

UNIVERSITY OF ARTS IN BELGRADE

Centre for Interdisciplinary studies



UNIVERSITÉ LUMIÈRE LYON 2

Faculté d'Anthropologie et de Sociologie



UNESCO Chair in Cultural Policy and Management

Master thesis:

Storytelling and Urban Collective Consciousness: An Organic Brew of
Participatory Creativity

By:

Zoi Tsiviltidou

Supervisor:

Nevena Dakovi , PhD

Belgrade, September 2012

Note of Acknowledgement

Writing a book is never a lone endeavour. You learn from others, you pick up ideas, you get rid of ideas, someone encourages you, someone challenges your mindset and someone just listens to your angst-filled stories. When the literary work is a research master's study the input from others is especially appreciated and priceless fortunate. None of this work would be possible without the generous help of Dr. Nevena Dakovi for she was an eyes-widening, responsive mentor and theory instructor. I would like to warmly thank Dr. Milena Dragi evi Šeši for her insightful guidance over the theoretical and empirical groundings in the field of interest, as well as I thank Dr. Slobodan veji for the indispensable impetus on research methodology, Dr. Ana Martinoli for providing me with sources, Dr. Jacques Bonniel and the counsellor Svetlana Jovi i for paving a theory root to this thesis, and Julija Mateji for her non-stop administrative support. Needless to say, I owe a great depth of intellectual gratitude to Dr. Nikos Kontos from Aristotle University who supervised my bachelor diploma thesis.

I thank wholeheartedly all my family and especially my mother Maria who witnessed and managed in revelatory fashion multifarious mood changes of mine whilst studying; my companion in life Giorgos for bearing with me this pressure stoically and humorously; my best friend Danai for her encouraging teasing, highly perceptive and motivating warming commentaries over black coffee; my friend and colleague Sophia for (re)fuelling my mind with courage and positivism; my dear friend Nicoleta for being a cornerstone in my behavioural model; my friend and colleague Lea for being always a fun and intellectual source of inspiration; my friend and colleague Milena for believing in me and offering me sweet encouragement; my friend David from Minnesota University for feeding my curiosity about minding; and all the friends who shared their stories with me and listened to mine tenderly and (seemingly) effortlessly. It goes unsaid that I thank sincerely the city port, all the people involved in the field research, and the professors and professionals who responded enthusiastically to my call for interviewing during summertime. Thank you all.

Foreword

“Honest authors realize that their books are never
as good as they had planned them.”

-Arthur Ransome¹

Perception is filtered by experience and my experience of producing this academic work of Master studies is inexplicably and undoubtedly priceless. I treasure wholeheartedly this opportunity to conceive and conduct research for my thesis in Cultural Policy and Management – Interculturalism and Mediation in the Balkans and I perceive this as the forte of my professional development. The title of the thesis is *Storytelling and Urban Collective Consciousness: An Organic Brew of Participatory Creativity*. The research question emerges from the blending of the art of storytelling with the collective’s consciousness and perception of an urban multicultural space positioning the question mark on the potential of participatory creativity and artistic engagement to enliven domesticity in urbanism. The hypotheses can be shortlisted as such:

- ❖ The art of storytelling feeds social interaction and the transfer of creative ideas empowering social networks within multicultural communities.
- ❖ The reciprocity in the ties intensifies participatory creativity which harnesses the creative cognition of the collective via imagination roots and emotional arousal.
- ❖ Co-creating stories can channel the perception people have about the urban environment and can impregnate it with feelings of domesticity which builds mediation between diverse communities.
- ❖ The urban collective consciousness becomes an organic brew of intercultural interaction via storytelling which brings people closer to one another and closer to the city as well.

My contribution will be twofold. Firstly, it is important for cultural policy-makers in Greece to acknowledge the storytelling art as an asset in the performing arts for intercultural mediation and to start implementing it in academic research, management strategies and policy planning. Also, storytelling is much linked to the art of city-making and can voice in creative fashions issues concerning the collective of a multicultural environment and can contribute to an art-led urban regeneration. Secondly, it is an instrument to boost the collective’s creativity thus, it is important for academics and cultural practitioners to comprehend and invest in participatory creativity which invites the ideas of the collective, challenges them and nurtures them to fruition.

¹ The quote is taken from Arthur’s Ransome book *A History of Story-telling*.

The work is divided in six major parts featured in separate chapters which address the terrain of interest in a coherent, efficient and sharply comprehensive fashion. The philosophy of the structural design is to navigate the reader seamlessly through the concepts, research objectives and outcomes, and to explore, depict and challenge the dynamic relationship between them. The first part consists of the introductory chapters which present minutely the art of storytelling in an epexegetic fashion positioning it in the academic research field and explaining the relevance of this thesis. The second part is essential because the conceptual framework is set up with the depiction and scientific investigation of the merging concepts of storytelling, participatory creativity and cognition, collective consciousness and urban domesticity through multicultural lens. The third section is the experimental research itself with the storytelling project in Thessaloniki, Greece and the documented outcomes. Part four is dedicated to the practicalities of the analysis in favour of cultural policies and intercultural mediation management with recommendations and valuable proposals. Part five confronts the romanticism of this thesis and consolidates the future elaboration of the research findings in arts management and education. Last but not least, part six is the conclusion.

Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Note of Acknowledgement..... | 2 |
| Foreword..... | 3 |
| Contents..... | 5 |
| Résumé..... | 6 |
| Introduction: | |
| I. Storytelling: a boat recently grounded on the bank of academic research..... | 13 |
| II. Chalk outline: all-embracing definitions of the art of storytelling..... | 19 |
| III. Contemporary showcases in the USA and the UK..... | 24 |
| IV. Specific yet non-exegetic readings of the art of storytelling in Greece..... | 28 |
| V. Relevance and expected fecundity of the research..... | 32 |
| Conceptual Framework: | |
| I. Portages between storytelling and social networks/connection topology..... | 37 |
| II. Wild swimming with the network effect: the flow and spread of ideas..... | 41 |
| III. Paddling along empirical and cognitive psychology: the geopolitics of emotions.... | 43 |
| IV. Parasailing with the physiology of building urban domesticity..... | 53 |
| V. The organic brew of storytelling and urban collective consciousness..... | 59 |
| VI. Conquering ideasclerosis and imagination by interaction..... | 63 |
| VII. Beyond the shoreline of theory: treasuring participatory creativity..... | 66 |
| Methodology of research: | |
| I. The aim of academic research and the debatable expectations..... | 68 |
| II. Analytic or synthetic progression of hypotheses?..... | 70 |
| III. Research design: instruments of measurement and limitations..... | 72 |
| IV. The storytelling project: collection, monitored analysis and evaluation of data...75 | |
| V. Developmental philosophies..... | 79 |
| Hosting policy recommendations: | |
| I. Quitting soft-peddalling: theory-based cultural realities..... | 81 |
| II. Amending cultural policies: stories/smiles from ear to ear..... | 86 |
| III. Mouth to mouth resuscitation of urban sites: imagined communities..... | 90 |
| IV. Creative Cities: community-building profitability by storytelling..... | 97 |
| Tipping surplus research: | |
| I. Festival wombs: weaving a safety net for artistic experimentation..... | 103 |
| II. Creative education: passing insight, planting inspiration..... | 105 |
| Conclusion..... | 107 |
| References..... | 112 |
| Appendix..... | 118 |
| Curriculum vitae..... | 119 |

Résumé

Introduction

Ce travail traite du sujet du storytelling par rapport à la conscience collective et à la perception d'une ville urbaine multiculturelle, celle de Thessalonique, Grèce en mettant le point d'interrogation sur le potentiel de la créativité participative et l'engagement artistique afin d'animer la domesticité et la médiation interculturelle. Les hypothèses sont structurées autour de ces concepts: 1. l'art du storytelling nourrit l'interaction sociale et le transfert des idées en vue de renforcer les réseaux sociaux au sein des communautés multiculturelles; 2. la réciprocité dans les relations intensifie l'imagination et l'éveil émotionnel; 3. à travers l'expérience empirique et la psychologie sociale, les sens influencent la perception et tissent peu à peu l'image de la ville en l'imprégnant d'une familiarité qui nourrit la domesticité; 4. co-crée des histoires peut canaliser la perception que les gens ont sur l'environnement urbain et peut construire la médiation interculturelle à travers la participation aux initiatives créatives culturelles; 5. la conscience collective urbaine devient une infusion organique de l'interaction créative interculturelle, par l'intermédiaire de la narration qui rapproche les gens les uns aux autres et, au même temps, les mènent plus proche à la ville. Tout d'abord, il est important pour les gens qui s'occupent des affaires culturelles en Grèce, de reconnaître l'art du storytelling comme un atout dans les arts de la scène pour la médiation interculturelle. Deuxièmement, la narration est considérablement liée aux arts qui construisent le caractère particulier de la ville et peut exprimer, via les modes créatifs, les questions qui préoccupent le collectif d'un environnement multiculturel en contribuant à une régénération urbaine basée sur l'art. Troisièmement, storytelling est un instrument pour stimuler la créativité du collectif, par conséquent, il est important pour les théoriciens, ainsi que pour les praticiens de la culture, de comprendre et investir à la créativité participative parce qu'elle accueille les idées de la convention collective, les défait et les rend fructueuses.

Cadre historique

Au-delà de toutes les longitudes et latitudes, même si elles appartiennent à la sphère de la réalité ou si elles se balancent dans un monde d'extrême hyper-réalité, les histoires voyagent. Elles parlent beaucoup de la motivation, du contact humain et des comportements, soit avec de simples vecteurs, soit de façon triviale ou allégorique, en mettant en lumière la communication des messages importants. Arthur Ransome (1909) a affirmé que "au début, la narration n'était pas une affaire de plume et de l'encre. Elle a commencé de se définir en exprimant les exemples d'avertissement naturellement racontés par une mère à ses enfants, et les exploits exagérément

racontés par un mari-fanfaron à sa femme ou entre amis, [...] [storytelling a été] engendré par la vanité de l'homme et les exigences de sa vie" (6). Sans doute la narration détecte ses racines aux récits oraux et à la mythologie, tous les deux fortement liés à la tradition populaire et les légendes, les sculptures et les symboles. "Les mythes-histoires des dieux, des héros et des grands événements cosmiques se trouvent dans toutes les nombreuses cultures du monde. [...] Les mythes apparaissent au début comme des contes racontés au coin du feu, [...] plus tard, avec l'invention de l'écriture, les gens ont commencé à écrire leurs mythes et à les adapter aux nouvelles formes d'écriture en les transformant en pièces de théâtre, des poèmes et des romans" (Wilkinson, 2009:6).

Ses origines sont liées à des rituels religieux et des poèmes chantés tels que les épopées dans la mythologie grecque racontée par le *rhapsode*. Le *rhapsode* et les bardes célèbres pendant le temps des Celtes et celui de Shakespeare étaient les premiers conteurs -chanteurs et narrateurs-professionnels. L'une des figures les plus frappantes est celle du Barde d'Avon à savoir de William Shakespeare, qui maîtrisait l'art de la structure et du style. Le style est d'un intérêt particulier, car il ajoute les éléments de la symétrie et de l'harmonie au texte, grâce à l'effet rythmique et mnémotechnique produit par deux sons de fréquences différentes, qui sonnent simultanément et qui aboutissent à des stimuli acoustiques agréables et particulièrement susceptibles d'aider à la mémorisation, l'improvisation et la livraison de la pièce. La mélodie crée un équilibre entre le langage narratif d'un côté et le langage dramatique de l'autre et fait l'oreille naviguer, s'envoler, s'échapper, ligne par ligne, scène par scène, rhapsodie par rhapsodie dans l'espace profond et volumineux de la narration. Ceci est crucial pour la naissance de l'art du storytelling, à cette époque-là car le storyteller, tout en jouant de sa lyre, tissait les paroles des toutes les histoires que le son et le sens suggéraient.

Storytelling se rapporte à la logique des contes et des principes de la narratologie avec les récits de fiction et non-fiction en tant que structures de communication. A cause du fait que les codes fonctionnent à un niveau abstrait, le contenu de la narration constitue essentiellement un phénomène mental en s'appuyant sur l'imagination du peuple et ses mécanismes cérébraux conformes à la perception. Les histoires, comme la plupart des récits, sont des structures sémiotiques. "Un récit n'est que la représentation sémiotique d'une série d'événements liés pour produire du sens, d'une façon temporelle et causale [...] à travers les moyens sémiotiques: une langue écrite ou parlée, des images, des gestes et des actes, ainsi que une combinaison de tous ceux-ci" (Onega & Landa, 1996:3). Amy E. Spaulding affirme que storytelling "est une forme de don" (2011:8) qui exige une communication et une interaction. Les instruments utilisés sont les personnages, l'intrigue et le point de vue. Le mode de réalisation de ces éléments présente des

densités de flux et des vitesses multiples car il peut être réalisé dans une variété de modes, de la même manière comme il se fait dans tous les arts.

Lectures contemporaines de l'art en Grèce

L'art du récit en Grèce n'a pas encore reçu un hommage respectable en tant que forme d'art reconnue et en tant que instrument de médiation interculturelle, et il n'est pas affilié ni avec la mythologie, ni avec les études de théâtre. La tradition orale est sous l'égide du Ministère de la Culture et dans le nord de la Grèce sous la supervision du Musée du folklore et d'ethnologie de Macédoine et de Thrace. En 2011, le Musée a organisé un séminaire sur storytelling par Mme Anthi Thanou, qui est également active dans POFA, un groupe de professionnels talentueux et instruits, dédiés à l'art du storytelling. Néanmoins, la narration n'est pas encore reconnue comme un instrument dans les mains des professionnels de la culture, des artistes et des amateurs de la créativité et de la médiation. En Grèce, il y a soif et faim culturelles pour le travail coopératif dans les niveaux nationaux et internationaux. Les artistes, les acteurs culturels et les opérateurs, les gestionnaires et les entrepreneurs dans leur majorité, consacrent toute leur passion, temps et réflexion à une carrière solo. Mais ce qui est proposé est de nourrir la responsabilisation des acteurs culturels afin de se rebeller contre les cadres asphyxiants de grandeur individuelle et embrasser la créativité collective. En écoutant la voix du collectif intrigué par la multiethnicité, en permettant aux gens de prononcer leurs histoires et de les partager, il est prévu de conserver le patrimoine culturel, préserver la diversité culturelle et à établir la citoyenneté culturelle.

Cadre conceptuel

Les liens entre la narration et l'analyse des réseaux sociaux nous aident à comprendre comment storytelling influence les relations humaines. Il y a cette idée qui constate que "les gens sont connectés dans de vastes réseaux sociaux" et que "la clé de la compréhension des gens est la compréhension des liens entre eux" (Christakis et Fowler, 2010: xi). En d'autres termes, "tout ce que nous faisons ou disons tend à se répercuter à travers notre réseau, ayant un impact sur nous et le réseau lui-même" (Christakis et Fowler, 2010:28). Les réseaux sociaux sont des structures sociales versées à des personnes, des individus ou des groupes, liés par des types spécifiques d'interdépendance. La densité du réseau dépend des ses nœuds de la même façon comme un arbre dépend de ses feuilles. Les nœuds peuvent être des personnes, des organisations, des pays et ainsi de suite. Ils façonnent les chemins de la communication et désignent les relations. C'est grâce à ces liens que l'information, les idées, les sentiments, les expériences, les souvenirs, se déplacent autour les gens et les unissent. Lorsque le storyteller s'adresse à l'auditeur, la communication

entre eux devient plus profonde qu'un simple échange d'informations. Le partage d'une histoire implique une communication en direct, une interaction et un engagement sensible.

