still haunted by the “\textit{vrek-akek-vrek-a-kek-kouaxing}” uproar of ten-thousand frogs.

After setting foot on Greek soil, an extraordinary change took place in the Minotaur. The hand which held his pen never rested. Sketch after sketch poured out onto the pages of his drawing-block. With difficulty restraining his tears, he could not stop. After all those months of captivity in the West, the Minotaur was finally in his own element, free to record everything he saw. So he and Daedala paused along the way, wherever the Minotaur had the urge to paint.

High in the mountains beyond Yannina, he and Daedala stayed several
days in Metsovo and there, in the open-air Market, under the towering plane-
trees, they heard a melon-vendor chanting a lusty refrain:

“We don’t give a fig for your money!
It’s glory we want... Glory!”

Indeed, this was to become their own favourite motto throughout the seven
years of their life together, but also a bone of contention – the impecunious
Minotaur was in the habit of giving everything away and then being left with
the proverbial “fuzzy end of the lollipop”. After Metsovo, they set off for the
Rock Monasteries of Meteora, where the monks still ascended the Tibetan
heights in baskets and where their own refrain was the following motto (a
Sphinx-like conundrum), so succinct in Greek it contains only four words,
although in English, it requires more than twice as many words:

“A monk without possessions is as a high-soaring eagle.”

In their ascetic eagle’s nest, the monks could indeed fly as high as the sky.
There was only one incongruous element: the constant purring hum of the
electric generator, which lent an inappropriately erotic tone to the otherwise
forbidding monastic cells. But as the Minotaur explained to Daedala, this
combination of ascetic and erotic should not surprise her. For it is precisely
this co-existence of apparent opposites, which makes life so fascinating in
Greece. Indeed, this Heraclitean “synthesis of antitheses”, is as old as Greece
itself.

Nevertheless, despite his philosophical words, the Minotaur was
beginning to have enough of wandering. The eerie atmosphere of these semi-
Cappadocian rock monuments of Meteora was beginning to get on his nerves.
He was longing to move on to the gentler green forests and verdant vineyards
of Attica. But before reaching Athens, he wanted to take Daedala to visit an
ancient Great Aunt of his still living in Thebes – the Boeotian Thebes, (not the
Egyptian!) She was one of the very few relatives who had survived the Asia
Minor Catastrophe, which had robbed the Minotaur of his own father at the
age of two months. Except for his Mother and his Grandmother (and his older
brother), this Aunt (who happened to have been christened Antigone), was
his closest relative. Before returning to the Athenian Matriarchy, he felt the
imperative need to speak with old Antigone in Thebes – to prepare himself for
confronting what was left of his Family in Athens.
Daedala never learned what the old woman said to the Minotaur, but after the visit to Thebes, his metamorphosis seemed complete. Whether it was the coincidence of his Great Aunt’s name being Antigone, or whether it was some significant Family secret she may have told him, the Minotaur now reverted to the myth of the ancient Oedipus of Colonos, which he had rejected in New York City. He was now a million light-years away from the stranded, albeit adventurous Odysseus he had been in Manhattan. After his long conversation with Aunt Antigone, he had begun to talk and walk like an old man, led back home by a faithful Kore. Growing mellower and mellower as he approached Athens, by the time they reached the outskirts of that “violet-crowned city”, there, in the shadow of Plato’s Academy, with the Acropolis looming large in the background – the Minotaur actually believed that he himself was ancient Oedipus and Daedala his very own Antigone.
Pasiphae’s Feast, Pythian Gatsos and “Phlokasophia”

The moment the Minotaur arrived “home”, he looked so weary that in actual fact, he might have been Oedipus at the age of seventy. When his Mother opened her front door, she almost fainted. She on the contrary, looked as fresh as a young girl – with milk-white skin, as white as the jasmine-petals blossoming every twilight on her balcony; smooth lovely white skin preserved by cucumber-juice, assiduously applied every night. As for the Minotaur’s Grandmother, she too was a beautiful woman, despite being seventy years old. Yes, Grandmother Kalliroe was a majestic, marvellous old lady, who – although condemned to a permanent wheel-chair – sat there erect and proud, as though upon an Olympian throne.

Pasiphae, after recovering from her amazement at the un-announced return of the Minotaur and at the presence of Daedala, (inasmuch as the last time she’d seen her son, he was still married to another wife), reacted in the best way a Greek (indeed, an Asia Minor Greek!) Mother always reacts – by preparing a great Feast. The Minotaur had already described Pasiphae’s culinary genius to Daedala, at their hungriest moments in Manhattan, when they’d been reduced to half a hotdog each or half a piece of apple-pie from the “Automat”. He had compared Pasiphae’s Feast-Table to a Garden. So Daedala was prepared for something wonderful from the hands of this Mother, who always sent her son jasmine petals in every billet doux she wrote, wherever he roamed through the World.

But this time, Pasiphae outdid herself. To begin with, she prepared four different specialities with aubergines: eggplant salad, for a starter; next, came imam baildi – that scrumptious Asia Minor specialty which an old “Imami” found so delicious that he ate the whole casserole and burst; then, there was mousaká (in those days, still a treat, not yet imitated by every Tom, Dick and Harry); and as the pièce de résistance, the so-called “papoutsákia” – those elongated eggplants with the shape of the elegant slippers worn by the Emperor of Byzantium. When stuffed with mincemeat (kneaded with garlic and parsley, covered with crème fraîche and parmesan cheese), this was a Constantinopolitan treat, irresistible for the eyes as well as for the palate. Pasiphae of course also
made Smyrnan “soutzoukákia”, sprinkling the mincemeat mixture with liberal doses of spicy cumin-powder. And for all the regular Greek titbits – from “tzatzíki” to saganáki, from taramosaláta to dolmádes in egg-and-lemon sauce; from stuffed tomatoes and peppers (Pasiphae added raisins and “koukounária” pine-cone seeds) to stuffed zucchini – Pasiphae’s Feast Table overflowed with all these delicacies.

As the climax, Pasiphae was about to serve her favourite dessert (emék with a honied walnut sauce), when the Minotaur staggered to his feet, afraid that he too might end up bursting like that old Imami of Asia Minor. So, without further ado, he grabbed Daedala by the hand and led her out of the dining-room. Daedala was frantically trying to say “Thank you so much for the wonderful dinner!” But the Minotaur, in the typical manner of many Greek males, paid no attention to Etiquette and without saying a word, just walked out of his Mother’s house. In two minutes time, he and Daedala reached Syntagma Square and there, on an impulse, he decided to introduce her to his two closest friends, Manos Hadjidakis and Nikos Gatsos, who would undoubtedly be drinking their coffee at the nearby Phloka Café.

This was the Belle Époque of Phloka, where the élite of Athenian poets and musicians and painters used to meet. By then, their former meeting-place – the so-called “Piccadilly” – was defunct and the cramped space of the “Brazilian” was more suited for a quick sip before moving on. Phloka, on the other hand, was admirably suited for long sessions of timeless conversation, in the style of the ancient Greeks, who were capable of talking the whole night through, as though Time belonged to them. Daedala called this the Era of “Phlokasophia”.

The Minotaur had already told Daedala about the marvellous lyrics and Lorcan translations of Gatsos and from the very first night in Manhattan, he’d sung some of his favourite Hadjidakis songs to her, like the famous song composed for Tennessee Williams’ “Streetcar Named Desire”:

“When the sun goes down
And the moon goes over
The moon is my world”

“Full moon, you paper moon
Make-believe seashore
If only you believed me,
It would all be truly
ture.”

When Daedala first saw Manos in the flesh, that first day in Phloka, she understood why the Minotaur loved this song so much and how his own wonderful Moons were in perfect harmony with Hadjidakis’ musical Moons.
Furthermore, Manos’ round-as-a-full-Moon face looked just like a Minotaur Moon. As for Manos’ alter ego: the poet who wrote the words for Hadjidakis’ music, Gatsos was immensely tall—as tall as Mount Parnassus. However many earthquakes might erupt around him, he always remained the quintessence of ataraxia. Unshakeable, despite the perpetuo mobile of his right foot (the only hint of his intensity), oscillating back and forth like a metronome, punctuating his sibyline words. This wisest of modern Greeks also had the highest forehead and the most piercing eyes Daedala had ever seen. Gatsos’ gaze was capable of penetrating instantaneously to the very depths. When the Minotaur walked into Phloka’s, after so many months’ absence, and announced that he’d found a Kore to lead him back home after so many misadventures, (just like old Oedipus of Colonos and his Antigone), Gatsos put an end to this in an instant: “There, now, Man. Drop the nonsense! You’re just plain Odysseus and you’ve got another four decades before you become anything like poor old Oedipus. Cheer up, Odysseus! Welcome home, Ulysses!”

Magnanimously, Gatsos also included Daedala in his words of welcome: “And a warm welcome to you too, young lady. What shall I call you? Certainly, no Antigone! Perhaps Nausica? But no! I can see something else in your eyes besides a pretty young thing by the name of Nausica. You remind me of … of the Pythia. Yes, I’m going to call you “Pythia!” Daedala (who had long been a devotee of the ancient Pythia) was delighted with the nickname and at once, responded by calling Gatsos himself “Pythia”. And since their first confrontation seemed to be going so well (despite the odd expression of the Minotaur, who as a result of Gatsos’ words, had recovered some of his quondam Odyssean brio), Daedala decided to confide in Gatsos a dilemma she had not yet confessed even to the Minotaur. While the latter became engrossed in a private conversation with Hadjidakis, Daedala whispered to Gatsos the essence of her problem: her commitment to Cyprus (before she met the Minotaur), to translate the best of Irish plays and create a theatre in Famagusta. From the Minotaur himself, she already knew all about the wonderful translations Gatsos had made of so many theatrical masterpieces. And she needed his advice at this critical juncture, because she must decide soon whether to go on with her original plan for Cyprus, or to remain with the Minotaur? This dilemma was no laughing matter and Gatsos wisely declined to give Daedala an easy answer. Instead, he urged her to visit the real Pythia in Delphi and to ask for the Oracle’s opinion. From one Pythia to another—between Pythian “colleagues” – Gatsos’ advice, although uttered in a characteristically ironical tone – was that Daedala should persuade the Minotaur to abandon the chaos of Athens and accompany her to Delphi.
Minos the Minotaur and Daedala the Dreamer

Daedala and the Minotaur in the Delphic Ghost-House of Sikelianos

After the Introduction to “Phlokasophia” and the nickname “Pythia”, which Gatsos had immediately bestowed on her (in writing as well), Daedala was ready to re-visit the Navel of the Earth. For her, this would be the twenty-seventh time, because long before she’d met the Minotaur, she considered Delphi as one of her mythical “birthplaces”. She had even baptized two baby sheep there (with the names of the Muses: Thalia and Melpomeni) in the courtyard of Kyr-Kanellos (Mr.Cinammon), so she felt thoroughly at home there. But for the Minotaur, this would be his first time in Delphi. So Daedala chose a dramatic ambience: the majestic, albeit abandoned mansion of Greece’s most grandiloquent bard, Anghelos Sikelianos. Majestic yes, but in semi-ruins ever since Sikelianos’ death in 1951. And despite its splendid view – in the shadow of Mount Parnassos and high up above the never-ending olive groves – it was a dilapidated, decrepit, collapsing ghost of a mansion.

Apart from its grandiose ghostliness (enhanced by there being no electricity, no water and not a single pane of glass in any of the “windows”), there was also something downright weird about the place – the ideal décor for a psychopathic film director akin to Polanski – including stray baby-carriages covered with spiders’ webs in the corner of enormous ex-bathrooms; also a roving yoghurt-bowl (empty), which appeared in a different place each day, suggesting the presence of some other-worldly rodent – except that what would a rodent find to eat here in this godforsaken ghost-house?

In fact, another problem with trying to live in this once-upon-a-time majestic mansion: there was almost nothing to eat! The local Delphians were always talking about the regal banquets Anghelos Sikelianos enjoyed there – nothing but the whitest meat of the finest rabbits and splendid Byzantine chalices of such wine as dreams are made of, plus the marvellous clusters of grapes the Poet used to hold up to the light, to admire their translucent beauty. What could Sikelianos have known of the tough goat’s meat at the local taverna and the vinegary retsina and the tin cans of inky squid imported from Puerto Rico (or some other poverty-stricken, plague-infested seaport)? Or those “made in
the U.S.A.” packaged soups, which Daedala struggled to cook on the “phou-phou” burner (as it’s called in Greece, because you have to blow through your lips, making this “phou-phou” sound, to produce even the tiniest flame and then you have to go on blowing – “phou-phou, phou-phou” – to keep the flame burning). After a while, Daedala became so fed up with these abysmal culinary attempts that she wound up by putting her favourite Flamenco record on her ancient victrola and practicing Spanish dancing, with imaginary castanets clacking away, whenever the soup-pan clanged off the burner.

As for liquid refreshment: Daedala repeated her own variation on the words of the “Ancient Mariner”: “Water, water, nowhere and not a drop to drink”. In the searing heat of a summer noon in Greece, which in itself is enough to bring a person close to insanity, the women of the village used to visit the graveyard near Sikelenos’ villa, to fill their earthenware jugs with water from the one and only communal source, either at daybreak or at twilight. But Daedala was too superstitious (or too sleepy, especially at 6:00 a.m.) to choose this solution. Just as the drought was becoming unbearable, an incredible deus ex machina appeared on the scene: A poor man’s version of Zampano in Fellini’s “La Strada” (a foot or two shorter than Anthony Quinn, with a pug nose and without the brio). Whenever his ramshackle three-legged van sputtered to a halt under Sikelenos’ villa, Daedala used to crow with delight: “E arrivato Zampano.” She first caught sight of him carting a load of filthy barrels, which he proceeded to fill with a leaky “hose” from the aforementioned source. Right there and then, Daedala made friends with “Zampano” and in return for a few olives and one of her Flamenco “soups”, he would lug a heavy pail of water up to the gate of the villa. So, Daedala and the Minotaur were saved from total dehydration.

Aside from “Zampano’s” water-supply and the acrid retsina they drank in company with 80-year-old Barba Alekos (who had enjoyed taking Daedala down to his olive trees in his very own grove, in the days before the Minotaur and she began their life together in the collapsing mansion of Sikelenos), the only other form of liquid refreshment, was the kokkinéli redwine of Barba-Zakos. Seventy-year-old Zakos was their most amiable neighbour, and lived only a mile or so away in a fragrant garden, with a delicious old wife, whose courtyard was always full of children of all ages. When Daedala asked her whom they all belonged to, the old woman laughed joyfully and said they were all hers. “Each new-born baby’s a wing on my back” was her motto. (What a lovely antidote to most modern women, who wince at the prospect of being burdened with only one child.
Barba-Zakos himself had the same joyful outlook as his wife. So after taking his mandolin down from the wall, he would pick up a large straw-covered damizána-jug of his best wine – the only good wine in Delphi, this sparkling kokkinéli, red as the reddest red rose – and hugging both sources of delight to his bosom, he would set off for Sikelianos’ mansion. By then, it was night and a huge full moon would be rising in the sky, so bright with its own white light, there was no need for Barba-Zakos’ asetilíni (alcohol)-lamp. And when the old man sat down (on the floor, since there were no regular chairs on Sikelianos’ balcony) and began to play nostalgic songs, in the cool of the evening, Daedala and the Minotaur were at long last able to enjoy the far away firefly lights of Itea, down on the seacoast. At such moments, they came as close to happiness as they would ever come in Delphi.

However, happiness by the light of the full moon (and a midsummer moon, at that) is tantamount to sublunar ecstasy and has its dangers. At certain moments, when the wolves started howling high up on Mount Parnassos, the atmosphere began to grow spooky and Daedala couldn’t help recalling, willy-nilly, the five-year-old boy who’d been strangled by some adolescent maniac early in July, up there, only a stone’s throw from Sikelianos’ mansion. For weeks on end, all the village women gathered in the church, wrapped in black kerchiefs and shawls, to sing muffled dirges for the five-year-old boy. As soon as night fell, hushed voices could be heard in the darkness, wondering where the pervert murderer could be hiding. At such moments, a heavy melancholy fell from the mountain top, adding to the already intense somberness of the surroundings.

Nevertheless, in spite of these strange circumstances, the Minotaur painted some of his most marvellous paintings in that very place. Installing himself downstairs in a huge room (which looked more like a manger than a place for a human being to paint), he spread large sheets of drawing paper (instead of canvas) throughout that cavernous ambience. Out of this “manger”, emerged threnodies of weeping women gazing with mournful eyes towards a purple moon. Out of this “manger”, slumbering naked ladies suddenly sprang to life, whenever winged angels descended, reviving them miraculously. Out of this “manger”, emerged young girls consumed by fire, with eyes so alive the sparks flew into the face of an elderly Faun. Yes, all these images developed slowly slowly in the warm womb of this cavernous “manger”.

While the Minotaur was in his element in the downstairs seclusion of Sikelianos’ mansion, Daedala was still struggling upstairs, between her culinary concoctions on the one-eyed “stove” and her ever-increasing realization that
the uniquely Irish cadences of John Millington Synge’s “Playboy of the Western World”, Sean O’Casey’s “Shadow of a Gunman” and even Lady Gregory’s “Rising of the Moon”, could never be translated into Cypriot Greek. The closer she came to accepting this unwelcome fact, the closer Daedala came to despondency.

Near the end of their stay in Delphi, three unexpected visitors arrived, quite out of the blue, in rapid succession. The first visitor was none other than her old friend, Allen Ginsberg, en route to India. If ever a poet lived between one dream and the next dream, it was Ginsberg. He was so absorbed by his own dreams that he used to keep a notebook under his pillow, jump out of his sleeping bag at any hour of the night (and usually, several times every night), switch on his flashlight and start frantically jotting down the details of each new dream. Long before he’d sprouted a bushy beard and grown a kangaroo paunch and started posing for those satirical “Uncle Sam” posters, Ginsberg was so vigorous that in spite of his sleepless nights, he was in fine form to join Daedala and the Minotaur on one of their monthly pilgrimages to the Muses’ Cave. In fact, Ginsberg scrambled up the slopes of Parnassos at a much faster clip than either of them. When they finally reached the Cave, Ginsberg sat in silent meditation for the rest of the day. In those days B.C., there were no fake Apollos and only a few tourists to spoil the peace of the place. Until around sunset, with just a pinch of hash, he carefully rolled nine mini-cigarettes (one for each of the nine Muses), and left them on the ledge of their lonely lodge, as a token of admiration from the Beat Generation.

The second visitor (a young writer from Thessaloniki) arrived just in time to join Daedala’s Protest Movement against the Touristic Hotel whose foundations were about to be laid – the first eyesore threatening to mar the idyllic landscape of Delphi. With righteous anger, Daedala had begun collecting signatures from what she imagined would be the overwhelming majority of “outraged citizens”. But much to her surprise, she soon realized that most of the villagers – far from being outraged – were thrilled at the prospect of enticing more tourists! In high dudgeon, she was obliged to admit that the members of the “Protest Movement” were, all in all, three – the Minotaur, herself, and their young guest. In short order, the “Protest” turned into a Bacchic orgy, with the disenchanted trio prancing around the stoney ruins of Sikeliyanos’ ghost-house.

The third visitor was nonplussed, literally speechless, when he caught sight of what he imagined to be two ghosts, up there in the long-ago-abandoned mansion of Sikeliyanos. George Seferis had come all this way only in order to pay his respects to the marble bust of his fellow poet. But when the fiercely
Minos the Minotaur and Daedala the Dreamer

bearded Minotaur appeared in the downstairs doorway, Seferis barely had time to utter a flabbergasted “Robinson Crusoe!”, before vanishing in thin air. Meanwhile, from her upstairs perch, Daedala (who by now looked and felt like a latterday Pythia, with tangled hair and a long sarong), observed this third visit in silence.

By now, the wildest of the wild meltémi-winds had started blowing like mad. The unhinged shutters outside the paneless “windows” banged constantly in Daedala’s eardrums. At the very time that Maria Callas was singing the heavenly music of Bellini’s “Norma” in Epidaurus, Daedala and the Minotaur had become victims of a ghastly cacophony. Dismayed by the pandemonium, the Minotaur plunged into a series of surrealistic articles about “Apollo, the Delphic Spaceman!” (equipped with a donkey, instead of a rocket): a madcap mixture of ancient myth and sputnik science fiction. After three installments, his Editor-in-Chief sent an irate telegram:

“Get back to Athens, before you lose your mind... and your job!”

The “first rainfall” (as the Greeks call the early September “drizzle”) had begun and after the long hot summer, the parched earth revived. Daedala’s spirits, so bitterly disappointed by those seven debilitating months in America, had begun to revive as well. And now – with the blessing of the first “drops of rain” in September – they grew still stronger. So she and the Minotaur decided it was time for them to come out of quarantine and head back to Athens. Despite all the hardships of this first summer together, they were sad to leave Delphi. But in the end, they reluctantly bade farewell to Sikelianos’ phantom and old Barba-Zakos and the Fellinian “Zampano”, and around the middle of September, they came down from Mount Parnassos, down to the more familiar, but far less majestic landscapes of Attica.
The Minotaur's invitation to one of his Paris vernissages.


Marcel Marceau, kissing Daedala's hand, after her birthday “pantomime” in the Place Fürstenberg (based on the Minotaur's one-act play “The Paramour of Heaven”.)
The Renowned Poet – Nikos Gatsos – “President of Phlokasophia” and “Fellow-Pythia” of Daedala’s.

Manos Hadjidakis – throughout the new Golden Era of Greece in the Sixties – talking with the Minotaur, while Daedala eavesdrops.
SECTION THREE

SHELTER
Daedala and the Minotaur Find Their Own Home
Under the Acropolis

Following the farewell to Delphi in the early days of autumn, Daedala and the Minotaur began to search in earnest for their permanent Home. And they found it by a heaven-sent “mistake”. The key to their good luck was an amazing character called Nikos Vassiliou (alias Valter von Fipmer!), the third of three Plaka residents whom they met in the course of their search – and by the way, all three had the same Christian name: “Nikos”. The first Nikos, a decade later, became an haute couture designer for the most fashionable circles of Athens. But back then, he had only a very little shop on a little Plaka lane off Mnisikleous Street. This Nikos sent Daedala and the Minotaur up to the top of the steepest staircase in Plaka to a “Place for Rent” sign he’d seen recently.

At first, it seemed like a wild goose chase. But in the words of the old Greek proverb: “Keep asking and you’ll find your answer all the way to Constantinople!” So they plodded on asking everyone they met about the “For Rent” sign, till they finally found it; and out trotted the second Nikos – who looked more like a lapdog than a man. (Since his surname was the superlative of the Greek word for “Good”, Daedala nicknamed him “Nick the Best”.) This second Nikos told the Minotaur to look elsewhere, waving his arm vaguely somewhere in the direction of the Old University, which back then, long before its face-lifting, was thoroughly dilapidated.

Nevertheless, Daedala and the Minotaur were determined to complete their search and at long last, they reached a garden, which – even in the darkening shadows of twilight – radiated light. And there, sure enough, they found the “For Rent” sign. And there, next to a giant cactus, sat the third Nikos, the one who held the magic key to their future Home; the three sunlit rooms overlooking his own magic garden, where Daedala read the following words on a hand-painted wooden sign:

“HE WHO LOVES FLOWERS LOVES GOD”

Although it was dark night by the time this third Nikos opened the door
for Daedala and the Minotaur, a full moon (one of those wonderful Minoan moons), shone benevolently through the windows, casting its light on the whole upper storey. Only a stone’s throw from the future bedroom, several of the Kores of the Erechtheum could be seen, silvery-white in the moonlight. From this vantage-point, Daedala could also see some robust vines from the third Nikos’ garden, climbing all the way up to the upstairs windows, with a bridge of fragrant petals to and from his little kingdom.

Enchanted by what was to become their home (the only Home they would ever succeed in actually creating), Daedala and the Minotaur strolled past the crumbling Old University, when – lo and behold – they stumbled upon the original courtyard of “Dream Street”. The Minotaur stopped short in his tracks. From his famous Album of the drawings (the one he’d given to Daedala, at the end of the 50th Street in Manhattan), she also recognized the place. And she thought to herself: “What a miracle to find the very same courtyard on the very same street where we’ve just found our own Home!”

In front of the iron grille gate, decorated with the graceful swan, she could see the same tall palm-tree and the same three cypresses in the background. Only the mermaid was missing from the balcony, sketched by the Minotaur in the original drawing and also, those four old-fashioned singers playing serenades on their guitars and mandolins. But even without them, Daedala realized she had at last found the neighbourhood she’d always dreamed of. For in these early years of the Sixties, Athens was still rich in old neighbourhoods, where everyone knew everyone else and the phrase “like one big happy Family” was not an empty cliché. Just so, here on “Dream Street”, Daedala and the Minotaur felt they truly belonged to this Neighbourhood.

However, Daedala and the Minotaur were not yet quite ready to settle down for good, under their own permanent roof. There was still a touch of the Gypsy in both of them. So, while there was still enough gentle autumnal sun, they set off on one last trek – southwards this time, in company with the same Adonis of a dancer, who had rescued the Minotaur in Manhattan. First they visited the dancer’s village, near the foothills of Mount Taïyetos; then on to Mistra and then, to the Mani – as far as Areopolis, where a glum gendarme warned the Minotaur:

“It is strictly forbidden to make drawings in this part of Greece!”

So they went no further south in the Mani and instead, travelled up to Kalamata, not far from Callas’ birthplace in Meligala with its musical milk-
and-honey name. There, in a peaceful semi-slumber between twilight and Meligalasian midnight, Daedala conceived her and the Minotaur’s child. And then, it was time to go Home, to the verandah and the open windows on Dream Street, where Daedala settled in to the rhythm of the daily growing embryo and the Minotaur joyfully awaited the birth of their sun-blessed child. And while he painted his most inspired paintings, Daedala painted the walls of their Home and planted flowers everywhere to celebrate the joy of her offspring and her poems. Yes, indeed, throughout their life on “Dream Street”, their Home was always inundated with the music of the grapevine sprigs and the jasmine petals growing and the phoenix-tree branches rustling in the wind.

During the nine months of happy expectation, Daedala and the Minotaur also enjoyed the company of their neighbours on Dream Street. As part of the Neighbourhood Family, they knew every detail, including Paraskevas’ taverna and Mr. Tryphon’s milkshop; and every neighbour, from the hippopotamian Missus Phoundoúkaina to the skinny-as-a-giraffe, local photographer; and from old kyr-Mihalis, the local cobbler, in his dimly-lit cubbyhole on Mnisikleous Street to nearby Roubina, who bestowed her smile on every visitor to the “Old Man of the Morea” (back then, only a tiny taverna, instead of the touristic emporium it became later on.) But above all their other neighbours, Daedala and the Minotaur adored the third Nikos, who had opened the door for them “Open Sesame” to enjoy six whole years of a Happy Life.
Their Mythical Neighbour on “Dream Street”, Nikos Vassiliou (alias Valter von Fipmer!)

But just who was this Nikos Vassiliou (alias, Valter von Fipmer), supposedly born in Zurich! of Swiss parents (hence, his Swiss flag waving proudly alongside the blue-and-white banner of the Greeks). In actual fact, Valter von Fipmer was just plain Nikos Vassiliou from Aivali in Asia Minor, Greekest of the Greeks. Despite all his mythomanic legends, he was in reality the jack-of-all-trades for the entire neighbourhood and usually dressed in whitewash-splattered garments for his hard daily labours. Loaded down with pails and long brushes for painting ceilings and verandas, and usually carrying a shovel or two for gardening, he could be seen scurrying up and down the narrow lanes of Plaka, on his way to work, at all hours of the day and night.

In actual fact – despite all his tall tales of having fathered a dozen heroic sons – Nikos Vassiliou was the father of only one son, an apple-cheeked adorable little boy named Stellios. He was also the faithful seventy-year-old husband of only one wife – his golden-fingered, green-thumbed little wife named Niki. For all his polygamic mythomania, he was the ideal paterfamilias, who believed fervently in those words painted on his own handmade wooden sign:

“HE WHO LOVES FLOWERS LOVES GOD”

On the other hand, Nikos - Valter was also endowed with a miraculous Imagination, capable of transforming humdrum Reality into Mythology, marvellous Myth. After metamorphosing the rubbish-heap (which used to surround his shack) into a miniature Garden of Eden, Nikos-Valter metamorphosed himself into a mythical figure as adventurous as Odysseus, enhanced by Valter’s Myth of the African Jungle. Oh yes, Valter von Fipmer, sitting in his Plaka garden, amidst his giant cactus-plants and his jasmine and his basil and his bright vermilion coral-plant, loved to spin fantastic tales of slumbering Jungle beasts he had “tamed”.

According to Valter’s mythology, for seventeen whole years, he had performed great feats as a safari-hunter in the Jungle. (For maximum effect,
Minos the Minotaur and Daedala the Dreamer

he always added the detail that his Family’s bankruptcy had obliged him to abandon his “native Zurich” and seek work as a hunter in the depths of Africa.) For hours on end, in impeccable purist katharevousa style, Valter entertained the Minotaur and Daedala with incredible descriptions of the Gorilla which “had saved his life”. Valter even imitated the sounds made by the Gorilla. (Luckily, the Minotaur tape-recorded all these sessions, so the katharévousa and odd sound-effects can be verified by Posterity). However, sometimes, in the middle of a particularly long tale, Valter used to doze for two or three minutes, and then, waking up with a start, he would exclaim:

“Well now, that’s what we hunters call ‘the Jungle snooze’! Every night, for seventeen whole years, the roars of all those wild beasts never let us hunters sleep.”