Les gens éprouvent l'expérience de raconter des histoires et de les partager avec les autres en renforçant l'effet de réseau. L'effet du réseau c'est l'épine dorsale des réseaux sociaux, car il favorise la sensibilisation sociale et culturelle, et la participation. Quand les gens interagissent, ils créent du contenu, des idées et partagent des renseignements personnels. A travers les liens qu'ils construisent l'un avec l'autre, soit par le dialogue soit par toute autre forme de communication, ils exercent une influence sur les opinions, les perceptions et les comportements d'autres personnes à l'intérieur du réseau. Il y a un échange d'informations culturelles tout au cours du récit, il y a des idées qui influencent le développement de la conscience. La diffusion et la circulation des idées sont très importantes pour la formation d'une conscience collective. Cela dépend de la nature des liens et s'il existe des liens forts ou non. Lorsque les liens sont forts, la communication est facilitée, la créativité et la diversité est renforcée, permettant la médiation, l'échange et une appréciation plus profonde. Les histoires et la psychologie empirique sociale sont étroitement liées par un principe commun, le principe de s'engager avec des émotions, des sentiments et des images. Paul Ekman (1994) a étudié la nature des émotions et a fait valoir que les émotions sont des réponses à des stimuli qui surgissent sur des mécanismes d'évaluation, qui fonctionnent presque automatiquement, afin de réagir aux événements. Les émotions fonctionnent en interrelation avec le comportement et plusieurs états cognitifs. Et puisque la contagion émotionnelle favorise l'interaction et la réciprocité, il est important pour les gens de s'engager avec le storyteller et de travailler avec lui / elle.

Afin d'examiner pourquoi une expérience partagée rapproche les gens à un endroit, il faut détecter les liens entre les gens et l'endroit, et la façon dont ceux-ci sont créés et fonctionnent dans les rencontres quotidiennes. Pour donner un sens à propos de la ville, il faut venir sur place pour vivre des expériences culturelles, sur et dans la ville. Tony Hiss (1990) écrit à propos de l'expérience des lieux que "les images, les sons, les odeurs et les sensations du toucher et de l'équilibre, ainsi que les pensées et les sentiments" stimulent notre "perception simultanée [qui] nous aide à connaître notre environnement et nos réactions face à eux, et pas seulement nos propres pensées et désirs" (3-4). Il faut se connecter avec le lieu. Les modes via lesquels les gens se connectent avec la ville et avec l'autre sont influencés par et influencent leur comportement social et leur patrimoine culturel, artistique, créatif. Donner un sens à un lieu nécessite une expérience physiquement et mentalement acquise. Raconter des histoires peut aider à cela parce que les gens qui se livrent à des explorations créatives et des lectures de l'espace urbain peuvent réévaluer et approcher à nouveau l'endroit urbain sous une perspective meilleure.

Recherche sur le terrain

La recherche sur le terrain, le *projet storytelling*, qui comprenait des questionnaires fermés remplis par cinquante citoyens de Thessalonique, nous a donné une idée. Les gens étaient invités à répondre à vingt-cinq questions oui ou non, établies en cinq parties correspondant aux cinq hypothèses. Les réponses positives étaient: 1. Storytelling nourrit l'interaction sociale au sein des communautés multiculturelles 88% ; 2. La réciprocité dans les relations intensifie l'excitation émotionnelle 52% ; 3. L'émotion dirige les expériences, tisse l'image de la ville et l'imprègne de familiarité 94% ; 4. La créativité participative dans la narration s'appuie à la médiation interculturelle 48% ; 5. La conscience collective urbaine dépend de l'interaction 86%.

Même si les pourcentages de réponses pour savoir si l'art du storytelling intensifie l'interaction sociale et renforce les liens des réseaux sociaux sont élevés, les pourcentages de réponses pour savoir si la créativité participative nourrit la domesticité, la médiation interculturelle et la réciprocité sont bas, les deux demi atteint du total. Cela montre que même si les gens croient dans les aspects positifs de la narration pour rapprocher les gens les uns aux autres, ils semblent ne pas croire que cet engagement peut gérer des questions sensibles de médiation interculturelle. Les résultats de ces questions pour la troisième hypothèse ont montré que les émotions, les expériences et l'effet réseau influencent l'image de la ville; affectent la conscience du peuple et jouent un rôle important dans l'établissement de la familiarité et de la domesticité.

En outre, les questions sur l'écoute des histoires d'immigrants, ont montré que les gens s'intéressent à écouter l'histoire de quelqu'un d'autre et s'ouvrir au dialogue interculturel. Mais, il y avait aussi une question sur la co-création des histoires avec les immigrants et les réponses positives étaient seulement 19 qui font 38% montrant que les gens ne sont pas prêts à s'asseoir ensemble et co-créer sur la diversité culturelle, la créativité et les projets de médiation interculturelle. Thessalonique est une ville riche au sujet de la diversité de la population. La volonté des gens d'écouter n'est pas suffisante pour gérer l'intégration, la cohésion sociale et la prospérité fondée sur la diversité.

Modifier les politiques culturelles

Raconter des histoires peut être le lien pour établir et accomplir des projets artistiques interculturels entre la Grèce et les autres pays des Balkans. Raconter et surtout "raconter l'histoire urbaine ne signifie pas éradiquer le passé, mais exactement le contraire, à savoir de s'appuyer sur lui et d'utiliser les éléments historiques du passé pour se porter en avant et se faire progresser. Pour arriver à cette fin nous devons examiner honnêtement les mythes qui nous soutiennent et

nous donnent notre identité” (Landry, 2006:328). Milena Dragicevic Šeši (2007) dans son article *The Creative City: Crossing Visions and New Realities in the Region* intitulé *Culture as a resource of city development* affirme que les mythes et les récits, les souvenirs développés au cours des siècles font partie de l’identité culturelle ainsi que du patrimoine. On prétend que les modes selon lesquels les gens vivent, prennent conscience et se comportent, est un amalgame de différentes relations intra-et-interpersonnelles, étroitement liées par la diversité culturelle.

La conscience collective est une force omniprésente et importante dans la vie urbaine, car elle permet aux gens de s’auto-observer et de prendre la responsabilité de leurs actes, puisque ce sont ces actes exactement qui imprègnent, présentent et remettent en question les relations de la société. La conscience collective dépend de la signification les personnes associent et attachent à leurs expériences. Ce genre de prise de conscience sociale de l’image de la ville est façonné par les événements, ainsi que par les processus physiques et mentaux qui se produisent dans la ville. Les citoyens de Thessalonique se sentent impuissants à exprimer leurs voix et ainsi, ils restent passifs dans un monde solitaire. Storytelling peut briser les barrières et ouvrir un dialogue sur les arts folkloriques, la mythologie et les arts de la scène. Il est important pour la médiation interculturelle dans les Balkans d’établir un réseau de communication entre les théoriciens et les praticiens qui en incorporant la narration dans leur travail artistique peuvent assister aux différentes nuances dans l’art entre les pays, documenter les aspects uniques, élaborés sur des concepts communs et collaborer à la préservation et à la promotion de la diversité culturelle.

Raconter des histoires, soit de la terre d’origine soit non, peut combler les générations et montrer comment les gens partagent les mêmes émotions et défis. En le faisant, les attitudes xénophobes seront affaiblies parce qu’il y aura le contact direct et en plus, la communication des connaissances sur la tradition et le patrimoine culturel de tous, sera transférée et animée au sein du collectif multiculturel. Les politiques culturelles devraient renforcer la coopération, le partenariat et la participation active d’une manière approfondie à la création artistique et au développement régional. Protéger les histoires d’une communauté, c’est protéger la qualité de la valeur artistique et investir dans l’enrichissement de l’art du storytelling, c’est investir dans l’autonomisation de la diversité culturelle et la compréhension mutuelle qui rapprochent les gens les uns aux autres grâce aux expériences partagées.

Les politiques culturelles en Grèce devraient mettre l’accent sur une véritable collaboration interculturelle dans le champ du storytelling, basée sur des partenariats. En outre, il doit être établi une alliance coordonnée avec les politiques urbaines et les politiques de gestion de l’espace en se concentrant sur des visions à long terme et plus particulièrement sur la façon de développer la culture urbaine au niveau local et au-delà de la mise en œuvre de la créativité de la

société civile. Investir dans la créativité participative et plus exactement dans storytelling sera une invitation pour les citoyens de chaque ville et évidemment de Thessalonique, à exercer leurs droits culturels dans le cadre d'une autonomisation productive, avec des relations sociales et créatives profondes et une communication interculturelle.

L'idée est simple: permettre d'éduquer et d'engager. Pour ressusciter les espaces urbains à travers la participation à des activités interculturelles, il vaut mieux faire appel à un dialogue sur les réalités de la migration et de la diversité de la ville, organiser des débats ouverts sur les conflits culturels et la liberté d'expression artistiques, tous protégés par des accords entre l'UE et les pays non-UE. "Réunir les différents points de vue et essayer de créer une compréhension partagée entre tous les acteurs peut conduire à l'émergence de nouvelles idées" (Fischer et al, 2002:1). Jack Zipes (1995) affirme que la fabrication des mythes peut "créer une communauté" (7) parce que "les conteurs ne sont pas seulement des artistes, ils peuvent exécuter, mais ils sont avant tout des auditeurs et animateurs, ils écoutent les contes avant de les réciter, ils absorbent les phénomènes, les expériences et les conditions, et ils observent, puis ils partagent ces expériences"(7). Raconter des histoires peut être un moteur important pour la rénovation urbaine et civique en rapprochant et en investissant dans la créativité participative des communautés diverses et en envisageant de nouvelles images de la vie urbaine.

Conclusion

Ce document aspire plutôt d'être un générateur de la théorie que de la documentation, en examinant la théorie des liens entre l'art du storytelling, la conscience urbaine collective et le capital créatif. L'ensemble des hypothèses sont confirmées par la recherche sur le terrain, mais beaucoup reste encore inexploré et énigmatique. Dans ce travail, on a exploré comment le récit circule au sein des réseaux sociaux dans la ville multiculturelle de Thessalonique; comment la psychologie sociale et les émotions influencent les gens et établissent la conscience et la forme de la ville; comment la co-crédation des contes urbains tisse l'image de la ville et comment la créativité peut animer la domesticité participative et favoriser la médiation interculturelle. Les politiques culturelles sont étroitement liées à ces concepts et il est suggéré d'investir dans la richesse et la diversité culturelle de la narration dans le pays entier ainsi que à toutes ses régions. Des histoires étaient, sont et seront incessamment créés pour représenter, donner un sens, transmettre des sentiments différents sur la nature humaine, la société et la culture, ainsi que pour représenter des mondes imaginaires et des concepts abstraits. Elles dévoilent un univers extraordinaire, plein de paradoxes et énormément riche en perspectives et possibilités. Il serait bien dommage de ne pas en profiter.

Introduction

I. Storytelling: a boat recently grounded on the bank of academic research

“Storytelling is not what I do for a living. It is how
I do all that I do while I am living.”
-Donald Davis²

“One must not tie a ship to a single anchor.”
-Epictetus³

Stories travel. Beyond all longitudes and latitudes whether they belong to the realm of reality or whether they swing in segues of extreme hyper-realities, stories travel. Some stories travel faster than others and some manage to cross over geographical, socio-cultural, political or temporal borders and en route to intellectual mortality or immortality they migrate through minds and hearts enriching and challenging oral and written narratives. Stories orchestrate masterfully the pulses of narratives for quite some time now not because of their quality of concept or composition which can be effortlessly bargained down; but because of their crafty competence to speak volumes about human motivation, contact and behaviour with either simple, trivial or allegorical vectors spotlighting the communication of significant messages. They transcend substance, style and structure and they x-ray the human heart. This became a beguiling siren song to surrender rationality to a deep sea fishing for imagination, a long distance dedication to stories granted many allegiances by people throughout the centuries and the globe.

Stories became the journey itself when researchers dove into them in order to explore them, define and understand them. Unlocking the doors to the wonders of this art yet non-acknowledged became a quest anything but mundane for both professional and amateur intellectual wanderings. Arthur Ransome (1884-1967) assembled in 1909 a coherent profile of the development of the art of storytelling in his book *A History of Story-telling* where he stated that “in the beginning storytelling was not an affair of pen and ink. It began with the warning examples naturally told by a mother to her children, and with the embroidered exploits told by a boaster to his wife or friends; [...] [storytelling was] generated by the vanity of man and the exigencies of his life” (6). A few years later in 1915, Marie Shedlock (1854-1935) presented her

² The quote appears at this link: http://www.ddavisstoryteller.com/personal_bio.html.

³ The quote appears at this link: <http://www.quotes.stevenredhead.com/ancient/GreekQuotes.html>.

work *The Art of the Story-Teller* in which she blended wit and wisdom in her education-based approach to “the intimate relation between a child’s instincts and the finished art of dramatic presentation” (Barnes x). She produced a treatise on the methodology of teaching using stories and she exemplified strategies and *artifices* of devices which attract and hold the attention of the audience.

Undoubtedly storytelling originated from the oral narratives and mythology strongly connected with folk tradition and legends, carvings and symbols. “Myths –stories of the gods, of heroes, and of great cosmic events- are told in all of the world’s many cultures. [...] Myths began as tales told around the fire, [...] later, with the invention of writing, people began to write their myths down and adapt them in new ways turning them into plays, poems, or novels” (Philip Wilkinson 6). The origins of storytelling are also connected with religious rituals and sung poems such as the *epics*<*epos* in ancient Greek Mythology narrated by the storytellers of the period, the *rhapsode*, who also improvised during the narrative. Two of the most striking examples of storytelling from that period are Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Both pieces are epic poems written to be sung. *Iliad* communicates the stories of the Trojan War between the ancient Greeks and the city of Troy in Minor Asia and *Odyssey* portrays the twenty-year long adventures of Odysseus, King of Ithaca, who fought against numerous mythical creatures on his journey back home after the Trojan War. Accordingly, from the Roman mythology Virgil’s *Aeneid* the epic poem which figures the adventures of Aeneas, a Trojan leader who survived the war and escaped to Carthage in North Africa, is also a sequence of stories of the same style. What is important to accentuate is the ways language influences the narrative and how certain stylistic decisions encourage certain readings upon the stories and the connoted meanings.

The style is of particular interest because it adds to the symmetry and the harmony of the text due to the rhythmic and mnemonic effect of the simultaneously production of two sounds of different frequencies resulting in a pleasant acoustic stimuli which assists the memorization, improvisation and delivery of the piece. The melody created balances the narrative language with the dramatic language and navigates the ear from line to line, scene to scene, rhapsody to rhapsody. This is crucial to the birth of the art of storytelling at that time because the storyteller wove the words of the stories as the sound and the meanings dictated, and alongside his lyre playing the unfolded incidents were enhanced by witty linguistic combinations and meaningful transitions between imagery and acoustic effects. It is argued that oral tradition including the epics became the instrument for the ancestors to transfer information, imaginative or not, to their descendants wishing to instil insight and knowledge about social behaviour and contact; as well

as to shape the art of storytelling, empower the value of the narrative and pencil it on cultural heritage.

An important benchmark in the modern history of the art is the stories of the two German brothers, Jakob (1785-1863) and Wilhelm Grimm (1786-1859). Their work entitled *Grimms' Fairy Tales* is a collection of nearly two hundred stories which proposed the set up environment for folklore studies because of the detailed methodology of collecting, recording, modifying and documenting stories mostly of oral nature. Their scientific approach paved the way for a deepened understanding of tales inspired by legends, myths, oral and written compositions of the medieval times. Stories like *Hansel and Gretel*, *the Little Red Riding Hood* and *Sleeping Beauty*, were edited and presented as a substantial contribution to folkloric heritage and proposed for the first time a sharpened and systematized appreciation of the discipline. Additionally, the immeasurable contribution of Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) and Lewis Carroll aka Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832-1898) cannot go unnoticed. Both storytellers and theorists produced collections and diaries of fairy tales discussing both content and methodology. The former, major figure in the realm of storytelling is known for the widely read stories of *The Snow Queen*, *The Little Mermaid*, and *The Little Match Girl* and the latter for *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and the revolutionary linguistic treatment of tales.