When he reached the end of his Jungle repertoire, suddenly Valter would burst into some long-forgotten song, accompanying himself on his unstrung, out-of-tune guitar in a hilarious “serenade” of old-fashioned ballads, such as “The Flowering Almond-Tree” and “Let Your Tresses Blow, All Tangled in the Wind” and best of all, “Your Two Green Eyes with their Bright Blue Lids Are Making Me Crazy!” Or else – especially at the mellow hour of twilight (“sóúroupo” in Greek, or that lovely Italian equivalent: “crepuscola”), the hour when the jasmine-buds begin to open and the honeysuckle-petals start to drift, Valter would suddenly decide to enact some 19th-century Greek melodrama, or to improvise a tragi-comic scintillating invention of his own – with tear-jerker titles such as “The Maiden’s Lost Maidenhead” or “The Broken-Hearted Mother”. And then, to counteract the heart-rending pathos of such melodramas, Valter would end up with a scurrilous ditty, which sent the Minotaur and Daedala into convulsions of laughter, with “verses” such as:

“Turdlets here, turdlets there, everywhere
Turdlets! – even on the rooftop tiles.
Turdlets on the birdy of the bride
Turdlets on the bridegroom’s balls.”

After this impromptu performance, “Valter” always recalled that his captive audience – especially the Minotaur, who had a voracious appetite – must be getting hungry. And with a flourish, Nikos Vassiliou of Aivali would rush into the tiny kitchen of his shack and bring forth dish after dish of delectable “titbits” (not so delicate as Pasiphae’s Asia Minor delicacies, but nonetheless delicious mezédhes) – including pastourmá camel-meat, pickled peppers and octopus grilled on hot coals. And of course, his very own version of
taramosaláta smothered in garlic, (and even more delicious, due to Valter’s very own “etymology”: based on the verb “tarάζω”, which the ancient Greek mathematician Archimedes made famous in the 3rd century B.C.:

“Μην μου τους κύκλους ταράζετε! ”

or in plain modern English:

“Don’t you dare upset my circles!”

(or in still plainer mid-20th century English: “Piss off!”), which as Valter explained in his best “katharévousa”:

“Archimedes uttered this ultimatum to dull-witted Roman soldiers, who were erasing all the circular symbols, which our Great GREEK GENIUS had drawn on the marble tiles of his Institute!”

Needless to add, the Minotaur and Daedala devoured Valter’s taramosaláta with triple enthusiasm, after his stupendous “etymology”. So now, he was free to continue his fables with even taller tales, such as his tale of the Rumanian Princess, whom he’d supposedly “rescued” from a Nazi submarine on its way to Occupied Northern Africa. The tale of how he “wooed” (but never actually made love to) the beautiful “Princess”, on the desert island where he’d been stranded for six months (near the end of the Second World War), offered his guests a tragi-comic masterpiece worthy of his other tales about his other supposed “feats”, on behalf of the “Intelligence” Service (interspersed with his own gems of mis-information), for which the Allies had dubbed Valter “The Bronze Man”. 

Not yet exhausted by the tales of his anti-Nazi heroics, Valter also narrated how he’d found the time to join the Foreign Legion and had even visited Ethiopia just in time to save the Emperor, Haile Selassie’s life! In case Daedala and the Minotaur didn’t believe him, Valter went inside his shack and produced the very shirt which Haile was wearing “when his life was saved” by his Swiss admirer. And sure enough, there were indeed two holes precisely at heart-level (beyond the shadow of a doubt, they were bullet-holes, even the most cynical observer could see this). And to make the tale sound still more authentic, Valter proudly displayed a rust-stained gold medal, which he said Haile Selassie had awarded him for heroic valour. But after carefully folding
up the precious shirt and putting the rusty medal back in its box, Valter sank into a pensive mood.

By now, it was almost 4:00 a.m. and even for Valter, the “Jungle-Snooze” no longer sufficed. So finally – after losing his “train-of-thought” in the endless mazes of his amazing fantasy – he admitted to the Minotaur that all he really wanted (just like Diogenes of yore) was to find one (only One) Man, who deserved to be called a human being. Then, Valter placed a small tin lantern (or was it Diogenes’ own lamp?), at the entrance to his garden. And after bidding Daedala and the Minotaur farewell, he returned to the real world – to his own real son – little Stellios – and his one real wife – little Niki.

Next morning, bright and early, Valter von Fipmer as always, donned the paint-splattered clothes of Nikos Vassiliou and carried on with his daily round of errands and little jobs – everything from whitewashing the walls in some nearby abandoned mansion to cleaning the antiquated drains of Plaka and – if necessary – exterminating stray mice, with the help of his huge Persian cat. As for gardening, he had already proved his ability to Daedala, by planting lemon-trees and plum-trees and jasmine on her back balcony, and pruning her grapevine at exactly the right season. Also, he was very good at making lovely warm fires for those long cold winter nights near the Acropolis, when his Corfu in-laws had to move inside his shack. All summer long, Niki’s mother (dressed in the traditional costume of Corfu) stayed mainly in the courtyard, all day long busy with her spindle and her spinning-wheel. But between December and March, this was out of the question. So Nikos Vassiliou fixed his old coal-stove for his mother-in-law and also invited a few neighbours home. Particularly on the occasion of his December 6th nameday, he wanted to invite the whole neighbourhood to his shack and before all these friends arrived and wished him many happy returns, he also fixed a grand feast for one-and-all.

Yes indeed, for every human situation, Nikos Vassiliou had his own solution. For instance, when Daedala complained about not having a bathtub, he immediately emptied the odd object he’d been using as an “icebox” to chill his lemonade. Relying on his “Herculean strength” (as he called it), he hauled the ex-“icebox” up the Minotaur’s steep staircase and installed it as a “bathtub.” He even managed to make the hot-water boiler work. (However, where matters of high voltage electricity were concerned, Daedala – although she adored Valter von Fipmer Nikos Vassiliou – preferred a bona fide electrician.)

There was nothing on God’s earth which Nikos Vassiliou could not fix – except his own terrifying heart attacks. Sometimes in the siesta stillness of a broiling Greek summer, Nikos’ howls of pain would rend the air. At such
moments, Daedala would hold her breath until all was quiet again, when she knew for sure that little Niki had once again nursed her seventy-year-old Nikos back to life. Resurrected, time and time again, in the course of the years he was Daedala's and the Minotaur's favourite neighbour, Nikos Vassiliou used to celebrate the Easter Resurrection with redoubled reverence. He also celebrated the Holy Friday Epitáphios in his own unique way, standing solemnly near his iron-grille gate and his magenta oleanders, in the corner of his Garden where he taught little Stellios to read and every summer, handed out cucumber slices and fresh lemonades to all the itinerant pedlars. Whenever the sheep's bells on his gate began to tinkle, on each and every Holy Friday evening, Nikos Vassiliou would stand there sprinkling rose-water from an old silver phial, blessing all the neighbours of Plaka as they approached his threshold, in the candle-lit procession for the Time-Honoured Epitáphios.

Above all else, Nikos Vassiliou was that rarest of creatures: a Human Being. His humanity outweighed all the figments of his surrealistic imagination – even the most delectable of his thousand-and-one “heroic” characters. All Mankind was welcome in Valter's milk-and-honey oasis, here in the heart of 20th century Athens. All Mankind, as well as all the birds and beasts of Christendom: whole families of canaries warbling in their hand-painted cages, in harmony with dozens of frisky kittens and rabbits and even baby lambs bleating throughout the night and best of all: two heaven-blessed turtledoves cooing continuously, as soon as the Sun rose, singing their own mellifluous song for Daedala's and the Minotaur's House of Dreams, here on “Dream Street”, here at the corner of Tholou and Odos Panos, exactly here in this neighbourhood of Dreams in Greece as it was before the Cement Age, the Greece where the Greeks could still breathe freely here, near the Tower of the Winds and the Statues of the Caryàtids, only a stone's throw from Nikos Vassiliou's magic garden – where humdrum Reality had been transformed into a genuinely Greek “Human Comedy”, as miraculous a metamorphosis as Greek Easter itself.
The title-page of the Minotaur’s 1957 Album of black-and-white drawings, entitled “Dream Street”, culminating in Manos Hadjidakis’ most celebrated “musical”.

The Minotaur’s dedication of this Album to Daedala, when they first met in Manhattan, where they lived “At the End of the Fiftieth Street”.
A very different neighbourhood in Athens: with their “fantastical” neighbour – Νίκος Βασιλείου (alias Valter von Fipmer!), who told Daedala fairy tales about his adventures in the … Jungle!

The real Nikos, with his darling wife – Niki – and their little boy, Stellios; next-door to Daedala and the Minotaur, who wrote down all “Valter’s” tall tales.

Nikos-Valter, playing his hurdy-gurdy with a rogueish smile, entertaining a Scandinavian visitor.
Instead of the imaginary “Trial” involving the title of “Dream Street” (five years after the Album appeared), the Minotaur drew a caricature of another imaginary “trial”, with five of the most famous Greek artists (portrayed from left to right): The Minotaur himself (with the dark glasses); Mikis Theodorakis, Manos Hadjidakis; Odysseas Elytis and Nikos Gatsos.
“Dream Street” in the Minotaur’s Album and in Manos Hadjidakis’ Grand “Musical”

From the Easter season of that particular year, another birth was in the making… a birth which enchanted myriads of Athenians throughout the summer of 1962: the Minotaur’s and Manos Hadjidakis’ version of Minos’ “Dream Street” Album of black-and-white paintings – in theatrical form. From the very start of their collaboration, all-night confabulations took place. (As all of Hadjidakis’ close associates knew, Manos’ time-honoured schedule began after midnight and lasted until daybreak.)

At these full-moon sessions, Manos Hadjidakis’ “alter ego” – Nikos Gatsos – was always present. Whatever happened to be the topic under discussion, Gatsos set the tone of the semi-humorous (in the sense of Socratic “humour”) dialogue, enriching the “trialogue” of Manos, Minos and Himself, with his own inimitable irony. First of all, concerning the title of this sui generis “musical”: the Minotaur was quite right to claim the title as his own. After all, five years had gone by since the publication of his own Album in 1957. However, with a grain of “Attic Salt”, a lawyer friend of the triumvirate (Gatsos – Hadjidakis – Minotaur) was called in to “judge” the “case”. Gifted with Demosthenic eloquence and the poetic daemon of the ancient Greeks, this brilliant lawyer finally decided in favour of Hadjidakis. In the words of the poetically inclined lawyer:

“Manos was the person, who had made the conscious choice of the title for his own theatrical purposes! And therefore, from a purely legal point of view, the title belongs to Hadjidakis!”

(On another occasion, another legalistic “judgement” involving the Minotaur and Hadjidakis and Gatsos (as President of the Trial proceedings, with other eminent Greeks, e.g. Elytis and Theodorakis, acting as witnesses) dealt with the dispute about whether the statue of Harry Truman should be erected in the middle of Athens, whereas so many Greek heroes had not yet been duly commemorated! And yet another mock-”Trial” had been “staged”
(with the same lawyer friend), at Hadjidakis’s favourite café (“The Magic Flute”), to decide whether Manos had the right to dispossess Daedala of the best portrait the Minotaur had ever painted of her (a truly Botticellian portrait). As usual, Gatsos presided; but although (as her fellow-Pythia), he was in full sympathy with Daedala, he had to conclude that despite her “rights” to her favourite portrait:

“Who – in 20th century Greece” – these were Gatsos’ exact words, – “can expect to enjoy his rights!”)

As for Manos Hadjidakis’ theatrical version of the original “Dream Street”: Within the first few days of the magic collaboration between Manos and Minos, the Minotaur (who was on call 24 hours per day), had completed adapting by expanding of the musical. By a stroke of genius, he had expanded the conventional conception of “décor”, to embrace the whole Theatre – along the sides and behind the audience. And what’s more, downstairs and upstairs, thus enabling various scenes to unfold simultaneously on several architectural levels. The scenery was appropriately lit so that the spectator’s gaze could move from place to place, continuously.

For example, the old-fashioned movie-house (the so called “Ciné Sonia”) was decorated with strings of lights in many colours, which kept twinkling on and off. And the second-storey balcony of old kyr-Mihalis was brightly lit, so that the audience could watch him pottering around his flowerpots, watering his plants or just sitting on his doorstep. Two young actors succeeded in making the old man come to life: the one in pantomime and the other in one of Hadjidakis’ most nostalgic songs, interpreted by a gifted singer named Lakis Pappas. Another old man – painted on a typical Athenian kiosk, full of newspapers and magazines – appeared alongside a flower vendor, who was sound asleep in his wheelbarrow. Nearby, a few traditional ceramics adorned a small coffee-house with an old victrola and several little tables, where characters straight out of the Minotaur’s Album of “Dream Street” sat all day long, enjoying the sunlight.

As for the costumes designed by the Minotaur, they were amazing – particularly, in the scene of the “Old Black Ford”. Making use of the traditional Shadow Theatre technique of Karaghiozis, the Minotaur had placed all the characters behind the semi-transparent screen, where only their silhouettes could be seen. Then, suddenly, all the actors stepped out in front of the screen, with a phantasmagoric display of colourful 1920’s costumes. Most colourful of
all was the “Big Star”, who charlestoned with brio, while singing in a husky voice one of Manos’ most “spicey” songs. At the dress-rehearsal of “Dream Street”, this same “Big Star” had surprised Daedala by asking her if she was part of the Minotaur’s decor! By that time, Daedala felt so identified with the musical version that at certain moments, she had the illusion that she was indeed part of the performance. She’d even made her favourite maternity-dress out of the same material used by the Minotaur for the theatre-curtains (as he himself explained, inspired by three of his Grandmother’s nightgowns, ranging from shades of lilac and wisteria to lavender). Daedala was delighted to have chosen a piece of the lilac material for the dress that she wore backstage, throughout all the rehearsals of “Dream Street”. (No wonder the “Big Star” was puzzled by Daedala’s “role” in the performance.)

Anyway, as opening night approached – outside, as well as inside, the entire Theatre was metamorphosed in a highly original way: the Minotaur had permission to use the same Shadow Theatre technique he’d applied in the “Black Ford” scene. So now, he was free to create a large “transparent” screen above the outside Box Office, visible up and down the lower part of Alexandras Boulevard. Furthermore, in the “foyer” of the Theatre, two unexpected delights awaited incoming spectators: firstly, the “portrait” of Manos Hadjidakis, disguised as the ancient god Pan, painted by the Minotaur with Satyr’s “horns”, and strumming a mandolin. And secondly, the self-”portrait” of the Minotaur, holding a palette and a paint-brush, but also adorned with the lower half of a mermaid! And finally, upon entering the central part of the Theatre, the spectators had the chance to admire the proscenium curtain, where the Minotaur had sketched his own black-and-white vision of Hadjidakis’ favourite songs.

The Minotaur’s vision was so perfectly in harmony with Hadjidakis’ music that – perhaps? – if only the music and the paintings had been presented, the theatrical version of “Dream Street” might have been even more effective? However that may be, the aura of melancholy – which often characterized the Minotaur and Manos – did indeed create several deeply moving scenes in that Theatre, throughout the summer of 1962. For instance, the beginning and the end of the “musical”, when Manos Hadjidakis’ reminiscences were accompanied by a barrel-organ, the most authentic instrument for recalling the beautiful old neighbourhoods of Athens, where the youngsters still had dreams to sing about. In an exceptionally “romantic” décor, taken straight out of the Minotaur’s original drawing for “Dream Street” (including the “phoenikas” palm-tree and the swans sculpted on the iron-grille gate and the
mermaid on the balcony), a group of starry-eyed lads begin to sing about Love, while the very best of Greek dancers – Yorghos Emirzas – dances an eternal Greek dance in honour of Eros.

From another Minotaurian drawing, the protagonist of “Dream Street” was born. The Photographer, as played by the magnificent Greek actor, Demetres Horn. Equipped only with his old-fashioned “three-legged” camera, this particular “Photographer” is also a magician, with the gift of making dreams come true. His basic role is to listen to the secret dreams of each character, as each actor reveals his own wishes. However, when the Photographer finally reaches his own dream, he is not able to express it! And he ends up only with a bitter outburst “from one soul to another soul”. When he sings these particular lyrics, Demetres Horn removes his Salvador Dali mustache and his fin-de-siècle hat, and without any trace of “theatricality”, implores the audience to understand the plight of a true Actor – and by extension, perhaps of every truly creative Artist.

Another thoroughly different, but memorable scene was “The Dream of the Movie-Screen”. In this hilariously funny five-minute “film”, Manos Hadjidakis and the Minotaur play the roles of opponents, dressed up in fustanella-costumes, as if they have just stepped out of a 19th century Greek scene! They “duel” for the “honour” of a Greek “shepherdess” accused of stealing a lamb! This “shepherdess” – enacted by the most comical of all Greek comédiennes, Rena Vlachopoulou – satirizes all the old Greek movies, where the Greek Mothers inevitably say: “I have sinned for my child!” – except that here in the “Dream Street” filmette, Rena Vlachopoulou moans: “I have sinned for my lamb!” At the climax of this divertimento, Manos (in the role of the Evil Brigand, Barboúlas) falls into the open arms of the Minotaur (playing the “good-natured” shepherd); and the mock-”melodrama” ends, with Hadjidakis calling: “Babáka mou! Daddy dear!” and the Minotaur answering (with a Buster Keaton deadpan): “Paidáki mou! Oh, my dear little boy!” (For decades, we have tried to find a copy of this tiny masterpiece. But even the Director was unable to find it at the Finos Films Studio, which had so graciously lent their equipment and montage facilities).

Somehow, the rotund figure of Manos Hadjidakis in a fustanella and the Minotaurian good shepherd sounded so enticing that rumours had reached the ears of the “rival” Theatre nextdoor. The “rival” musician – none other than Mikis Theodorakis! – and the “rival” stage-designer – Bost – were busily preparing their own summer musical, entitled “Beautiful City”. However, the producers were so eager to discover what the mysterious “filmette” could be
that they sent a “spy” to watch a rehearsal. But the “spy” was caught and a “guard” (disguised as a “peanut-vendor”) was placed at the entrance to “Dream Street”. Nevertheless, “much ado about nothing!” The very next summer, three of the “rivals” joined forces: Hadjidakis and Theodorakis and the Minotaur collaborated on another open-air musical, entitled “Magic City” (from a movie made by Manos’ close friend, the fine Greek film-director, Nikos Koundoulos).

In the last two songs of “Dream Street”: entitled “The Party” and the “Nightingale”, the Photographer is in a melancholy mood. The image of a bird-cage suggests the atmosphere of an oppressive environment where:

“A party is something sadder than death”

and dreams last only for a moment. At the end of this song, the Photographer metamorphoses the symbolic “cage” into a real cage and hands it to the leading lady – whereupon, a full moon – one of those Magical Moons of the Minotaur – starts rising slowly in the sky, as the final song begins, with a slight variation on the words written by Minos:

“I’m on my way to tell the sky
I’m on my way to tell the cloud
The nightingale will not be caught
The tiny child will not be lost
Way up there high as the sky”

Almost the very same words Daedala had sung at the tip of Manhattan – in Battery Park, a stone’s throw from the Statue of Liberty – after she’d first encountered the Minotaur, trapped in New York City, between Scylla and Carybdis. How far she and he had come since then, when their Return to Greece was still only a distant Dream.
Birth Almost Backstage

Throughout those two months after mid-April, the feverish pace of the “Dream Street” rehearsals never let up. By the time opening night finally arrived, all the participants were almost sleep-walking. But from the moment when the Athenian First Night audience entered the Theatre, they began applauding the scenery even before the first actor appeared. “Dream Street” was off to a resilient start, and all through that joyful summer of 1962, an impressive bevy of luminaries continued to visit the “musical” at the Metropolitan Theatre—ranging from Elia Kazan to Leonard Cohen, as well as the omnipresent Melina and the Prime Minister of Greece.

Furthermore, almost every night, after the performance, an all-night celebration followed—often until daybreak—at which point, the Minotaur accompanied Manos home, and Mrs Aliki (Manos’ adorable Mother, whom he truly adored) would cheerfully open the door to all of her son’s closest friends and make coffee for one-and-all. (She always wore her most elegant slippers and her hand-embroidered apron when she made Manos his own special coffee, no matter what time he came home). After waiting so patiently for her prodigal son’s return, she felt that it was the least she could do, even though—after the Greek coffee ritual, Manos headed straight for his own bedroom and fell sound asleep for the rest of the day. On the contrary, the Minotaur had to go on working “like a dog”, all day long (a regular “Hard-Day’s Night”, as the Beatles would soon be singing). He never slept more than two or three hours in those “Dream Street” Days.

Now, the night when Daedala was ready to give birth, (her gynecologist had predicted the date precisely 9 months ago), she put on a lilac-coloured hat (to match her lilac-coloured maternity-dress) and began moving towards the front door of their Home in Plaka—ready to set out for the “Metropolitan Theatre”. That particular night, Manos’ super-star – Nana Mouschouri – was to sing for a super-gala performance of the already legendary musical. (In those olden days of Greece B.C., Mouschouri still preferred the Hellenic fragrance of jasmine and moonbeams, rather than Parisian perfumes and B.B.C. broadcasts.)
However, just at the moment when Daedala was tiptoeing towards the door, a tremendous bellow was heard from the Minotaur – such a deafening roar that it must have reached all the way to the Labyrinth near Knossos. In these unexpected circumstances, Daedala retreated. And after removing her lilac hat, she collapsed near a large open window facing the Acropolis, to find solace in the moonlight and the ancient Maidens of the Erectheum. Now, it happened to be full moon that night and a Full Moon in August. On her minuscule victrola, Daedala longed to hear the Minotaur’s song “To the Darling Little Moon”. But counterpointed with the lilting voice of the lovely lady singing to the Moon, that savage bellow of her Minotaur still reverberated in Daedala’s ears. Nevertheless, just before dawn – before the Moon began to set and the Sun was ready to rise – Daedala felt “the waters” beginning to flow (as many Greek women say just before giving birth) and she rushed towards the veranda to tell the Minotaur. As soon as he heard the news, he held Daedala in his arms. Since they lived so close to the highest part of the Acropolis, they could count only on their own legs to take them anywhere. And when the birth-pangs began to come more frequently, Daedala had to sit down each time she reached the next step, until she felt strong enough to continue the long walk on that endless stone staircase leading down to the centre of Athens.

Anyway – at the bottom of those steps, by chance, an open-air taxi was waiting there, decorated with dozens of trinkets. And – mirabile dictu – the taxi-driver was the very same person, who had driven Daedala on another historic occasion, before she’d met the Minotaur – the day she was supposed to be leaving Greece, “forever” (as she imagined at that time.) By what lucky coincidence, had this same taxi-man re-appeared now, just in time to escort Daedala and the Minotaur to the Maternity Ward. And what’s more, as they flew past the Café where all the other participants in “Dream Street” were still conversing, everyone stood up and gave them a standing ovation.

Well then, on this most Greek of blessed Days – the Fifteenth of August – Daedala gave birth to her one-and-only precious child. All her Greek friends had told her she would give birth to a boy, who should be named “Manos-Minos”. But how much better a baby girl. And when the obstetrician had delivered the baby, Daedala called her by a name, both Greek: and Irish: “Moira”, meaning “Destiny” in Greek Kalomoira: “She-of-the-Good-Destiny”, a name blessed with Happiness – a name worthy of expressing a mother’s love.
The Minotaur tries to create a peaceful Home under the Sun.
SECTION FOUR

“ARK”
The Christening of Daedala’s Ark Theatre
and Tsarouhis’ Promethean Ceiling

Two years after Hadjidakis’ and the Minotaur’s “Dream Street” – a beautiful Prelude for her own theatrical dreams, which she had never abandoned – Daedala looked down from her second-storey veranda on her own Dream Street and with all the self-confidence of a professional Pythia, delivered her prophecy:

“HERE IS WHERE MY THEATRE IS GOING TO BE!”

At that particular moment, she was standing on a laundry-laden, ordinary balcony, staring down at an ordinary Plaka courtyard, where two very ordinary bachelors were eating their baked beans phasoláda lunch, with an equally ordinary Greek family cooking fish-soup on the ground floor. So everybody was convinced that Daedala had taken leave of her senses. In any case, her streaks of quixotic enthusiasm were taken for granted. In order to protect his Pythian wife, the Minotaur reminded her of the wise advice he’d given her when they first lived under the same roof in Paris. Sitting in their favourite café next door to Notre Dame, the Minotaur had pointed up to the top of the tallest belfry and told Daedala that if she really wanted to reach the peak of the Tower, she should never try to leap straight to the top – only in gradual stages, sideways, this way and that way, any other way, but never ever directly.

Daedala listened to this well-meant advice and decided to proceed as methodically as she possibly could, by curbing her innate impetuosity. First things first: first, she must choose a name for her Theatre. This was no sooner said than done! And by whom else? By her inimitable neighbour, Valter von Fipmer (alias Nikos Vassiliou). And coming from this offspring of the Jungle, what else but a vessel grand enough to shelter all the animals of Kingdom Come. And so, the “ARK” came into being (not in Ararat, but on the highest peak of “Plaka”). And not Noah’s Ark, but “Daedala’s Ark”. (Little did Daedala and the Minotaur realize then, that instead of saving all the living creatures which would enter their “Ark”, all too soon, they themselves would be flooded out.)
After Valter’s choice of the name, the “Ark” had to be built in actual fact. So the Minotaur approached the greatest theatrical designer, as well as the finest painter in Greece – Yannis Tsarouhis. As a lifelong friend of the Minotaur and also, as his erstwhile mentor, Tsarouhis had taught a select group of disciples, as well as the Minotaur and was delighted twenty years afterwards, to share his vast knowledge of the Theatre with them. At the time when the Ark was launched, he was at the height of his international fame, having designed two superb sets and costumes for Maria Callas (one being the aforementioned performance of “Norma” at Epidaurus and the other, the memorable presentation of Cherubini’s Opera “Medea”). Furthermore, Tsarouhis had recently been particularly interested in the Renaissance Theatres of Northern Italy. So the idea of a mini-Renaissance theatre, in the shadow of the Acropolis, intrigued him greatly.

With genuine gusto, Tsarouhis set to work in order to find the best “Renaissance” model for the Minotaur’s and Daedala’s theatre. So he recalled the 16th century Opera house at Spoleto (where the Minotaur and Daedala had already visited Menotti’s “Festival dei due Mondi”). With the assistance of a young Greek painter by the name of Andreas Phokas, Tsarouhis prepared elaborate designs for the “Ark”, basing all the details on photographs of the actual Renaissance stage at Spoleto. And in the end, he produced a red-and-gold miniature theatre constructed for 39 spectators! – plus one imitation “Royal Box”, just large enough to seat the rotund figure of Manos Hadjidakis. The crowning glory was Tsarouhis’ painting on the ceiling, where Prometheus was depicted holding his torch of Light for Mankind.

Now, the actual process of building this miniature theatre was another adventure. Tsarouhis had given the Minotaur a meticulous list of instructions, down to the minutest details. In order to carry out these details as faithfully as possible, Daedala always accompanied Tsarouhis, who insisted on finding precisely the right hue of red he had envisaged for the proscenium curtain. This had to match – precisely – the red fabric he had chosen for covering the walls of the theatre. Next, precisely the right kind of cardboard had to be found for tracing the “classic” decorations onto the proscenium arch and the Royal Box (two samples of these motifs Daedala preserved for Posterity, along with a small gold fragment of the actual décor – the only tangible remains of her Ark.) Tsarouhis even chose the carpenter’s workshop, where Daedala was in charge of ordering the wooden planks for the stage. All these details consumed much of Daedala’s time, while the Minotaur concentrated mainly on high-level “public relations”, occasionally involving even the most trusted
alter ego of the Prime Minister, who gladly lent the Ark his Archive of rare old cinematic gems.

At certain times, when Daedala had to cart the planks by herself, or when she couldn’t convince the carpenters to work more quickly, she may have felt she was getting the “fuzzy end of the lollipop”. But in the end, Daedala had the more rewarding task – the joy of participating in the actual building of the theatre, piece by piece – as well as all the incidental joys of keeping company with the marvellous Tsarouhis, who visited the Ark almost every day, in order to supervise everything.

There was also the joy of watching Valter hard at work on the Ark. As the Generalissimo Jack-of-All-Trades, he was in charge of the demolition labour needed to transform the former ground-floor flat into a “building-site” for the Ark. Valter was also flourishing from his daily contact with Tsarouhis. For despite his work-stained old clothes and stubby fingers, Valter had more in common with Artists than most of the “Elite” of Athens. In his spare time, he even wrote delightful little “poems” dedicated to each of the various artists, who visited the Ark at that time – including Manos Hadjidakis, Mikis Theodorakis and Odysseas Elytis. What’s more, Valter’s poem to Tsarouhis was a genuine gem.