Equally and notably valuable to the contemporary scientific analysis of the art was the work of Milman Parry (1902-1935) who baptized the discipline as *oral tradition* and discovered formulas and patterns in the epic poetry and particularly in the work of Homer. Parry insightfully underpinned in his dissertations the existence of several clear-cut patterns in grammar and vocabulary that keyed the prior verse with the next in order to aid memorization. His *Oral Formulaic Hypothesis* came into existence after his field expeditions in ex-Yugoslavia and his recordings and readings of oral local poetry with the help of Alfred Lord (1912-1991). The research introduced the idea that the style and structure of the epic poetry relied heavily on the nature of the composition which was to be memorized, to be told, sung and retold. He believed that the narrative was prompted by standardized phrases restrained by metrical boundaries because the performance of the storyteller was a mixture of memorization and improvisational composition. However, his concept put into question the originality and value of the Homeric masterpieces and this excited the differences between oral and written storytelling inquiring the influence of improvisation on the art work.

Parry's favour over the "true" nature of oral composition motivated Walter Ong (1912-2003) to produce the research *Orality and Literacy* in which he dealt primarily with the interplay between oral and written cultural heritage underscoring that orality transcends the lack of text and

builds concrete communication bridges cemented by the direct transfer of information. Alongside came John Miles Foley (1947-2012) who systematized the academic research by creating the journal *Oral Tradition* and founding in 1986 the *Centre for Studies in Oral Tradition* under the aegis of the University of Missouri. His methodology explained in *The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology* concentrated on the performative part of storytelling and the influential character of oral performances onto the cultural scene of a society. Foley paved a firm route for the discipline by creating collaborative bridges between scholars and educational and cultural institutions worldwide. At this point, the discipline of oral tradition was established as an academic field of interest and storytelling was definitely a part of it.

Storytelling: An Encyclopaedia of Mythology and Folklore published in 2008 and edited by Josepha Sherman is a very recent example of academic research. In the three volumes of this definitive study, storytellers from all over the world and documentations of folkloric and mythic art are depicted as poignantly as possible. Apart from the history of the art and the individuals who got directly or indirectly involved, there is multifarious information about the praxis, practices and customs of telling a story. A similar study is also Philip Wilkinson's *Myths and Legends: An Illustrated Guide to their Origins and Meanings* where there is detailed classification of mythic literature according to the place of origin. Recently in 2003, John Walsh published his book *The Art of Storytelling: Easy Steps to Presenting an Unforgettable Story* in which through preaching he suggests tools to strengthen our ability to tell a tale. He states with insight the following:

People of my generation are considered analytical thinkers. For us, everything is linear. We think in facts and figures; [...] Stories were props that supported and illustrated the theme; [...] Sorry, but that has all changed. [...] [Story thinkers] have become some of the most creative, productive citizens of our society. They want the information, and they want it straight. But they want it in a way that holds their interest. Stories are the best way to reach this new breed of thinker.

(John Walsh 15-16)

More recently in 2011, Amy E. Spaulding wrote *The Art of Storytelling: Telling Truths through Telling Stories*, a book which encompasses exercises and techniques to celebrate the joy of storytelling. Her work is an important addition to the academic research not only because it presents pedagogical methods of teaching storytelling and teaching with stories, but also because it exemplifies in simple utterances inspired by her experience the living nature of the art, its ethics and the enchanting professionalism it possesses.

It cannot be missing from this retrospective academic approach that narratology came to embrace storytelling as a mothering figure. The discipline of oral tradition married the science of narratology and part of the fruitful conversations were about the art of storytelling. In the 1970s, structuralism theorists, scholars and critics of discourse and poetics such as Gerard Genette with his book *Narrative Discourse*, and Gerald Prince, Seymour Chatman with his book *Story and Discourse*, Ronald Barthes, and Mieke Bal with his book *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of the Narrative*, developed scientific approaches to the study of mainly written narratives. Susana Onega and José Angel Garcia Landa wrote in *Narratology: An Introduction* that “narratology is, etymologically, the science of narrative” a study “which negotiates and incorporates the insights of many other critical discourses that involve narrative forms of representation” (1). Storytelling pertains to the logic and principles of narratology with fictional and non-fictional narratives as communication structures. Because codes operate on an abstract level, the content of a narrative is essentially imagistic, a mental phenomenon relying on the people’s imagination and perception brain mechanisms.

Stories like most narratives are semiotic structures carrying autonomous signifying entities which communicate meaningful messages. Seymour Chatman based on the work of Louis Hjelmslev drew a distinction between a story’s substance and form stating:

Substance relies upon expression, that is, the media insofar as they can communicate stories and upon content, that is, the representations of objects and actions in real and imagined worlds that can be imitated in a narrative medium; and form relies upon expression, that is, the narrative discourse (the structure of narrative transmission) consisting of elements shared by narratives in any medium whatsoever and upon content, that is, the narrative story components: events, existents, and their connections. (24)

Storytelling relates directly to that narrative story components as substance and form work in tandem. Like novelists for instance, storytellers wish to form their messages in stylistic modes of expressive communication. The producer of the content, the narrator, relies on the stylistic format to send the intended and often unintended messages to the receiver, as well as the receiver becomes a producer of meaning himself whilst decoding and encoding the content with perception filtered by his cultural codes.

Theorists of the studies of hermeneutics attempted to understand and interpret linguistic as literary (history, the novel, short stories) and non-literary (theatrical, pictorial, filmic) expressions in order to decode the principles of narratology. For the hermeneutic critics, “it is impossible to divorce the meaning of a text from the cultural context of its interpreter” (Baldwin

et al, 35), and “a narrative text [is] not events, as such, but signs, the representations of events” (Susana Onega and José Angel Garcia Landa 5). “A narrative is the semiotic representation of a series of events meaningfully connected in a temporal and causal way [...] through semiotic media: written or spoken language, visual images, gestures and acting, as well as a combination of these” (Susana Onega and José Angel Garcia Landa 3). In that sense, a story seems to be the signified of the narrative, “a fibula which has been given a presentational shape: a specific point of view and temporal scheme” (Susana Onega and José Angel Garcia Landa 8). Narratology calls story a sequence of events and narrative discourse a specific representation of these events via audio, visual, symbolic, etc. media.

“For Levi-Strauss, a myth is a story that is a specific and local transformation of a deep structure of binarily opposed concepts that are important to the culture within which the myth circulates” (John Fiske 122). “For Levi-Strauss myth is a narrative that is recognized as a myth even if its meanings are not consciously negotiated by the people using it” (John Fiske 132). “Myth is a story by which a culture explains or understands some aspect of reality or nature. Primitive myths are about life and death, men and gods, good and evil. Our sophisticated myths are about masculinity and femininity, about the family, about success” (John Fiske 88). “A myth, for [Roland] Barthes, is a culture’s way of thinking about something, a way of conceptualizing or understanding it” (John Fiske 88). “Roland Barthes used the term *myth* to refer to the cultural values and beliefs, [...], [the] set of rules and conventions through which meanings, [...], are made to seem universal and given for a whole society” (Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright 19). However, universality in cultural processes and products is a risky interpretation. Stories may address a universal audience huddled by a campfire but the denoted and connoted messages are culturally dependent and specific. This is evident even if the whole experience of telling a story expands in temporal, spatial, social and cultural borders intensifying the excitement of this creative arousal of imaginative minding and communicating.

“Other critics envision narratology as an umbrella term, the meeting-place of multiple approaches to narrative, from the standpoint of a variety of disciplines: history, anthropology, psychology, cognitive science, hermeneutic philosophy, ideological criticism, and so on” (Susana Onega and José Angel Garcia Landa 35). Consequently, being part of that envisaging discussion, storytelling fired many debates up until today on whether its emergence was structured around the preservation, protection and promotion of cultural tradition and mythology, around entertainment as for theatre, around indoctrinated political speeches overloaded with strategic objectives or around a random love for stories. Even if the controversy is only expected to intensify, my stand is that it was the *mélange* of all situated conditions that electrified the sparkle of interest, and, due

to the fertility of the soil, the impregnation of the craft with the art developed naturally. There are scientific explanations for the fertile character of the prosperous minds that cultivated the art and this thesis will scrupulously endeavour to shed light upon them. The relationship between the art of storytelling and urban collective perception as an organic brew of participatory creativity fostering intercultural mediation and ensuring cultural diversity is at the centre of the attention.

II. Chalk outline: all-embracing definitions of the art of storytelling

“Storytelling is almost the oldest art in the world,
the first conscious form of [...] communication.”

-Marie Shedlock⁴

Shaping and granting a definition to the art of storytelling is a process more intricate than the descriptive lexicography it demands. Several convoluted arguments have been introduced so far but their definitive character should be treated with vigilant retrospection. It would be unfavourable to argue that a straightforward statement could precisely enclose the perplexities and complexities of storytelling in its totality. According to Ransome, storytelling initiated as the way to represent manhood as equally powerful to the grandness of the gods. “The history of storytelling henceforth is that of the abasement of the grand and the uplifting of the lowly, and of the mingling of the two” (10) envisioning the super-humanity of man and later on the loss of it. Spaulding argues that storytelling “is part of the legacy of being human” (7) and that “it is a form of giving” (8) hence it requires communication and interaction. Varying in design, length and content stories have been carved, scratched, painted, printed or inked onto wood or bamboo, ivory and other bones, pottery, clay tablets, stone, palm-leaf books, skins (parchment), paper, canvas and other textiles, recorded on film, and stored electronically in digital form. Therefore, it is suggested to defend the case from an inclusive all-embracing perspective as sharp as possible.

The etymology⁵ of the word *storytelling* is rooted in 1709 with origins in the Old French and English language of the 1200s and the 1300s. In detail, storytelling is a compound word of the noun *story* and the verb *to tell* where the former dates from the early 13th century and portrays “an account of something happening, a narrative of important events or celebrated persons of the past, or of fictitious events meant to entertain, a floor of a building, a picture.” The word *story* originates from the noun *history*<*historia*<*estorie* meaning “the relation of incidents, a chronicle,

⁴ The quote is taken from Marie Shedlock’s book *The Art of the Story-teller*.

⁵ Source: <http://www.etymonline.com/>.

a narrative of past events, a tale” and it relates to the verb to *see* and earlier to the past tense *ĩ* of the Greek verb *ĩ* which means “to know.” And the latter comes from the Old English *tellan*<*talo*, later also *tale*, and means “to calculate, account, mention in order, narrate, relate, announce” with the meaning of “narrate” from the 1000s and that of “to make known by speech or writing, announce” from the early 12th century. Semantically, storytelling displays the narrative of events portrayed in words, images and/or sounds usually improvised and/or embellished for a particular reason. Telling a story involves conveying information about some characters, an action or a plot, the sequence of events, and narrating this material from a specific or non-specific point of view.

Aristotle argued in *Poetics* that “every tragedy must have six parts which determine its quality – namely: plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle and song” (*Poetics* 4). This structural principle applies to storytelling as well because like a tragedy a story imitates, presents and projects action. These elements are assembled into a piece of art when the objectives and the manner of delivery are exercised as defined. Drama is deeply related to storytelling. Oral performances gave birth to tragedy long before storytelling was associated with mythology and folklore culture. Although the scientific observations were initiated by folklorists, dramatic writers engaged with the art prior to its recent academic acknowledgement. And, Shedlock comments:

The art of telling stories is, in truth, much more difficult than acting a part on the stage. First, because the narrator is responsible for the whole drama and the whole atmosphere which surrounds it [as] he has to live the life of each character and understand the relation which each bears to the whole; [and] secondly, because the stage is a miniature one, gestures and movements must all be so adjusted as not to destroy the sense of proportion. [...] [Thus] the special training for the story-teller should consist not only in the training of the voice and in choice of language, but above all in power of delicate suggestion, which cannot always be used on the stage because this is hampered by the presence of actual things. The story-teller has to present these things to the more delicate organism of the “inward eye.” (31-32)

In fact, the narrative of stories is drama as it is a performance, an expression, a direct communication of ideas, images and feelings in a specific manner, time and space. The features of dramatic art that storytelling has assimilated into its practice go beyond structural design and reach the profound and underlying ideological profile of the art.

The commonly shared ideology probes deeply into the minding of the human being performing an autopsy on human condition and contact. Imitating action is more than an entertainment inquiry of informative and didactic character; it is a premeditated voyaging into consciousness to detect how perception works, how emotions interfere with the brain and how psychological tickles encourage or discourage certain social interactions. When people engage with narrative either masqueraded as storytelling or as a dramatic piece, stories become the powerboats that carry semantically and emotionally bound values; these values reflect social beliefs and ethics, cultural qualities and tendencies. The driving engine that projects such problématique is usually exaggeration in the cause and effect relation of incidents supposedly ushering the soul into a cathartic resolution and an enlightening self-awareness. By fleshing out characters and by breathing life into the narrative, the dramatic character of storytelling sets up a compilation of themes and theatrical channels to capture the attention, challenge the mind and elevate the soul.

Aristotle further added in his work *Rhetoric* that there are dramatic elements mal-incorporated in another kind of storytelling, in rhetoric speech. In order to instantly captivate the attention, the rhetoricians intensified the elaboration of dramatic elements and wished to strengthen anaemic arguments with exaggerating imagery and vocabulary. The stories portrayed in such speeches became pseudo-documentations of truth. “An emotional speaker always makes his audience feel with him, even when there is nothing in his arguments; which is why many speakers try to overwhelm their audience by mere noise” (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 2). The rhetoric embodies practices of overwhelming preaching with qualities of self-portrayal, self-empowerment and self-recognition. The end to this is to persuade and “the use of persuasive speech is to lead to decisions” (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 18). Exaggeration and emotional language produce directness in persuasion and liveliness. “Liveliness is specially conveyed by metaphor and by the further power of surprising the hearer; because the hearer expects something different, his acquisition of the new idea impresses him all the more” (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 11). Thus, metaphorical speech is a technique which defines storytelling, drama and rhetoric practices as well.

“It was naturally the poets who first set the movement going for words represent things, and they had also the human voice at their disposal which of all our organs can best represent other things” (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1). And what became common practice in all three performances was the decision on volume of sound, modulation of pitch and rhythm. This decision affected the delivery of the narrative and consequently the examination of the subject matter. At this point it is important to reconsider whether storytelling is subject to indoctrination

or whether it endorses interaction, debate and the negotiation of meanings. The narrative mode could be subject to strategic objectives and propagated language yet storytelling is a ubiquitous component of human contact enriched by metaphors mostly for illustrative and entertaining purposes. Without lessening its didactic and protective over heritage character, it can be argued that stories do not serve as manifestos or as dogmatic evidence for truth or meaning. On the contrary, stories seem to seek the expansion of meaning, its regeneration through the offer of stimuli for communication, exchange of information and for a creative interaction that passes insight via exposing the imitation of life and not via imposing a reading upon life.