Perhaps this poem was particularly vivid, because Valter had enjoyed a very special evening with Tsarouhis. In one of the seven articles, which the Minotaur wrote about Valter, he described the following scene: One evening when Tsarouhis was in an especially good mood, he began reminiscing about Greece’s most celebrated actress, Marika Kotopouli, who was considered the Grecian Sarah Bernhardt. While painting the “Royal Box”, Tsarouhis began singing one of Kotopouli’s favourite songs. Valter, who was working near the ex-kitchen area of the little theatre, recognized the song and immediately joined in with Tsarouhis in several other songs of Kotopouli’s “repertoire”. In this impromptu “duet”, Valter also performed a little dance, miming the comic gestures appropriate to each song. At the end of this delightful improvisation, on the unfinished stage of the Ark, Valter plunged into one of his tallest tales, about his own “mythical” friendship with Kotopouli. His imaginary “flirtation” with the diva was hilarious. Even the ineffably eclectic Tsarouhis was amused.

Exuberant scenes such as this alleviated the hard labour. Meanwhile, the formal religious ceremony for “christening” the theatre took place. An Orthodox priest from the nextdoor church came to bless the Ark with holy water and a sprig of basil, in the presence of an appreciative audience. One Sunday afternoon before the actual opening of the theatre, a Shadow Theatre
performance of Karaghiozi took place, entitled “The Founding of Daedala’s Ark”. And that same historic afternoon also included the gift of a Karaghiozi memento offered by Thanos Veloudios, the latterday Ikaros, who was the very first Greek to fly an aeroplane. So all the elements seemed to be approaching a happy climax.

But just then, something characteristically Greek happened. Out of the blue, Tsarouhis ordered the Prometheus ceiling to be dismantled! With inexplicable wrath, he released a statement to the Athenian Press declaring that as of that moment, he had no connection whatsoever with the Ark. Daedala, was nonplussed and did not know how to react. But the Minotaur, in keeping with his own Greek temperament, was so angry that he consented to have the ceiling torn down and the opening-night postponed (which would probably have ended in a permanent “postponement”). Just at the crucial point, however, Daedala rebelled: After all those weeks of carting armfuls of burgundy-coloured fabrics, gold paint and gilded planks, she was determined not to let the Ark be demolished just because of a clash of Greek egos. She absolutely refused to watch her dreams go down the drain like that.

In a stentorian tone of voice, Daedala ordered the carpenters not to remove a single nail from the ceiling. Promising to be back in five minutes, she dashed out to the nearby Byzantine church: Ayios Nikólaos Rangabis. The words of her prayer were so fervent that by the time she returned to the Ark, Daedala found the Minotaur and the workmen smiling affably, after deciding that despite the brouhaha, the show must go on! Meanwhile, the cause of Tsarouhis’ tantrum had come to light. Another famous Greek painter had – unwisely – been invited to the Ark the previous evening. Two rival Opera Divas could not have reacted more capriciously.

Two days later, both painters had forgotten all about the scene and Tsarouhis had accepted the fact that the Prometheus ceiling would stay put. Nevertheless, beyond the temperamental explosion, which lasted only a moment, something far more important was clear from this incident. Tsarouhis had been willing to destroy all the work he’d so painstakingly created throughout the past nine weeks. This inability to collaborate on an excellent project for the common good is as characteristic of various Greeks nowadays, as it was in fifth century B.C. Greece during the Peloponnesian Wars.

All of the Minotaur’s Manifestoes and all of Daedala’s Declarations of their Aims – in the name of uniting Greek Artists into a creative Movement capable of transcending petty cliques – in the end, fell into the void. The impossibility of uniting even two Greeks – let alone a whole group of Greeks
– in a consistent endeavour, continued to plague Daedala throughout the brief history of the Ark. For example, the two most gifted musicians in Greece – Manos Hadjidakis and Mikis Theodorakis – had both expressed the wish to collaborate with the Ark. Nevertheless, instead of uniting their voices, each went off on his own individual tangent. Manos wanted to use the Ark for his own Orchestra to rehearse and Mikis wanted to organize political meetings for the Peace Movement followers of the assassinated hero, Grigoris Lambrakis. In the end, nothing came of either.

Another reason for the Ark’s collapse was the total lack of financial organization. Despite the admirable efforts the Minotaur had made to equip the Ark with all sorts of luxuries, he simply would not accept money – even from Onassis’ richest relatives. He actually used to treat one-and-all to his mother’s magnificent gastronomic spécialités, which she spent all day to prepare. How could the Ark possibly survive? But even if the Minotaur had had the financial know-how of the Rockefellers and the diplomatic “finesse” of a Paris salon, sooner or later the Ark would not have been able to survive. In the end, that same age-old Greek curse of

Dis c o r d

would have sapped its vitality. From its very outset – with that sad threat of destroying the Promethean ceiling – the ultimate outcome was foreshadowed.
Another reason for the sinking of the Ark was that the contents of its repertoire could not easily appeal to some of the cultural snobs among the contemporary Athenian intelligentsia. First and foremost, the Ark’s opening performance of the so-called “Arty Party” was hard for persons directly connected with the Art Collectors’ World to accept. How to describe the savage gibes hurled at pseudo-“Critics” and pseudo-“Art Lovers”, especially the specimens “endowed” with an Anglo-Saxon variety of snobbishness. The Minotaur’s satirical prose-poem had been commissioned in 1960, by a famous Paris Periodical (called “Haute Societe”), in order to poke fun at the so-called “Picasso Party”, at the Tate Gallery. The result was such a sui generis text that some of the passages must be quoted verbatim:

High Society versus the Minotaur.
ARTY PARTY
(Excerpts)

We enter the United Kingdom of Death
A symmetrical cemetery

Inside the Gallery
High Society
is flirting with Flamenco
while the Painter is buried
alive
at the Arty-Party
of the Garden Parties
while Spanish waiters
serve Amore Frio
Paella a la Valenciana
cappuccino
and champagne

A mournful cocktail party
organised
by the Salvation Army of the Arts
Four pall-bearers
a Prince a Lord
a Lady and a Duke
with one Catholic Priest
Sir Chaos parading
to the mournful
rhythms of Flamenco
holding the casket
with the Painter’s body...
Medals of the Alter Ego
Mummies moving vertically
up and down
instead of resting,
comfortably and securely
in a coffin
of the Archeological Museum, horizontally...

* *

Art critics
leaping
from picture to picture
like cicadas,
scared of the Last
Judgement.

* *

Shivering American Collectors
pursued by the fear
of losing their shares
on the Skin Trade
of the Art Exchange.

* *

A broom
by the name of Countess Con
A featherless scarecrow
incapable of singing
or flying

* *

A new class
of Snobs
pseudo-intellectuals
preaching “Revolutionary Art”
from the balcony
of their Forefathers’
traditional
and titled belly,
seated
on the comfortable
Throne of Money

* *

Directors
of British Councils
Born for-ever-Bald
Secretaries
Minos the Minotaur and Daedala the Dreamer

Traitors
Spiritual Clerks of the Void
keep entering
like luxurious waves
without any foam
through the gates
of the Tate Gallery
Inferno

* * *

2000 corpses of High Society
crowded in the corridors
with noble and charming
hypocrisy
after paying five guineas
for the entrance-fee
(per capita)
a cheque made out
to the National Bank
of Gossip

* * *

Entrance
of the Prince of Scotland
(Son et lumière.)
His Royal Highness
keeps leading
more and more waves
of sleeping sheep

* * *

End of the Arty Party
Escape of the Visitors
(Silence and darkness)

**

They all depart
faithful
to their Banks
unfaithful
to their dreams.
At daybreak

a madman in the marketplace
howls
“WANTED!”

“2000 ESCAPED MEMBERS
OF HIGH SOCIETY.
5 GOLD POUNDS PER CAPITA
DEAD.....OR DEAD.”
Many an Athenian must have felt uncomfortably “exposed” by the caustic phrases of the Minotaur. At first sight, they may have tittered in polite embarrassment. But on second thought, they found the “Arty Party” upsetting. And in the end, they could not digest it. At best, they turned a blind eye on the contents and managed to say something good about the way it was staged. Indeed the techniques used by the Minotaur and Daedala (way back in the Sixties) were definitely “avant garde” – and not only by Greek standards. Black-and-white slides of the Minotaur’s most electrifying drawings were projected on the rhythmically dancing bodies of three black jazz-musicians: Chico Callender from Trinidad, who played the double bass and sang; Carl Washington from Boston, who played a variety of musical instruments and was also an experienced mime; and Sam Stone from London, who was a shy, but conscientious drummer.

The slides were also projected on Daedala, who impersonated several “characters” based on the Minotaur’s text, including a hysterical Huston millionairess on the trail of a billion-dollar “Work of Art”; followed by a New York City heiress, negotiating a life-size model of the Parthenon for her Colisseum Show; followed by a bedraggled “Comtesse de Con”, no longer in fashion in the Art Galleries of Paris; and finally followed by an innocent victim of Lyndon Johnson – alias, “L.B.J.” –, devoured by the fangs of one of those monstrous skyscrapers the Minotaur had satirized in Manhattan.

Along with all these caleidoscopic images gyrating on the stage, the Minotaur also introduced several large paintings of “Pop” Art (“Pop” in its original sense, before Andy Warhol monopolized the scene). “Pop” as painted by the Minotaur: full of incongruous objects and weird characters: Tourists equipped with gas-masks and machine-gun “cameras”; obese females in search of Latin-American lovers; as well as “Mr. and Mrs. America” invading the still virginal landscape of Greece, with all the “grace” of bulldozers. These Horror Portraits – unmistakeably influenced by the Minotaur’s original drawings made in Manhattan – were enhanced by the most grotesque details of “Pop” Art, expressing a violent protest against the threat of Americanization in Greece.

At some points, the jazz grew wilder and wilder. Occasionally, Chico Callender’s improvisations on his double bass developed into full length cadenzas and the African drums of Carl Washington almost flew off the floor. In the best performances of the “Arty Party”, there was a positively orgiastic atmosphere and when the curtain closed on the tiny stage, the participants were intensely excited. But out there, among the seats of the miniature
“Renaissance” theatre – except for a handful of rare individuals (mostly young people, who happened to be on the same wave-length) – there was all too often a blank expression of non-comprehension, or even antipathy.

However, the rest of the program – beginning with a 1920’s movie, starring Ramon Novarro (one of those 1920’s films lent to the Ark from the Prime Minister’s private Archive) – improved the audience’s mood. And on the nights when the Minotaur’s 8-millimetre gem, “The Monsters of Madouri”, was shown, a considerable improvement could be observed. This 19-minute movie was filmed on the islet of Nanos Valaoritis (grandson of the illustrious Poet Laureate, Aristotelis Valaoritis, who once upon a time had built the only house on Madouri.) Flanked by Levkada on one horizon and Onassis’ Skorpio on the other, the Minotaur had invented a “scenario” wherein the wee islet is being invaded by weird monsters from Outer Space. Superhuman footprints have been discovered down on the seashore and what with three galloping imaginations at work on the plot, a whole arsenal of Dinosaurs and Nanosaurs and Minosaurs (sic!), perform all sorts of incredible deeds. A humorous little film emerges, wherein the Minotaur – garbed in red tights, huge black flippers, the headgear of a jungle explorer, and a bizarre seaweed beard – attempts to elope with a five-year-old child bride (played by Nanos’ elder daughter), but gets trapped in a tree-house, and is pursued by Nanos himself (dressed as a Buddhist monk), accompanied by a harridan from the Salvation Army (played by Daedala). In the end, Nanos and the Minotaur engage in a mock duel and the latter is shoved unceremoniously into the sea, whereupon Law and Order are restored on the Islet of Madouri. This titbit, which did not endanger any of the sacrosanct taboos of Athenian Society, was easily digested by the audience.

Even more easily accepted by one-and-all were the superb performances of Shadow Theatre by the Old Master of Karaghiozi, Barba-Sotiris Spatharis. Indeed, Daedala’s most joyful moments throughout the building of the Ark were provided by this grand old man. In her dreams, long after the Ark had been flooded out of existence, she could still envisage the fairy-tale world, which Old Spatharis had brought with him. Despite his advanced age, every single day he used to climb that steep staircase up to Daedala’s citadel. During one whole autumn, Barba-Sotiris spent all his time adorning the Ark with the Pasha’s delicately carved Seraglios and Oriental palaces painted on canvas panels, as well as Karaghiozis’ humble shack and a multitude of stained-glass parchment figures (aside from the usual figures of Stávrakas and Morphoniós and Sior Dionisis). Other characters he had created out of his own rich imagination – all the way from Cannibals and “Kalikántzari”
(impish little devils) to long-neglected cardboard *Palikária* and Heroes of the 1821 Greek Wars of Independence (including Andróutsos, Athanásios Diákos, Kat-sandónis, and Old Spatharis’ favourite Hero: Kaplánis). And even tragic protagonists from Antiquity, even Oedipus the King! In the months before the Ark was launched, Daedala had had the rare good luck of living in the fabled world of Barba-Sotiris’ Seraglio and his Shack.

By now, having learned their lesson the hard way from the audience’s reactions to the “*Arty Party*”, the Minotaur and Daedala decided (at least, temporarily) on another approach to the Athenian Elite. Anyway, it was Carnival time and during the far more frivolous celebrations of this season, it is difficult to think about more serious themes. So, the Minotaur set about painting the two-storey façade of the Ark with giant Satyrs and Nymphs and other mythological figures suitable for the pagan “orgies” of Greek Carnival. As a tasty morsel, which he felt sure would please the palate of most culture vultures, the Minotaur entrusted Daedala with the task of adapting Mozart’s “*Don Giovanni*” into a light-hearted “*Intermezzo*”.

And oh, what a spoof of “*Don Giovanni*” that was – with the three black jazz-musicians decked out in courtly 18th century costumes and elaborate wigs. There was also an omnipresent mime (Daedala herself), and also an ancient “*Mágos*” with satirical proclivities (impersonated by the Minotaur). In actual fact, the only element in harmony with Mozart’s glorious music was the Spoleto Opera décor designed by Tsarouhis. This “*Operetta*” was irreverently re-named: “*Don Pan Carlos*”. The lascivious Don was played by Carl Washington. Daedala was supposed to be playing Donna Elvira, although she was more Wagnerian than Amadean, with a big horn in the middle of her forehead. As for the Minotaur’s role (a mysteriously disguised Sorcerer-cum-Satyr), he just kept peering through a small brass “telescope”.

(This instrument had an odd story of its own): At the Minotaur’s request, the most famous Greek poet of Eros had lent the Ark his “telescope” for the performance of “*Don Pan Carlos*”. One of the few items left among the Ark’s paraphernalia flooding the apartment of the Minotaur’s Mother – after the Flood – was this very instrument. One day, as Pasiphae was doing her spring-cleaning, she found it in a drawer of her china-cupboard. As there had been a bomb-scare recently, she was terrified by this weird object. Anyway, “telescope” or no telescope – “*Don Pan Carlos*” turned out to be only an ambitious farce. Daedala’s “Ark” had sunk, plunging the three black musicians and herself – at least for the moment – into No Man's Land.
Daedala’s Diligent Dreams for Repairing the Ark

Around Eastertime of the same year – Easter being a season when Greeks usually shake off the dark barnacles of winter – Daedala started to recover her erstwhile fighting spirit. From passive disappointment, she went to the opposite extreme – ebullient Plans. Jolted into action by a former actor from Judith Malina’s and Julian Beck’s “Living Theater”, Daedala’s first extravagant Plan was to bring their colossal production of “Frankenstein” to Greece! All too aware that she might be accused of hyperbolic enthusiasm, Daedala all the more methodically examined the architectural levels of the Ark, outside in the back courtyard. Together with the actor, who had already participated in “Frankenstein”, she located four separate areas where the elaborate décor of the original performance could fit. So desperately did Daedala need to believe that the Ark would be seaworthy again that she envisaged this magnificent production in Greece as something definite. And accordingly, she was already preparing menus to serve the hungry troupe of the entire Living Theater, (including spaghetti “putanesca”, which the young actor said was their favourite dish). (A parergon of this grandiose “Plan” was to be their performance of Genêt’s “Maids”, played by three of their best male actors in “drag”.)

Another grand illusion – although this time, based on an actual contract rather than wishful thinking – involved Samuel Beckett’s “Happy Days”. Daedala had an official contract from Beckett’s literary agent in London – Curtis Brown – to translate the play into Greek and produce it in Greece. Beckett himself demanded that first choice be given to the superb Greek actress – Christina Tsingou – who had created her own theatre in Paris and acted in various French productions of Beckett (best known, as already mentioned for her interpretation of the superannuated mother in the rubbish bin of “End Game”). Tsingou was the Alpha and Omega of Beckett for Greece and Daedala was immensely excited by this imminent collaboration with the Ark. However, even this solid prospect fizzled out – in spite of the watertight contract, yet another chimaera. The theatre where Tsingou finally chose to present her version of “Happy Days”, (approximately eight years later) was to be her last. Night after night, as the heroine Winnie got buried deeper and deeper in the
sand, Tsingou was approaching her own end. Only a few nights after the last performance, in the course of a severe attack of asthma, she breathed her last.

As Daedala watched her grand Plans for the Ark going down the drain, one by one, she became more and more grandiloquent. Determined to resist defeat at all costs, she dreamed up Greek versions of traditional Japanese Theatre with an enticing variety of Noh plays. She also dreamed of a mini-Festival of Gian Carlo Menotti’s Operas (in actual fact, Menotti had given her a token sum to support the Ark – before it sank all the way). She even dreamed of an “Anti-Festival”, aimed at satirizing the splendiferous Athens Festival, so successfully established on the other side of the Acropolis. But when her “Anti-Festival” inevitably failed, she at long last, decided to go into strict isolation.

Recently, Daedala had heard about a new theatrical form – the so-called “One Man Theatre”. So Daedala decided to take this intriguing “Movement” one step further and create her own “No Man” Theatre. Sitting all alone on that, by now, empty stage of the Ark, she began working twelve hours a day on a series of theatrical divertimenti for herself alone. Daedala already had written a one-man (rather, a one-woman) “Scenario” entitled “Odysseus in New York City”, based on the Minotaur’s adventures with Scylla, Charybdis and Nausica. Choosing this as a point of departure, she refreshed her memory concerning all the theatrical techniques she had used for that “play”. Most of these techniques had already been tried out in the Minotaur’s production of his “Arty-Party” – including the projection of black-and-white drawings on the human body, as well as the physical presence of Pop paintings dancing back and forth on the stage.

Calling upon her previous experience, Daedala also began working on her own sui generis version of “Prometheus Bound” – where the characters of Zeus, Force and Violence would be masked figures impersonating various 20th century Dictators – including Hitler, Mussolini and Metaxas. For comic relief, she also prepared her own adaptation of Aristophanes’ “Frogs”. Here, the parody of the two rival tragedians – Euripides and Aeschylus – was presented as a Nobel-“Yesbel” Contest, and the only loser was the Muse herself, portrayed as Isidora Duncan in a “Pop” painting by the Minotaur. Daedala’s version of the “Frogs” also included an amateur 8-millimetre film satirizing the Academy Awards Ceremony, with some of the Beatles’ lustiest songs in the background (especially, “It’s Been A Hard Day’s Night”). Daedala even tried to make her own 20th century adaptation of “Oedipus Tyrannos”. But even the mighty eagle in the Minotaur’s strongest “Pop” painting – a kind of atomic bomb Apocalypse. And even the powerful voice of the young actor, who appeared out of the blue
to transplant Oedipus to the Modern World, were not strong enough. As the Minotaur so correctly chided Daedala:

“You have so many fine ideas. But that’s NOT enough – It’s what you do with your ideas that matters!”

In the end, thoroughly discouraged, Daedala abandoned her theatrical adaptations from Ancient Greece and as her swan-song, she threw herself into another “One-Woman Show”: a presentation of Joyce’s women characters at all ages – from the age of infancy to the ageless washerwomen on the banks of the Liffey, liffeying outwards in “Anna Livia Plurabelle”. For months on end, Daedala sat on that empty stage of the ex-Ark, experimenting with the lights and sound-effects – recording everything from the soughing of the sea to Handel’s “Messiah”, while selecting the most appropriate of the Minotaur’s surrealist drawings to project as “slides”. She also persuaded him to paint a backdrop for Joyce’s “Woman-City”.

Week after week, in total isolation, Daedala sat there, on her sinking Ark, reading out loud all the Joycean texts connected with her particular vision – all the way from the opening page of “Portrait of the Artist” (with its infantile baby-talk) to those incomparably musical pages of “Finnegan’s Wake” wherein all the rivers of the world flow out into the sea and then return (corso, ricorso). Between the infant and those ancient (as the elm-tree, old, old washer-women), Daedala added a passage with adolescent Gerty MacDowell; as well as a twenty-two-year-old passage with Zoe the Whore from “Night Town”; and above all, the middle-aged monologue of Molly Bloom – beyond a doubt, the greatest torrent of words ever written. This vision was carefully staged, detail by detail – especially in “Night Town”, where Joyce himself had already suggested many of the theatrical effects – although Daedala couldn’t resist the temptation of adding a few theatrical details of her own – such as several extremely surrealist “projections” of Hieronymus Bosch’s paintings to enhance the already weird opening scene of the Joycean “Night Town”).

Throughout this entire “performance”, Daedala alone appeared on stage, shrouded in the mysterious light of the “slides”, but nevertheless, present – and present for more than two hours. Since she no longer had any hope of actually producing her vision for a flesh-and-blood audience, she was determined at least to make a tape-recording of herself reading all the characters in “Woman-City” with the aforementioned sound-effects. Making use for the last time of all the excellent equipment in her erstwhile Ark, she prepared a tape-recorded
document – for posterity. Her heart would have broken, if she’d known at the time, that along with all the other precious relics of the Ark – this tape would also be lost, in the course of the coming Cataclysm.
The Hypocritical Landlady and the Petty Rascals

All too soon, the day came when Daedala’s dreams proved too expensive and the Minotaur could no longer afford to pay the rent for the Ark. With irrefutable logic, the landlady asked the Minotaur: “What do you expect me to eat? Stones?” The Minotaur was in favour of abandoning the Ark, which had become an unbearable burden. But after all the sweat and tears they had showered on this Ark, Daedala revolted against giving up – at least, without a fight. So she began to search for someone to rent the theatre and garden area – a search as difficult as Diogenes’ search for one (just One) genuine Human Being.

At the eleventh hour, she thought she had found the right solution: an ex-actor from a reputable “Art Theatre”. He had managed to disarm Daedala by showing her photos of himself in a one-act play, which she particularly liked. Two days later, one of the ex-actor’s siblings turned up, with a nasty glint in his eyes, looking more like a decrepit rattle-snake than an impresario. Soon afterwards, the in-laws and other relatives, a whole mob of them, descended and Daedala started to have her doubts. But by this time, it was too late. A two-year contract had already been signed and the Interregnum of the Petty Rascals had begun.

Removing all the regalia of the happy era of the Ark – the Suns and crescent Moons, the Arabian Nights and Biblical Arks, and Botticellian portraits – the Rascals appropriated whatever they chose to satisfy their own ambitions. Tricking even the far more experienced Minotaur into painting a series of Comédia dell’ Arte characters. The ex-actor Rascal boasted that the audience would “lick its fingers” when it got a taste of his own Pulchinello performances. But as soon as the paintings were ready, he latched onto them and Daedala never saw them again or any sign of the Comédia dell’ Arte either.

Even more infuriating: on every possible occasion, they posed as the Minotaur’s proxies, in order to attract all the vips they could lay their hands on. As they did in the case of Melina Mercouri, who had invited Nureyev and Margot Fonteyn to visit the garden of the Ark, where she expected to see the Minotaur. Quite recently, she had filmed a documentary of her favourite
haunts in Athens and had chosen an unforgettable sequence with the Minotaur on a ladder outside the Ark, painting a Minoan Nymph and an idyllic sunrise on the second-storey façade – with Melina standing near him on the balcony of the Ark’s hippopotamian neighbour-lady, Mrs. Hazel-Nut Phoundouíkaina. There; the Minotaur “fluffed” his one and only line: instead of referring to this “historical” moment, he’d said: “Oh Melina, what an hysterical moment!”. Much to the delight of Melina, as well as the crew of cameramen.

Well, some time not long after this scene, when Melina arrived at the Ark with Nureyev and Fonteyn, the Rascals did not even take the trouble to inform the Minotaur! “Never give anyone too much air!”, as the Greeks say, “Or he’ll do his worst to wipe you off the map!” The Minotaur (and even more so, Daedala) were ideal dupes and the Rascals were planning to sidestep them and finally, get rid of them – if possible, by “triplomacy”. But if “triplomacy” didn’t work, then by every other dirty trick available, (And when a really crooked person decides – by hook or by crook – to use every dirty trick in the “Book”, nothing can beat him!)

Meanwhile, another gang of much more dangerous Rascals – in fact, Big Time Scoundrels – had appeared on the scene. Daedala was out of Athens at the time and failed to hear (until four days later) that a Coup d’Etat had taken place. From the safe distance of the island of Aegina, immersed in her third translation of Kazantzakis (and feverishly trying to finish it, before the last rounds of her struggle to save the Ark), she was isolated in a ramshackle villa on a pistachio-tree estate – and only when the wife of the caretaker brought her a plate of artichokes or green beans, Daedala could momentarily raise her head from her stacks of manuscripts.

However, after twenty days of hard work, Daedala needed to make a phone-call to Athens. In veiled words, the Minotaur tried to tell her that something had changed in Athens and that she had better take the next boat home. But she had just found enough momentum to complete the English translation of Madame Kazantzakis’ magnum opus, so Daedala said “No”. Then, the Minotaur tried to be more explicit. But Daedala shouted: “What are you trying to tell me? You mean there’s a DICTATORSHIP?” At which point, the Minotaur let out a ferocious bellow and slammed down the telephone in Athens, in case the wires were being tapped. The very next day, he arrived in Aegina to whisk Daedala away before she made any other blunders. And within a week, he had taken her out of the scoundrel-infested city of Athens, to their last happy oasis – yes, that golden, glorious

Oasis in Dodona.
The Dodona Oasis and the Minotaur’s “Film” of *Oedipus Rex*

Dodona opened its embrace as a welcome haven from Athenian chaos – Dodona, redolent of all the fragrances of May. Spring came late this year (it was a miracle that it came at all). Only after the late April rains had metamorphosed the little village into a Garden of Eden, full of green moss, covering the old stone houses high up there; above the yellow and red flowers in the green green fields, with myriads of tiny white camomile daisies and scarlet poppies and yellow gorse, alongside bowers of bright mimosa on all the ancient masonry (back then in the days of Greece B.C., when stone walls were made of real stone, each stone an individual entity unto itself). In one of those old stone houses near kyr-Lolos' cheese-mill, Daedala took refuge in a room full of rainbow-coloured handwoven blankets and hand-carved bridal chests and a wooden balcony with a panorama of the Ancient Amphitheatre of Dodona, where “*Oedipus Rex*” was being filmed, and the Minotaur had been chosen to appear in the Chorus.

And oh what a myth this filming of Sophocles’ “*Oedipus*” was to be... what with the Minotaur all decked out in long black robes to enact a silent role in a Chorus led (incongruously!) by Donald (“*Casanova*”) Sutherland. However, after the first rehearsal, the Minotaur had had enough of translationese verse in “ultra-poetic” English. So, he decided to make his own movie, with a scarecrow Chorus flinging its limbs in a mad Can-Can, as weird as ever tripped the light fantastic. Yes, with his own 8-millimetre amateur “camera”, he actually filmed his own satirical spoof of “*Oedipus*”. And with several huge sketch-books, he also filled page after page with scintillating portraits of the various Stars wandering around the ancient site of Dodona (including Christopher Plummer in the title-role; Lili Palmer as Jocasta and Cyril Cusack, that delightful Celtic actor, who immediately befriended the Minotaur and Daedala, as well as Greek tsipouro, which reminded him of Irish poteen).

But first and foremost, there was Orson Welles in all his gargantuan grandeur, preparing to play Teresias. He rumbled onto the “*Oedipus*” scene a few days late from Madrid, enthroned in his sumptuous Rolls Royce (fully equipped with bottles of vodka, iced champagne and his own private telephone, not to
mention his gorgeous Spanish Duenna). Well, on his very first day at Dodona, while rolls-roycing through the mountains between the Ancient Amphitheatre and Yannina (12 kilometers away), Welles heard a baby-lamb bleating by the roadside. The vodka, (or maybe a human streak of kindness?) guided him to rescue the lamb. But back at the de luxe Hotel in Yannina, in spite of his being such a celebrity, he couldn’t convince the bellboy to keep the bleating lamb in his suite. And out at the Amphitheatre, it was even more impossible. On the film-set, far below the towering shadow of Welles’ magnificent Teiresias, the forlorn bleating of the baby-lamb pierced the Dodonian air, refusing to obey the Sound Technician’s demand for silence. Before the film director had a fit of apoplexy, something had to be done about that lamb! So the Minotaur (with his usual spontaneity) volunteered to take it up to the village, where only he and his family were staying and where at least the lamb would be in its natural habitat. Little did the Minotaur know what he was getting in for. As for Daedala, she was thrilled to have the lamb for company. At once, she borrowed a baby’s milk-bottle and filled it with warm goat’s milk from kyr-Lolos’ cheese-mill, where huge vats of milk boiled all day long for Lolos to make into big round cakes of cheese. So, the baby-lamb was able to live the “life of Riley” up there in the village.

On rare occasions, Daedala was allowed down on the film-set and could feast her eyes on the country-people of Dodona, dressed in superb costumes, hand-dyed with herbs, from the nearby mountains – each costume a masterpiece designed by Deny Vachlioti. In their smiling innocence, the villagers were a strange contrast to the swaggering Stars, who kept striding back and forth in front of the cameras, while the skinny Script Girl (with her chandelier earrings dangling down to her navel) flirted unabashedly with the flamboyant actor, who was impersonating Oedipus.

Anyway, Daedala preferred to keep company with mad Lefteris and his even madder donkey. Lefteris was the village “character” and whenever the Dodonians saw him disappear towards the fields, with an odd gleam in his left eye, they knew he’d be spending that night frolicking with his quadruped (the creature he loved best in the whole wide world was his adorable donkey). But at other times, sitting in the village kapheneion, sipping his thimbleful of tsipouro, Lefteris would recall tales from Herodotos’ History and especially the story about ancient Dodona – with the three black priestesses from Egypt, metamorphosed into three blackbirds, babbling oracles from the mythical oak-tree of Dodona. Yes, mad Lefteris knew Herodotos’ whole text by heart just as Kalliopi (the old woman from the nearby village of Monodendri), knew

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the ancient text of the original Sophoclean “Oedipus Rex” and could recite it by heart; and just as the old pappás knew the Chronicles of his seventh-century village church and with the belfry bells chiming in his cloud-misted, rain-drenched courtyard, he used to read them in Byzantine Greek to the villagers, who stood there in awe, v holding tall white candles in the penumbra. On rare occasions, Lefteris also went down to the ancient Amphitheatre of Dodona, where Electra and Hecuba and Jocasta could be seen every summer. Holding a sickle on one shoulder, he would stalk, like Charon, along the top tiers of the Theatre, capturing the quintessence of Greece through the Ages – Archaic and Byzantine and present-day Greece. Indeed, Daedala much preferred Lefteris’ eternal Greece to the ephemeral glitter of the Stars, who seemed to dim up here in the village, on the stoney slopes of the Dodona oasis.
The Actors on Frog Island and Daedala’s Mock “Court Martial”

Everything was proceeding idyllically, until the day when Daedala was invited to Frog Island, near the haunted lake where Kera Phrosyni had drowned in the 1820’s. This was supposed to be a celebration for the completion of the “Oedipus” movie; but alas, all too soon, it turned into something very different. As soon as Daedala sailed across the “vrek-a-kek, vrek-a-kek-koax” frog-filled waters of that haunted Lake, she began to imagine that she too was about to drown. Then, as the wine began to spout and the frogs’ legs mezedes started to leap and the Bacchanal commenced in earnest, a wild spirit got into everyone. Leaving the banquet-tables in the taverna still spread with dozens of titbits, all the revellers seized candles and joined a spontaneous procession, led by the Minotaur, up through the fragrant footpaths of Frog Island.

In short order, one and all were singing at the top of their lungs, forbidden songs of Mikis Theodorakis, intermingled with Greek Orthodox refrains from the Easter Resurrection liturgy (including “Christós Anésti”), alternating with old-fashioned “barber-shop” quartettes (e.g. “I used to shake the flowering almond-bough” and “Your green eyes bewitch me”). Soon, Frog Island resounded with high spirits. At the top of a hill, a tiny white church appeared and everyone wanted to be allowed inside. A leering priest in an old cassock unlocked the door. Continuing the impromptu “concert” in front of the Byzantine icons, how could anyone suspect that this blasphemy was being mentally “recorded” by an unknown person, who had appeared out of the dark and turned out to be a stool-pigeon.

Oblivious of everything except enjoying the fun, everybody marched down the hill back to the taverna. After reinforcements of retsina wine, the pandemonium accelerated. And inasmuch as the Minotaur was busy flirting with Jocasta (while the bamboo-limbed script girl was virtually licking the feet of Oedipus), Daedala went berserk. The juke-box bouzoukis blared louder and louder on the taverna terrace and the night air grew more and more intoxicating, with its heavenly scents of jasmine and honeysuckle. Suddenly, Daedala found herself with a crown of night-blooming cereus in her hair and dancing barefoot on a pile of broken plates. The Minotaur bellowed, (as only
he knew how to bellow): “Stop that nonsense!” But Daedala just roared back:

“DOWN WITH THE DICTATORSHIP!”

And that was that.

* * *

Six years later, when Daedala needed to come back to Greece incognito, after her six-year-exile, she was to regret this night. For she was warned by one of the worst Junta officials still in power, never to get involved in Greek politics again! After perusing a 2-page single-spaced typewritten “Report” concerning this insignificant scene on Frog Island, he insisted that despite Daedala’s saying that she “loved Greece”, she certainly did not love the Laws of Greece! Glancing at the official photograph of the Arch-Dictator (which had replaced the King’s and Queen’s photograph in every single Junta office), this particular Scoundrel concluded his tirade with a phrase, which on second thought, inculpated him more than Daedala:

“The person you see in this photograph is here today and gone tomorrow! But the Laws of Greece are everlasting!”

At that moment, Daedala was too flabbergasted to notice the “subversive” implications of his words. Her only reaction was to lower her eyes like a child who’s been scolded.

Just as Daedala had also done at that Mock “Court Martial” in Yannina the day after her “Disgrace” on Frog Island. For believe it or not, the Minotaur and Daedala had been summoned to appear before three provincial “Judges” employed by the Junta! In one of those strange old buildings of Epirus, where weird storks stand one-legged on the tiled rooftops, Daedala had been interrogated for five whole hours and the Minotaur was forced to concentrate all the subtlety he was capable of, in order to disarm the “Judges”, in true Smyrnian style:

“You see, Gentlemen,” he pleaded, “my wife – although born and bred in the good old USA - was referring to my Family Dictatorship. She’s in the habit of calling me “Pasha”. And at certain moments, I call her my “Yiousoufáki”- my darling little slavelette. But when things get really bad, she calls me “Big Bully”, or even “Dictator”! That’s all she meant last night, Gentlemen. You see, I’d just ordered her not to take off her shoes.”
“A most ingenious excuse!”, retaliated one of the Court Martial “Judges”. “But you must never imagine that you can fool us!”

Then the second Court Martial caricature pounced on Daedala:
“You should be ashamed of yourself, young lady! Especially since you’ve had the honour of being born in that venerable Fatherland, the United States of America! As you well know, America has showered rivers of dollars upon our grateful Nation. Yes, but we Greeks have also showered rivers – rivers of our own blood for your great country! You cannot deny that we Greeks are always ready to shed our blood, whenever you Americans need us! So how could you make such a mockery of Greece?”

Daedala’s only answer was to stare even harder at the floor. By now she had learned, after almost a decade of living in Greece, that the only weapon to disarm a Greek male on the rampage is either to tell him that he’s absolutely right – or else, to count to a hundred-and-ten, and then either beat a hasty retreat – or if his tantrum seems to be petering out, to “smile” as though nothing has happened.

But in the course of this particular scene in Yannina. Daedala only tried not to notice the menacing expression on the face of the third Court Martial “Judge” – into whose right ear, the “informer” from Frog Island was whispering. As always after an avalanche of bravado, the next day, Daedala was consumed with guilt and all she wanted was to escape that Mock “Court Martial”. Fortunately, it was almost lunch-time, and even the strictest Greek authorities never sacrifice their three hour lunch-break for even the most pressing matters of State – let alone, a mock “court martial” for a mere “peccadillo”. So the Court Martial trio allowed Daedala and the Minotaur to leave. With one last reminder that Daedala owed her discharge to their own magnanimity and not to the Minotaur’s cunning excuses, the grotesque trio paraded out of the room and Daedala was free.

Free, but forlorn. For the general atmosphere of “Oedipus” at Dodona had changed. Anyway, now that the film was completed, one by one, all the beautiful people were leaving. First Donald Sutherland, then Lili Palmer, then Cyril Cusack and Christopher Plummer – and last, but certainly not least, Orson Welles, leaving his namesake – Baby-Teiresias – bleating away in the no longer enchanted village of Dodona. Last of all, Daedala and the Minotaur also left, leading “Teiresias” on a leash and doing their best to bottle-feed the baby lamb with kyr-Lolos’ goat-milk all the way back to Athens. As soon as they arrived at the Athenian apartment of the Minotaur’s mother, they realized they were in for trouble. After only one night of tying baby-Teiresias to the
sink in Pasiphae’s bathroom, the lamb broke loose and wrought such havoc throughout the apartment that they decided they’d have to take him back to their own environs. In ordinary circumstances, quite an appropriate idea. But as the Ark was about to collapse, Baby-Teiresias ended up in Valter’s garden.

There too, Baby Teiresias went haywire. Not only did he gobble down whole crates of cantalope melons, he also devoured Mrs. Niki’s best silk stockings. By the time the frisky little lamb had finished off Niki’s last nightgown, Valter’s inexhaustible store of patience was exhausted. He was forced to summon an old neighbour to slaughter Baby Teiresias. Daedala was heart-broken, but Valter was adamant. The sacrificial scene was witnessed only by the septuagenarian actor, who had impersonated Oedipus’ Father back at Dodona. Indeed, “Laios” was present when Valter’s old neighbour reluctantly sacrificed “Teiresias” to the gods. Now which of the Ancient Greek gods were particularly offended, Daedala never learned. But what she did realize all too clearly was that from the day of bleating Baby Teiresias’ sacrifice, the hopes for the Ark went from bad to worse. And the Dodona Oasis faded out as if it had never existed, like a mirage in the Desert of the implacable Dictatorship plagueing Greece.
Eviction from the “Ark”: A 20th Century “Minoan” Cataclysm

Far away from magical Dodona – and stranded in Athens, after statuesque Laios and Baby-Teiresias had departed – Daedala discovered crystal-clearly just what the petty Rascals had been plotting. As she crossed the threshold of the Ark, the first thing to greet her was an eviction warrant to leave the premises and get out forever! Incredulous, but more rebellious than ever, Daedala tried to galvanize some right-wing journalists, whom someone might still know. Only one tough newspaper-scion deigned to write a two-column Appeal for the Ark. Although acting directly against her own political conscience, for the one and only time in her life, Daedala armed herself with the Junta newspaper and marched down to the local Police station – (the same Police, who had repeatedly reprimanded her for participating in Left-Wing Peace Marches before the Junta.) With heated audacity – slightly dampened by the presence of two of the meanest Rascals, who had followed her down to the Police Station – Daedala plunged into an impassioned protest worthy of Bernadette Devlin. Waving her Appeal in the snout of the outraged Police Officer, Daedala cried triumphantly:

“Just look here! See for yourself what this Editor in Chief calls the Minotaur: “A Pillar of Hellenism!”

“Pillar of Hellenism, my foot!” retorted the Police Officer. “You mean ‘Pillar of Bolshevism!’”

If Daedala could have sunk through the floor at that moment, she would gladly have done so. The two Rascals smirked maliciously and she was forced to retreat through the dark corridors of the Ark’s Last Stand. However, it was not so easy to evict Daedala from the Ark. An Ark, built for the sacred purpose of rescuing as many Greek Lovers of Art and Civilisation as possible from the Flood of Mediocrity and Mendacity, unleashed by the miserable Dictators.

Literally at the eleventh hour, just as the Ark was about to sink irrevocably, Dora Stratou – that brave pioneer in the field of traditional Greek Folk Dances and Music, sent her lead-dancer, bearing a packet of one-thousand drachma notes, stacked high – precisely the amount needed to pay off the landlady and get rid of the petty Rascals and scoundrels. Madame Stratou had succeeded in
Minos the Minotaur and Daedala the Dreamer

creating a Theatre of her own to stage the Greek Danses and she had earned well-deserved praise from internationally renowned Men of the Theatre, including Tyrone Guthrie and Frederick March, Jean-Louis Barrault and Gerard Philippe. With incomparable courage, Dora Stratou had defended her Theatre against all odds. Perhaps this was the main reason why she understood and so generously supported Daedala’s struggle to save her own little theatre.

Anyway, when Dora Stratou’s lead dancer arrived on the doorstep of the Ark, Daedala set off with him to visit the landlady, in a mood of elated expectation. However, Daedala had not yet learned the wise lesson of how “NOT to count one’s chickens before they are hatched”. Instead of finding a cordial smile on the landlady’s face, she found only an embarrassed expression, followed by outright refusal to accept any money. Now, what in the name of Zeus had gone wrong? As Daedala heard later that same day: The Rascal’s lawyer had taken sides with the landlady’s lawyer in order to outwit Daedala’s lawyer.

Now the long and the short of all this chicanery was that Daedala – the Founder of “Amy’s Ark” – found herself ousted and out. For Daedala it was not only the loss of a home – far more, it was the loss of a whole way of life. Every facet of her everyday existence had been in harmony with all the details composing the aura of the Ark. The new moon and the smiling sun on the ruby-coloured sign, welcoming her each time she opened the front door; the charming map the Minotaur had sketched to show visitors how to reach the Ark; and the enchanting sketch the Minotaur had made of the garden with its towering phoenix-tree and on each level of the back façade, another member of the Family. All this vanished now.

In mute dejection, Daedala returned from the treacherous landlady and went straight back to Dora Stratou. No words were needed as she handed back the packet of drachma-notes. Madame Stratou stared at Daedala’s woebegone expression and looked skywards: “May God give you courage!” was all she said. “But you still have your Life in front of you”. Yes, but meanwhile, Daedala felt lost when she saw Barba Spatharis and herself dumped along with all the treasures outside their rightful habitat. Helter-skelter the Renaissance treasures designed by Tsarouhis; helter-skelter, the finest works of Old Spatharis, even his 1821 parchment Heroes pell-mell, in an onslaught worse than any Turkish brigand could have perpetrated; the Minotaur’s splendid paintings scattered alongside the most delicate Figures of the Winds carved by Old Spatharis – all thrown out in front of the Ark.

As for the Minotaur – because of his Left-Wing past in the Greek Resistance against Nazi Invasion, as well as his Leftist friends in Anti-Junta Greece (many
of whom had already been imprisoned on remote “Devil’s Islands”), after the fall of the Ark, his need to get out of Greece as quickly as possible was an urgent priority. At all costs, he had to avoid being sent to Yioura (or any of the other concentration-camps), where he could not have made any of the powerful Anti-Dictatorship Works of Art, which he did create throughout the seven endless years he remained – of necessity – outside Greece. Luckily for the Minotaur, a “cinematographic” escape (via the Canary Islands) was arranged by the British producers of “Oedipus Rex”. They were now working on a movie based on Garcia Lorca’s “Blood Wedding” and had found the solution of offering the Minotaur another silent role as an “extra”. After this, he was free to leave the isle of Minorca and move on to a Brave New World outside Junta Greece; a World where he could be free to paint and draw and write about the vile Injustice in Greece.

For Daedala, the fall of the Ark meant losing the only Home she would ever love and risking the loss of the only man with whom she was on the same wavelength. She also lost the last chance on this earth of having her own theatre. In Daedala’s quixotic way, she went on hoping against hope for a miracle. But doomsday had indeed come and all the shacks and seraglios of Kingdom Come were being destroyed – this time not by the cement-lined bulldozers, which were already destroying the other time-honoured neighbourhoods of Athens; but by the despicable Dictators. The treasures of the Ark were scattered to the winds. Although Daedala gathered up all the bits and pieces and found shelter for them as long as possible, in the storage-space of Dora Stratou’s Theatre, nevertheless, all her dreams for the Ark had died a Don Quixote death.

As for Barba-Sotiris Spatharis, for him – at the age of almost eighty – the Cataclysm caused by the Scoundrels of the Junta was as devastating as the volcanic eruption from Santorini, which had destroyed Minoan Art. The Grand Old Man gazed back at the scattered relics of his Figures outside the Ark. He gazed with infinite sadness. Because of his advanced age, he wondered if the Ark was his last chance to find a place in the Sun, but he too refused to give up. After the fall of the Ark, he continued struggling. searching even more stubbornly for a permanent Home for his beloved Shadow Theatre family. Wherever Daedala wandered during those seven bitter years of Exile, she answered his letters, trying to give him courage. The handwritten texts he sent Daedala in Cyprus were amazing. At the age of 77, he was ready to load all his treasures onto a tiny kaiki-boat and set sail for Cyprus, as long as someone could assure him that he would die arm-to-arm with his beloved figures, protected under a single benevolent roof. Daedala tried and tried – oh
how she tried. But she was not in time to make a reality of Barba-Spatharis’ dream.

Instead, Daedala was called back to Greece and had to give up her quest for Old Spatharis, as well as for herself. Just before he died, he found his own way out and donated a large number of his most masterful figures to a treasure-house of traditional Greek Art. His last wish was that in such a hallowed place, they might be given the permanent honour he had fought for so passionately all his life. The last few weeks of his life – during that icy cold winter (which he called “Dante”) – Daedala kept him company almost every day. His greatest pleasure – except for his daily sip of coffee at the Platanos “kapheneion” – was their afternoon stroll towards the “Ledra” music-hall. There, Barba Sotiris used to offer the audience little toys portraying the barefoot children of Karagiozi, whom he and his beloved wife – Kyra Triandafyllià – had painted and strung up on two splinters of wood, to help the little urchins somersault in mid-air.

A kindly, smiling child himself, Old Spatharis used to visit the “Ledra” every day to see how his miniature “grandchildren” were faring. This was the heyday of Nikos Xylouris, who sang Markopoulos’ “Rizitika” and “Ithageneia” with particular love. Indeed, all the musicians and singers at the “Ledra” also loved Barba-Spatharis and his work and helped to fill his last hours with warmth. And since both he and Daedala – each from different vantage-points – felt the need to find shelter somewhere, there they both found a resting-place, soothed by the heavenly voice of Xylouris, singing of the land where he was born, the land he loved so deeply.

Easter week of 1974 was Barba-Sotiris Spatharis’ last week on this earth. The last time Daedala saw him alive, despite his dying lips and hands, he was bestowing biblical blessings on one-and-all:

“Let the Son of Abraham and Isaac keep you well, dear child.”

As benign as always, although in the grip of Charon, later that same night, just at the hour when Orthodox Greeks sing of Resurrection, Barba Spatharis departed for a world, where his only company henceforth would be the beautiful figures of his own rich imagination, remaining for ever alive because he (their creator) and they (his creations) belong to Greece and the Greek People. Whereas Daedala, who had never actually belonged, however hard she tried to believe in her Greekness – was condemned to watch almost all her dreams turn to dust.

Yes, in the end, Daedala’s dreams had turned to dust. Vanitas vanitatis.
To what avail, all the “Great Names”, who had entered her Ark? (Even Greta Garbo, even Nureyev and Fonteyn.) To what avail the visit of Lawrence Durrell, accompanied by the Colossus of Maroussi, old Katsimbalis, who although hardly able to walk, wielded a colossal cane to make his every footstep possible – to what avail, even though they were so appreciative of the Ark. To what avail Daedala’s grand plans for producing masterpieces of the Living Theater, as well as a bold “Anti-Festival”? To what avail the acquisition of an actual contract from Beckett himself for “Happy Days”? To what avail Daedala’s efforts with so many modern versions of ancient Greek plays (including “Oedipus Tyrannus”, “Prometheus” and “The Frogs”). And above all, to what avail her most cherished endeavour of all: James Joyce’s “Woman-City”? All for naught, vanitas vanitatis.

The Dictators were contemptible worms. But they had done their harm – irreparable harm. Perhaps Daedala should have remained at home on some far away Greek island – like Penelope, waiting patiently for her Odysseus to return. Perhaps if Daedala had stayed behind in Greece, none of the disasters would have happened, which later befell both her and the Minotaur. But at the moment of the Cataclysm, Daedala reacted in a state of panic and fled.

Yes, fled from the Deluge in Greece and from the ruins of her lost Ark.
Renaissance Theatre in Spoleto: Tsarouhis’ “model” for the “Ark”.

Tsarouhis’ painting of Prometheus, on the ceiling of the Ark.

“A Royal Box”, as in Menotti’s Theatre in Spoleto.

The actual “Box” in the Ark, where Tsarouhis and the Minotaur converse.
Minos the Minotaur and Daedala the Dreamer

Tsarouhis’ text with instructions for the Ark.
The Minotaur’s invitations to the Ark; also, a membership card designed with the Sun and the new Moon; also, another of the many newspaper articles about the Ark.
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Together with Tsarouhis, the great Greek Artist of Shadow Theatre – “Barba”-Sotiris Spatharis – was the most important creative Spirit of the Ark.
Every single day, “Barba”-Sotiris used to visit the Ark.

From his multitude of hand-made figures, his favourite Hero from the Greek War of Independence (1821), was Kaplanis.

“Alexander the Great and the Accursed Serpent” was one of the historical dramas, which the Greek People particularly loved.
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Until his dying breath, Barba-Sotiris Spatharis, worked every single day, continuing to perfect his marvellous figures.
The original drawing for the “Arty Party” exhibition of Picasso, at the Tate Gallery, in the summer of 1960.

A detail of the same Exhibition.
Four glimpses of the three Black Musicians, who improvised jazz for each of the thirty performances of the “Arty-Party”:

Together with Carl, the double-bass player – Chico Calender.

Only Carl’s head can be seen in one of the many black-and-white “slides” projected during the performance.

Carl, in front of another “slide”, sketched by the Minotaur.
Two of the six roles played by Daedala in the “Arty Party”.

Two scenes from the Carnival version of “Don Giovanni” (re-named “Don Pan Carlos”), “starring” Carl and Daedala.
Four photos of guests to the Ark.

Manos Hadjidakis (talking with Daedala).

Down in the Garden Café of the Ark, Chico playing his double-bass jazz for the Minotaur and his Guests (even the close relatives of Onassis).

Mikis Theodorakis, talking with Lymberaki and Daedala.

Odysseas Elytis and Yannis Moralis, in the audience.
Eviction from the Ark and “Barba”-Sotiris Spatharis, looking at the Disaster from a distance.

“Barba”-Sotiris looking from close-up: and then, with the Minotaur – after the “Ark” had sunk.
SECTION FIVE

EXILE
Minos the Minotaur and Daedala the Dreamer

Daedala Boards the Good Ship “Apollonia” and Is Befriended by the Poet “Marabou”

After the definitive sinking of “Amy’s Ark”, Daedala chose the difficult solution of revisiting Paris, which once upon a time, had been the ideal refuge for many Greek artists – as well as “self-exiled” Artists from all over the world, a kind of enchanting Mecca. Indeed, she had set out from Athens with high hopes and with her Anti-Junta manuscripts carefully concealed inside a knapsack full of figs and olives. At all costs, she didn’t want her notes and photographs to be confiscated by some nasty Junta Customs Inspectors, so she’d taken all the necessary precautions. Furthermore, she’d decided to try and find a Publisher abroad, as far as possible from the tyranny of Greece under the Dictatorship. Daedala was aware that because of her Irish origin, it would be almost impossible to find a British publishing-house; and for other reasons, out of the question, in America. But she always remembered the brilliant French Publisher – Girodias – whom she’d admired in Paris (at the beginning of the Sixties) for daring to publish – in English! – the most revolutionary writers of the Beat Generation, two of whom were her good friends. Daedala was hoping that Girodias might be interested in her manuscripts as well.

As for her other goal in Paris, she wanted to bring the Minotaur’s paintings safely to Iris Clert’s beautiful Gallery. After a Marathonian struggle with dictatorial red tape – demanding that every single work of art, every sketch, even a small scrap of paper, had to be stamped with the official “permit” from the Junta Government – before leaving Greece, Daedala had managed to arrange for all the best works of the Minotaur to be sent to Paris and carefully stored by Iris Clert, until Minos could arrive to claim them. In retrospect Daedala realised that perhaps it would have been better to wait? But for seven whole years? With the all too real threat of imprisonment and/or exile islands? And the impossibility of free expression, the *sine qua non* of any true Artist. Daedala had a very hard time in deciding; but in the end she “rationalized” the decision by faithfully following the Minotaur’s final instructions. Nevertheless, later on, she regretted it, because some of these works became scattered in various European capitals – especially, in Copenhagen, where some of the
Minotaur’s finest paintings were misappropriated, in unspeakably unfair circumstances. Deep down, Daedala felt that her two main goals for choosing Paris were wrong. And as soon as she reached France, she began to delay – as she usually delayed, whenever she needed to gain time. But now, in the case of Paris, she delayed infuriatingly.

Aboard the good ship “Apollonia”, Daedala had made her escape from Piraeus to Marseilles, early in October. There, she was befriended by the seafaring poet, Kolyas “Marabou” Kavvadias, who had been wandering the Seven Seas for the last many years. As playful as a youthful leprechaun, despite his white hair, “Marabou” was a constant source of joyful optimism. He gave Daedala a sense of elation and she sorely needed his self-confidence. In fact, she enjoyed his company so much that she made another four or five voyages aboard the “Apollonia”. Throughout the 7-year curse of the Colonels’ Junta, this became a delightful link for several other Mediterranean ports, including Genova and Haifa and Limassol – in addition to Piraeus and Marseilles.

As the official wireless-operator, Kavvadias had his own den alongside the Captain’s quarters and he’d filled it with “memorabilia” – including a rare tropical seaweed bestowed on him by his favourite mermaid, the lovely lass tattooed on his right arm. This mermaid’s gift of seaweed was preserved inside a volume of Saint Jean Perse, next to a dogearred edition of Joyce’s “Ulysses”.

“Marabou” enjoyed telling the following tale (which happened to be true): how the Minotaur (who was also travelling aboard the “Apollonia”, on another occasion) was so intrigued by Kavvadias’ poetic description of this particular mermaid, that he drew a perfect sketch of her and handed it to the ebullient marconi. (As many Greeks already knew, Mermaids were one of the very special spécialités of the Minotaur – and they may also recall, he had even sketched himself as a Mermaid-Holding-A-Palette in “Dream Street”).

Anyway, in October of 1967, as soon as the “Apollonia” had docked in Marseilles, the logical next step was to take the first train to Paris. But again, Daedala delayed. (Now why was she delaying?) Fabricating one lame excuse after the other, she told herself: Since this was her first time in Marseilles, why not try to explore it? Next, she was suddenly seized by an irresspressible desire to visit Kazantzakis’ last abode in nearby Antibes – the place he’d chosen for his final self-exile from Greece. Daedala had just finished working with Kazantzakis’ second wife on the latter’s 589-page Biography of the Great Cretan. And the name of their last home in Antibes – namely, “Koukouli” (“Cocoon”) – rang as invitingly to Daedala’s ears as the music of the waves washing Kazantzakis’ seaside home on the island of Aegina, where Daedala
used to leave a symbolic handful of wild flowers, whenever she walked there around sunset. But now, after arriving in Marseilles and after searching all the beautiful houses of Antibes, Daedala couldn’t find Κουκούλι-Cocoon anywhere. So now, there was absolutely no excuse for any more delays.

Nevertheless, with one last flash of Celtic obstinacy, Daedala decided to try one last Delay. After spending the rest of the day in the Picasso Museum at Antibes – and after a charming detour to nearby Nice, the next day, she’d convinced herself, that since Nice was so near Antibes, she might as well visit it too. (“Who knows if I’ll ever be back in this part of the World?” she said to herself.) If she’d continued the same soliloquy, she might have gone all the way to Corsica or Sardinia. And who knows, even as far as Timbuctoo? But as luck would have it, the weather changed in Nice. In fact, it was so grey that it looked like England in February. At this season of the year, the Côte d’Azur was anything but azure. So at long last, Daedala pulled herself together, leaving her mania for delaying to some other time in the future.

Finally, Daedala boarded the train for Paris, where an old friend of the Minotaur – an elderly Irish journalist – had been expecting her arrival for the past ten days. His apartment in the Rue Molière – near the Comédie Française and the Bibliothèque Nationale – was enticingly situated, but the eminent Irishman had already sublet most of the rooms to a genteel French intellectual, who slept all day and woke up only around midnight. In the one empty room – with only a so-called “kitchen” in between – Daedala was supposed to settle down and collect the scattered fragments of her manuscripts. But in these unexpected circumstances, she found it impossible to concentrate, let alone, organize her work – including the translation of a book by one of the best-known Greek writers. She also found it hard to find the courage to “storm” the Bastille of the Paris literary world. In fact, the only thing she managed to “storm” was the French intellectual zombie’s midnight privacy. All too soon, she ended up sitting endless hours in one of those fashionable Cafés, near the “Deux Magots”.

Until this autumn of 1967, Daedala had never realised how many fake litterati, from the four corners of the World, had swamped Paris, which no longer resembled a “Mecca”, but a “Babel” of disillusioned dilettantes and fake “Exiles”, peddling fake articles to publicize themselves, instead of their long-suffering Motherlands. Not to mention all those fake Big Shots hobnobbing with movie magnates and vips, who attended all the Gala Fêtes, Right, Left, and Centre. Of course, the timing of Daedala’s visit to Paris was partly to blame. Only four months later, Danny le Rouge’s miraculous Spring Uprising changed
the scene in 1968. But back then – just before Christmas of 1967 – Daedala had had enough of Paris, and what with her failure to “storm” anybody or anything, there was no reason for her to remain there any longer.