It is of great importance to concentrate on the fact that stories were from the beginning associated with a form of artistic expression and experimentation culturally bound. Evidently, storytelling initiated as poetic narrative exercised by gifted narrators often composers and singers such as the *rhapsode* and the bards famous during the Celtic and Shakespearean times. One of the most striking figures is the Bard of Avon or else William Shakespeare (1564-1616) who mastered the art and experimented with structure and style proposing a different poetic narrative distinguishable not only in his *Sonnets* but also in his plays. Later on, the modernist poets like the American T. S. Eliot (1888-1965) rejected the patronized verse and suggested a liberated writing style which projected the unlimited thinking process and the fragmentation of the *modern temper* in the stories' form and content. But, Ted Olson comments:

Even as the narrative urge fell out of favour in English-language poetry, amateur as well as professional 'storytellers' have honoured the spirit of the bards by keeping the art of the narrative alive. While perhaps not conveying their stories by means of structured 'poetical' forms, the most skilled of these storytellers have often created oral narratives every bit as memorable and entertaining as many of the narrative poems that have been written down and published in books and magazines. (1)

Whether carved, inked, told or written, stories were developed as a means of expression, meaningful communication and transfer of knowledge. The people who got engaged into the processes of creating, processing and delivering a story attempted to venture into the hinterland of abstraction and to return to the coastline of description armed with designs, shapes, patterns, symbols, sounds or/and words to communicate their messages to others.

The instruments employed were and still are the bone structure of a story. As mentioned above, together with language, the cardinal points are the characters, the plot and the point of view. The embodiment of these elements presents flux densities and velocities as it can be achieved in a variety of fashions connoted to decisions similar to artistic decisions. The mirroring

example is the art of screenwriting. Syd Field explains that screenwriting and scriptwriting are neighbouring concepts both in terms of form and content. In *The Screenwriter's Workbook* he states “whether you want to tell a story on the big screen or write a television show that can be downloaded onto an iPod, [...]; whether you want to create a video game or short film; a business plan or a Power Point presentation for any future delivery system, you have to know the tools and rules of visual storytelling (3). He draws the analogies between storytelling and screenwriting by juxtaposing the philosophy and the practices which underlie them. “Story exposition is shown rather than told; characters are revealed through behaviour, not dialogue; time present and past have merged into a compelling storytelling device” (Field 3) fabricating experiences and thoughts alluded to the imitation of life. And since action is character, screen and script writers should know that “good characters are the heart and soul and nervous system” of a story, the foundations of “an on-going, never-ending practice” of a three-acted narrative (Field 82-83).

Also, Per Persson argues in *Understanding Cinema: A Psychological Theory of Moving Imagery* anthropomorphism and the fact that actions are caused by desires and beliefs with beliefs shaped by perceptions and experiences, and desires motivated by emotions, makes cinematography a visual storytelling. “The spectator is equipped with certain psychological dispositions, obtained from everyday physical, social and cultural life, whose structure may illuminate cognitive appraisals of cinematic characters” (Per Persson 150) inspiring the identification process. Plus, the notion of *voyeurism* or *scopophilia* enhances the bonding of the spectator with the visual storytelling and their in-between dialogue bringing the fictive world closer to the eye and vice versa. Kristin Thompson added further to the research with her books *Storytelling in Film and Television* and *Storytelling in the New Hollywood: Understanding Classical Narrative Technique* that oral and written narratives share a lot with visual texts even if structurally and aesthetically they present diverse delivery options. The similarities merge in a parcel of narrative techniques, character-building guides and stylistic decisions. The ways nowadays television series, motion pictures and other filmic texts create storylines differentiate from the classical storytelling patterns but the hooking device remains the same; that of putting stories together in order to entertain.

With the art of writing flourishing, storytelling attracted more interest as a seeking novelty device. As mentioned previously, creative writing elaborated on its practices to boost the creativity of authors of many texts either literary or visual. Gradually stories blended with the concept of imagination-rooted creativity and grew into an art itself with the potential to become a full-fledged art form in the future. Spaulding states “everyone loves a story” (76) and:

[People] need to develop and keep alive the comfort with thinking, for thinking carries the power to understand what is happening and to originate a sensible response rather than an unthinking reaction. Stories give this strength by teaching the listener to think and to imagine, thus giving them the power to understand and to create wise solutions. Albert Einstein is supposed to have said, “imagination is more important than knowledge.” That makes sense to me, and I want all people to have imagination and the ability to make sensible judgments rather than just accumulate knowledge in the abstract about other people’s judgments. (135)

This is why academics, theorists and practitioners in the arts and humanities discipline ought to embody storytelling more sincerely into their way of thinking. Not only because it holds a long interdisciplinary tradition over communication patterns and methods, but also because it offered and still offers an inspiring instrument for interpreting and reinterpreting human contact and condition. Storytelling is a way to “make sensible judgments” upon intercultural mediation blending history and tradition with urban tales of everyday encounters in a multicultural environment such as Thessaloniki. Also, the role of the cultural participant can be redefined and re-evaluated if participatory performance of different communities is engaged in the discussion about the nature and flow of creative experience. In the parts *Hosting Policy Recommendations* and *Tipping Surplus Research* of this thesis, the beneficial character of the art to cultural policy and mediation management will be accurately explained and exemplified.

III. Contemporary showcases in the USA and the UK

“Create living people; people not characters
(for) a character is a caricature.”

-Ernest Hemingway⁶

Storytelling is growing in popularity stating in a rather vigorous fashion its autonomous voice to the cultural map almost worldwide. Nonetheless, this voice is newly born and fragile, and over-determinate affirmative nuisances should be screened out of the statement it makes. There are showcases in the USA and the UK which point semi-thoroughly towards a craven yet steady growth of interest in involvement and engagement with storytelling practices. This is partially

⁶ The quote appears at this link: http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/e/ernest_hemingway_4.html.

explained by the increase in the interdisciplinary academic research between scholars and researchers and by the people's enchantment with the new media which favour written and multimedia narratives and therefore experimentations with storylines, imitations and character building activities. For instance, the creation of characters like living people became in the gaming industry an important asset for designers and producers of electronic and web games. Martin Ericsson from the *Interactive Institute's Game Studio* presents the value of storytelling, drama and transmedia into the design of a game stating passionately that participatory interaction engaging the co-creation of the story is highly important and influential on the whole gaming experience. Nevertheless, there are more showcases in the arts and humanities discipline that demonstrate and validate the widely influential character of the art of storytelling.

To start with, there is the World Storytelling Day celebrated every year on the spring equinox in the northern hemisphere and on the autumn equinox in the southern. It is an international celebration of the art of storytelling which brings people from diverse cultures together to narrate and listen to stories whilst sharing inspiration and knowledge. It was initiated in Sweden in 1991 as *Alla Berattares Dag* (All Storytellers' Day). In every edition there is a particular theme to direct the selection of the stories and to creatively fertilize a debate of specific nature and objectives. This is the list of some past and future themes:

- 2005 - Bridges
- 2006 - The Moon
- 2007 - The Wanderer
- 2008 - Dreams
- 2009 - Neighbours
- 2010 - Light and Shadow
- 2011 - Water
- 2012 - Trees
- 2013 - Fortune and Fate
- 2014 - Monsters and Dragons

It is significant to notice that these themes can be found in the Balkan cultural heritage as well. Especially in the myths and legends of the region, natural elements, mythical creatures and fortune, play a pivotal role in oral tradition. For example, the Paleo-Balkan mythology is rich in stories of gods and people who fought monsters, in transcendental mysteries such as the Dionysian and Orphic Mysteries and unexplained natural phenomena from the Dacian Thracian and Illyrian traditions. Slavic mythology and Serbian epic poetry are full of beast-like dragons such as *Zmaj* and *Aždaja*.

Furthermore, concerning the United States of America, there is a rich inventory of organizations, networks and festivals about storytelling. The National Storytelling Network and the International Storytelling Centre in Jonesborough in Tennessee are two of the oldest and most acknowledged cases. In 1973 the National Storytelling Festival introduced its debut edition in the city of Jonesborough with immeasurable success. What followed the event was the creation of an association which managed the following editions and which became the National Storytelling Association in 1994. Four years later it was divided into the National Storytelling Network and the International Storytelling Centre. The scope and managerial strategies of these two non-profit organizations proclaim the performance, preservation and promotion via professional practice of the art. Under the fathering figure of Jimmy Neil Smith, founder and President Emeritus of the ISC, with international connections and inspiring agendas they wish to “rediscover the simplicity and basic truth of a well-told story and help people enrich and enliven their experiences, hopes, dreams and visions by celebrating and sharing personal and community cultural heritage.”⁷

Since storytelling builds upon effective communication, the basic principle that underlies their cause and policies is that people can capture, crave, tell, listen to and honour stories while bonding and creating a better living environment. The National Storytelling Festival takes place annually in October in Jonesborough and alongside the National Storytelling Conference in Cincinnati Ohio, they advocate for the support of this statement. Acclaimed as one of the Top 100 Events in North America, the festival on its 40th anniversary October 5 – 7, 2012 is a well-organized and well-run cultural event. Similarly, the conference which will take place June 28 – July 1, 2012 invites professional storytellers and amateur lovers of the art into an open debate with workshops and discussions for the protection and promotion of the value of storytelling both for the individual and the community.

Another showcase equally notable is the Storytelling and Arts Centre of the Southeast in Laurinburg in North Carolina. This cultural centre organizes and hosts annually the Storytelling Festival of Carolina in a three-day event which assembles in a storyline regional renowned and published storytellers and sums up the whole experience with a youth competition. Also, in New York State in Albany there is the Riverway Storytelling Festival born in 2001 and last edited April 16 – 21, 2012. It is a community festival organized on public libraries and inviting people to exchange skills, knowledge and experiences. In addition, the Illinois Storytelling Company with rich networking services and a promising festival, it commemorates the traditional nature of the art and suggests a more dedicated engagement for its preservation. Last but not least, the Northlands Storytelling Network proves to hold a qualified presence in the terrain because with

⁷ Source: <http://www.storytellingcenter.net/experience/about-isc/our-story/>.

its annual conference, last edited April 26 – 29, 2012 in Wisconsin with panel discussions, fringe performances, story concerts and workshops, it sheds light upon the problems storytelling confronts and its prospective development.

Regarding Great Britain, there is an equally systematized engagement which deals with the art. To start with, founded in 1993 the Society for Storytelling supports the art practitioners strongly. Believing in the entertaining, educational and therapeutic value of the story, the strategies wish to increase public awareness with open invitations, workshops, practices and publications, to explore in all its diverse forms the art itself and therefore to engage more people actively with established networks of liaised organizations and individuals. The annual National Storytelling Week initiated in 2000 and held during the first week in February in Wem, Shropshire attempts to meet these objectives. With an estimated audience of 17,000 people, this cultural event is a great opportunity for accumulating hands-on experience and for advancing skills and interest. The publicized material is very specific, rich and the advices offered encourage people to get more enthusiastic about the art.

The London Centre for International Storytelling is a central meeting point for professional tellers which hosts throughout the year storytelling performances and workshops in theatres, art centres, schools, museums and conferences. Co-existing with the Crick Crack Club since 2004, the centre is interested in preserving and exploring oral tradition, promoting the value and versatility of storytelling as a performance art, supporting artists who engage with narrative patterns, celebrating language and imagery in an international level and above all it is interested in establishing a venue dedicated to the art with an educational remit as well. Additionally, the London Storytelling Festival directs the audience's participation to creative engagement. The Spontaneity Shop and the Storytellers' Club organized last October in Leicester Square Theatre the first annual London Storytelling Festival suggesting a contemporary interaction with stories. Emphasizing on new practitioners and shows such as the Story Slams, the 10-day festival presented a romanticized celebration of stories with music, drama pieces and improvisations.

The Scottish Storytelling Centre in Edinburg is widely renowned for its commitment and creative approach to the welcoming embrace of storytelling initiatives. A well-built and enthusiastic team of professionals and supporters projects the modern tendencies of the art, welcomes new projects and builds upon history a fresh melting pot of people, pioneering ideas and memorable experiences. The centre is a friendly and inspiring place with the Storytelling Café, the library and the activity areas which present live performances, theatre and literature seasonally-themed events. It also offers training courses grounded in the philosophy of using stories in/for education, conducted by professional storytellers and offering the Storytelling

Journey Certificate of attendance. However, the most challenging event that the centre hosts is the Scottish International Storytelling Festival with the upcoming edition October 19 – 28, 2012 entitled *Once Upon a Story: Folktales of Europe*. The festival especially embodies creativity content projects such as the Tell-a-Story Day as well as thought-provoking and participatory activities about traditional and contemporary storytelling celebrating the flourishing fascination with stories. Last but not least, the centre organizes a Telling Tales Young Storytelling competition and a forum to sustain and nurture the Gaelic and Highland culture and way of life and promote traditional narratives as inspirational stimuli for modern artists.

To reach the conclusion of this inventory, it is important to touch upon another festival, the Festival at the Edge. It is a festival that highlights the traditional stories of the British Isles and attempts to build a creative communication bridge with modern British narrative scenes. This annual international event, the oldest of its kind in Britain, takes place in July in Wenlock Edge in Shropshire. Since 1999 performing arts, music and theatre blend with narratives from the region and local guest tellers set up a vibrating atmosphere of creative sessions, family-friendly events and camping opportunities perfect for informal exchange of stories. Concluding, there are organizations and festivals concerned with digital storytelling such as the Digital Storytelling Festival in Wales which deal specifically with this activity field that blends media to enhance the narrative producing, for example, photo stories; but, their mission, vision and programming do not propose similar principles and practices with the objectives of this research. Bryan Alexander's *The New Digital Storytelling: Creating Narratives with New Media* is one of the latest researches on the issue to be consulted if necessary.

IV. Specific yet non-exegetic readings of the art of storytelling in Greece

“We are shy, except [...] of trying in a spoken story
to reproduce the effect of moonlight in the trees,
the flickering firelight on the faces in a tavern.”

-Arthur Ransome⁸

Surprisingly enough, the art of storytelling in Greece has not yet received a respectable tribute as an acknowledged art form and intercultural mediation instrument neither affiliated with mythology nor with theatre studies. Both fields are competent in terms of structural design and

⁸ The quote is taken from Arthur's Ransome book *A History of Story-telling*.

directorial management to endorse storytelling in their syllabus and research area however this is not the case. Storytelling in modern Greece is far from reaching a mature growth as a state of mind and artistic activity and the explanation is neither simple nor complicated. There are readings of the art framed by specific concepts but certainly non-exegetic ones. And even if there are meteoric cases with individuals who embrace stories in education, ethnology, social services and psychology practices, the approach is less coherent, less systematic, less conscious and sustainable. To unpeel the problematic because of its multi-causality nature of the issue, one should start the analysis from the legislative framework and the legal protection of the relevant cultural activities.

Cultural policies in Greece seem to overvalue the modernization of anthropology and ethnology studies. Strangely enough, this leaves storytelling merely undiscovered and its potential to benefit intercultural mediation in the Balkans almost unexamined. Dr. Stavroula Mavrogeni from the Department of Balkan Studies of the University of Western Macedonia in personal electronic communication states:

“The storytelling art can contribute to the intercultural relationships between countries in the Balkan region taking of course into account the ideological movements and the communication modes of each culture.”

Sadly, storytelling is not yet perceived as an instrument in the hands of cultural professionals, artists and amateurs to empower mediation in the Balkan region. It is of great significance to change that and to incorporate the storytelling art into the Greek policies of intercultural mediation in the Balkans. Mr. Thomas Korovinis edited this February an anniversary anthology about the city entitled *Thessaloniki: 1912-2012* in which through stories, photographs, songs, recipes, memoirs and facts, Thessaloniki gets a lyric narrative of her own. It is a great book for both locals and travellers because it paves through history and art a *storylogue* for mental and physical discoveries. It is an open invitation to ravel at the multifaceted metropolitan city of a Balkan-Mediterranean patina. Initiatives like this anthology should be encouraged more often.