Besides, by now, she had an acute case of nostalgia for the Minotaur, after three months of his absence. So one Sunday noon, Daedala set out for London, where he had landed after his cinematic adventures in the Canary Islands. As the boat from Calais chopped its way through the English Channel towards Folkstone – where the non-British passengers were “welcomed” by the stench of Dettol disinfectant (Great Britain’s customary way of “welcoming” Foreigners!), how could Daedala have guessed that she was about to fall out of the frying-pan into the fire?
Daedala Joins the Minotaur in England and Works on Translating Elytis’ “Axion Esti”

If Parisian “reality” was difficult on the French side of the Channel, here, on the British side, the situation was intolerable. The only job Daedala could find was as a charwoman. All her Oxfordian education, with all the trimmings of Lady Margaret Hall and all those “poetic” boat-rides on the Magdalen College river, and all the performances of Shakespeare in the Gardens of Trinity College – all this meant absolutely nothing. Willy-nilly, she was obliged to become a servant of the Anglo-Saxon Establishment, condemned to clean the house of an aristocratic English lady, without even a trace of Cinderella’s Prince in the background.

Surrounded by such slavery, the only salvation Daedala could find was to enjoy her “free time” by rushing down to the British Museum to work on her favourite, long poem by Odysseus Elytis – the “Axion Esti”. Despite her vow to refrain from any passive approach to the Anti-Junta Struggle, (by translating the creative work of other poets), nevertheless she decided that translation was better than negativity. So almost every day for six whole months, Daedala visited the British Museum, to use the best Greek-english Dictionnaries, where she could find the rare words in Elytis’ extraordinarily rich vocabulary. (Another minor reason was to prove to herself that she was not made for a charwoman since she was incapable of cleaning even her own floor.) The only work enabling her to survive British Miserabilia, was day-by-day, page-by-page, to continue translating poetry (even when she was too discouraged, to write her own poems). And the only reward she longed for was a word of recognition for her efforts to find the courage to go on struggling against the misery of pseudo-“Exile”. A cordial letter from Elytis himself brought his blessing to carry on with the translation, another six months.

Unfortunately, as sometimes happens in academic circles, the above-mentioned translation never saw the light of day. However, despite Daedala’s justifiable disappointment, nevertheless, she still drew lasting courage from Elytis’ “Axion Esti”, even at the darkest moments of the Dictatorship in Greece. When she heard the “Byzantine” voice of Bithikotsis singing Elytis’ plea to
God not to forget the Greek motherland, Daedala understood that her own motherland meant Greece. As for the heartbreaking refrain:

“Where can I find my soul, the four-leaf tear?” her own eyes filled with tears every time she heard those words. At other moments, she felt only wrath from all the Injustice and recalled the fierce verse of the Poet about cutting his veins to incarnadine his dreams. But she also found “release” in the Poet’s words of Resurrection amidst the fragrant lilacs. Above all the other verses in “Axion Esti”, Daedala loved the prophetic prose-poem, with its paean to perpetual birth and eros, and its climax in the vindication of dreams:

“And dreams will take revenge and sow the seeds of generations in secula seculorum!”

And also, the following leit motif, repeated in the thundering voice of the magnificent Greek actor, Manos Katrakis:

“Exiled Poet, tell your era, what is it you see?”
In spite of Britain’s gloomy climate, Daedala found another splendid source of courage there: an almost unknown series of 32 poems with words written by Mikis Theodorakis himself and entitled “The Sun and Time”. Completed at the beginning of the Junta, when Mikis was still imprisoned by the notorious Bouboulina Prison torturers. Later on, he also composed music for approximately half of these poems, when he was exiled high in the mountains of Arcadia, in a village called Zatouna. But even as a whole “cycle” of songs, these poems are among his least well-known works. Anyway, before Theodorakis’ exile in Zatouna was finished, a copy of “The Sun and Time” had been smuggled out of Greece. As soon as Daedala learned that the manuscript of the 32 poems had reached England, she rushed out to a far away district of London, near Golders Green, to find the Greek friend who had saved the poems from the Censors. Like finding a spring of water in the desert, she copied all the verses in her notebook and that very night, began translating Mikis’ words into English.

The poem she liked best, referred (inter alia) to Suleiman the Magnificent, the Sultan at the time when Constantinople was captured by the Turks in 1453. But the names in the sixth verse: (“Andreas/ Elias/ Anthi/”) belonged to contemporary Greeks, well known for their Anti-Junta activities. In particular, the name of Anthi impressed her, because Daedala considered Anthi the bravest heroine of the Greek Resistance – here in Greece, rather than in some distant foreign country. When the Minotaur learned that Anthi had been imprisoned at the same time as Mikis, he brought Daedala five red carnations and a newspaper clipping with Picasso’s portrait of the Greek Resistance Hero – Beloyannis – holding his symbolic carnation.

The Minotaur was also moved by Mikis’ unusual verses and made a series of drawings, for some of the 32 poems of “The Sun and Time”, which he succeeded in getting published in Daedala’s English translation in an excellent periodical, called “London Magazine”, edited by Alan Ross. In the course of the Junta, the same magazine published two other significant contributions
by the Minotaur, with his drawings on the cover. The first text – entitled “The City Swam in Black Flags” – was written by the Minotaur ten years before the Junta began. But as a powerful attack on all forms of Tyranny and political Injustice, it was painfully relevant to the 1967-1974 Dictatorship. The second article and drawings were connected with the specific details of Theodorakis’ imprisonment at the very start of the Junta and up until the end of his exile in Zatouna, when he was finally granted permission to leave the mountains of Arcadia for Paris.

Aside from the above-mentioned anti-Junta articles, another Magazine published two exceptionally strong political drawings by the Minotaur. One of them was connected with an international situation, not directly applicable to the Colonels’ Junta. But the second – entitled “The Triumph of Papa-doc” – was a scathing satire focused on the Chief Dictator Papadopoulos. The top lady-journalist from Greece – Helen Vlahou – had commissioned the caricature for her newly founded, anti-Junta Magazine, which she edited in London, with the name “Hellenic Review”. However, a glance at the contents of the Minotaur’s bold drawing, will enlighten the Reader as to why the “Review” was allowed to circulate for only two or three issues! In a word, this particular caricature illustrated Doctor Papadopoulos [“Papa-Doc”, for short], demanding a “surgical operation”, which he characterized as “Urgent” for “the Recuperation of the Greek People!” Expressing the Minotaur’s wrath against the Hitlerian hysteria of the Dictator “Papa-Doc”, it also expressed his scorn for the diabolical “Surgeon Papadopoulos”, as well as his concern for the crippled human beings of Greece tortured by crutches and plaster casts forcing them to kowtow to the Dictator. Such a caricature was a resounding slap in the face of “Papa-Doc” and his cohorts. Henceforth it was out of the question for the Minotaur, who was now branded as a “dangerous anti-Junta militant”, to return to Greece, as long as the Colonels were still in power.

Needless to point out, this impossibility of returning to Greece in such circumstances, applied to every exiled Greek – especially to an outspoken Artist. Furthermore, as a close friend of Mikis Theodorakis, ever since the old days, the Minotaur had shared various experiences unknown to many Greeks. For example, after the assassination of Grigoris Lambrakis at the end of May 1963, the Minotaur took part in various Peace Marches to commemorate Lambrakis in various places, including Cyprus and Crete. As for the First Peace March, in the spring of 1963, the Minotaur (this time, together with Daedala), had the following adventure, in company with Mikis:

Their closest Family friend – the aforementioned Anthi had roused the
Minotaur and Daedala at the crack of dawn to remind them to be in time for the Peace March. They had to find Mikis in Ambelokipi and from there, set out together for Marathon. But when they reached the Athens Tower, they couldn’t go any further than the nearby coffee-shop. There, they had a brief encounter with Manolis Glezos (The Greek Left-Wing hero, who helped remove the Nazi flag from the Acropolis, during the Occupation). When the three of them – without Glezos – came out, they found a squadron of policemen waiting for them. The Peace March had been banned and transformed into a forced march to the nearest Police Station.

Soon, some other well-known Left-Wing people appeared at the Police Station. As that historic day progressed, at Security Headquarters, the guard on duty who brought them water and dry biscuits every so often, was surprised to find these supposedly “dangerous Communists” singing songs and laughing away, like a group of young boys. Meanwhile, the Minotaur had brought out his pens and a big piece of paper from his ever-present drawing-pad. As if it were the most natural thing in the world, he began making a sketch of Mikis, at the moment when the Police had arrested him near the Athens Tower. As always happened when the Minotaur began his sketches, everybody gathered around him to watch. And as always, he just went on with his work – imperturbably.

Around sunset, the news resounded that the only person who had been able to complete the Peace March – Grigoris Lambrakis – had just come back to Athens holding his banner aloft, inscribed with the Greek word “HELLAS”. A little while later, inasmuch as there was no longer any “danger” of a “Left-Wing Uprising” – all the “prisoners” were released and free to go back home. All except the Minotaur and Daedala, who preferred to savour all the memories of that truly historic day with Mikis, before returning to reality.
From the beginning of her life in Greece with the Minotaur, Daedala loved Mikis’ music ever since the day she actually met him way back in October of 1962. Exactly when he was composing the music for Brendan Behan’s “Hostage” and she’d been introduced as a compatriot of that Irish Rebel and playwright, whom she knew from Dublin. After this introduction, she attended the final rehearsals of “The Hostage” and was asked to express her opinion of the Greek version of the Irish masterpiece. Daedala was well aware of the Greeks’ great respect for Irish writers, and especially, poetic playwrights such as Yeats and Synge, as well as O’ Casey and Eugene O’ Neill, most of whom had been translated admirably into Greek. So she of course acknowledged the superb translation of Vassilis Rota. As the most celebrated Greek translator of Shakespeare, Rota was fully equiped to make a splendid translation of “The Hostage”.

However, Daedala did have several doubts about the way the play was directed – especially because of the occasional lack of tragi-comic sui generis “humour”, which is the quintessence of most Irish writers. For example, in the last scene of the English language production of “The Hostage” – both in Dublin and in Joan Littlewood’s Theatre in London, the last song – “The bells of Hell go ting-a-ling-a-ling for thee, but not for me!” – is accompanied by a hilariously funny Finale, where all the actors and actresses improvise freely. In fact, on Broadway at the Algonquin Theatre in New York, where Daedala had seen the last performance of the play, Brendan Behan himself, used to “dance” along with the entire cast, telling his own jolly jokes and singing his own Celtic songs. The whole shebang ended up merrily, whereas in the Greek version “The Hostage” ended on a “serious” note.

Nevertheless, in retrospect when Daedala heard Mikis Theodorakis’ magnificent music for the best song in the whole play, the militant “battle-hymn” for the Irish Rebel Hero of the 1916 Easter Uprising – Michael Collins – whom the Irish People call the “Laughing Boy”, she forgot her doubts about anything else and fell in love with that Ballad, which began with the same words as the Irish original:
“Twas on an August morning, all in the morning hours, 
I went to take the warming air all in the month of flowers, 
And there I saw a maiden, and heard her mournful cry, 
Oh what will mend my broken heart, I’ve lost my laughing boy.”

Daedala not only fell in love with that song, she also fell in love with the whole play. And when the joyful news arrived from Europe that the musician was now free from the Junta’s shackles and alive in Paris, she sent him a letter addressed: To the “Laughing Boy”, although she realized that he would never receive her enthusiastic message, in the flood of all the other letters sent to him in Paris. Later on, Daedala enjoyed other rare scenes with the Laughing Boy. For instance, the rehearsal where Mikis began intensive work on Neruda’s “Canto General”. In an old shack, at the back of a ruined “courtyard” in a Paris “slum”, Theodorakis had succeeded in collecting all his faithful musicians again. Now he was ready to set forth on a new adventure: to compose music for Spanish excerpts of the vast Poetic work, the “Canto General”, written by the greatest Poet of Chile, Pablo Neruda.

At this particular rehearsal, Neruda himself was present. Seated discreetly in a corner of the shack, with a gentle unaffected smile, dressed in blue overalls, Neruda was a thoroughly unpretentious Human Being, who never tried to exaggerate his own importance – a fine lesson in modesty for certain pseudo-artists, who think that when they “put on airs”, they acquire “prestige”. Although Daedala found several parts of the music for Neruda’s “Canto General” rather repetitive, it was a memorable experience to have witnessed the first rehearsal of this opus in a free country, far removed from the tyranny of the Colonels’ Junta.

Needless to say, Daedala was fully aware that she owed the privilege of being present at this stirring event to the Minotaur, who was such a true friend of all the great Greek artists that they loved not only his work as an Artist, but also himself for his character. Daedala also became their friend, basically because of the Minotaur. Except in the case of one Artist – the greatest Poet of Poets for whose poetry, Mikis Theodorakis composed three of his best-known Series of Songs, which became a great source of Courage throughout the Junta. The first two – namely, the “Epitaphios” and the “Romiosyni” – Daedala had begun to translate into English, even before the Junta. After the start of the Junta, Daedala firmly believed that some of the strongest verses with Ritsos’ most

The superb Greek translation of the whole vast work of Neruda is by Danae Stratigopoulou.
inspired words about Freedom, should become a second national anthem for the Greeks.

As for Ritsos’ third large group of songs, entitled: “The Eighteen Short Songs of the Bitter Motherland”, this work played a unique part in Daedala’s life. For now, it suffices to mention only Daedala’s delight in having been able to communicate her enthusiasm for these “Songs” to the Minotaur. Such a contagious form of enthusiasm that the Minotaur, plunged into working on a series of paintings for every single “Short Song”. These marvellous paintings captured the quintessence of Ritsos’ own marvellous images and at the same time, preserved some of the Minotaur’s own familiar details – such as the angelic winged nymphs near the sea when he painted “the willowy girls near the seashore” (in Ritsos’ 12th “Short Song”) and the “dainty dawn born in springtime” (in Ritsos’ 6th “Short Song”).

In Paris, at the same time as Mikis was completing his music for the “Short Songs”, the Minotaur was painting at a feverish pace, in order to complete his own vision inspired by the same Songs. It was as though they were working on the same wave-length. There was a magical invisible communication between the painter and the musician, together with the Poet. Without their needing any direct contact, everything worked miraculously well – even at a distance of hundreds of miles from the far away Poet, who was still living on the island of Samos under house-arrest.

Later, unfortunately, thirteen of the “Eighteen Songs” painted by the Minotaur disappeared, while the Junta was still in power. However, many Greek exiles in Paris – near the end of the Junta, enjoyed the entire series of paintings in the foyer of the Bobino Theatre, in the course of the concert of Theodorakis’ music. That evening, on April 21st of 1973 – the sixth black anniversary of the seven year Junta in Greece – the Greek Exiles in Paris came out of the Bobino Theatre, determined to unite – at least, temporarily – despite their many differences. The creative combination of Yiannis Ritsos, Mikis and the Minotaur brought about this miracle. And this is what made both the Minotaur and Daedala, particularly happy – after so much unhappiness during the period when the Minotaur and Daedala had begun going their separate ways.
The Minotaur’s Temporary, but not Yet Final-and-For-Ever Flight

As for the Minotaur, at first he had found creative solutions, after arriving in London. At first, he could express his anger through his powerful cartoons. Nevertheless, after the second year of poverty and the everyday misery (as insipid as watery tea) – but worst of all, the total uncertainty – the Minotaur was fed up with England. By now, wherever he walked through the grey streets of London – especially, in the vicinity of Fulham Road – he literally dragged his feet. This proud human being who used to walk so energetically, now could only limp along in his worn-out shoes.

Down at his nadir, suddenly a close friend from the old days appeared in London, as if he had dropped out of the sky like a *deus ex machina*. Before the Junta, this same dynamic friend had used his strength in a positive way, to bring the Minotaur and Daedala back together, when they quarreled. But now, that friend had changed – he decided to interfere. So, in the summer of the third year of the Junta, he did his best to persuade the Minotaur to leave Daedala, because of her hyper-sensitive character and her outbursts.

At Victoria Railway Station, where Daedala had gone to say only “Bon Voyage” on the night-train to Spain, she burst into tears. Inexplicable tears, since – theoretically – they would be parting for only three months, till the end of the summer. But deep down, Daedala sensed that this was the beginning of the End. Until now, throughout seven whole years, they had never lived apart, except for the three months when Daedala had been obliged to stay in Paris for professional reasons. But now, after nineteen months of living together in London, Daedala had a strong premonition that the present absence in Spain would be just the first in a series of repeated farewells, which would soon end up in the final good-bye.

Without going into all the complex details, Daedala had to admit (in retrospect) that the Minotaur’s *deus ex machina* had succeeded in rousing him to work creatively on a tremendous amount of drawings. This in itself was admirable, after the sad situation in England. The *deus ex machina* was determined to renew the Minotaur’s willpower and the first thing in the *deus ex machina’s “program”* was to convince the weary Minotaur to burn all his old
clothes, starting from those worn-out shoes he used to wear in London. This proved to be an extremely effective way of changing the Minotaur’s mood! But there was also a slightly diabolical element – something akin to African black magic – when the deus ex machina ordered that an “effigy” be dressed in the actual rags of the Minotaur, who was “ordered” to set fire to his own effigy, until he was handed a wardrobe of brand-new garments.

At that point, the deus ex machina began to act like an Alchemist capable of transforming the Minotaur so thoroughly that he would agree to concentrate his creative work exclusively in the following three fields: SPACE – EROS – REVOLUTION. But this was only part of the Alchemist’s Plan. He also wanted to persuade the Minotaur to alter the Technique of his work – in a word, to simplify his own delicate and frequently, complicated style – especially in the field of Eros, attempting to impose an absolutely different approach to his way of painting.

Throughout the three months of that surrealistic summer, in that sublunar Spanish village near the sea, the Minotaur tried to obey the “orders” of his deus ex machina, and did indeed produce hundreds of drawings, but very far removed from his own idiosynchrasy. Under the influence of the extraordinary Alchemist, he temporarily abandoned his traditionally “Hellenic” adoration of women’s beauty. Obliged as he was to draw violent images of women making “love” in Outer Space, the Minotaur was moving further and further away from his own human, “natural” Greek approach to Women.

At this point, he could stand no more. But just then, another deus ex machina dropped out of the sky. The Danish friend whom the Minotaur had known in Athens – that brilliant photographer by the name of Ib – appeared on the scene with a tempting proposal. Their mutual friend – Ole Wahl Olsen – was eager to invite the Minotaur to Denmark, where Ole had arranged to translate and publish the former’s best anti-Junta texts and drawings. Ole was the top literary translator in Copenhagen, (as well as the spitting image of Max von Sydow, in Ingmar Bergman’s “Seventh Seal”) What better excuse could the Minotaur find for his own escape from the Spanish “Seventh Seal”? 
Anyway, just as had happened with the Minotaur: at the nadir of the nadir, a *deus ex machina* appeared on the horizon for Daedala as well. Her Harvard Professor of Ancient Greek History, John Finley, finally answered her plea to return to Greece. He was delighted to announce that he’d just now arranged an honouracy scholarship for her to study and record the traditional Ballads of Greece—not only in mainland Greece, but also as far away as Asia Minor and Cyprus and Imbros and Trebizond, and other regions of the Pontos, where descendants of the Greeks still preserve Greek customs.

At first, of course, Daedala was deeply grateful to this wonderfully generous Professor Finley. But she wanted to re-visit the Minotaur’s Mother in Athens, before setting out on such travels to such distant places. When she reached Athens, however, she discovered that many of her old friends were exiled and others in prison. All of them were forced to keep their mouth shut. It was hard even to hear the Greek songs and poems, which had given Greek exiles in Paris and London courage. Daedala could hardly rejoice at returning “home” to a Greece humiliated by Censors and Torturers. She felt more like a homeless stranger in her own ruined “home”. Even her best friend, Anthi, was nowhere to be found. So Daedala decided to leave for Cyprus as soon as possible – once again, aboard the good ship “Apollonia” this time, in hopes of finally freeing her own soul from the frustration of Exile.

* * *

Fortunately for Daedala, her destination in Cyprus was only a few hours away from the “Apollonia’s” nearby port in the Holy Land. So when she decided, at the very last minute, to disembark at Haifa – in order to make a week’s tour as far as Bethlehem – there was no great delay in her original plan to sail straight to the next port in Limassol, Cyprus. In fact, such digressions were compatible with several of her other delays (e.g. her first 10-day delay after disembarking in Lisbon, before proceeding at once to her actual destination in
Paris). But this time Daedala decided more quickly for her once-upon-a-time beloved Cyprus, arriving in Limassol, aboard the good ship “Apollonia” on the first day of the new decade – and thence, immediately to Famagusta.

Now, at first, she’d imagined that this new interlude in her favourite place in Cyprus would last only a week or so. How could she possibly guess that the cold January afternoon when she arrived in Famagusta, would be the beginning of an almost three-year sojourn in Cyprus? On principle, Daedala was still loyal to the Minotaur, although his recent Scandinavian shenanigans had begun to make her angry. So angry that she reacted by returning to her long-delayed friendship with the Dark Boy of Famagusta, interrupted ten whole years ago.

Through the Dark Boy’s recent paintings, the darkest he had ever painted, Daedala re-entered the no longer translucent waters of the Famagustan Sea. His luminous seascapes of the early Sixties had been metamorphosed into mysterious dark murals descending down into the entrails of Ancient Cyprus – particularly in his enormous “Horses of Engomi”. In his tawny-coloured atelier, nextdoor to the little village of Ayios Memnon, scented with the orange blossoming trees near the Sea of Famagusta, Skotinos had created his own magical world, out of crumbling arches and vast paintings full of prehistoric dark stones and bones and skeletons of archaic horses. He had painted these darkest of all his compositions, in the midst of his own bright grove of lemon-trees, as incandescently yellow as the Sun itself. This is where the Dark Boy welcomed Daedala back to Cyprus on that cold wintry first day of the New Decade.

Nevertheless, this lemon-tree Oasis could not last long. Two hyper-egocentric artists (such as Skotinos and also Daedala) could not help stifling each other. Soon, Daedala no longer felt welcome in his Oasis. So she began searching for an oasis of her own – at first, frantically. But after two of three days, with headstrong, Celtic determination, she managed to find a little shack near the Sea, just a step away from the “Kalamies Fish Taverna”. The first thing she did was to plant a tiny garden, filled with rainbow-coloured dahlias and strawberries, where the children who lived in back of her shack – little Kika and Panikos and Pambos – enjoyed playing, every afternoon.

Their Daddy was a fisherman, and twice a week, when they weren’t at school, they went out in his fishing-boat and helped bring back all kinds of fish – even lobsters and crabs. But they always had time to help Daedala water her garden just before sunset. That was the most joyful part of Daedala’s efforts to build her own place under the Sun. Even if it was in the middle of Nowhere and – literally – built on quicksand, still it was a beginning. And although she realized it could
not last forever, she rebelled against sinking back into bitterness. Instead, she sat down in her garden and transformed her sorrows into song.

Yes, now that she was back in a Greek-speaking land, she discovered that she was still capable of singing. And she sang her poems into a tape-recorder and they flew high enough to break the sound-barrier of her self-exile and they even reached the receptive ears of Henry Miller. And the day she received the first of Miller's many enthusiastic letters of encouragement, she danced in the sea of Famagusta, with a red rose in her hair; as happily as she had danced ten years ago; and almost as carefree as the young girl she'd been back then. And she treasured those generous letters, all her life.

Nevertheless, even at the zenith of ecstasy in her tiny garden by the Sea, Daedala was not completely free from her anguish caused by the Minotaur's cruel absence. Even when she recalled the most memorable images of Cyprus, from the most magical places – such as Platres, with its ruby-coloured cherry-trees nestling among the tall plane-trees; and the Troodos Mountains, with their babbling brooks full of sparkling trout; and the Monastery of Mahairas, with its sky-blue arches full of swarms of swallows fluttering back and forth; and Fontana Amorosa, with its crystalline waters, where Aphrodite and Adonis could still be seen bathing until the present day – despite all these life-giving images, Daedala still felt suffocated by the Minotaur's absence and above all, by his ambivalence (although recently, reliable “rumours” had reached Daedala's ears that he'd found another Danish woman and a new life in Copenhagen).

Apparently, the Minotaur's ambivalence had taken a new “direction”. One way or the other, Daedala had to find the truth and put a definitive end to the lingering Limbo, where she could no longer breathe. So she abandoned her garden in Famagusta and moved to the claustrophobic centre of Nicosia. But as usually happened when she acted out of blind despair, she only rushed straight into another impasse. To make matters worse, now that her scholarship for the traditional Greek and Cypriot Ballads was finished, she had to find a job, and what she found was certainly not what she would have dreamed of. Not as bad as sweeping floors in England, but still a long long way from her former dream of creating an Irish Theatre in Famagusta.

Instead, she found herself working eight hours a day in a second-rate, pseudo-“Leftist” bookshop in Nicosia, where she'd been hired to promote third-rate “books” and to correct a zillion typographical errors in mediocre texts, written for the sole purpose of promoting the sales! Needless to add, Daedala's energy was drained away by this silly sort of “work”. She felt as hypocritical as Dickens’ Uriah Heep, as she crept in and out of the Big Boss’ office with a
servile smile and endless piles of useless files, littered with “typos”, which had to be corrected before the end of the working day. By the time she abandoned this job for something better, Daedala had begun to feel like a typographical error herself, in urgent need of being corrected, or actually erased! And worst of all, she felt robbed of her ability to dream. How could anybody dream, when compelled to “Rise and Shine!”, every single day, eight hours per day, day in day out, forced to play the role of a zombie, in the name of earning the daily wages of Security that most dangerous oxymoron for total Insecurity of the soul.

The Cyprus Daedala had loved so deeply a decade ago, just after Cypriot Independence had been won, this same Cyprus was now in danger of dwindling into a state of well-fed non-entity. Nevertheless, on the brink of giving into such mediocrity and almost ready to compromise (something she'd never done, even in her glummiest moments), Daedala was suddenly jolted out of her “security”: that comfortably secure – but oh so boring – Routine.
The Minotaur’s Ambivalent Arrival in Cyprus

Just when Daedala had finally become reconciled to being divorced – definitively separated from the Minotaur, he performed an unforeseeable salto mortale. Out of the blue, he arrived in Cyprus. In keeping with his chronic ambivalence, he contradicted everything he’d told her about never-ever coming back to her, and on one of those halcyon days near the end of January, there he was: on Daedala’s humble doorstep in Nicosia. A feat in itself! As a persona non grata for the Junta officials in Greece, the Minotaur was obliged to avoid any contact with Athens, and had to follow a weird itinerary. Unable to afford an airplane ticket direct from Copenhagen, he tried to arrange a steamboat ticket from southern Turkey – from the port of Adana to the port of Kyrenia in northern Cyprus – until (at the very last moment) the Turkish authorities informed him that this particular steamboat would not be sailing until the end of May! (viz., for the next four months, it was impossible to reach Cyprus at all). So it was quite a miracle that he arrived at all.

Despite the surprise and the first fleeting delight of being together again, the undeniable truth of the new situation became clear at once. This was to be the worst interlude of all for Daedala and the Minotaur. Afterwards, she realized that although his act of returning to her proved his love for her, nevertheless he himself was so torn in opposite directions, that even when he tried to embrace her, he could not resist sending passionate letters to the other woman – the Danish woman – the insatiable woman – with his own words: “I love you – I love you – I love you” repeated umpteen times in indelible ink.

Good God, how could Daedala fail to feel hostile? But this was only part of Daedala’s hostility. Not just a case of female jealousy. That would be banal! Her very soul was in danger. The hostile situation improved for a month or two, when the Minotaur was commissioned to make the décor and costumes (and even the hand painted masks) for a Cypriot performance of Menander’s post-Aristophanic Comedy, “Samia”. Although far from feeling in the mood for Comedy, the Minotaur did a marvellous job of disguising his personal dilemma. (Daedala had always admired the Minotaur’s rare ability to
transcend his personal dilemmas through his own creative work.) His unique contribution to the Cypriot Theatre was highly acclaimed.

Another event also alleviated the general gloominess of the Minotaur’s sojourn in Cyprus: the two-month visit of his Mother (Pasiphae, according to the Myth: in mythical truth, Galatea). In the course of those two months – aside from several visits to her idol, the Leader of Cyprus, whose friendship she had cherished when he was a mere deacon in Athens, in the church of Saint Eirini, near her home, Galatea brought a touch of Family tranquillity to the otherwise troubled atmosphere between her son and Daedala. The loving care of Galatea – her delicious Asia Minor cooking with its prime ingredient being Love – her exquisite embroideries, which she loved to create every evening – along with her hand-knitted scarves and gloves for all the Family – were a genuine blessing, both for the Minotaur and for Daedala.

But as soon as Galatea’s two-month ticket expired and she had to leave Cyprus, the atmosphere returned to where it had been before the Mother’s visit – unadulterated hostility. Endless months of hostile silence. Endless months of “aloneness” – despite living “together”. An endless unbridgeable chasm, with the Minotaur walking out of the front door and Daedala tiptoeing out of the back door. There could no longer be any hope for any form of co-existence – symbiosis the Ancient Greeks would have called it. Even at the worst moments – when “Amy’s Ark” was being destroyed by the Junta Scoundrels, there had been an element of symbiosis between the Minotaur and Daedala. They were not alone, in the middle of Nowhere. They had had the support of so many Greek Artists, and even though the Artists themselves were often divided among themselves, individually most of them had supported the aims of the Ark – Great Artists, such as Yannis Tsarouhis and Barba-Sotiris Spatharis, such as Manos Hadjidakis and Mikis Theodorakis, such as Odysseas Elytis and the Colossal Katsimbalis, as well as a select group of worldwide Artists had given their support and their vital presence, until the Junta seized power.

After the destruction of the Ark and the by and large humiliating experience of Exile, Daedala did not want to complain. She considered such grumbling petty. But she was so wounded by the lack of solidarity among most Greeks – even the noblest of the Greeks – that she could not help revealing her bitter disappointment to the Minotaur, when he suddenly appeared in Cyprus. In retrospect, she had to admit, that this bitterness of hers was one of the main reasons for the impossibility of symbiosis between herself and the Minotaur. Even the indisputable beauty of Cyprus could not transcend such an obstacle,
even when their wisest and most faithful friend – Tatiana Milliex – tried to bring them together again.

Not even Tatiana, with her own splendid gift as a writer, and above all, her deeply human sensitivity for other artists, could help them come back together again. But still, Tatiana persisted in taking them to their favourite places in Cyprus, in hopes of making them forget their sadness. Beautiful places like Akanthou, east of Kyrenia, with a huge red sun plunging into the Cilician Sea; and like Vavylas in the shadow of Lapithos, Daedala’s beloved village west of Kyrenia, where Tatiana sang: “Ai Yannis Makriyannis” at the top of her lungs and Daedala accompanied the song on pantomime drums and all three of them – Tatiana and Daedala and the Minotaur – drank a toast to the Pendadaktylos mountain-range.

On another occasion, Tatiana took them to her favourite place in Cyprus – Ayia Napa – south of Famagusta, where they also stopped near Daedala’s former shack and the Kalamies, before moving on to the Monastery which Seferis had particularly loved in Ayia Napa, with its famous toumbazhià-tree dropping its berries (plop-plop) into what sounded like water in a fountain; and high up on a hill the outline of the Dark Boy’s future atelier, in the golden sunlight, a perfect setting for any Artist’s workshop – only a stone’s throw from the Sea. But the day when Tatiana drove Daedala and the Minotaur to Ayia Napa, the sea facing Lebanon in the distance, was not the Famagustan translucent Sea. That day in Ayia Napa, there were wild whitecaps and the waves kept rolling in the wind, cascading past the secret cave where the Dark Boy had first fallen in love.

Nevertheless, wherever Tatiana took them, in hopes of helping them forget themselves, it was all in vain. Nothing was strong enough to wash away the poison of their bitterness. The disease went on spreading, deeper and deeper and deeper down, throughout Daedala’s viscera, until she thought the ceiling was about to collapse on her head. She truly believed she was going to die, her pulse was beating so fast. But two strangers put her in an ambulance, which rushed her to the Nicosia General Hospital just in time. And later that same day, after Tatiana had been told what had happened, once again – for the last time – she came to the rescue.

Daedala was still too weak to go anywhere outside, so Tatiana came home to her – bringing a book of poems by a consummately great Greek Poet, who was to play the most essential role in Daedala’s creative life henceforth. This particular poem was very long indeed and brought to life a very old woman – some two-hundred years old, as the Poet tells us in his Prologue. The image
of this heroine breathed life into Daedala and gave her the courage to go on living. Right there and then, she decided to translate as much as the Work of this wonderful Poet as she could into her mother tongue – English – and offer it to as many Readers as possible. Tatiana was so delighted that she decided to ask the Minotaur to take care of Daedala until she was strong enough to take care of herself. When he promised to do his best, Tatiana bade him and Daedala farewell – with the fervent wish that – some day in the foreseeable future, in better circumstances – they might still be able to remain together.

* * *

A few days later, Daedala and the Minotaur headed for Limassol, to board the good ship “Apollonia” yet once again. Their old friend, “Marabou”, was still aboard and still active as the best of wireless operators. The Mermaid painted by the Minotaur on another occasion was still in the same place on the wall. The seaweed was still concealed on the same page of Saint Jean Perse’s masterpiece, alongside James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. But now, the unhappy mood of the Minotaur and Daedala was oh so very different from the rare ebullience of their previous voyages aboard the “Apollonia”. Nothing could hide this change from “Marabou’s” poetically perceptive eyes. Before disembarking from this penultimate voyage with Kolyas Kavvadias, Daedala felt the need to show him the black-and-white drawing, which the Minotaur had given her the night before they left Cyprus together.

Even back then, Daedala felt in her bones that this would be “The End” of her story with the Minotaur. But after so many ups-and-downs of Fate, her Pythian powers of prophecy had perhaps deserted her. Anyway, after living alone through another November of No Hope, Daedala was on the verge of breaking down, when – just in time – her oldest and closest friend, Anthi – the valiant Anthi – with her hand outstretched in friendship, welcomed Daedala back to Greece.
“Marabou” Kavvadas, the poet, as well as wireless-operator of the S.S. “Apollonia”.

The Fourth of Ritsos’ “Eighteen Short Songs of the Bitter Motherland” – set to music by Mikis Theodorakis, and illustrated by the Minotaur.

The Minotaur’s frontispiece for Daedala’s first edition of her own prose-poems (published in Cyprus, in April 1972).
The Minotaur's black-and-white painting, foreshadowing the final explosion of a Man's and a Woman's Love.
SECTION SIX

LIBERATION
Daedala Finds Temporary Refuge in Dora Stratou’s “Labyrinth”

Meanwhile, a few months before this absolutely “last” salto mortale, Daedala found refuge in Dora Stratou’s museum of a mansion. She arrived with only a few of her own possessions, because she’d left all of her books and almost all her manuscripts in Nicosia. (What a pity for her English-language translations of Nikos Politis’ *Collection of Demotic Greek Ballads*, all of which were destroyed by the Turkish Invasion in July 1974). Before she left Cyprus, she’d made the mistake of deciding to leave all her most precious things there. And now, she made another mistake: she kept postponing the journey to Cyprus for the purpose of collecting them. She was afraid of repeating another wrong decision, as when she’d abandoned the oasis in Famagusta for the wasteland in Nicosia. Later on, she again realized her mistake. But how could anyone have foreseen the tragedy which Turkey was preparing at that time?

For the time being, Daedala was satisfied that she’d found refuge and interesting work with Dora Stratou, who had collected a wide variety of material from the time-honoured Greek Vases and other kinds of Ancient Greek Art, in order to document her theory that the traditional Greek dances – as they are still danced nowadays – have their roots in Ancient Greece. This viewpoint – based on the continuity of Greek civilization through the centuries – coincided with Daedala’s research. Already in the mid-1960’s, she had translated the original form of Stratou’s book and found a title which the author liked enormously for her life work on the Greek Traditional Dances: “Our Living Link with Antiquity”.

In the case of Dora Stratou, there was also another “link” with Daedala, whose first image of that incredibly vibrant Great Lady, Madame Stratou, remained unforgettable. In her magnificent salon – in the very centre of her “Living Museum” – in company with a huge reproduction of Picasso’s best-known portrait of Don Quixote. Inasmuch as the latter happened to be Daedala’s almost favourite Hero, and she almost always took this same portrait with her – wherever she traveled in her own quixotic journeys (needless to say, only in a tiny postcard-sized “reproduction”) – she hoped, from the very first moment of their collaboration that they would ultimately find themselves on the same “wave-length”.
And now, after ten years, when Daedala had come back to Greece – but like a shadow of her old self, without a drop of willpower – Dora Stratou decided to “force” her into re-discovering her former vitality. So she took Daedala literally under her own protection and offered her a room on the top floor of her three-storey ancient “Museum”, in the heart of Old Plaka. A glorious ambience, where Madame Stratou had collected all the superb costumes, which she’d discovered in the most remote corners of Greece. Although the room was quite small and certainly “had seen better days!”, Daedala fully appreciated the privilege of living there, surrounded by all those marvellous costumes. Furthermore, this room was quite near her own “Ark”, and still closer to the last “home” of her beloved 80-year-old “Barba”-Sotiris Spatharis, after he’d moved from his courtyard in Kifissia. And the most important thing of all, it was literally nextdoor to the home of Anthi, who – like a human version of the Rock of Gibraltar – was standing by her uprooted friend – Daedala – trying to persuade her to remain in Greece.

As for the slightly impoverished environment of the room, Daedala was an experienced “decorator” of poverty. All these years of Exile, with so many moves from so many rooms, she’d managed to metamorphose even the poorest room into a nice little palace: with a few brightly coloured scarves and covers (in her own style of “luxuriously-rag-bag-items”, (or as she called it in Greek, thanks to the Greeks’ far more sophisticated compound words: “πολυτελοκουρελαρία”! And then, after sticking several posters of Matisse on the walls (even in the bathroom), she’d chosen her favourite posters by her favourite painter (except for the Minotaur!) – Chagall – and as the finishing touch, she always added a bunch of flowers (stolen, of course; but only from rich people’s gardens). And now that she’d be working for Madame Stratou, Daedala hoped to be able to buy a few flowers from the old grandfather, who used to sit every Saturday noon, outside the iron-grille gate of Stratou’s Museum. From his basket of flowers, Daedala always chose the bright red anemones, because they reminded her of the beautiful song – “My Dear Little Anemone” – which the Minotaur had written for her, in better days, when the best Greek Radio Station played it every other night, before the Junta ruined everything.

Anyway, throughout the year of living there, Daedala also kept company with the two night-watchmen, whom Madame Stratou had chosen to protect her costumes and other traditional treasures, from possible burglars. This detail added a note of suspense to Daedala’s stay there – especially, when she came back from the Theatre after midnight, in the dark. But this seemed a piddling detail, in comparison with the far more dangerous years of Exile. And in any case, the old-night watchman, from the far-away island of Imbros, was
always awake until sunrise, and would probably be waiting up for her, with a cup of hot mountain-tea. Yes indeed, Daedala loved to talk for hours with this old man, and he also enjoyed teaching her rare words from his own Imbrian vocabulary.

So there were no real problems in that first year of collaborating with Madame Stratou for her new Book, except that it had reached the proportions of a genuine Magnum Opus. Furthermore, it was supposed to be translated into English as soon as possible and such deadlines tended to put extra pressure on any conscientious translator – and Daedala was hyper-conscientious! Especially when a highly complicated Book was at stake, full of complex details about the so-called “Labyrinth Dance” (also known as “Theseus’ Dance”). Madame Stratou considered this as the essential root of all subsequent Greek dances and had spent years in proving it. Ordinarily this theory would have been in perfect harmony with Daedala, who also believed in the predominant role of the Cretan Labyrinth for Greek History. Why else would she have written so much about the Minotaur and the female incarnation of Daedalos?

However, the “poetic” approach of Daedala to this fascinating theme was very different from Madame Stratou’s scholarly style of writing about the Labyrinth. And inevitably, several arguments arose between her and Daedala, about the latter’s style of translating the Magnum Opus. Despite Daedala’s gratitude for Dora Stratou’s assistance when she first returned to Athens, she could not refrain from expressing her objections to being told how to write! After all, Madame Stratou’s efforts to rouse Daedala’s former vitality also roused her “spirit of contradiction” towards any interlocutor with whom she disagreed! Alas, this ruined the possibility of fruitful collaboration. Dora Stratou was far too polite to ask Daedala to leave – and Daedala was far too proud to take advantage of the situation, so she started looking for somewhere else to stay, at least until the last salto mortale of the Minotaur – namely the Epilogue he had planned for April in Paris, if it actually did take place. Until that final “Epilogue” would be written, she began translating the “Eighteen Short Songs of the Bitter Motherland”. But when she reached the Eighteenth – especially the verse about the “strap on the nape of our neck” and the Greek who refuses “to bow down” – she wondered what was going to happen in Paris?

(Nota Bene: Perhaps that “Epilogue” would never have been “written” if the Greek Poet had not appeared on the scene – the Poet who became a guardian angel for Daedala)
The Poet of “Romiosyni” Liberates Daedala

Maybe Daedala would have postponed asking the Poet for their first encounter, if the following chance event had not taken place:

One fine day (soon after Daedala’s return to Greece) – she was at the desk in Madame Stratou’s office when Tsarouhis appeared, out of the blue. He needed to copy some details from one of the rarest costumes in Dora Stratou’s Collection, and with his habitual precision, he was concentrating on making a series of detailed drawings. As soon as he completed them, he turned his head and caught sight of Daedala. Spontaneous, as usual, he invited her to join him for a walk outside the office.

But Daedala wanted to show him her room first. Tsarouhis was not at all impressed with her tiny nook and when she asked him what had happened to his great painting of Prometheus, which he’d made for the ceiling of her “Ark”, he answered that he would gladly have given “Prometheus Bound” back to her, if she were living in a more appropriate ambience! Of course, Daedala was disappointed (and even more so, when she learned that – along with certain other treasures from the “Ark” – Prometheus had sprouted wings and vanished into Outer Space! Anyway, after Tsarouhis had gone to the trouble of asking Madame Stratou’s “permission” to take her translator out for the day, Daedala did her best to be cheerful and that evening, Tsarouhis wrote to the Minotaur in Paris to tell him they’d enjoyed a very happy afternoon together.

At the start of this happy encounter, Daedala had mentioned to Tsarouhis that she was supposed to confirm a rendez-vous with a very great Poet (unless it was postponed). Immediately, Tsarouhis expressed his wish to make a little painting for Daedala to give the Poet. She was thrilled and Tsarouhis hurried off to his brother Mario’s nearby office, where he could choose his colours and work in peace. At the last minute, he decided to let Daedala be there as well, as long as she promised not to speak! So she had the joy of watching this marvellous painter prepare such a gift for the Poet, whom she was soon to confront for the first time. What more could Daedala desire? Several years afterwards, Tsarouhis offered the Poet another painting: his magnificent large portrait of Saint Sebastian. (When Daedala first saw that painting in the Poet’s
home, she knelt down in awe.) But the far smaller painting was also beautiful: one of Tsarouhis’ most heaven-sent Angels, accompanied by a poem he himself wrote for the occasion. By the end of that winter’s afternoon in Athens, the painting was ready. As Daedala observed the great Artist so absorbed in completing his work, she took courage for her imminent encounter with the Poet of Romiosyni. Thanks to the “Open Sesame” from Tsarouhis’ Angel, now she felt sure that the encounter would go well.

However, there was also another equally important “Open Sesame”: the presence of a human being whom the Poet trusted absolutely – Daedala’s best friend, Anthi. Anthi, the brave idealist, who was also practical and who had thought of a perfect way to broadcast militant anti-Junta messages, in the very centre of Athens, at the nadir of the Colonels’ tyranny – this same Anthi, who without a word of complaint, was imprisoned in isolation, in a cell flooded with ice-cold water up to her knees, without ever betraying the names of her comrades. Anthi, who never betrayed anyone; with this same Anthi, Daedala made her first visit to the Poet of Romiosyni. And that night, almost the whole conversation was between only Anthi and the Poet. Daedala remained silent, listening, while the other two recalled their mutual friends, who were in prison for their beliefs.

At a certain moment – after the traditional bitter-orange sweet, which the Poet always offered his guests (his own favourite sweet, which his wife Falitsa sent him from Samos every winter), he rushed into the other room and brought back an armful of sketch-books with hundreds of drawings he had made of his fellow-prisoners on various exile-islands. All the remaining hours of this first visit were devoted to the topic of the health of Anthi’s and the Poet’s friends. When the visit ended, it was 3:00 a.m. And the Poet’s characteristic words were:

“Everything depends on the sequel.”

In the course of this visit, Daedala was impressed by the human kindness of the Poet. Of course, she realized that the presence of Anthi had played the main role for this impression. Nevertheless, the “sequel” suggested the same kindness – for everyone (even for herself, although he had just met her). Furthermore, Daedala had the same impression from the first letter, which the Poet has sent her two months before the first visit. In that exceptionally cordial letter, the Poet had given Daedala his blessing to translate his immensely long poem about the 200-year-old Heroine, (the very poem, which Tatiana had entrusted to Daedala on that critical night in Cyprus.) This poem was to be
the first of many long works, which Daedala was destined to translate into English, including the 9-volume “Iconostasis of Anonymous Saints”. His first letter was so human that it gave Daedala the hope of talking with him face to face in Greece. With the generosity of a truly great human being, he had even expressed what he himself called “his admiration” for Daedala’s own poem, entitled “Birth”.

Such unexpectedly human words gave her the courage to discuss other things with the Poet of Romiosyni, not only Work. To begin with, when Daedala visited him – thenceforth, always alone – she asked him:

“To whom do I belong?”

And with infinite patience, the Poet answered that no human being can belong to anyone else. This gentle, but strict dialogue with the Poet was the most essential step towards freeing Daedala from the omnipotent influence of the Minotaur on her life. Exactly at this point in time, Daedala began writing a series of poems – entitled “Eleven Sea Stones for Yannis Ritsos” – where she implored the Poet of Romiosyni to help her:

“Can you, the Poet of naked sea-stones, lead me beyond the false impasse of “Guilt” for betraying another Man?”

But the Poet always answered:

“It is not for me to tell you Soon, you yourself will understand.”

In the course of the long cold winter of 1973, the human contact with the Poet kept Daedala alive. In the absolute void where she had fallen – with the imminent separation from the Minotaur – she had begun slowly-slowly weaving a delicate thread binding her imperceptibly with the soul of the Poet. A discreet feeling, never expressed in words, and yet, so intense that it held her up high and kept her from sinking into the abyss of an unloved woman:
“Ai-Yiannis, you are here with me now
in the shade of these fragrant oleanders
in this garden full of
white roses
white honeysuckle
white jasmine
and oh these cicadas zizz-zizzing
in the sizzling heat of high noon
while I lie upon my sea-blue sheets
and dream
you are with me even now”

However far Daedala traveled, she could never forget the El Grecoan expression of his eyes. He was present – everywhere, every moment present – in particular, in the element she loved more than all the other elements of Nature – the Sea. Thenceforth, she began searching for Sea-Stones, even from the most distant islands of the Aegean, bringing them back to him:

“And the further I ran, the closer he came
Every time I dipped my hand in the sea
The stone-pregnant sea
the most generous sea
Begging the Sea to give me its best stone
for the Poet to
re-create”

To supplement these Sea-Stones, the Poet had also found little pieces of wood (which he himself called “roots”), and even fragments made out of “bone”, stranded on the seashore. Out of such materials, he had made the exquisite “statuette”, which Daedala had chosen for the cover of her book dedicated to him:

“Before his delicate fingers give form to
a Kore born out of stone
Kore staring shyly down at the Sea
with her tresses held high against the wind
little Kore ripe for
Eros”
Daedala loved this tiny statue for its absolute purity and she placed it near her other talisman – the painting of “Europa and the Minoan Bull”, which the Minotaur had given her when their own eros had just begun. After the upheaval of all these years, Daedala longed to re-discover her own purity. Perhaps then, she would find peace. Nevertheless, alas for Daedala, a terrifying shadow of self-destruction still tormented her:

“Out of the last awful entrance to Hell
I go on rushing like a wild atom-bomb
Breaking the barrier of my barren body
Screaming my futile frustration
Burning my own singed wings
Erupting with volcanic explosions
Exploding in the first implacable cracks
    of Daybreak”

Thanks to his gentle wisdom, the Poet of Romiosyni was the only human being capable of transforming a dangerous fire into something creative. By “taming” the destructive elements, without completely getting rid of them, he alone could lead her out of the impasse of self-destruction, “out into the open Sea”, where she would at last be free to sing, thanks to the Poet’s most precious gift of all: self-awareness.

Nevertheless, before this final stage of Daedala’s liberation, she would have to go through her “last” confrontation with the Minotaur in Paris – where “once-upon-a-time”, the couple had truly lived together. But what Daedala really feared was that after Paris, she might not have the strength to return to Greece – alone, without the Minotaur. Precisely, at this critical point, the Poet acted as a magnet for Daedala. To free her from the Minotaur’s influence, the Poet of Romiosyni convinced her to face the truth in Paris and then come back to Greece:

“Through the four lingering days on the train
he remained every instant vibrating inside her
through the vermilion Sun rising outside Ljubliana
through the temptress Impasse-des-Deux-Anges
    in the empress of cities
his fragmented image a benevolent earthquake
magnet of magnets
dragging her back to the land where she could stop submerging herself carrying her back to the land where she longed to cast her roots forever

Her eyes wide open no longer pinpointed on Guilt”

When Daedala finally reached Paris, after the long long journey by train, from Athens all the way to the other end of Europe – her spirit was already back in Greece. Throughout the wavering dark days in Paris, the light cast by the Poet’s soul continued to shine for Daedala, like a bright beacon in the night.
Paris Finale (i)
From the Windy Station to the Legendary Bookshop

South Station – April in Paris – The Penultimate Year of the Junta in Greece. The Minotaur waiting for Daedala’s arrival at the Parisian Railway Station of the South Wind. But so different from twelve years ago, when he’d also waited for her, back then at the beginning of their life together. This time, Daedala arrived exactly on time (instead of ten days late), and instead of the promising South Wind, she found only an atmosphere colder than the North Pole, (when the Minotaur “welcomed” her with a hasty frozen “kiss” on her left cheek). Without even looking at her, he took her straight to his tiny room in the neighbourhood of Beaumarchais. From the very start, they couldn’t bear seeing one another, face to face, and rushed out immediately.

An old friend of the Minotaur from the days of the Nazi Occupation in Greece, happened to be staying fairly close to his room. One of the many Greek Exiles living in Paris since the early days of the Colonels’ coup, he was a brilliant political analyst and a militant fighter for his own political ideas. But he had the sad problem of quite a few idealists condemned to Exile. Whereas he gave great support to other human beings and believed deeply in the need for Brotherhood to help the Poor – (he even wept whenever he saw other people’s children begging for a crust of bread), nevertheless he had remained so far away from his own Family that he became incapable of giving moral support to his own children. His brave wife was a close friend of Daedala’s and before setting out for Paris, Daedala promised to take a red rose and a message to the exiled Greek, that his Family in Athens longed for his return to Greece. Inasmuch as he was also such a loyal friend of the Minotaur’s, Daedala suggested they should both go to visit him – together – that very day. And unexpectedly, the Minotaur agreed.

So, around noontime of Daedala’s first day in Paris, they took the Metro in the direction of Notre Dame, where the Minotaur had visited his friend recently. Since there was no telephone where he lived, they had to risk not finding him at home. Anyway, Daedala took responsibility for finding a bright red rose from a flower-vendor near the Seine and hoped for the best. Luckily,
he was home. After handing him the flower and telling him his wife’s message, she whispered a few words to the Minotaur and luckily, again he agreed to invite his friend to come with them for lunch in his Beaumarchais room.

When they got back there, Daedala asked the friend to help her make a more human atmosphere and the Minotaur, relieved by the errand of going out again, rushed to the neighbourhood shop, where the Yugoslav grocer always gave him credit to buy home-made delicacies. For his old friend in Paris, the Minotaur chose three portions of paella, and a large slice of cheese, as well as an extra-long loaf of hot bread from the next-door bakery. Everything was ready for all of them to enjoy the feast and relax.

But suddenly, Daedala spoiled the pleasant atmosphere, by suggesting to the friend that they all drink a toast to his Family. In a twinkling, the cordial mood was gone. The two men frowned and before the friend went back home in a huff, they talked only about politics. Then after he’d gone, the Minotaur shouted at Daedala:

“When did you have to say all that nonsense about making a toast? Do you always enjoy saying the wrong thing at the wrong moment?”

As usual, one blunder led to another blunder, and Daedala shouted back:

“For God’s sake, will you please talk more kindly? I can’t stand your cruelty!”

(The same words she’d been repeating in all her recent letters.) At that point, the Minotaur withdrew to another planet, refused to answer, and shut his mouth tighter than a clam, for the rest of the day.

Daedala’s anxious reactions grew worse and worse. However, the Minotaur – as always contradictory – had prepared a pleasant surprise for her: he had always appreciated her prose-poem about the assassination of Grigoris Lambrakis. And when he knew for sure that Daedala would be visiting him in April or May, he had asked Theodorakis’ permission to use some of the music from Brendan Behan’s “Hostage”, for a recording of Daedala’s text. (In particular, the song for “The Laughing Boy”, which was perfect for the story of the Greek hero, Grigoris Lambrakis as well as for Behan’s Irish hero, Michael Collins. Both heroes had given their lives for their beliefs). Mikis was
favourably impressed by that recording of Daedala’s poem, accompanied by his own music and gave his permission at once. Of course, Daedala was grateful for the Minotaur’s interest. Grateful and pleased. However, when she listened to her own words, ten years afterwards, she wondered how all that passion had disappeared? At the hour when Grigoris Lambrakis was assassinated, she had stayed up all night, like thousands of other Greeks. And after the casket arrived in Athens, another five nights.

For this, the Minotaur had been magnanimous in protecting her best interests. But on another “occasion”, quite the contrary. Encouraged by Henry Miller’s words about her first book, Daedala had decided to visit the legendary bookshop, known as “Shakespeare and Company”, which had been going strong ever since Sylvia Beech had published James Joyce’s “Ulysses”. As an English-language bookshop in the very heart of Paris, near Notre Dame and the open-air kiosks full of rare books, “Shakespeare and Company” had wound up in the hands of a quixotic character by the name of Mister Whitman. Thanks to the generous praise of Henry Miller, he immediately expressed interest in Daedala’s writing. (The walls of his bookshop were full of Miller’s and Anais Nin’s photographs, as well as other writers of the 1930’s – including Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Gertrude Stein). In such brilliant surroundings, Mister Whitman spontaneously offered Daedala the chance of reading her poetry on her birthday, early in May.

She was so enthusiastic she couldn’t conceal her delight from the Minotaur. Mister Whitman had also offered a generous sum of money for a few copies of Daedala’s book. In fact, that’s exactly when the trouble started! As soon as the Minotaur realized that his Wife had accepted money from a stranger, he was furious. Then, Mister Whitman got furious! In the end, the Minotaur spent the entire sum on the “Collected Works of Shakespeare”. And poor Mister Whitman – instead of making his generous gesture – was obliged by an egocentric Greek Husband to take back his gift! As for Daedala, she was speechless and stamped out of “Shakespeare and Company”, without looking back. And far worse, she lost the unique opportunity of presenting her poems in the very same bookshop where James Joyce had launched Ulysses.
Paris Finale (ii)
From Tsarouhis’ Mayday Celebration to the “Salon”
for the Parisian Intelligentsia

As Daedala’s departure from Paris approached, even the most harmless events started to end with increasingly violent quarrels. Such as the evening when a group of young foreign students presented a play by Hikmet, for a University audience of other youngsters. (Admittedly, a *sui generis* “play”, in a pitch-dark “detention-ward”, where a Turkish Tyrant kept his Captives). Anyway, after this odd performance, the students had organized a Concert with Theodorakis’ *Canto General* and naturally, Daedala wanted to hear it in its completed final form. However, the Minotaur insisted on leaving and a typical argument took place.

( By now, the following couplet applied:

“*East is East, and West is West
Never the twain shall meet!*”)

But this time, Daedala absolutely refused to leave and the Minotaur departed in a rage.

So, the inevitable problem arose: the rebellious young lady had no way to get home from the dangerous neighbourhood, where Hikmet’s play and Mikis’ music were being presented. After the usual delays backstage, it was almost daybreak when the youngsters were able to take Daedala “home”. Now, she herself began to be alarmed. After all, the Minotaur would be quite right to worry about probable dangers and he had already expressed his wrath for Daedala’s “rebellion”, at a normal hour – not six in the morning. When she finally arrived on his doorstep, at 7:00 a.m., he scolded her for her “vile behaviour” and cancelled her invitation to the “Jardin de Théophile”, where he had just been commissioned to paint a huge mural* and where all the most elegant Parisian Connoisseurs were invited.

* After the return of the Greek Exiles to Greece, (July 24th 1974) this historic mural was brought back to Greece, auctioned by Christies and acquired by the Greek Parliament, where it is now on permanent exhibition.
The Minotaur’s punishment for Daedala’s “rebellion” lasted almost until the end of her “visit” to Paris, including the miserable Greek Easter “celebration” at the country “home” of a second-rate Greek “Artist”, who seemed to be more suited for a factory-owner from Texas. Nevertheless, thank the Lord, three days after that desecration of Greek Easter, Daedala had one last chance to enjoy a genuine Greek Mayday, (where the Minotaur refused to go with Daedala, despite the enticing prospect of finding his first Mentor there). In vain, Daedala tried to persuade the Minotaur – “for old times sake” – to accompany her to the village (two hours away from Paris), where Tsarouhis had chosen to live in the countryside, free of all the tempting distractions in Paris. But when she realized that the Minotaur could not be persuaded, she went to her favourite flower-vendor in Beaumarchais, chose a blue-and-white bouquet, and set off for the train-station, where she caught the next train to visit Tsarouhis in a thoroughly unfamiliar décor.