The speculation that monetary sources play a pivotal role to the cultural and educational scenes in Greece is ominously renegotiated. Vehement criticism exists already among the professionals' community and it juxtaposes outwardly money power with will power. The lack of money is an unfortunate fact but not an inescapable hindrance. In fact, the absence of money does not translate into the absence of cultural offer and demand. Even though at turbulent times it is hard to sustain the offer and at the same time it is traceable that the demand gets lessened, the outlined situation in Greece seems to prove the opposite. The will power of the artists and the cultural practitioners should be strengthened and solidly cemented in order to transcend the

obstacles of funding. And even if they receive less support, the more eager should be to collaborate and prove their worth at least when the employment standards are secured. And storytelling can validate such models and stimulate such practices.

In other words, museums and other heritage institutions can overwhelmingly benefit from storytelling but they seem to innocently ignore that. The situation proclaims that oral tradition is under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture and in northern Greece under the supervision of the Folklore and Ethnological Museum of Macedonia and Thrace. In 2011, the Museum organized a storytelling/narratology seminar held by Mrs. Anthi Thanou which introduced a number of people to the art and the techniques of narratology. In personal electronic communication Mrs. Anthi Thanou argued that:

“Through stories you can learn about a culture, the customs and traditions of a country because stories and fairy tales expose people to them. They are a fun way to meet other cultures and develop intercultural relationships. In Greece storytelling could provide that environment for communication but the public policies need to embrace it.”

Mrs. Thanou is working in the Greek Association of Narratology Friends or POFA⁹ a group of talented and well-educated professionals dedicated to the storytelling art. In detail, this group tries to maintain, safeguard and cultivate the art and technique of storytelling as in fairytales, myths, poetry, lyric songs, folk tales and others and it studies, documents the material and narrates the stories of certain areas in order to animate the people, educate and entertain them. And, it organizes and hosts the Olympus Storytelling Festival. On the 29th and 30th of June 2012, the 5th Olympus Storytelling Festival took place in Palaios Panteleimonas and in Kallipefki supported by the University of Thessaly and the Cultural Constitution of Tempi Municipality.



Illustration I; Source: <http://www.pofa.uth.gr/>.

⁹ For more information, please visit: <http://www.pofa.uth.gr/>.

When it comes to the educational institutions, the diagnosis gets more favourable comments. Regarding the Universities, storytelling constitutes a marvellous opportunity for interdisciplinary research which is sadly still underdeveloped. The University of Thessaly and the University of Western Macedonia are closest from other Universities in the country to endorsing storytelling. The reason is because they have developed programs of Master studies and have organized seminars on creative writing, myth-making and narratology. Their academic staffs are eager to explore and proclaim the importance of researching storytelling practices. However, concerning storytelling as an instrument for achieving intercultural dialogue, there is no concrete research approach. Intercultural dialogue between scholars and cultural practitioners necessitates people to be aware of their own assumptions and be able to suspend judgement in order to bring together research teams multilaterally. The Panteion University of Athens and the European Community Studies Association of Greece may have proposed agendas on intercultural dialogue and social cohesion from an academic standpoint, but no specific research on mythology or folklore culture has been conducted to propose a scheme bridging the concepts. Networking policies should be established with the Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Hamburg which have rich agendas on narratology with conferences and events in which storytelling can penetrate equally creatively and satisfactorily as a major axis of debate and discussion. Concerning intercultural dialogue, Greek cultural policies and the activities of the Hellenic Cultural Foundation obey to the guidelines of UNESCO and the Council of Europe. National and local authorities focus on Euro-Mediterranean and Balkan low-level links in order to establish cooperation, collaboration and intercultural mediation¹⁰.

Concerning the civil sector and the engagement of the people into the appreciation of storytelling as an organic part of the country's cultural heritage and development via intercultural collaboration, it is evident that without notification, education and awareness it is hard to raise reachable expectations. The "why so?" is not phrased by low levels of interest from the people; but, its wording depends on the lack of acquaintance with what storytelling really holds, hosts and promises as an art. It is believed that when people get familiarized with storytelling and start appreciating the vast potential it holds, more and more get involved and actively engaged. An exemplar of such good practice is the Scottish Storytelling Centre in Edinburg which managed to sustain its audience and enlarge it with interesting proposals, multifarious activities and cultural events which enliven the relationship people are building perpetually yet steady with storytelling. My wish is to popularize such initiatives in Greece and consolidate their positive influence on

¹⁰ For more information, please visit: <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/pprinticd.php>.

intercultural mediation with suggestions answering to the “how” this objective can be achieved tenderly and efficiently.

V. Relevance and expected fecundity of the research

“Millions survive without love or home, almost
none in silence, the opposite of silence
leads quickly to narrative.”
-Reynolds Price¹¹

The inquiry of this thesis unearths originality not solely from the expected research findings but also from the thinking process which applies established knowledge in new situations inviting new perceptions, new explanations and recommendations in cultural policy-making. By bringing something new to the debate between the arts and urban, social psychology and cultural policy studies, what the objective is here is to beguile the decision makers into engaging actively and productively in the interpretation and the reinterpretation of several key concepts which divulge information for dialogue on intercultural mediation. In other words, what is delivered by the thesis is an original interdisciplinary synthesis of existing material which will contribute with grounded insights to the recommendation policies consolidating and challenging altogether the importance of merging concepts in academic research. This body of work wishes further to address the misconceptions, misfits and miscommunications in the understanding of the cultural demands and changes; and to advocate realistic and reasonable proposals for the amendment of the current cultural policies either by altering or adding to the existing legislative framework and ideological standpoint.

The objective to reach the research aim is to investigate, unfold, explore and define the meaningful bridges between the art of storytelling and participatory creativity in urban multicultural environments and more explicitly in Thessaloniki. In order to explore the intentional phenomenology of participatory engagement and creative practices, the subject matter will be structured around the concepts of social networks, the network effect and how ideas spread, empirical and cognitive psychology and the geopolitics of emotions, the physiology of building urban domesticity, the interactive relationship between storytelling and urban collective consciousness of intercultural nature, and participatory creativity in order to conquer

¹¹ The quote appears at this link: <http://www.studiohansa.com/888/>.

ideasclerosis. This conceptual frame will constitute the dynamics built when stories are created and shared within a multicultural community in a public space; and the connotations attached which impregnate the space with emotions and a debatable unit of perceptions. Participatory creativity will be the spot light to the research because through interactivity the social and emotional phenomena become organic, sometimes transparent and others not.

Having that said, the complementary yet crucial aim is to propose to the cultural policy-makers a new concept of creativity, that arisen of a collective as a brew of interaction, participation and co-work. Creativity in the discipline of the arts is often treated as a shooting star phenomenon where individualism acts as the main source of artistic expression, experimentation and manifestation; but this standardized approach seems to have outgrown its own potential. Nowadays, group-generated creativity is treated more attentively and warmly since ideas are born out of meaningful interaction between diversified groups, variable mindsets and different experiential and intellectual backgrounds. Robert J. Sternberg in *The International Handbook of Creativity* postulates a wide view on creativity, its nature and development and argues that for many theorists the normalcy was, and maybe still is, to relate creativity to intelligence since it was interpreted “as an essential component of giftedness” (4). Yet as research develops, this notion is more and more ostracized as measurements present that there is an interdependent relationship between creativity and environment, social interaction and diverse thinking as in intercultural participation.

In Greece, as stated above there is cultural thirst and hunger for cooperative work in national and international level as well. Artists, cultural practitioners and operators, managers and entrepreneurs in their majority dedicate all their passion, time and thought to solo careers. It is not uncommon to meet people who are unwilling to collaborate, to trust and share their knowledge and skills. Individual and usually immediate success defined by financial prosperity, popularity and power accumulation, is met commonly in the Greek societal relationships. This premise of the success ideology is an offspring of the blind faith in the tenets of a fading tradition in the cultural market that advocates that masterpieces are born out of talented individuals; an ideology which encompasses the belief in the potential greatness and glorification of the individual effort and accomplishment leaving participatory creativity out of the spectrum. But what is proposed by this thesis is to feed the empowerment of the cultural practitioners to rebel against the asphyxiating frames of individual greatness and to embrace the creativity of the collective. By listening to the voice of the collective puzzled by multiethnic lines, by enabling people to utter their stories and by motivating them to share them, what is expected is to boost their creativity skills to a respectful extent. The idealistic aspect of the venture is combated by organizing an

intercultural storytelling project this August. How stories become the canvas for painting the perception and appreciation of the city of Thessaloniki as a creative multicultural city is the hard core of the investigation.

The challenge lies to understand and nourish with perseverance the collective's intelligence, formidable intellect and creative capital. And the steps needed to be undertaken in order to achieve the research aim, purpose and methodological orientation of this thesis and its rationale, are assembled and interwoven inextricably with its chapters. The objectives are expected to produce the following fecundity and are listed as such:

- ✓ To trace the relationship between social intercultural interaction patterned by storytelling practices and the emotionally engraved urban consciousness.
- ✓ To measure the hybridism of the ties of that relationship by comprehending the ways imagination influences awareness, sensations and concept-based domesticity building.
- ✓ To understand how and why participatory creativity gives flavour to public space and builds intercultural mediation upon urban domesticity; and suggest artistic co-creation as a principal branch of creativity research.
- ✓ To propose storytelling to be acknowledged as an art worth of securing and promoting by cultural policy-makers in Greece because it can mediate in cultural diversity dialogues.

It is an attempt to investigate the linkages between conserving cultural heritage, maintaining cultural diversity, defining and establishing cultural citizenship through the storytelling art. A more explanatory account will be given later on with the set up of the hypotheses and the research design.

At this point, a condensed framework of relevant cultural theories will be given to anchor the above objectives. Gavan Titley in *Resituating Culture* says that “culture may be used to describe ‘ways of life’ and life practices, collectivities based on location, nation, history, lifestyle and ethnicity, systems and webs of representation and meaning, and realms of artistic value and heritage” (10). According to Raymond Williams (1921-1988), a Welsh cultural analyst and literary critic, “culture refers to: the arts and artistic activity, the learned, primarily symbolic features of a particular way of life and a process of development” (Baldwin et al, 4). Dealing with culture as a way of life, humans possess “a symbolizing capacity which is the basis of our cultural being” (Baldwin et al, 4) which through signification and ideological processes makes meaning and sense out of our experiences within the social context. Social interactions and relationships between individuals and groups and particularly between diverse groups are governed by physical and mental processes which operate in dialectics with cultural phenomena.

This exchange motivated theorists on cultural studies, sociology, psychology, philosophy and linguistics to think of the communication patterns and schemes involved. “Since it is a never-ending process of socially made meaning, cultures adapt, change and mutate into new forms” (Baldwin et al, 15) and the ties between them, the individual and the group change as well. Structuralism theorists viewed culture as a structured system, a social structured system, where the dynamics of interaction are influenced by and influence the cultural phenomena. The American sociologist Talcott Parsons viewed “culture as necessary for the proper functioning of society” because it offers “values and norms, language and other symbolic systems essential to social life” and it is “internalized by individuals and institutionalized in the stable patterns of action that make up the society” (Baldwin et al, 24-25).

Intercultural mediation theories arrive to accentuate that culture enlivens social life empowering the interaction of diverse communities and different cultures. Any forms of intangible traditional culture and knowledge such as verbal expressions: stories, epics, legends, poetry, riddles and other performances, dances, ceremonies, rituals, etc. which are products of creative intellectual activity whether individual or communal, are part of a community’s cultural and social identity and heritage; and therefore, should be maintained, preserved and protected. In that preservation and protection lies the heart of intercultural communication which respectfully recognizes diversity and ensures productive and creative interexchange. In 1994, UNESCO introduced an agenda entitled *Living Human Treasures* and in 2001 launched the Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. By securing in legislative terms the orality of cultural heritage, these measurements paved the way toward a meaningful discussion over diversity and intercultural mediation. Throughout history, people from different cultures have met and exchanged ideas, values and goods through art, trade and migration. Intercultural dialogue promotes the sharing of ideas.

The European Union’s Culture Programme 2007-2013 supports the development and reinforcement of cross-border and cross-cultural initiatives in order to promote and celebrate cultural diversity. Policies that ensure inclusion, integration and the participation of all are very important for cooperative and collaborative activities. The book *Cultural Diversity, Heritage and Human Rights* (ed. Michele Langfield, William Logan and Mairead Nic Craith, 2010) is a much interesting to read documentation of multicultural issues. The Council of Europe in 2000 publicized a declaration on cultural diversity¹² stating that cultural diversity is expressed in the

¹² For more information, please visit: <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Decl-07.12.2000&Sector=secCM&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75>.

co-existence and exchange of culturally difference practices and in the provision and consumption of culturally difference services and products and that cultural diversity refers to free creative expression and freedom of information existing in all forms of cultural exchange. In 2005, UNESCO adopted the *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*¹³ which declares priority of promoting cultural diversity and intercultural collaboration applicable not only for EU countries but also for Non-EU countries. The objectives can be shortlisted as such:

- To protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions.
- To create the conditions for cultures to flourish and to freely interact in a mutually beneficial manner.
- To encourage intercultural dialogue.
- To strengthen international cooperation and solidarity in a spirit of partnership.

All the objectives aim at managing the existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures through dialogue and mutual respect. 2008 was the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue with platforms of intellectual and creative reflection on the issue to raise public awareness and get people involved. In 2008, the European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research published a report on *Sharing Diversity: National Approaches to Intercultural Dialogue in Europe*¹⁴ where it is written above other issues that “regional and local authorizes play a very important role not only in the implementation of intercultural dialogue related programmes, but also in the development of intercultural policy positions” (xii) as do the non-governmental bodies. It is suggested to establish “Diaspora connections with communities of the same ethnic origin settled in other countries; creative work within a country that is the outcome of different cultural perspectives, traditions or styles; partnerships [...], mainstream arts producers, managers and directors to respond to and take in new cultural perspectives” (ix). The steps are: mapping roads, breaking down walls, building bridges and sharing spaces (xiii-xiv). And in Greece and generally in the Balkan region, such policies are vital because promoting integration and understanding within communities and countries can create meaningful portages and motivational workplaces for boosting curiosity, reciprocity and creativity.

There is also the *Traditional Cultural Expressions/Folklore for the Protection of Tradition Knowledge* framework which recognizes the value of respecting, safeguarding and

¹³ For more information, please visit: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/en/diversity/convention>.

¹⁴ For more information, please visit: http://www.interculturaldialogue.eu/web/files/14/en/Sharing_Diversity_Final_Report.pdf.

promoting cultural diversity whilst empowering communities to support their customary practices such as storytelling. Furthermore, the Shahrazad Project¹⁵ invites writers from all over the world to discuss freedom of speech, diversity and solidarity through the sharing of tales. Stories of refugee poets, journalists, novelists, screenwriters, essayists and others are welcomed in an intercultural debate organized by the International Cities of Refugee Network. The Balkan region would immensely benefit from similar initiatives which debate creativity, tradition, mediation and cultural rights. Particularly in the city of Thessaloniki where integration and participatory creativity move sluggishly, a thinking process which safeguards cultural heritage and involves intercultural dialogue, artistic expression like in storytelling and interaction like in creativity networks, is much beneficial.

Conceptual Framework

I. Portages between storytelling and social networks/connection topology

“In a world with only a single harbour
ships are mere entertainment.”

-Felix Stalder¹⁶

The social networks theories depict the power of stories to unite and unify audiences. Stories are told to be heard and like every ship are destined to travel. They travel a long way to meet the ears and hearts of the eagerest listeners making the bonding between the storyteller and the listener a Gordian knot unthinkable to untie. Portages between storytelling and the social network analysis help us understand how a simple story can rustle the people’s attention up and bake miracles with connected minds and souls. There is the premise “that people are connected in vast social networks” and “the key to understanding people is [to] understanding the ties between them” (Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler xi). In other words, to figure out how and why stories speak volumes about the human minding, condition and emotional state, one should map out the connection topology that brings stories closer to the people and vice versa.