However, even in this unknown, “foreign” village, where Tsarouhis had chosen to live in a crumbling, two-hundred-year-old ex-mansion (with all the normal plumbing fixtures, etcetera, more than 70 metres from the front door), even here, this most cultivated of the Greeks had succeeded in creating a truly Greek atmosphere, thanks to his paintings, which reflected the quintessence of Greece. On the other hand, as far as haute Cuisine was concerned, his kitchen produced only Gallic delicacies – ranging from odoriferous camembert to vin Rosé d’ Anjou. Yes indeed, the whole kitchen was also fragrant with French scents of Bread, (filled with almonds and walnuts and baked by Tsarouhis’ favourite French model – Dominique), assisted by the painter’s favourite Italian model, who also posed for the Master’s portraits and had played the role of the young painter in Pasolini’s “Theorem”. As the finishing touch: in the middle of the ancient wooden table – decorated with other delicious Gallic titbits – stood a hand-painted vase for the classic Mayday bouquet of muguets-des-bois lilies of the valley, instead of Greek camomile buds and cyclamens. But despite all these non-Greek details, Greece was indelibly present.

And even more vividly present, when the voice of Dallaras was heard, singing those most memorable songs by Caldaras on the “Asia Minor” record. At that moment, Dallaras’ voice covered every other sound. In absolute silence, all of Tsarouhis’ guests just sat there, with bated breath, listening to the poignant refrain:

“On which stone, in which soil, can you plant your roots now?"
To be a Refugee is more bitter than death itself.

The everlasting cry for Greece. As though hypnotized, Daedala listened with her eyes focussed only on Tsarouhis. She listened, as she'd never listened before. Listening, as if an eternal voice was trying to carry her back to her own roots. And then, Daedala suddenly burst into tears – followed by uncontrollable sobs – and she knew it was time for her to go back to her only homeland – for now and for ever more –

Greece.

* * *

Nevertheless, there was still one last scene, awaiting her, due to the ineffably contradictory nature of both the Minotaur and Daedala. Exactly on the eve of Daedala’s return to Greece, a Gala Evening had been organized by a group of Neo-Greek Snobs, in honour of a celebrated French specimen of the so-called “Intelligentsia”. For some inexplicable reason, the Minotaur insisted that Daedala be invited, instead of banned. However, when she arrived at the door of the glittering “vips”, she was dismayed by all the fake phrases of all the pseudo-“Intellectuals”. And even worse, the Minotaur refused to say even a word to her. After thirty seconds, she knew she could not stand another minute, and she burst into one of her bold philippics against whatever she considered “pseudo”. Silence invaded the elegant salon. Then, the Minotaur bellowed, shouting his own philippic, which must have been heard all the way to the Labyrinth in Knossos, ending with the words:

“Go back to Greece, you wretched Ghost of a Ghost! Go back and be damned!”

Daedala almost fainted. But in order not to weep in front of all those Neo-Greek Snobs, she started to “laugh” – like the “Laughing Boy”, on his way to the gallows. She realized there could be no worse curse than the words the Minotaur had just bellowed. But she struggled to convince herself that – at least, now, (although unbearably wounded) she would, at long last, be liberated from that Bitter Void of Vacillation.

* * *

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Dora Stratou was never afraid of the Junta’s Police Force.

A traditional Dance in a distant village of the Greek countryside.

Two of the most experienced dancers in Dora Stratou’s Folk Dance Theatre.

The Minotaur's Frontispiece for this book expresses his feelings about the couple's final separation.
SECTION SEVEN

RE-PATRIATION
More than a year later, Greece herself came out of her seven-year Limbo. July 1974 and all of a sudden, all the “Exiles” were returning to Athens. Tintinabulations of joy, but in the end, ephemeral as fireworks. Paradoxically, the most disappointing part of the seven-year Junta was the Return. Yes, after seven bitter years of wandering like the proverbial tinker, Daedala had indeed returned to Greece – but a Greece without even the glimmer of a spontaneous smile, a Greece cancer-ridden with anxiety and hypocrisy and self-interest. The intensely creative land Daedala had loved so deeply, before the Junta, was now, for the most part, submerged in an atmosphere of glum compromise. Greece, bereft of her smile was as glum as the Sea bereft of water.

As for her erstwhile dream of resurrecting her little theatre – a dream which had kept her alive throughout the worst moments of the Junta – by the time when Daedala finally returned to Greece, it was too late. All her dreams for her own “Ark” had turned to dust. Deprived of the slightest hope of reviving her own theatre, now Daedala had to take refuge in other people’s Theatres. First and foremost, as a member of the Chorus in Tsarouhis’ version of Euripides’ *Trojan Women*. For one whole month, Daedala trudged uphill to Tsarouhis’ outdoor theatre and donned the ragged black garments he had designed for all the women of the Chorus. As soon as Daedala joined the group of anonymous women, who were about to be shoved onstage by barbarous soldiers, she was mesmerized, as if taking part in a ritual. (As Tsarouhis remarked, she was particularly able to re-live the upheaval of the Cypriot Tragedy, for she had actually experienced it.)

In his version of Euripides’ masterpiece, Tsarouhis had achieved what only a truly great artist can achieve: he had made a universally understandable story out of a complex web of heterogeneous material. A magnificent vision, magnificent in its apparent “simplicity”, which he had created, despite a few bizarre details. (For example, Menelaos dressed as a modern Admiral of the Greek Fleet, attended by six typically Tsarouhian present-day sailors straight out of his paintings). Also: despite the costume of Helen of Troy, La Belle
Hélène, who looked as if she had just stepped out of *a fin de siècle* Fashion Magazine, with a huge floppy hat and an incongruous French song, in the style of Mistinguette, playing in the background. Despite these anachronistic details, the *Trojan Women*, according to Tsarouhis, emerged as a tremendously powerful condemnation of War and an eloquent protest against any sort of “mercenaries” hired to destroy an ancient civilisation.

At the very outset of every performance, a trumpet-call was heard, imposing silence on even the most flibbertigibbet gossips in the audience. From the very start, an electrifying atmosphere was established by those last notes resounding from the trumpet. Immediately afterwards, six tough Military Policemen harassed the women of the Chorus, who then fell to the ground or crouched in a corner to avoid further blows. Laden with their tattered bundles, the women had become refugees, stoically waiting to hear what lay in store for their City. No matter if this City was Troy itself, (in 1200 B.C., or 1922 A.D. Smyrna burning in the Asia Minor Catastrophe, or Cyprus in 1974). The Disasters were the same. When the stentorian voice of Sappho Notara began to resound, as though from the depths of a bottomless cavern, her anguish became universal. With bated breath, the women of the Chorus listened to her reminiscences of the Glory that had once been the City’s. Did it matter whether that City was called Troy, or Smyrna or Kyrenia? Did it matter whether the act of devastation had taken place 3000 years ago or only three summers ago?

Every night of the performance, Daedala responded to the tragedy with the same startled horror, as when she first heard the news of the Cyprus Invasion in July 1974. Every night she wept for the ruination of what had once been so flourishing and beautiful. When the young lad Astyanax was carried in – the last hope of the Trojan Women – and the threnody commenced, was this any different from the threnody of the black-clad mothers of Cyprus mourning for their missing sons? And when loudspeakers transmitted the final crumbling of the walls of Troy with a deafening rumble, was the bewildered despair of Tsarouhis’ Trojan Women any different from the Cypriot women’s despair after the napalm-blasts in Paphos, which disfigured the face of the once “Sweete Land of Cyprus?”

If Tsarouhis had created only the décor for his *Trojan Women*, he still would have achieved an atmosphere of devastation. By what stroke of genius had he selected that crumbling wall, ready for demolition, near an empty lot, for the “scenery”. By what stroke of genius had he himself translated the ancient Greek text into such admirable modern Greek that a master of the language
lauded Tsarouhis’ translation, in a eulogistic Prologue? And above all, by what stroke of genius, had Tsarouhis chosen the grand old comédienne of the Greek Theatre – Sappho Notara – and succeeded in transforming her into a superb tragic actress, who captured the tragedy of a fallen City so poignantly?

Alas, at the end of this amazing month of continuous performances, the autumn rains began and after a temporary solution of staging his “Trojan Women” indoors, in the Municipal Theatre of Piraeus, Tsarouhis was forced to cancel the tour he had planned. For Daedala, this experience had become a kind of catharsis, a ritual enabling her to transcend the pain which the Turkish barbarians had inflicted on Cyprus. After returning from her sixth research-trip to Occupied Cyprus, Tsarouhis’ brother told her: “Yannis has been searching for you, per terra, per mare. He needs you for his “Trojan Women”. At first, Daedala had not realized what a precious experience this would be. But just before performances began, one evening when she was rushing to the dress-rehearsal and by chance, encountered the Minotaur outside the nearby Benaki Museum, she told him that Tsarouhis’ Trojan Women was one of the most inspiring events in her whole life.

Now that she would no longer have Tsarouhis’ vision for company, she would have to seek other outlets in other Theatres.
Joan Baez’ Songs of Freedom, Versus Other “Foreign” Protests

Now that Daedala had to search for other theatrical sources, she faced a dilemma. In 1975, she had seen and described another performance based on the Trojan Women, directed by Ellen Stewart, and performed by a well-known group of actors from the “La Mama Theater” of New York. But although Daedala appreciated their way of presenting the Polytechnion story of November 1973, as the historic “Prologue” for the Cyprus story of 1974, and also created a plausible “sequel” based on Euripides’ original tragedy – nevertheless, Daedala found “La Mama’s” performance far less moving than Tsarouhis’ vision.

Likewise, for the “Living Theater’s” two performances of two ancient Greek Tragedies. Although Daedala had lauded this Theater’s work, directed by Judith Malina and Julian Beck – (in 1969, in London, where they presented their brilliant “Frankenstein”), when the “Living Theater” came to Greece after the Junta, with a modernized version of Antigone (played by Judith Malina, in American blue jeans, etcetera) and also, Prometheus Bound, with Julian Beck (interpreting the Russian Revolution), in what seemed to Daedala an extremely intellectualized manner – she was thoroughly disappointed by their way of approaching Ancient Greek Tragedy. Perhaps her reaction was due to her doubts about their Americanized theatrical style. In any case, they were a zillion light-years far from Tsarouhis’ profoundly human and unmistakeably Greek vision.

And finally: as for the purely Greek event, directed by Yannis Xenakis and entitled “Polytope”, it was performed in 1978, with the whole landscape of Mycenae as the “décor” and with his own mysterious astral Music – without a single human actor appearing. Indeed, Agamemnon’s whole Family seemed to be present, while remaining invisible. An impressive tour de force. But needless to say, the human quality of Tsarouhis’ vision was missing.

Of all the other performances Daedala attended during these early Post-Junta years, the most memorable of all was Joan Baez’ Concert at the Lycabettus Theatre in 1980. Daedala’s following text, recorded the audience’s immediate reactions:
“Baez all alone with only her guitar, no electronic gimmicks no synthetic orchestrations
just herself and her guitar and her seven words of Greek
(including “Evharisto” and “Elevtheria” for Freedom)
and her own delicious sense of humour
(“You must be very far away, if you think I’m beautiful ...Better stay where you are!”)
and her magical contact with her audience
(“I don’t want to leave Greece thinking that the Greeks don’t like to sing:
Now, let’s all become one big happy family.”)
The throngs of youngsters perched high up on the crags of Lycabettus Hill, in the autumn of 1980, (unable to afford the exorbitant price of the tickets), responded by lighting a big torch reflecting the warmth of her own fire, celebrating her songs:
Don’t Cry for Me Argentina
Gracias a la Vida
Is there only sorrow in Cambodia?

Little by little, the youngsters started coming closer to the stage, until suddenly, Baez gestured to them – spontaneously – to come down next to her.
Pandemonium.
   Jubilation.
   Almost a stampede.
As for the other spectators and the Police protecting them, Baez turned her back on them and continued singing – unperturbed –, for the youngsters.
Baez filled the air and the heart and the soul of these young ones sitting in a circle around her
surrounding her in silent ecstasy
   oh, so quiet (not even the fluttering of their eyelids could be heard.)
Here in the first year of the Eighties, Joan Baez began to sing her homage to these “Children of the 80’s”:
“We are the children of the 80’s, haven’t we grown
We’re tender as a lotus and we’re tougher than stone
Our “age of innocence” is somewhere in the garden –
We’re well informed and we are wise
Please stop telling us lies
We know Afganistan’s invaded
We know Bolivia’s dictated
We know America’s inflated
And although we do not move in masses
We have lit our candles from your ashes”
As she stood there in their midst,
Baez became the ageless Mother of One-and-All,
the vibrant pulse beat
of the eternally younger generation.

Above all, her theme song for Freedom burned bright all night, as brightly
as the torch which her young ones had lit on the hilltop. By the time she came to
her last song,

“We shall Overcome”
when she reached the phrase “We are not afraid”, the first time she sang it, she
concluded with an ironical “Ha – ha”, suggesting just how afraid everybody is.

But for this particular audience, she didn’t want to end on a down-beat. No –
here in Greece, in the “Cradle of Freedom”, she repeated all the verses, which the
World had – and still has – such need of:

This song of songs, as Baez sang it for the Greek youngsters, included all the
verses with the leit motif, which became symbolic for Martin Luther King and all
the other great militants for Freedom, throughout the decade of the Sixties:

“Oh, deep in my heart,
I do believe
We shall overcome, some day”

“We shall all be free
We shall all be free
We shall all be free some day”

* * *

Yes indeed, Joan Baez’ message burned meteor-bright, like a shooting-
star in the Athenian night. And yet, sub specchie aeternitatis, it was only a
lightning-swift flash in the dark, and the ensuing darkness was all the darker
for it. In the years that were to follow – after the first authentic Concerts by the
greatest of the Greek singers, who were delighted to be free to sing again, the
general atmosphere of later “Concerts” declined, reduced to the mentality of
“Bread and Circus” spectacles – with the crass vulgarity of Neronic “Panem et
Circum”, in cinemascopic stadiums.

Throughout the first Post-Junta years, Daedala had struggled valiantly to
keep her spirit alive, against such tendencies. But all too soon, she felt just
about ready to give up, or – if her proverbial “imp of the perverse” caught hold
of her – ready to explode.
The Aftermath of Baez’ Freedom Concert and Daedala’s Last Visit to the Pythia

And explode she did – with Vesuvian wrath. Daedala was just that angry with the so-called “Organs of Public Order” for trying to interfere in Baez’ humane gesture of inviting the ticketless youngsters to keep her company on stage – not only angry, but outraged. For as she said, not even the worst scoundrels of the Junta would have acted so boorishly! In fact, Daedala expressed herself so forcibly, after joining a group of militant students who’d attended Baez’ Concert, that she was arrested by a policeman and taken to the nearest Police Station, where she promptly unleashed one of her most furious philippics against the Officer on Duty, who threatened to incarcerate her, if she didn’t shut up.

At this point, Daedala recalled the pseudo-”Court Martial” after she’d shouted “Down with the Dictatorship!” and she realized that she’d gone too far again and things might get “dangerous”. Now, that Daedala was about to be incarcerated, she had to think extra-quickly. In the nick of time, she thought of appealing to Manos Hadjidakis, for whom she had just completed the English translation for all of his and Gatsos’ Lyrics. Much to her surprise, Manos arrived in person (and unusually promptly), at the Police Station, where he guaranteed Daedala’s contribution to Greek Culture. Furthermore, to make his words even more convincing, he telephoned to the Minister of Culture, who at that time was the incredibly dynamic Melina Mercouri.

Needless to add – as soon as Melina herself telephoned to the obstreperous Police Officer, he changed his tune in a “jiffy”:

“Yes, yes, Madame Minister...Just as You wish...
We were about to let the young lady go...”

And of course, after adding several more words of flattery – for the Minister’s ears, of course – the local “Official for Public Order” opened the door for Daedala to walk out – “free”. A perfect example of one of the commonest Greek “vices”, namely the Thrasydeilia-Syndrome, or in plain English: the
bootlicking servility towards so-called “Superiors”, versus the bravado (often with a barrage of swaggering insults) for so-called “Inferiors”. (A vice, which although fairly common in various other nations, one would hardly expect to find in the “Birthplace of Democracy”.)

However, Daedala also lamented several other flaws in the Greek character, the worst of which she called “Anthropophagic Instincts”. From the days of her first sojourn in Greece, she’d been surprised to hear the verb “to eat” being used as a synonym for “to beat”! How often she’d heard the phrase: “So-and-so ate his rival!” (in the sense of beating his opponent), – in all sorts of contexts (ranging from artistic events and sports, to handsome rivals in matters-of-marriage). Alas, Daedala could not help reaching the conclusion that in Greece, there is one cannibalistic “habit” even more deleterious than James Joyce’s image of Ireland, as a sow devouring its own litter. Ever since the days of the Peloponnesian War, a venomous chain of perpetual internecine war, so harmful for the fruitfulness of the Greek genius. A bane more ancient than the History of Thucydides. A bane all the more abominable because of the superb human beings, who suffer from such idiotic destructiveness.

Daedala lambasted this Thyestian vice of the Greeks, occasionally devouring their finest spirits through the Ages – as at the “trial” of Socrates; and almost two-and-a-half millenia later, as at the excommunication of Kazantzakis, resulting in his “self-banishment” from Greece. And even at the level of Family: Greeks’ devouring Greeks; father devouring child; child devouring father; brother devouring brother; wife devouring husband. Does anyone want such an omnivorous Family as this? A Nation of factions, where fellow idealists – instead of uniting their voices in a single-minded, unified outcry, capable of shaking the very mountains – divide their own motherland into petty party “politics”. How can anyone survive in such a State, where Antigone alone dares to defy unjust Authority?

Nevertheless – now, with the Damoclean sword of imprisonment dangling over her head, Daedala no longer had the luxury of indulging in such negative syllogisms. So she quickly began thinking about all the good qualities she had once loved in Greece – such as Courage (the exact opposite of θρασυδειλία): bravery embracing the whole People; (as in the Greek Wars of Independence and in the Second World War and in the Resistance Against the Colonels’ Junta.) Also, such as Generosity (the opposite of money-grubbing self-interest). And most important of all, such as Solidarity (the opposite of “Anthropophagy”).

By the time she had completed her Good Thoughts, Daedala’s best idea of all “came” to her. Just as she used to do when she had to make a critical decision,
Minos the Minotaur and Daedala the Dreamer

Daedala thought of re-visiting the Delphic Oracle. She was absolutely sure that her old Friend, the Pythia, would again give her the best possible advice. And as always, twenty-four hours after returning from Delphi, Daedala knew exactly what she must do. This time – incredible as it may sound – the Delphic Oracle had convinced Daedala that she must turn to the very person who had banned her presence. Yes, indeed, she must go to the Minotaur and ask him humbly – if needs be, on bended knee – for his Help.
Daedala’s Unspoken Plea to the Minotaur
(After His Atonement)

Two years later, by the time the Pythia had persuaded Daedala to ask the Minotaur for his help, he was well on his way to becoming a frail old man, although he still had a touch of his former “patriarchal look”. When she knocked on the door of his one-storey atelier, in a picturesque lane of Old Pangrati – despite the Greek flag bravely flapping its blue-and-white stripes from his front window, Daedala found the tiny “house” on the verge of collapse: the ancient wooden floor had caved in, right under the Minotaur’s feet, and the cracked ceiling was getting ready to fall on the Minotaur’s head, earthquake or not. Even the flowering plum-tree in the back courtyard had fallen apart. (Although until then, it had always blossomed every year, only this particular year, it had stopped blooming.) All these omens looked black.

Nevertheless, for more than the first decade of the twenty years when the Minotaur had lived there (after the Junta), he was still active with his own creative work. Aside from two books and abundant newspaper articles and drawings for the best literary magazines, he also participated in exhibitions of his paintings, as well as several theatrical and other kinds of collaboration with Manos Hadjidakis – (including the costumes and décors for Donizetti’s operetta “The Bell”, as well as for Manos’ unusual new “musical”, and three Festivals with Hadjidakis’ songs, performed with the Minotaur’s décors, in Crete and in Corfu). In short, throughout this first post-Junta decade, the Minotaur was still blessed with a powerful urge for creative work.

But now, he was tired, after a long, and often, difficult life. When he appeared in the doorway, Daedala was astounded by his transformation, for he was almost unrecognizable. He had changed into a benevolent grandfatherly human being. For the first time, almost no spoken words were needed between the Minotaur and Daedala. Without her saying a single word, he could see her need for Help in her eyes. From the time when he’d begun to repent for the pain he had – unwittingly – caused her, his leit motif had become:

“I must atone for my sins!”
In his newly achieved mood of benevolence, the Minotaur welcomed Daedala with genuine love. His very first words to her were:

“Daedala, oh my Daedala –”

thereby giving her back the name he’d deprived her of so many years ago. Now, he felt capable of recalling the pact they had made at the beginning of their life together: Daedala would accompany him back to Greece, safe from the nightmares of his previous life, just as Antigone had accompanied Oedipus back to Colonus, after all those years and years of atoning for Sins. Only now, in retrospect, the Minotaur realized that this sacred “pact” between them was infinitely more essential than all the unhappiness – even “Danocracy” and even the cruelly unjust “Curse” in Paris. The sacred pact had remained intact.

As soon as he became aware of this, after so many years, the Minotaur opened his arms to Daedala (just as he’d done on that first rainy night in New York) and reminded her again of his plea to her back then, three decades ago and more, when he’d asked her to take him back home to Greece, just as Oedipus had asked Antigone to take him as far as the outskirts of Colonus. Now, the story was repeating itself, but with certain differences. By now, Daedala was no longer young. She too was tired and often felt ready to lie down and give up. Yet the Minotaur was begging her to lead him away from his crumbling atelier (where the Sun had already set) and take him somewhere where he would be able to stand on solid ground. He also asked her to walk with him as far as the blessed Grove, there, at the entrance to the Other World. Only then, just as at the very end of “Oedipus in Colonos”, he would know how to walk alone towards the Light.

Part of the Minotaur’s Help for Daedala to find her own way through the dead-ends of the Labyrinth, was exactly this. By his example, he gave her the courage to go on alone – as he had done at his End – in search of the Light. Without complaining, and without a drop of bitterness, he had given her the key to discover the secret. If any human being in World Literature had the “right” to be bitter, it was Oedipus, tormented a thousand times by his inhuman troubles, which no other man in human history had lived through. However, he walked calmly, almost full of hope, as he approached the light in that Grove.

Perhaps – on second thought – the Minotaur’s greatest Help of all for
Daedala to go on her way – was his generous act of opening his arms to her once again, after so many decades. For by making the iceberg of hatred melt – all that bitter Hatred, which had been festering like poison between them – he had relieved her from ten hundred tons of anguish and given her the ultimate gift of Calm.
Daedala Prefers To Be Wedded to Greece

After nineteen months of shuttling back and forth between Ministries, Municipalities and Prefectures involved with Greek Citizenship, Daedala was looking forward to the great day when her name would be officially erased from the List of “Aliens” in Greece and she would at last be acclaimed as truly and utterly Greek. Huffing and puffing, to be on time to find her two Greek friends, who’d agreed to witness the ceremony of her becoming officially Greek, Daedala was already on the verge of tears.

The Official, with the hornrimmed eyeglasses and the smile in his eyes, welcomed Daedala in such a friendly way that her hands began to tremble. When he recited a long passage of Homer in ancient Greek, Daedala wept. And when he told her that he too had wept when he first visited Constantinople and first stood in the Time-Honoured Church of Ayia Sophia (and at that point, he remembered to quote the famous verse from the old Ballad):

“Once more, in years to come, the City [Constantinople] will be ours!”

Daedala was so moved, that she said something quite out of place:

“Well, well, now all I need is to get married!”

At which point, the lady witness answered:

“But don’t you realize? You are married now! Wedded to the whole of Greece! “

Little by little, her friend’s words began to sink in. Daedala was not only Greek now – she was wedded to Greece, for better or for worse, for ever and ever. She ordinarily would have wanted to celebrate these two great events, with a joyous fête. But instead, she began crying her eyes out. And later – after nightfall – instead of lying safely in the embrace of her legal spouse – Greece – Daedala found herself sitting on a sandy beach, weeping rivers of tears into the Sea.

Luckily for Daedala, Reality caught up with her. Instead of a band of
angels “comin' for to carry her home”, this “motherless child” was rescued by a jolly Greek family, from the old days when Greek Families were still happy and loving and full of laughter. A typical old-fashioned Family with a happy Mother and Father and Grandmother and two happy young children, who'd been eating a fish-dinner at a seaside taverna, until they heard the sound of Daedala's weeping and had come to rescue her. First, they persuaded her to eat something at the taverna and then, to spend the rest of the night in their nearby cottage.

The 80-year-old Grandmother, wreathed in smiles, spread freshly-washed sheets on her own bed for Daedala to sleep well. And with the soothing sounds of the Family's laughter, Daedala woke up the next day, totally renewed. Such laughter was precisely what she had missed in Greece ever since the Junta. Now that she'd re-discovered the generous spontaneity of the Greeks, she believed she could face the challenge of being Greek. Perhaps, some day, she might be tempted to travel again— but only for a little while. Now, Daedala knew that she was wedded to Greece “until Death do us part”. 
After her marriage to Greece, Daedala was capable of calmly looking back (no longer in Anger) at the turbulence of her Life – from an immense distance, with detachment, surveying everything in historical perspective: back two-thousand, three-thousand, more than three-thousand-five-hundred years – back to the original Labyrinth built by Daedalos in Crete – back to the original Minotaur, back to the time when he too got “trapped inside his own lair”, slain by Theseus, and then, in turn, Theseus’ son was slain, and the never-ending chain of violence continued with the volcanic eruption from the Island of Thira, threatening the entire Minoan Civilisation.

Thanks to this way of looking at the Past, Daedala could now truly imagine herself as a wise septuagenarian (as she had tried to do in her very first poems six decades ago), surveying the disasters which had threatened to destroy her life, and above all, her dreams – either in the form of the Flood, which had destroyed her Ark, instead of making it safe for other people; or in the form of the Earthquake which had shaken her very foundations. And yet, out of all these disastrous forms of violence, Daedala had learned what should keep her Life from having been in vain. She had learned to curb her own violence – in order to be able to record all the wonderful things she had had the joy of experiencing in this World and of offering these experiences to other human beings.

Now that the time was approaching for Daedala to bid farewell to this Wonderful World, she recalled the wise words of a Greek philosopher standing only a stone’s throw from the Pythia’s Home in Delphi, listening to the mellifluous echo of her words like resilient Music resounding in those never ending olive-trees: 

“Only when the Greeks unite they are capable of Greatness.”
The Minotaur’s Favourite Protagonists
The wise – oh so wise – Yannis Tsarouhis, always insisted:
“Love is not enough!”
Although the Minotaur was separated from Daedala now, occasionally, he seemed to be under her spell. In fact, sometimes he gave the impression of still loving her.
Sappho Notara, in Tsarouhis’ splendid theatrical presentation of Euripides’ *Trojan Women*, reminded Greek spectators of the drama in Cyprus. Although Notara was usually considered a *comédienne*, Tsarouhis transformed her into a memorable tragic actress as well.
Like Sophocles’ Oedipus in Colonus, the Minotaur also needed Help, in order to walk all the way into the Land of Light.
But occasionally, a touch of “Attic Salt” is also necessary – especially when an Artist with such a sense of humour as the Minotaur – Minos Argyrakis – is the hero of the story. So before you plunge into the Daedalan Album of his Works, enjoy this “laughterful” photograph of Minos with his best Friend, Manos Hadjidakis.

(The four words on the poster: “MAKE LOVE, NOT RADIO!”)
Manos’ note for Daedala: (Winter of 1990)

“Amy has been my friend for many years. And she’s been my friend, because from the very beginning she proved herself unique in the use of language and dreams. Whatever she creates is precious. Her prose-poems are full of genuine visions. She is courageous to be writing and publishing prose-poems in the year 1990. Now, Amy has chosen to be Greek. Slightly more fanatical than the present times accept. And that is why I remain her friend and admirer.”
In a more somber mood: Manos and Minos
A Daedalan Album
of
Minos Argyrakis’ Works
Gloria Biblesex and her Terrified Husband.

Scylla Goldbank and her Ghostly Spouse.

Carybdis Sexman Invents an Ancient Greek Lover of Her own.
The “Maecenas Big Shots”
Invited to Scylla’s Big Party.

“Time is Money!”

Scylla Preparing for the Mykonos Cruise.

Fellow Traveller from Kansas – or Nebraska.
The Cannibal: American Specimen.
Disintegration of the Technology “Couple”.

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The Imbecilic All-American T.V. “Male.”
Another Hell-Bound Skyscraper Threatening to Consume Daedala’s Dreams.

The Statue of Tyranny, clutching her check book instead of her heart and a midget, instead of the Liberty Torch!

Omnivorous skyscape nightmares.
Two Newspaper Articles published by “Elevtheria” in May and June of 1961.

Entitled IMAGES FROM AN EXHIBITION:

“Pretending to be dead?”