Inspired by mathematics and the work of Matthew O. Jackson and Alison Watts on economic networks, Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler wrote the book *Connected: The Amazing Power of Social Networks and How they Shape Our Lives* and postulated several

¹⁵ For more information, please visit: www.icorn.org/www.shahrazadeu.org.

¹⁶ The quote is taken from Felix Stalder’s work *Open Cultures and the Nature of Networks*.

theories on social contact. Alongside social networks, the principles of sharing a story can shed light on the way the 1:1 engagement is transformed into a “me-to-we” communication pattern. Linton Freeman with his book *The Development of Social Network Analysis* and his studies on social structures and networks is a great introduction to this interdisciplinary field of research with input from sociology, anthropology, statistics, mathematics, information sciences, education, psychology and other. Of course Wasserman and Faust with the *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications* developed the theories further by proposing models for analyzing and measuring. Marijtje A. J. van Duijn also underpinned the importance of implementing social network analyses in academic research and described statistical models for data collection and analysis. One should consult Steven H. Strogatz’s article *Exploring Complex Networks*¹⁷ for further insight about the structure of social networks.

More specifically, “everything we do or say tends to ripple through our network, having an impact” on us and the network itself (Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler 28). Social networks are social structures made out of people, individuals or in groups, connected/tied by specific types of interdependency, relationships of any kind. The approach elaborates on network theories which identify the nodes and the ties and analyze their interplay. Social networks analysis attempts to understand the nature and function of social networks by description, visualization and modelling. Some of the issues that are of interest are: betweenness, bridges, centrality, closeness, clustering coefficient, cohesion, degrees, density, flow, paths, and structural holes. The network’s density depends on the nodes like the scheme of a tree on its branched leaves. Nodes can be people, organizations, countries or any subject like that which can establish friendships, partnerships, alliances or harmful bridges such as an epidemic of petty crime. The nodes model paths of communication, restricted or not restricted walks in their neighbourhood, which navigate the directed and undirected interactions. “A network’s *shape*, also known as its structure or topology, is a basic property of the network” (Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler 14) and it schematizes the form that relationships undertake. The relationships are depicted as the ties in each network.

Ties are much complicated like human beings. It is through these ties, that information, ideas, feelings, memories, etc. move around and bond people. “Social networks spread happiness, generosity, and love. They are always there, exerting both subtle and dramatic influence over our choices, actions, thoughts, feelings, even our desires” (Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler 7). Concerning the art of storytelling, when the storyteller addresses the listener, the communication between them grows deeper than just an exchange of information. Sharing a story is not a

¹⁷ For more information, please visit: <http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v410/n6825/pdf/410268a0.pdf>.

bureaucratic task. It involves live communication, interaction and responsive engagement. There is action and motivation and reaction with emotional arousal from the linguistic and non-linguistic stimuli. The storyteller and its audience create a small network which links their common experience to each of the social networks of the people engaged. This communication is spread from one listener to the other and within the whole network.

People experience stories and share them with one another empowering the network effect. The network effect is the backbone of social networks because it promotes social and cultural awareness and most importantly it can cultivate social engagement and active participation. In other words, when people interact, they create content, ideas and share personal information. Through the connections that they build with one another by dialogue or any kind of communication, they influence the opinions, perceptions and behaviours of other people inside the network. The communication patterns can be algorithmically measured but the effect depends more on inter-and-intra-personal relationships affecting and affected by mindsets, moods, personalities, etc. which are difficult to translate on socio-maps. The interaction in aggregate circulates ideas, images and concepts among networked people and there are responses, actions and reactions, approvals and disapprovals. Some people are inspired by this interaction and produce novel ideas which then motivate new responses. In fact, this is happening when people like the story they listened and retell it enriched and slightly altered or when they completely change it in order to negate established concepts and propose different ones provoking different reactions and behaviours.

Through the ties that govern their behaviour, an idea, an image, a feeling conceptualized by the story's form or content, is possible to root itself in the mindset of the listener and stay there until it is communicated to another person. Whether transformed or not, the idea, image or feeling influences and marks the behaviour of the person. "The world of a story is not merely the sum of all the words we put on a page, or on many pages. When we talk about entering the world of a story [...] we refer to things we picture, or imagine, and responses we form -to characters, events- all of which are prompted by, but not entirely encompassed by, the words on the page" (Peter Turchi 163/166). Entering this world, people synchronize their ears to the beating of the narrative which inflates their hearts with information and emotions. This vitalization and aliveness of the sharing spreads the information faster and further. It becomes like a ritual that bonds people together and the effect can be sustained and spread further after the event within the social networks.

"The networks we create have lives of their own. They grow, change, reproduce, survive, and die. Things flow and move within them. A social network is a kind of human super-organism,

with an anatomy and a physiology –a structure and a function- of its own” (Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler 289). “Organic networks have a structure, complexity, function, spontaneity” (Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler 15). The structure and function of a social network operates in contagion. Culturally speaking, this means that in a live, creative and spontaneous cultural activity such as storytelling the networks produce more energy, more vibration and influence over the experience. Like in “festivalizing” experiences where the network effect also works in contagion and in interdependence with spontaneity and live energy transfer, storytelling experiences become organic building comfortable bridges of communication between the people who exchange opinions, feelings and attitudes in a natural and smooth way. According to Felix Stalder, “more and more of the processes that we participate in, or are affected by, are organized as networks, rather than as traditional hierarchies” (8) which hands active participation a prominent role in communication.

To familiarize ourselves with these concepts, we should trace the paths of communication and interrelation between stories, creative ideas and social network analyses and map out the network effect of motivation, engagement and active participation. As Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen claim about the interpretations of experience and forms of social interaction, “meanings belong to culture, rather than to specific semiotic mode. And the way meanings are mapped across difference semiotic modes, the way some things can, for instance, be ‘said’ either visually or verbally, [...] is also culturally and historically specific” (2). For that reason it is very fruitful to research storytelling practices from the cultural policy perspective in order to understand its codes of communication and protect and promote the artistic value. Research shows us how motivation works, how human capitals are enriched or not, how artistic performance collides with personality or environmental issues, and in broader sense how the communication between creative individuals works. To investigate the portages between storytelling and social networks, it is reasonable to draw heavily on the network effect and the ways ideas spread within a network of people.

II. Wild swimming with the network effect: the flow and spread of ideas

“Perhaps, being lost, one should get ‘loster’.”

-Saul Bellow¹⁸

Saul Bellow’s proposition applies to the flow and spread of ideas because within social networks ideas travel, get lost and are usually retrieved from the “lost-and-found” mental cabinet. “The recognition of the importance of flows goes back to the Greek philosopher Heraclitus (c.540-c.480) who famously summed it up as: *panta rei* (“everything flows”). He was referring to a general condition of nature, where everything is in a constant process of transformation. [...] Following the ideas of Manuel Castells (1996), who introduced the term [the space of flows], it refers to a specific social condition, rather than nature in general. [...] The space of flows, as a working definition, is that stage of human action whose dimensions are created by dynamic movement, rather than by static location” (Felix Stalder 71). Manuel Castells in *The Network Society: From Knowledge to Policy* claimed that social transformation is highly dependent upon information and how it moves around and through the society mostly assisted by technology. He argued that “networks throughout history had a major advantage and a major problem vis-à-vis other forms of social organization. On the one hand, they are the most adaptable and flexible organizational forms, so following very efficiently the evolutionary path of human social arrangements. On the other hand, in the past they could not master and coordinate the resources needed to accomplish a given task or fulfil a project beyond a certain size and complexity of the organization required to perform the task” (4). This changed as soon as technology formed an information society where the flow and spread of information, ideas and knowledge are celebrated. Apart from that, networks are very important for the circulation and thriving of certain ideas because the density and intensity of flow depends on how much strong are the ties between the nodes of a network.

Malcolm Gladwell in his book *Outliers: The Story of Success* addressed the issue of success in terms of social environment and social networking. He argued that “it makes a difference where and when we grew up; the culture we belong to and the legacies passed down by our forebears shape the patterns of our achievement in ways we cannot begin to imagine” (19) and that the communities with an “egalitarian ethos” and a “powerful, protective social structure” (9) where social ties are encouraged to intensify, usually showcase a more coherent, adaptive and

¹⁸ The quote appears at this link: <http://parkstepp.tumblr.com/post/29296589264/perhaps-being-lost-one-should-get-loster>.

sustainable profile than the ones that differ. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi with his work *Finding Flow: The Psychology of Engagement with Everyday Life* argued about the quality of life that “is in part determined by the chemical processes in our body, by the biological interaction among organs, by the fine electrical currents jumping between the synapses of the brain, and by the organization of information that the culture imposes on our mind. But the actual quality of life – what we do, and how we feel about it- will be determined by our thoughts and emotions, by the interpretations we give to chemical, biological, and social processes” (4). And, “to live means to experience through doing, feeling, thinking” (Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi 8). Stories definitely make us feel and think and within the created networks, the circulation of experience, imagined ideas and perceptions, is facilitated.

When dealing with social networks and the creative capital of a collective, the network effect is responsible for making the creative idea wild swimming within the network. In storytelling, concepts which address human contact and behaviour travel in the minds of the listeners carrying cultural values and shaping perceptions. There is an exchange of cultural information and alongside the flow of narrative there is a flow of idea-making that influences consciousness development. The spread and flow of ideas are very important to the formation of a collective consciousness. How ideas are instilled in and travel from mindset to mindset is the cartography of which ideas are more likely to achieve that and which not; of which ideas have the dynamism to influence the flow and which not. This depends on the nature of the ties between the network whether there are strong ties or not. “Flows without elements of structure would be noise and nodes without flows would be dead. The interconnections between the nodes constitute the patterns in the flow of information. They provide the stabilization within the potentially fluid environment enabling navigation and purposeful, systematic action” (Felix Stalder 62). This suggests that if a network is built with strong ties, interaction is facilitated and the flow of ideas and the communication patterns are enabled.

In other words, when in a social network there is cohesion and coherence and communication is safeguarded, creativity is reinforced and cultural diversity becomes an asset of intercultural communication and creative content production and consumption. It is of great significance especially in the Balkan regional cultural scene, to support the cultural researchers’ training and to promote cultural cooperation keeping in the mind the beneficial character of the network effect. The cultural practitioners and scholars should be encouraged to participate in collaborative activities and to create partnerships which focus on the exchange of ideas and on establishing a fruitful communication bridge enabling the flow of productivity and creativity. Doing so, not only the uniqueness of each culture’s story is protected but also it is communicated

to others enabling mediation, exchange and deeper appreciation. In order to manage that, it is advised to return to the conditions which allow such communication to occur and which are bound by experience and the ways empirical and cognitive psychology influence human interaction.

III. Paddling along empirical and cognitive psychology:

The geopolitics of emotions

“The purpose of a story [...] is to lead to a journey”

-Peter Turchi¹⁹

Most of the stories touch sensitive strings in the hearts of the people who listen to them either because they are narrated by beloved ones or because they become part of who we become due to the emotional effect they have upon our souls. Stories and psychology are bound by a common principle, the principle of engaging with emotions, an inwards discovery, an introverted journey into the heart and soul driven by feelings and images. Paddling along empirical and cognitive psychology means to move through the emotional waters of experience to try to understand how stories are interpreted by both our minds and bodies in terms of neuro-imaging and neuro-linguistics. To do so, a few theories on the geopolitics of emotions are introduced and simplified added to theories on neuro-imaging and neuro-imagining. In order to comprehend why stories can create powerful emotions and images, one should understand how cognition is handled by the brain mechanisms and how emotions navigate themselves inside our minds.

Paul Ekman studied the nature of emotions and argued that emotions are responses to stimuli energizing appraisal mechanisms which operate almost automatically in order to respond to events. Even if there are “enormous variations in the specifics of what calls forth emotion that are attributable to personality, family, and culture” (Paul Ekman 16), emotions seem to function in the same fashion for every human being. Despite the unique physiological patterns of each emotion, emotions have basic common principles and they create identifiable informative signals. Emotional experiences were analyzed in terms of actions, bodily reactions, facial expressions and appraisal mechanisms. Bower and Gilligan (1984) researched cognition and emotions and stated the following:

¹⁹ The quote is taken from Peter Turchi’s book *Maps of the Imagination: The Writer as Cartographer*.

- Emotions are units or nodes in a semantic network, with numerous connections to related ideas, to physiological systems, to events, and to muscular and expressive patterns.
- Emotional material is stored in the semantic network in the form of propositions or assertions.
- Thought occurs via the activation of nodes within the semantic network.
- Nodes can be activated by external or by internal stimuli.
- Activation from an activated node spreads to related nodes. This assumption is crucial—it means that activation of an emotion node (e.g., sadness) leads to activation of emotion-related nodes or concepts (e.g., loss; despair) in the semantic network.
- “Consciousness” consists of a network of nodes activated above some threshold value. (10-11)

Naturalist theorists believe in a biologically grounded existence of emotions (Hogan, 2003) whereas constructionists argue that emotions appear to be culturally specific (Stearns, 1995). Emotions operate in interrelation with behaviour and several cognitive states as they are responses to stimuli. Schachter and Singer proposed in 1962 the cognition-arousal theory of emotion which deals with emotion generation. “According to Schachter, an emotional state is the result of the interaction between two components: physiological arousal and cognition about the arousing situation” (Rainer Reisenzein 240). Criticism posits that “an emotion is actually a result of arousal and *two* cognitions: one that characterizes the situation in an emotional way, and a second that connects the emotional cognition with the arousal” (Rainer Reisenzein 240). The following graph exemplifies the statement:

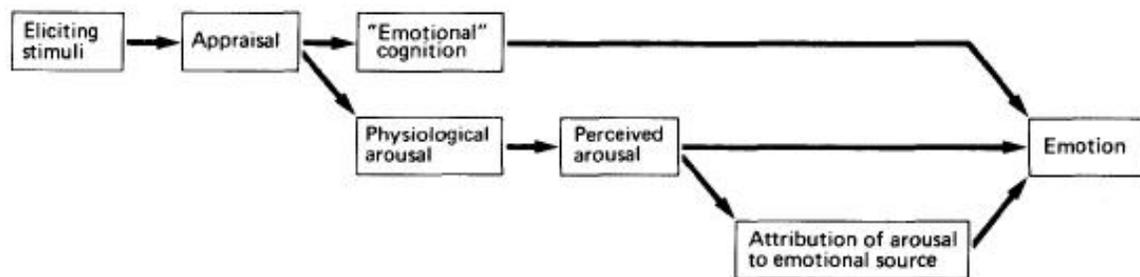


Figure I. The process of emotion generation in everyday life.

Illustration II; Source: Rainer Reisenzein, p. 242.

Furthermore, “there seem to be eight fundamental emotions. Five are connected to survival: fear, guilt, anger, sadness and shame. The three others –excitement, joy and love- make us bond and attach and are not about survival. A ninth crucial element is surprise; within this emotional interplay there is a balance between safety and a sense of anchoring and exploration” (Charles Landry 241).

Concerning storytelling and emotions, every time a storyteller begins a story with the well-known “Once upon a time,” there is this balance between safety and eagerness to discover. The audience opens up to the world of the narrative and embraces the narrator’s voice and walks his/her way through the pathways of the imagination. Because emotional mimicry and emotional contagion foster interaction and reciprocity, it is important for the audience to engage with the storyteller and to work with him/her along the way. The instruments to conduct this mental and psychological work are the emotions which build upon language. “Emotions can spread between pairs of people and among larger groups. Consequently, emotions [can] have a collective and not just an individual origin” (Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler 35).

First, we usually have a conscious awareness of our emotions: when we are happy, we know it. Second, emotions typically affect our physical state: we show how we feel on our faces, in our voices, even in our posture; given the role emotions play in social networks, these physical manifestations are especially important. Third, emotions are associated with specific neurophysiological activity; if you are shown a scary picture, the flow of blood to structures deep in your brain instantly changes. Finally, emotions are associated with visible behaviours, like laughing, crying, or shrieking. (Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler 35)

These are the founding principles in the relationship the storyteller builds with the audience. Emotional communication is key to grasping a story and connecting with it and with people through language that is form and content. “Emotions spread from person to person because of two features of human interaction: we are biologically hardwired to mimic others outwardly, and in mimicking their outward displays, we come to adopt their inward states” (Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler 37). Therefore, when the storyteller lives the experience and shares it vividly, the people participate physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Empirical psychology deals with our senses and experiences. Wilhelm Wundt’s theories systematized physiological psychology. Explicitly, he argued that “the only certain reality is immediate experience” (Arthur L. Blumenthal 1081). Perceptual systems are bound by experience. Wundt studied socio-cultural products of human mental activity, researched linguistics and neuroscience to address perception, thought and memory, and proposed the productive synthetic reading of physiology with psychology. He stated in the *Principles of Physiological Psychology* the following:

Physiology is concerned with all those phenomena of life that present themselves to us in sense perception as bodily processes, and accordingly form part of that

total environment which we name the external world. Psychology, on the other hand, seeks to give account of the interconnection of processes which are evinced by our own consciousness, or which we infer from such manifestations of the bodily life in other creatures as indicate the presence of a consciousness similar to our own. Psychology is called upon to trace out the relations that obtain between conscious processes and certain phenomena of the physical life; and physiology, on its side, cannot afford to neglect the conscious contents in which certain phenomena of this bodily life manifest themselves to us. (2)

“Following Wundt, Werner described an *organismic* psychology that is in opposition to *mechanistic* psychologies” highlighting that it was the sensory, perceptual, selective-attention capacities which “enabled mankind to make a consistent mental advance and to develop human culture” (Arthur L. Blumenthal 1086). Therefore, empirical psychology provides us with the necessary impetus on the understanding of emotion generation which is needed to explore the depth and breadth of the influence that stories have upon the mental states of the people.

Cognitive psychology attempts to explain how neuroscience and psychology meet and shed light upon the brain mechanisms that relate to behavioural and emotion-oriented conditions. Because “cognition is biologically grounded” (Kaufman et al, 216), it is important to study theories on psychology which deal with cognition, mental processes, behaviour, reasoning and decision making. Cognition is actually a subjective interpretation of a situation or an event. “Our perceptions are not a simple mirror or window on the outside world but have been shaped by the apparatus that observes them” (Kaufman et al, 119). This apparatus is our brain. The human brain is a complex system consisted of neurons which are non-creative in nature. The neurons are connected with each other in small junctions called “synapses” and “through the synapse one neuron sends messages to the other” (Sebastian Seung xii). “The assembly of neurons, ‘wired’ together by their slender branches makes a *connectome*, [...] a totality of connections between the neurons in a nervous system” (Sebastian Seung xii-xiii). Connectomes are very important because they receive the cultural/artistic information that is usually language or imagery and they manage it accordingly. “Unlike the genome, which is fixed from the moment of conception, the connectome changes throughout life [...] affected by our experiences” (Sebastian Seung xv). In other words, connectomes which shape our mindset are indeed much motivated by our experiences.

The networks of neurons with branches which “entangle like spaghetti” operate in dense relation with thoughts, feelings, memories and perceptions (Sebastian Seung 40). The messages that the transmitters send back and forth to the receptors inside the connected neurons depict the

mental activity, the electrical signalling of neurons which is translated in chemical terms. This “neural activity in the brain at any given moment encodes thoughts, feelings, and perceptions in that instant” (Sebastian Seung xviii). The arousal in the communication carries telltale signs which create pulses, spikes “converting an electrical signal into a chemical signal and then back into an electrical signal” (Sebastian Seung 49). This process continues perpetually explaining “why stimulating one sense organ can cause multiple responses” (Sebastian Seung 53). From neuroscience and this simplified description, one can comprehend how a telltale sign is translated into an image, a feeling, a perception. Cognitive linguists dedicated time and energy to figure how “the biological architecture of the brain very much influences the form of its output” (Jackson Barry 127). Neuroscience is demonstrating that the human brain organizes, retains and accesses information most effectively in narrative form. Actually, narratives and even more dialogues serve as travelogues.

Language teams with stories in embryo form. It serves as the motorboat for the telltale signs to travel inside the neurons and create vivid images and sensations. John Lyons writes in *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* that, as Ferdinand de Saussure and Louis Hjelmslev argued, “a natural language is a semiotic system because the plane of expression functions as a signifier to the plane of content: both expression and content are characterized by a substance and a form; [...], the substance of content is the whole mass of thoughts and emotions common to all mankind irrespective of the language in which they are expressed; the form of content is the abstract structure of relationships which each language or culture imposes on the same underlying substance” (59). “Saussure was interested primarily in the linguistic system, secondarily in how that system related to the reality to which it referred” (John Fiske 85).

“It was Saussure’s follower, Roland Barthes, who first set up a systematic model by which this negotiating, interactive idea of meaning could be analyzed” when he presented the notions of *denotation*, *connotation*, *myth*, *symbol*, *metaphor* and *metonymy*. (John Fiske 85). “Denotation describes the relationship between the signifier and signified within the sign, and of the sign with its referent in external reality” (John Fiske 85). “Connotations describe the interaction that occurs when the sign meets the feelings or emotions of the users and the values of their culture” (John Fiske 86). “An object becomes a symbol when it acquires through convention and use a meaning that enables it to stand for something else” (John Fiske 91). “Just like emotions, language is key to the acquisition and manipulation of social information about other members of our species” (Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler 249). “Levi-Strauss said that individuals have an innate biological capacity, what he called a ‘bio-grammar,’ which they use to ‘decode’ or interpret codes of cultural information” (Baldwin et al, 33).

This “bio-grammar” describes linguistic processes and mental interpretations based on physiological and cognitive procedures. The connoted, denoted or symbolic messages appear in interplay in storytelling and posit that language is much more than a means to an end. “The words are like the bricks” in the toolkit of language²⁰ (Polu Miliori 59) and in stories the words much like gestures and body language are extremely valuable. “Gaisford argued that language helps us: to share information, to learn the accumulated knowledge, to make both specific and abstract statements, and to speak in the present about events in the past or to anticipate events in the future” (Baldwin et al, 45). Sociolinguists believe that language is “culturally specific [...] grounded in social and cultural experience” and that it represents “the significant features of social and cultural experience that are regularly and routinely communicated” (Baldwin et al, 49). “Semiologists have argued that all cultural products should be seen as texts, [...], consisted of signs whether visual, aural or even tactile which can be ‘read’ or interpreted” (Baldwin et al, 32). This leads us to the fundamental principle of storytelling, representation; language presenting and representing events, characters and behaviours.

“Representation refers to the use of language and images to create meaning about the world around us; we use words to understand, describe, and define the world as we see it, [...] [through systems which] organize, construct, and mediate our understanding of reality, emotion, and imagination” (Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright 12-13). According to Saussure, “the image (or word) and its meaning together (the signifier and signified together) form the sign”²¹ (Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright 29). “A sign is something physical, perceivable by our senses; it refers to something other than itself; and it depends upon a recognition by its users that it *is* a sign” (John Fiske 41). “It’s the sign with its two sides which as an element of the autonomous linguistic system allow us when we use it in a phrase to *make reference* of the extra linguistic worlds, real or imaginary”²² (Marina Yaguello 94). “But meaning and reference in the discourse situation are inseparable and somehow *confondus*”²³ (Marina Yaguello 112). “Meanings are produced in the interactions between text and audience. Meaning production is a dynamic act in which both elements contribute equally” (John Fiske 164). “The user of the sign keeps it in currency by using it, and maintains the myths and connoted values of the culture only by

²⁰ « » (Polu Miliori 59).

²¹ “The principles of semiotics were formulated by American philosopher Charles Peirce in the nineteenth century and Swiss linguist Ferdinand De Saussure in the early twentieth century” (Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright 28).

²² “C’est le signe, avec ses deux faces, qui, en tant qu’élément du système autonome de la langue, nous permet, lorsque nous l’employons dans une phrase, de *faire référence* au monde extralinguistique, réel ou imaginaire” (Marina Yaguello 94).

²³ “Mais sens et référence, dans la situation de discours, sont inséparables et en quelque sorte *confondus*” (Marina Yaguello 112).

responding to their use in communication. The relationship between the sign and its myths and connotations, on the one hand, and the user, on the other, is an ideological one” (John Fiske 171).

This interrelationship between meaning and reference is mapped by the linkages established between representational modes and concepts. In order to decode and understand this relationship, people read, reread and write and rewrite the linkages/codes. “Codes are, in fact, the systems into which signs are organized” (John Fiske 64). “Codes and culture interrelate dynamically since they perform an identifiable social or communicative function” (John Fiske 65). This “editing” process exposes how language is translated into mental images by the brain mechanisms and how meaning is attached to them. Language and images have a never-ending fling where brain chemistry complicates things from day to dawn.

By the ‘language of images,’ then, we mean three sorts of things: 1, language *about* images, the words we use to talk about pictures, [...] 2, images regarded *as* a language, the semantic, syntactic, communicative power of images to encode messages, tell stories, express ideas and emotions, raise questions, and ‘speak’ to us, 3, verbal language as a system *informed by* images, literally in the graphic character of writing systems or ‘visible language,’ figuratively in the penetration of verbal languages and metalanguages by concerns for patterning, presentation, and representation. (W. J. T. Mitchell 3)

“In social semiotics the sign is not the pre-existing conjunction of a signifier and a signified, a ready-made sign to be recognized, chosen and used as it is, [...], rather we focus on the process of sign-making, in which the signifier (the form) and the signified (the meaning) are relatively independent of each other until they are brought together” (Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen 8). “An image or object is encoded with meaning in its creation or production; it is further encoded when it is placed in a given setting or context” and it is decoded by the recipient of the informative sign” (Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright 56). The interpretation of these signs is “a mental process of acceptance and rejection” that includes “our own memories, knowledge, and cultural frameworks” (Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright 57).

The negotiation of meaning results in the negotiation of reality itself. Storytelling has a unique quality of negotiating reality, an enduring and charming one as well. It is the metaphoric use of language. “Metaphors have an everyday function. They are part of the way in which we make sense of our everyday experience” because they are “a concrete, physical” way to articulate abstract, social concepts (John Fiske 93). “Metaphor works by transposing qualities from one plane of reality to another” (John Fiske 95) and stories are famous for representing reality by presenting another kind of reality sometimes a positive one and others a darker one. Marina

Yaguello analyzing linguistic elements in poems and stories claims that “the different functions of language privilege the different grammatical and stylistic procedures”²⁴ (24); “the play with sonority is essentially the rhyme, repetition, alliteration, assonance, the elaboration of paronyms, [...], the play with meaning is the surprising approaching of words different one from the other, the sufficient exploitation of synonymy, ambiguity”²⁵ (32). These elements appear in the language of the storyteller quite often.

“It is believed that it is the creative genius of the poet and the artist that creates the most authentic examples of metaphor. When we examine this notion from the point of view of cognitive linguistics, we find that the idea is only partially true and that everyday language and the everyday conceptual system contribute a great deal” (Zoltan Kovecses 49). Also, metaphoric language builds upon personification. “Personification is a metaphorical device that is also used commonly in literature” (Zoltan Kovecses 55). In storytelling it is obvious how the metaphoric use of language endorses personification of animals, natural elements such as rivers and trees and creates an imaginative environment alluded to real life. By doing this, people perform a negotiation of reality and a rapprochement of already perceived notions. They manage the linguistic input, they create mental images of it, they decode and encode them and they seem to redefine preconceptions. Christina Hall states “metaprograms are a set of distinction by which people filter, sort and organize sensory input to create and sustain their realities and personal coherence. The brain organizes an incredible amount of information into configurations that make it possible for us to make sense of our experience. Metaprograms provide the structure that governs what we pay attention to” (Judith Baker 15). Metaphors in stories build upon that theory and challenge the creativity of the human mind.

Concerning creative endeavours in linguistic terms which manage emotional effects, Alexis Stamatis argues that “feelings, all kinds of feelings” (60) are inseparable elements of the creative process. Stories which are created in the process and by remembrance or improvisation are immensely based on creativity for emotional arousal such as for building suspense or surprise. All things truly creative start from innocent experimentation and end with more or less cognition in emotion. “Creativity, it could be argued, is the highest level of human cognitive ability, the engine that drives artistic, cultural, scientific, and technical advances” (Kaufman et al, 216). “The etiology of creativity, its neuroscience and neuro-genetics, unfolds in parallel with the continuing

²⁴ “Les différentes fonctions du langage privilégient des procédés grammaticaux et stylistiques différents” (Marina Yaguello 24).

²⁵ “Le jeu avec le son c’est essentiellement la rime, la répétition, l’allitération, l’assonance, le rapprochement de paronymes, [...], le jeu avec le sens c’est le rapprochement inattendu de mots étrangers l’un a l’autre, l’exploitation habile de la synonymie, de l’ambiguïté” (Marina Yaguello 32).

evolution of definitions and theories of creativity” (Kaufman et al, 228). To measure creative production, one assesses the process and the product. The process is defined as the “sequence of cognitive operations that gives rise to novel insights or ideas” and the product as the result of this process which produces creative norms (Kaufman et al, 217).

Therefore, there are biological mechanisms which support the emergence of creative cognition. “Specifically, the hemispheric asymmetry hypothesis posits that creativity is a result of neural functioning within the right hemisphere” (Kaufman et al, 219). “The processes in the right hemisphere are responsible for the generation of novel ideas, which are then communicated by the left hemisphere” (Kaufman et al, 220). The neurons in the right prefrontal cortex engage in activities responsible to handle “a story-generation task creatively” (Kaufman et al, 220). There is also the disinhibition hypothesis which states that creative cognition appears when “low levels of cortical activation with less inhibition of brain mechanisms” exist allowing the brain to enter into a cognitive state which is conducive to creativity (Kaufman et al, 222). The conditions which favour creativity are much more complicated than their cartography shows. Unequivocally, one of these conditions is motivation.

“Discussions about creativity have been intertwined with questions of task motivation” (Beth A. Hennessey 342). There is a synergy that melds extrinsic and intrinsic motivation responsible for creative performance. “The intrinsic/extrinsic distinction tends to dominate discussions of the associations between motivation and creative behaviour” (Beth A. Hennessey 343). Motivation fires sparkles of interest and cultivates the urge to react creatively to certain stimuli. Motivation is the oil in the brain engine which produces novel ideas. So far “creativity may be viewed as a process in which straightforward, traditionally ‘left-brain’ processes of information acquisition and storage interact with processes associated with the ‘right-brain’ such as abstract and novel integration. In other words, creativity in this interpretation requires both the sequential and interactive engagement of both hemispheres” (Kaufman et al, 221-222). Even if all individuals possess the same mental organ, the functions of each brain differentiate significantly and uniquely. How information is processed differs from person to person because of the unique brain mechanisms and chemical functions. In storytelling, this has also to do with the process of interpreting, grasping, assessing and reviewing language operating inside the geopolitics of emotions.

“In 1995 Daniel Goleman published *Emotional Intelligence* which pulled together the huge amount of work in developing areas of brain research, where extraordinary advances have been made in understanding how people function. Goleman stressed the centrality of emotions” (Charles Landry 241). With the emotional intelligence tests we can “identify our emotions and

help with the establishment of a more enjoyable, richer and creatively reciprocal relationship between the people of diverse cultures and the urban space they inhabit.