“A couple of Parisian Spectators.”
“In the Romantic City of a Saint”:
Assisi Inundated by the Legend of Saint Francis
with Five Illustrations of the Giotto-an Churches
and the Rock where the Water so miraculously Flowed.
From the moment Minos Argyrakis returned to Greece, he never stopped sketching every island and village he re-visited, after such a long absence West of Eden.
Until he settled in Delphi with Daedala for the rest of the summer of 1961, where they spent their first holiday together.

Old Mister Zakos played his mandolin, on the balcony of Anghelos Sikelianos’ poetic mansion, by the light of the full moon.

While the Parnassos shepherds used to drink *retsina*-wine – more sour than vinegar – with a few olives, except for their weekly “treat” of a tough piece of goat’s meat, (as hard as a stone).
Old Plaka, as the "Old Neighbourhood Ought To Be!"
Nicknamed by Minos: "Acropolis-City of Attica".
The original drawing in the Album of “Dream Street”, at the corner of Tholos and Pan Street, as the Minotaur sketched it in 1957, five years before Hadjidakis’ “musical”.

Another romantic mansion in Plaka, at the end of Polygnotos Street, just where the Ancient Agora begins.
Nikos Vassiliou (alias Valter von Fipmer), sitting in his garden, near his favourite motto:

“He who loves Flowers, loves God!”

Valter’s Shack, only a stone’s throw from the Acropolis and the “Old University”.

Four drawings of Valter, ending with ERT
Our mythomanic Valter, Nikos Vassiliou von Fipmer, endowed with “Herculean strength”, tells the tale of his love-affair with...Marika Kotopouli!

Sitting in his ancient bathtub (planted outside in his courtyard), Valter recalls the heroic day when Haile Selasieh “awarded him a medal” – for his heroic feats in the African...Jungle!

Valter and the Minotaur visit ERT! Under the general title: “FREEDOM FOR THE RADIO” (one of seven articles, which the Minotaur wrote about Valter for his weekly page in “Elevtheria”). Valter is presented as the “Aid-de-Camp” of the Minotaur (alias, Pan) whom Valter accompanies everywhere – even to the antiquated Radio and T.V. Station (namely ERT). One of Daedala’s elusive Dreams is to write an enticing 27-page book(!) about the Sancho Panza adventures of Valter with the quixotic drawings by the Minotaur.
For all 15 pages with “Dream Street” Archive material, George Hadjidakis has the exclusive copyright – except for two photographs of Rena Vlahopoulou photographed by the Danish photographer, Ib Henriksen; also, the three samples of Alexis Solomos’ “Notes for the Actors”. Also, the front page newspaper “Ethnos” with the headline about Hadjidakis “For Ever on Dream Street” and the cover of the “Elevtherotypia” Sunday Magazine, with Minos’ drawings and Manos’ photograph, entitled “Manos Hadjidakis’ Street.”
Manos Hadjidakis’
“Paper Moon”

1. Prologue
The Photographer of Dream Street
Demetres HORN

MANOS HADJIDAKIS presents
DREAM STREET

Δ ΜΑΝΟΣ ΧΑΤΖΙΔΑΚΗΣ
την
ΟΔΟΝ ΟΝΕΙΡΩΝ
με συνεργασία
'Αλέξη Σολομού
Μίνου 'Αργυράκη
Μανώλη Καστρινού

1. Πρόλογος
'Ο φωτογράφος της ΟΔΟΥ ΟΝΕΙΡΩΝ
The barrel-organ is played by Panayotis Benardis.

The “Dream Street” Orchestra is conducted by Stellios Kaphandaris.
2. Dream of the Neighbourhood
Youngsters
The lady: Chrysoula Zoka
The young man: Yorgos Emirzas
A young singer: George Marinos

5. The Black Ford
starring Maro Kondou

RENA VLADOPOULOU
Special projection of the movie
"THE NAVAL BATTLE OF
SALAMIS" (480 B.C.)
The Shepherdess: RENA VOLVO
The First Shepherd: MINOS ARGYRAKIS
The Second Shepherd: MANOLIS KASTRINOS
THE BANDIT BARBOULAS
MANOS HADJIDAKIS
The façade of the Metropolitan Theatre, seen from Alexandras Avenue.

One of the balconies, built along the sides of “Dream Street”.
The Actor, who played the Photographer, talks to the Public.

DEMETRES HORN
(Lyrics by Manos Hadjidakis)
George Marinos first appears at the very start of “Dream Street”.

Chrysoula Zoka, after her dreamlike dance with Yorghos Emirzas, listens to the youngsters of the neighbourhood singing to her.
Horn listens carefully to Maro Kondou’s dream, which he intends to make come true.

In the first scene with Kondou, the first décor has been made with the traditional shadow-theatre technique.
Towards the end of the same scene, the actors appear in front of the screen. Here, Kondou dances in a 1920’s charleston costume.

Here, she dances by herself, while her fans wait for her near the old-fashioned vehicle, where she’s going to lose something she’s been keeping as a “lucky charm”.

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Horn presents Rena Vlahopolou in the “Dream of the Movie Screen”. She is dressed in a phantasmagoric “costume” painted by Minos Argyrakis.

Vlahopoulou, as a “Movie Star”, posing with her Cinema Manager, who is played perfectly by George Konstandinou.
In front of the old tram, the “Star” and the “Director” enjoy enthusiastic applause after the highly successful opening night.

The “Star” bids farewell to the audience, while the whole neighbourhood cavorts up and down, with vivid facial expressions.
The “Tata Sisters” – including Kondou, Phytousi, Vlahopoulou, and in the right-hand corner, a surprise...

One of the “five sisters” – of whom not even one remained – was a boy!

Kondou and Vlahopoulou are sitting in front of the two hand-painted sopranos, while the Daddy of the “Tata Sisters” (Vanghelis Protopappas), peeks through the theatre curtain.
Lakis Pappas sings “Mama”, with lyrics by Iakovos Kambanellis.

On the upper balcony, Lakis also sings about “Mister Mihalis”, who was a mute but unforgettable role for George Papakonstandinou.
In front of the most “romantic” décor of “Dream Street” (with the word “Souvenir” painted on the backdrop), Demetres Horn converses with the choreographer.

Manos and Minos in front of their “portraits”, in the foyer of the Metropolitan Theatre: Manos, as a Faun, holding a mandolin; and Minos, as a mermaid holding a palette.
At the dress rehearsal of “Dream Street”, Alexis Solomos, Manos, Minos, and Demetres Horn discuss the pleasant expectations for opening night.
Manos Hadjidakis
“FOR EVER ON DREAM STREET”

Notes of the Director of “Dream Street”:
from Alexis Solomos’ Archive.
Minos' memories of “Manos Hadjidakis Street”
Almost 30 years before Hadjidakis’s death, another cover for another Greek magazine, where the Minotaur let his imagination play with the farcical operetta “Don Pan Carlos” – or the “Dream Opera”, as he also named the “Ark’s” second theatrical venture (just after the “Arty Party”, in time for the Greek Carnival Season of 1965.)
Two years later – just after April 21st, 1967 – as a short-lived period of relief from the tyranny of the Colonel’s Junta, the Oasis in Dodona followed. With the filming of “Oedipus Rex” in the Ancient Greek Theatre of Dodona, the Minotaur played a role in the chorus and made the whole cast happy.

Orson Welles, as Teiresias, magnificent as the Greek mountains near the ancient Theatre.

A portrait of the “leader” of the chorus, who was still unknown at that time: Donald Sutherland. But the other actors were perfectly well-known: Christopher Plummer as Oedipus, Lily Palmer as Jocasta; and the best known of all: Orson Welles.
Shades of that mock – “Court Martial”
(next door to Dodona, in the northern Province of Epirus),
where Daedala had bellowed:
“DOWN WITH THE DICTATORSHIP!!”
LONDON MAGAZINE
– November 1970 – (“MIKIS IN EXILE UNTIL HE REACHES PARIS”)
But the Junta Police locate him, together with the illegal “printer”, used for revolutionary declarations.

Behind the piano where he was hiding, they aimed their pistols at Mikis. But he refused to kneel down.
The Junta policemen try to frighten Mikis by threatening him with the firing-squad.

But instead of killing him, they dress him in a kind of Ku-Klux-Clan hood, and take him to Security Headquarters.
In the notorious Prison on Boumboulina Street, Mikis makes an effort to see his beloved Athens through a small opening, while he writes his 32 poems, which he entitles “Sun and Time”.

High up on the terrace of Boumboulina Prison, the howls of other prisoners are heard – including all the visionaries and revolutionaries, punished with the cruelest tortures.
During his exile in Zatouna, where he was isolated in the mountains of Arcadia, Mikis experienced the hardships faced by his family, including his young son.

Nevertheless, every so often, instead of beating people up, the Junta guards started dancing in the village Square of Zatouna.
Later on, while he was imprisoned in Oropo, Mikis made friends with other Greeks involved in Resistance. At that time, he wrote a different kind of songs.

Because of a serious health problem, Mikis was sent to “Sotiria” Hospital [near Athens]. There, his wife and [the French politician], Servan Schreiber, visited him – making all the preparations needed to help him escape to Paris.
"Pole Star Acropolis Chimney...
only five meters
from my cell
(Written on the wall the words:
“Freedom or Death”)
“Upon the dry soil of my heart
a cactus sprouted
more than twenty centuries went by
when I’ve been dreaming of jasmine”
“The rain unites us
the sun was ashamed to show itself, Nikos Yorghos, a flower helps me to go on”
“I sway above the swaying mosaic
my thought whirls towards earth
the parachute failed to open”

“Inside the gardens of paradise in my brain
eucalyptus trees and pine-trees cover
the left side of my brain
on the right-hand, nymphs and heavenly whores”
“Song of the Dead Brother”
“FIVE METERS FROM MY CELL”

From the Danish Edition of 1970, during the Junta, made by the Danish Publishing House, “Sigvaldis Forlag”. An almost 100-page Anthology of various songs by Mikis Theodorakis, with verses translated into Danish by Ole Wahl Olsen and Works of Art illustrated by Minos Argyrakis. The following groups of songs are included: “Archipelago”; “Song of the Dead Brother”; “Zatouna”, “Arcadia X”, etcetera. Selected drawings follow, in the next few pages,[including several verses by another Poet].

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Tyranny
Resistance
The arrest of Mikis Theodorakis in the spring of 1963.
Angel, with the Broadsword of Justice
“and dreams will take revenge”

“let the woman at his side come forth like a ray of sunlight”

“and they will beget generations in secula seculorum”
(from Elytis’ Axion Esti)
“EROS INVINCIBLE BATTLE”
From the Anti-Junta “Musical” – “Sexagon” – produced in 1969 in Denmark, where Minos collaborated with the brilliant Director, Carl Johan Rosenquist.
The three drawings of the Rolling Stones’ scheduled Concert in Athens (just before the start of the Junta) – were banned by the Colonels – and were printed exclusively in the “Sexagon” program.
The cover of this rare prose-poem – entitled: "The City Swam in Black-and-White Flags" – was also published in London Magazine in 1968. A sample follows:

“We commemorate
by our tribute –
[But] the City swam in black flags.”
“In the Persons of our Heroes We annihilated our Peace”

“We pay tribute to these Men! (The defeat of their dreams.)"
“Let us crown with laurel yesteryear’s dead”

“They buried us side by side the two of us as one”
“The Junta’s Surgical Operation Perpetrated on the Greek People –
by Papa-Doc, in order to silence Freedom of Speech”.

From Helen Vlahou’s anti-Junta periodical – the “Hellenic Review” – published exclusively in London, before the End of the Junta’s Tyranny.
The Assassination of Grigoris Lambrakis, at the end of May 1963.
Here, the Frontispiece for Daedala’s first book of prose-poems for Cyprus, clearly expresses the Minotaur’s wrath, provoked by the Turkish Injustice against Cyprus (in 1974). In 1922, in Asia Minor, he and his Family were victims of similar injustice. As for Daedala, she never ceased being haunted by the plight of Cyprus. The best outlet she found was to accompany her words with the Music of Mikis Theodorakis for an Ancient Greek Tragedy, which he gladly permitted her to add to the recording of her Cyprus book.
Detail from a RITSOS “Sea-Stone” including this “portrait” of Makarios.

AMY MIMS
“CYPRUS 1974”
KEDROS
AMY: ΚΥΠΡΟΣ 1974

ΚΕΔΡΟΣ
1
Shadow of a black archiepiscopal veil enveloping the Island in its protective embrace
shadow of a Byzantine Man who lies down at the roots of towering cedars in the Troodos Mountains in order to imbibe the power of these trees inside his veins
shadow of a grand Last-of-the-Palaeologues who signs his spirit in his own vermilion blood
as long as this miraculous ikon of Byzantium this Man of the Nine Lives is alive the flying-fish Island will not die like this.

* * *

2

Early September:
The Iman of Maratha sits alongside his Turkish mass-grave (the Greek mass-grave in Ayios Memnon not yet discovered) chastising the Greeks as the western experts quibble about whether they’ve uncovered 73 or 74 human skulls...as two-hundred-thousand human beings are slowly being frozen to a living death two-hundred-thousand human beings who have lost everything two-hundred-thousand human beings who have lived through a new *Desastrosdella Guerra* such as even Goya never envisaged as in the village of Akanthou

with the genitals of the men sliced off by Turkish yataghans and hurled against the ikons and fourteen-year-old girls raped until their virginity hemorrhaged into death and as their parents went to bury them the Turkish guns took aim leveled against their mourning limbs and spinsters were also raped along with aged mothers till they moaned and the old mother went mad in Akanthou
of the rainbow-painted wooden wedding-chests and o those phantasmagorically
carved shelves embellished with exquisite birds and flowers and gazelles in
Akanthou

* * *

3

And yet during those first Abel-and-Cain days had not Greek against Greek done
even worse? Had not a Greek priest with an assassin’s pistol pressed against his tem-
ples been compelled to bury alive his fellow-Greeks – fellow-Greeks still only in a
semi-coma – this priest was compelled to fill their grave with shovelfuls of dirt smother-
ering their still breathing faces... *in seculaseculorum*..

July 20th:

Early morning – the western tip of Candian Crete – blaring military marches
loudspeakered over the Radio:

“The Invasion of Cyprus”

And o the uncanny sense of being back in Cyprus the harbour of Hania a where-
am-I? mirage of Kyreniaharbour. Blacking out into Kyrenia to the accompaniment
drummed into us by the bombardments of the ancient strongholds of the Cypriot
Greeks. Waking up before dusk still convinced we were in Cyprus. Groggy glances at
truck-loads of Cretans being mobilized and standing packed like animals inside the
rattling caravans on their way to makeshift camps scattered throughout Crete. Strings
of mules plodding to the war down the dust-gutted village roads. Back in the capital
of Crete inside the ghettos:

The young woman with the wall-eyed stare
her tiny shop filled with odds-and-ends
telling everyone how she felt like vomiting
because of the War.

The fifty-year-old mother in her dark grocery
selling a bit of *mizithra*-cheese and stale biscuits.
Sighing with anxiety for her younger son
who’d just been summoned and she was
terrified of losing him like her other son.

The tiny children playing “Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Turk” brandishing sticks and
screeching childishly fierce war-cries: “You play the Turk and we’ll play the Greeks!” echoing through the
ghetto dead-ends.

* * *

**July 23rd:**

Strangest night of seven midnight years this night between the 23rd and 24th of July. After suffocating Black Out last night, tonight bright searchlights flashing back and forth above the Hania-Kyrenia harbour. Electrified resilience of the Cretan anthem: “Na paro to douphekimou...I’ll take my gun” sung by throngs of young Cretan boys chanting in rhythm the fall of the dictatorship and welcoming the seven-year exiles home again. Athens Airport transformed into a giant Circus, the headlines and the front-page photos filled with the vedettes’ V-Day gestures while the dead-trenches of the Island-in-Agony fill with yet another human being. Papier-mâché Carnival in Athens with thousands of onlookers crowding in to fan the vanity of the Vips as the paparracichi-chi cameramen lap up the pseudo-Passionarian vehemence, the Comédie Française Tartuffian poses, the hystereonic tears while the sands of Famagusta are still smouldering incarnadined beyond all recall: Othello’s plane-strangled walls my God, the walls are falling all around the Island-in-Agony.

And these days, the very waves are bellowing the wake of Famalost buried in the sand – the sands the sands those sands old Atthis sang of – and the boy she used to race the turquoise waves with maybe dead – the room, the tiny Karaghiozi tomb she lived in boomed to bangdom come...and this new magic place Hania so like the place below old Saint Hilarion’s bitter lemony groveyards and graveyards of well-loved friends (like that orange grave of ancient Varnavas in Ayios Memnon three kilometres from Famalost). How many people killed, sisters dead, unborn babies buried in their womb-shelled shell-shocked end?

And we in Crete so lethally useless we didn’t even give that half-kilo of blood we’d promised, (they scared us that the Nurse in Hania is so savage she leaves you no veins). And here on the Via del Greco Theotokopoulos Venetian Calle with balconies of griffins and winged Cupids and crumbling walls and Othellian palaces and Napoli street-noise and a tiny green bird cage filled with green cucumbers, for a yellow-green cantatorino and old black women who still know how to wail and wake and all their many children and men away from their himless homelessness and they sitting breathless for news of the War. How can anyone be madly glad, “ecstatic” as in Athens, though knowing all the news the fabulous news the bastillian news (or so

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it seemed for a few brief weeks) and all the constellations in their right place now: the Morning Star no longer at war with the Big Bear and the Pleiades of Romiosyni singing now, no longer hanging muzzled in a songless galaxy...And yet in spite of all this multi-magnitudinous news, the old black women here near the crumbling Cretan balconies are eating their own entrails, weeping for what has been and what may be the repercussions of this Famalost massacre.

And now, who's alive there, who is dead?
Phanos, ageless doctor of Famagusta, are you still alive?
Skoteinos, archaic painter of Famagusta, are you still alive?
Maria my sister are our sisters still there?
Famagusta paying for that papier-mâché Carnival in Athens with its own blood.

* * *

August 16th:
Sad “Anniversary” of the founding of the Cypriot Republic fourteen years ago counterpointed with the renaissance of the Cretan Theatre in Hania ("The Sacrifice of Abraham", performed after 300 years within those same Othellan walls Venetian-built all the way from Hania to Famagusta) – the death of Famagusta announced on the Radio, on the way to a Cretan village – Asi-Gonia: “Village-Never-Trodden-by-the-Turk”. The people of Asi-Gonia with (their ears glued to the old transistor listening through the static) as they try to tune in to Bucharest – Sophia – Moskva inside the dim-lit old shop with its big round cheeses and thimbles of tsikoudia. Through the static the transistor begins listing the names of human beings from villages in Cyprus: Maria S. of Droushia is all right and is asking her brother Hambis in Lemessos to phone her at 21, 224...Panikos P. of Arakapa wants to let Aliki T. in Lemessos know that he and his brothers are well...Phaidon B. of Asinou and his sister Phani are all right and would like Mairi Th. In Lemessos to phone the family at 74, 623. Back in Asi-Gonia in the dim-lit little shop the Cretan families remained huddled around the tables, to gethe r.

In another kapheneion further up the Asignonian hillside a blind old bard 95 years old BarbaMihalisGlentzakis, sole survivor of the 1903 Macedonian Campaign recalled the satirical poems he'd written once-upon-a-time: – that uproarious parody of the Flea he'd composed during the Nazi Occupation with hilarious words like “D DD 's” and “Barba” Uncle Truman. But when we asked him to sing us Cretan mandinades, he protested:
“Now how can I do that when every hour on the hour me and all the rest of us here in
the village have to listen to the news from Cyprus? What will the other villagers think if
they happen to go by and catch sight of me singing while Cyprus lies dying?”

Outside the village of Asi-Gonia beyond the tree-shaded oasis, where the rich old
aristocrat has architected his own tomb grandiloquently before he dies; beyond the
huge trees where the women used to do their washing; beyond Ai Yorghis where every
April the festival of the hot goat’s milk and the fresh warm bread is re-enacted – be-
yond all this and far beyond towards the village of Myriokephala, two hundred-year-
old women sit beneath a twisted olive-tree, gnarled roots in the middle of Nowhere,
calling out to every chance passerby:

“What news of the War, my child? O what is going to happen, Panayiamou?
God give us peace, my child.”

Cyprus - Crete
Crete-Cyprus
Sister Megalonissos

extending along the same geographical parallel Creto-Cypria

experience the same historical opponent Creto-Cypria

the same terror of the Turk lurking in the souls

of Cretan and Cypriot

the same age-old tradition of taking to the mountains

Creto- Cypria

Asi-Gonia sister-village to all the villages of Cyprus

Karmi

Lapithos

Kythrea

* * *

Karmi:

Kyria Maria with her eight handsome children and she baking in her ham-
am-shaped village-oven-cheese-"phlaoùnes"with red eggs for Easter in this Cyprus vil-
lage nestling in the lap of Pendadaktylos along the north coast of the Island. And o
how close those mountains in Turkey used to loom etched against the horizon on a
clear winter afternoon staring back at Pendadaktylos that backbone of the northern
Cyprus mountains and although sprinkled with anemones in the springtime, it can-
not help glaring grimly against the Turkish mainland. And this brave levendissaKyria
Maria (who used to walk for hours into Kyrenia every daybreak to wash dishes so
she’d be able to feed her eight children) Kyria Maria (who used to give birth every other year till she and her eldest daughter were giving birth at the same time) Kyria Maria and her whole family were uprooted now to a refugee-camp a zillion miles from home her cypress-embellished Karmi
now
a pock-marked charcoal wasteland.

Lapithos:

Your lemon trees withering, dried to dust, blighted by the Turk to Sodom-and-Gomorrhandessication. Your almond trees no longer opening their white flowers to the February air. The Turk is seeking to learn the secret of how you make your lemon trees flourish. The Turks still live in your age-old watermill homes. The Turk is treading your threshold as his own – o no longer “Village-Never-Trodden-by-the-Turk”. And KyriaHarikleia high up at the highest point of Lapithos from whose high terrace we used to watch the twinkling lights of Kyrenia in the distance beyond the Five Mile Point and the nearby lights of Vavylas and Vassileia with its Jehovan monk from Mount Sinai and further down towards MaroniteKormakiti the little inlets of Orka. KyriaHarikleia with the ancient grandfather patiently turning huge skewers of meat on the outdoor fire and the half-mad grandmother staring vacantly into the space below the towering plane-trees.KyriaHarikleia with her robust husband setting off every Sunday with his gun to hunt for rabbits and partridges and tischles-birds along the ridges of the Pendadaktylos range gazing grimly back against those Turkish mountains glowering so close to Lapithos...Lapithos where the gurgling waters used to bubble musically out of Kephalovrisso
although now, you too are only
a pock-marked charcoal wasteland.

Kythrea:

Here too another magnificent Kephalovrisso, its gurgling waters again surrounded by enormous plane-trees. Kythrea where the baby was found still suckling its mother’s breasts seventeen hours after the baby’s mother’s massacre by the Turk. Kythrea whence they sent the young lads to fight the Turkish tanks, armed with blankets only. Kythrea where they ordered the boys to set out on foot in their everyday old clothes and sneakers without a single solid gun, to go and fight, to go and climb the ichthyo-
saurian back of Pendadaktylos. And o my God the forests all those forests proudly planted, green tree by tree all burned to charcoal a black volcanic landscape...The crystal-clear atmosphere of the Cyprus sky now stinking as in some plague-ridden Middle East ghetto. Her villages emptied now and her villagers lying in the plains bemoaning their animals they’d had to leave behind to die alone, like the old man who felt saddest of all for the little birds he’d left behind; only the tidy home-bodies of Lyssi with the odd goat or two having built themselves huts in the otherwise desolate plains, where all the other villagers lie roofless whimpering for their heifers.

Everywhere

  a pock-marked
  charcoal
  wasteland
even the residence where the Byzantine Man of the Nine Lives used to live amid his resplendent basil-plants and flower-beds he himself tended to, but now, all his velvet lawns are also burnt to charcoal.

* * *

Island-in-Agony while you lie dying, the glutted occidental vultures sit on the sidelines idly delaying. A curse upon this criminal dilly-dallying while you are flayed alive. Idle comparisons with Asia Minor – idle philanthropic acts – idle Benefit Performances organized by Big Shots more intent upon displaying themselves than saving Cyprus. Idle bickering in the International Press about statistics while the only thing that really matters is forgotten:

Anthropos
  with
Anthropos

Greek or Turk Turk or Greek. But while the western experts and fake “philanthropists” continue quibbling at Maratha, far away from these scenes, a little village near Myrtou at the instant when the Greek inhabitants were being forced to leave – a Turkish woman in tears calling to her best Greek friend:

“Photeini, I’ll do all I can to look after your home, my love, till you get back”.

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These were the last words this Greek woman heard as she left her village:

Anthropos
with
Anthropos

What does Anthropos know of diplomatic tricks and hollow rhetoric? Island-in-Agony, as day-by-day more and more of your terrain has disappeared, the self-righteous Potentates of the Western World insist on applauding their own “Humaneness” declaring in the presence of the assembled representatives of the “Free World”:

“We must all work together to alleviate Injustice in three major trouble-spots of the World: Indonesia...Ireland...Cyprus!”

* * *

8
Ireland-Cyprus
Cyprus-Ireland

two wild drops in the ocean at the two extremities of Europa; two mad champions of Independence against quixotic obstacles; the Irish born blood-brothers of Cyprus, from the time of Brendan Behans’s “Hostage”, our wish expressed in twenty-pages epistles from the Aran Islands all the way from the western coast of Ireland to the eastern coast of Cyprus
to bring the Irish rebel spirit to the Cypriots (sealed by the sending of a traditional red skirt worn only by the Irishwomen of Inishmaan, that tiniest of the Aran Islands described by the most musical of Ireland’s writers, John Millington Synge, this talisman traveled all the way from there to Famagusta, where it waited for us a whole decade). And when we met that Man of Byzantium back then, a month before the Independent Republic of Cyprus was declared we said to him:

“How at one the Irish feel with Cyprus”.

And he answered equally simply:

“We hope to see you here again in Cyprus.”

* * *
9
As long as that miraculous Man of the Nine Lives remains alive
the flying-fish Island must not die.
The shadow of his protective embrace shall go on and on
enveloping the ikon signed in his own vermilion blood.

* *
*   *
*   *
*
Copy of the cordial permission Mikis Theodorakis gave Daedala.
My Dear Amy,
I haven’t yet heard the [CD] tape, because I’ve just received it. But I am sure that I’ll find it superb. For that reason, you can use my music and I must tell you that you are giving me great joy and satisfaction. I know your poetry – which I admire – and I want to thank you for your choice.

With love, yours truly,
Mikis

From the original Greek text:

Αγαπητή μου Άμυ,
Δεν άκουσα την ταινία ακόμη –γιατί μόλις την έλαβα– όμως είμαι βέβαιος ότι θα την βρίσκω υπέροχη. Γι’ αυτόν τον λόγο μπορείς να χρησιμοποιήσεις τη μουσική μου με την βεβαιότητα ότι θα μου δίνεις μεγάλη χαρά και ικανοποίηση. Ξέρω την ποίησή σου –που θαυμάζω– και σε ευχαριστώ για την εκλογή σου.

Με αγάπη δικός σου
Μίκης
Μιχαήλ Κακαγιάννης
Κορυφαίος 148
Αύγουστος 610
21/10/1915

Το προσφέρω στο Εκκλησιαστικό Παράθυρο του Ι. Νεάπολι Θεσσαλονίκης, την 10η Νοεμβρίου 1979, έμεινα ένας άνθρωπος που αλλάζει την Ελληνική Κοινωνία, ο οποίος έδωσε απόλυτη συμπαθεία στους πολίτες της με ένα αποκλεισμένο μέρος της Ελλάδας. Θεωρώτας την Ελληνική Κοινωνία, έναν πολιτικό συνόλο, ο οποίος δεν έχει δικαίωμα, θα έπρεπε να επιδιώκει την επέκταση της Ελληνικής Εθνικής Επικράτειας και της Ελληνικής Καινοτομίας.

Γιάννης Καρυδάκης
Inasmuch as a record [cd] will be made with Amy [Mims’] prose-poem “CYPRUS 1974”, I give my permission for using excerpts of the music for my film “ELECTRA”. The normal and indispensable pre-condition is that the composer, MIKIS THEODORAKIS, will also give his consent.

Mihalis Kakoyannis

From the original Greek text:


Mihalis Kakoyannis
A Few Extra Words About the CD For
MINOS THE MINOTAUR and DAEDALA THE DREAMER

Containing excerpts of MIKIS THEODORAKIS’ symphonic music, originally composed for KAKOYANNIS’ film “ELECTRA”. The text entitled Cyprus 1974 was written by Amy Mims and is heard on the present CD, read mainly by Chr. Tsangas – but also with three other voices, two of which are heard very briefly. At the beginning of the CD, Makarios’ voice is also heard, in his mid-July 1974 message to the People of Cyprus. And there is also a lament of a Greek-Cypriot woman from a Refugee-Camp in Cyprus.

All these elements were interwoven by C. Serezis and the text of Cyprus 1974 was recorded in a studio of the Third Programme of E.R.T., in 1975. The poetess Amy Mims, who wrote the text, produced the CD with the above-mentioned excerpt of Theodorakis’ music and with his cordial permission.