IV. Parasailing with the physiology of building urban domesticity

“The audience itself was a performance. Moving, shifting, laughing, clapping all as one as if they were all part of the same soul.”

-Orson Scott Card²⁷

“All part of the same soul” is the ultimate manifestation of sharing. Having analyzed how emotions map and navigate interaction, this chapter will focus on how this sharing contributes to the establishment of the feeling of urban domesticity. In other words, how the manifestation translates to being “all part of the same city”. Interaction pumps liveliness up through the physiology of the experience and develops domesticity in urban environments. Starting with cultural geographies and moving to the physiology of psychology and the maps of the imagination and meaning, this chapter highlights the interplay of emotions, behaviours and the dynamics of place; how a place influences and is influenced by the people’s emotional and behavioural states. Domesticity is key to understanding the bonding people establish with a city. Thus, in order to examine why a shared experience brings people closer to a place, one should detect the connections between people and the place and how these are created and operate in everyday encounters which include narratives.

“Culture is a sense-making process that makes sense not only of external nature of reality, but also of the social system that it is part of, and of the social identities and daily activities of the people within that system. Our senses of ourselves, of our social relationships, and of ‘reality’ are all produced by the same cultural processes” (John Fiske 121). Making meaning about the city derives from having cultural experiences of, about and in the city. Tony Hiss wrote about the experience of place that “sights, sounds, smells, and sensations of touch and balance, as well as thoughts and feelings” work in interplay stimulating our “simultaneous perception [which] helps us experience our surroundings and our reactions to them, and not just our own thoughts and desires” (3-4). “Through one system of perception we see ourselves as observers of an environment composed of separated objects, but at the same time, through another system of perception, equally active, we look for ways in which we are connected to or

²⁷ The quote is taken from Amy Spaulding’s book *The Art of Storytelling: Telling Truths through Telling Stories*.

are part of our surroundings” (Tony Hiss 22). Thus, “city-making is a sensory, emotional, lived *experience*” calling us to think, perceive, feel, understand and recognize the dynamics built in the organic relationship between a city and its people (Charles Landry 2-3). These dynamics can undoubtedly be expressed and punctuated through stories.

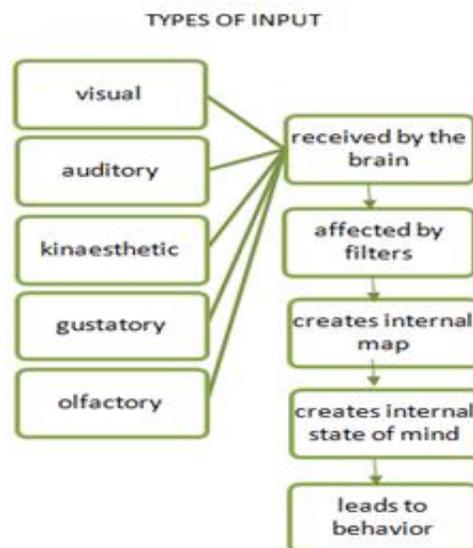
Yi-Fu Tuan concentrated on the cultural philosophies of place and argued that “the place incarnated the experience” (Baldwin et al, 141) and the other way around, the experience defined the place. Cultural geographies or topographies deal with how we conceptualize place, space and cultural meanings, how people understand and respond to the surrounding environment either creatively or not. For example, psycho-geography theories embrace the city from the perspective of wanderlust. They propose a peripatetic experiential thinking process. Guy-Ernest Debord wrote in the *Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography*²⁸ in 1955 that psycho-geography is “the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals” which “can contribute to clarifying certain wanderings that express not subordination to randomness but complete *insubordination* to habitual influences”. This suggests that in order to experience an area, one should erode away stereotypes and boundaries and engage into the imaginative realm of wandering and grasping the urban flavour.

One should connect with the place, experience it and respond to it. Storytelling practices favour this idea and offer an opalescent palette of mottled instruments to achieve this artistically and creatively. As Rebecca Solnit suggests in her book *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*, “when you give yourself to places, they give you yourself back; the more one comes to know them, the more one seed them with the invisible crop of memories and associations that will be waiting for you when you come back, while new places offer up new thoughts, new possibilities. Exploring the world is one of the best ways of exploring the mind, and walking travels both terrains” (6). Accordingly, storytelling serves as walking. Exploring and walking inside the human mind and heart with doors and windows facing the expressive world of imaginative characters and events. The teller is the cartographer of urban tales. The teller can be anyone who walks the city both mentally and physically.

Considering the maps of the imagination, “a story [...] is a kind of map because, like a map, it is not a world, but it evokes one” (Peter Turchi 166). Mapping words and imaginative worlds is fundamentally linked to narrative sense making. “It isn’t just that we *can* imagine a world created through words; the power of tales, tall and short, is that we *want* to enter their world” (Peter Turchi 172). Storytelling neither proposes nor imposes a reading upon real life. It

²⁸ For more information, please visit: <http://library.nothingness.org/articles/SI/en/display/2>.

expands real life by projecting the possibilities of human existence and by exploring the human mind and heart. Urban stories do so about the city as well. Through physiological, emotional and psychological elements, they depict the dynamics of the city and influence behavioural social statuses. Reading the philosophy of physiological psychology by Refinetti, one can simplify that biological factors can “cause or constitute behaviour” (2). Input is responsible for behavioural and mental states and in storytelling practices this functions in two ways. First, stories deliver emotional and sensory input which affects directly the state of being and mind of the audience, and second, stories engage people into imagination-rooted processes which project life situations where they are also invited to feel, imagine, and think about the input. Therefore, psycho-biology is definitely motivated and enlivened making the whole experience more perceivable and rich in content. The following graph shows this process:



Carl Sauer (1889-1975) argued that culture is empowered to give a sense of space and he examined “‘culture’ operating over time on a ‘natural landscape’ to produce an amalgam of ‘forms’ (population, housing, production, communication)” and ending up as a “‘cultural landscape’” (Baldwin et al, 135). His theories emphasized the cultural imprint on the reading and shaping of a space which is slightly different from a place. “Considering place means considering the ways in which particular locations are important in the making of a cultural world. Our understandings of the world are tied closely to the ways in which we construct and contest the meanings of particular places” (Baldwin et al, 141). “Considering space means considering the ways in which, in ‘reality’ or ‘representation,’ the distribution of things and activities, the formation of boundaries and patterns of movements are both culturally produced and part of the construction of culture” (Baldwin et al, 141). Peter Jackson wrote in 1989 the book *Maps of Meaning* where he studied cultural geographies in depth arguing that “cultures need to be

understood as codes or ‘maps of meanings’ with which different social groups attempt to define themselves, others and their places” (Baldwin et al, 137).

When it comes to the formation of an urban collective consciousness, public space is the area where stories and people form a spaghetti junction. In urban tales, public space is the major reference point and ideally the ultimate beneficiary of the creative communication. From definition, “*public places* can be defined as those sites in a society that are freely accessible to persons (streets, stations and so on)” (Baldwin et al, 393). From experience, public places operate as the heart of the city which urges for a bypass because they are maltreated and in Thessaloniki they are either underestimated or overestimated. From the ancient Greece and the *agora* (<*ageirein* means to gather together), public places were societal meeting points for open discussion, interactive encounters and exchange of knowledge and ideas. A public space should be assessable, comfortable and sociable where people engage in activities. Domesticity comes to question the operation of the city’s heart and challenge the misconceptions about it. Feeling the city as your home means feeling every part of it, knowing and accepting every aspect of it whether pleasant or not, and attempting to protect, preserve and ameliorate it.

Yi-Fu Tuan’s theories are very useful to the notion of domesticity because he claimed that a place can be impregnated with meanings, feelings and emotional statements. “Although spatial concepts and behavioural patterns vary enormously, they are all rooted in the original pact between body and space” (Yi-Fu Tuan, 1974:219).

Tuan divides places into two sorts: public symbols and fields of care. Public symbols such as ‘monuments, artworks, buildings and cities are places because they can organize space into centres of meanings... centres of value and significance’ (1974:239); consciously made. [...] Fields of care are places that become meaningful as emotionally charged relationships between people find an anchorage at a particular site through repetitions and familiarity. They are well-worn and well-loved ‘corners’ which become meaningful through the ways in which repeated use binds them into the relationships between people and builds up a storehouse of memories and associations. (Baldwin et al, 142)

Apparently, domesticity touches upon both public symbols and fields of care. It is not only the latter that matter. Undoubtedly the fields of care are responsible for giving a flavour in the urban experience, but the former, the public symbols, are also capable of building the feeling of domesticity. This is where stories come to assist.

It is not uncommon to find personal or national stories about a well-loved place. There are traditions, songs, memorabilia, pictures, oral and written narratives about the places in the city

which are easily identifiable and distinguishable. In particular, in Thessaloniki there are numerous documentations and songs which tell the story of the White Tower²⁹ or they narrate stories structured around this historical monument. This monument with the open greenery and the sea sending constantly and perpetually kisses, is one major trademark of the city. Whenever there is a story or an image about this locality, people identify the city and respond to it by recalling from their memories or visualizing from narratives they have heard, the charms and flavours of Thessaloniki. Referring to something so easily identifiable, one can feel the heart of the city and position the self in the place itself. Stories that have a strong connection to trademarks of the city create an equally strong connection with the people who tell them or listen to them. The identity of the people and consequently their behaviour interact with the identity of the place.

“Culture is concerned with human behaviours and so cultural analysis can be expressed in human terms we find familiar and engaging” (Charles Landry 3). Familiarity and domesticity give ground to deep interpretations and close encounters. Social interaction and social behaviour are key to these procedures. “Our connections –partly shaped by our genes but also profoundly influenced by our culture and our environment- are made and remade every day” (Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler 250). How people connect with the city and with each other is influenced by and influences their social behaviour and their cultural, artistic, creative or innovative expressions/interventions. “Our culture shapes how we create and make our places, from the physical level –from the design of street furniture to icon buildings- to how we feel about ourselves and the place” (Charles Landry 246). “While behaviour is almost always motivated it is also almost always biologically, culturally and situationally determined as well” (A.H. Maslow 3). Social behaviour is targeted by situated cognition.

Situated cognition theories affirm that knowing is doing because of socio-cultural and physical parameters which tie empirical psychology to situativity. From this perspective, hands-on experience is irreplaceable and inseparable from meaning conception and creation. Living is perceiving. Perception is bound by experience and physical encounters *in situ* are inseparable from context. Therefore, giving meaning to a place and shaping a consciousness about it requires experiencing and learning it physically and mentally. Engaging in collective creative endeavours and participatory storytelling practices is a fresh and delightful way to achieve this. Not to go unnoticed that social behaviour is encouraged and sincerely favoured. Also, environmental psychology can and should be researched elaborating on stories which people tell. “Environmental psychology measures the effect of the physical and social environment on the health and well-being of individuals and communities” (Charles Landry 243); and stories can

²⁹ For more information, please visit: <http://www.lpth.gr/en/>.

inspect such misconceptions and mistreatments. And most importantly, through visionary imagination-rooted discussions, they can envisage developmental solutions and ameliorations to build stronger relationships between the people and the environment cementing domesticity.

Creativity in culture is entrusted to anchor such policies of development. Group creativity can give answers to many questions of urban designing and construction. “The need for creation is located in the humans’ needs to adjust to their environment” (Sternberg 9). There are two ways to examine creativity and place dynamics. The first perspective argues that creativity can and should favour the environment making adjustments for its richer appreciation. In that direction, storytelling is in the shoes of creative interventions because people who engage in imaginative explorations and readings of the city space can map out visionary re-assessing, re-approaching and re-enchanting plans to make the place a better one. The other perspective posits that creativity is favoured by the surrounding area. As Dockal states, “creativity can be enhanced by the environment” (Kaufman et al, 226) arguing that in the cases where the environment is welcoming, the conditions for the flourishing of confident and creative ideas are multiplied.

Back to building urban domesticity, it’s been written many times so far, stories transmit values, morals and culture. The language embodied in the telling portrays the concerns and interests of the people. It helps us explore alternative bridle paths through the physiology of the brain which is patterned like confetti from the ways perception operates. “The language of the senses is not rich enough for describing our cities today, especially when we think of the combined sensory experience together as one” (Charles Landry 50). Consequently, extremely useful is the study of body language. Language is not only an instrument of expression but also an instrument of action. Words have meanings that people attempt to simplify, decode and respond to but they are meaningful actions themselves since they are said to compliment an activity or a feeling that portrays an activity. “An underlying assumption of sociolinguistic analysis is that languages are culturally specific phenomena and that language is grounded in social and cultural experience” (Baldwin et al, 49). Non-verbal communication is carried on through presentational codes such as gestures, eye movements, or qualities of voice.

In short, “Argyle (1972) listed ten presentational codes: bodily contact, proximity, orientation, appearance, head nods, facial expression, gestures, posture, eye movement and eye contact, and non-verbal aspects of speech” (John Fiske 68-69). In storytelling, all the above codes appear in action. The non-verbal language with the facial expressions and the body postures sketches out the emotional and psychological profile of the people engaged. As Allan Pease states about body language that “every gesture is like a special word and a word on its own can have many different meanings; only when you put it in a sentence with other words you

and the intellect of people of all ages. Stories are born when emotions find their thoughts and thoughts their wording. Stories about the city which people remember, sustain, and retell, stories which people create on the spot, deconstruct and reconstruct, and stories which people share with one another, become assets of cultural urban heritage. Storytelling melds its principles with everyday urban realities like country music melded with blues and created rock and roll. Tradition is organically embodied in contemporary stories, reaffirmations and re-appreciations of old myths collide creatively with modern voices and human behaviour manifested as social contact is found under this vulgar fraction being the common field of interest and discovery.

“Every city has many stories. Every story a city tells itself anchors its sense of self and possibilities. Stories describe where a city has come from, how it sees itself now, where it might go, its personality and its perspective on life” (Charles Landry 326). Urban stories are part of the city’s character and personality. Urban stories help the citizens imagine, improvise and invest in the dynamics of the environment. “It is an exercise in telling a possible story about the city and how to get there. It energizes and provides direction. It is both normative and prescriptive. [...] The skills of the storytellers need to include an understanding of the various dynamics that make cities work” (Charles Landry 300). The storyteller as part of a collective should understand, feel, accept and nurture these dynamics. Telling and “retelling the urban story is not about eradicating the past, but about building on it and using the elements of past stories to help us move forward. In so doing we should examine honestly the myths that sustain us and give us our identity. There is nothing wrong with myths as long as we challenge them regularly. We also must invent, and then live out in our daily lives, new stories about ourselves” (Charles Landry 328).

It is claimed that how people live, become conscious and behave, is an amalgam of different intra-and-inter-personal relationships bound by cultural diversity. Stanley Krippner strongly prioritized group consciousness over individual stating that “an individual’s awareness, attention, memory, etc. is socially constructed. Without group interaction, an individual would never achieve ‘identification’ with anyone or anything” (Duane Elgin 4). “The collective and the personal go hand in hand. They arise and develop together” (Duane Elgin 4). Transpersonal connections which communicate feelings, perceptions, opinions and awareness form collective consciousness. Collective or group consciousness is a pervasive and important force in urban life because it empowers people to self-observe and take responsibility for their actions which permeate, portray and challenge even culturally societal relationships. Collective consciousness depends on the meanings people as a whole entity associate and attach to their experiences based on their experiences. This kind of societal awareness about the image of the city is shaped by the phenomena, the events, the physical and mental processes that happen in the city. “The cultural

attribution of meaning is the outcome of events and processes in particular social settings, and although meanings are standardized and conventional, they do change over time as a result of the action of social and cultural forces” (Baldwin et al, 44). Therefore, urban collective consciousness can be altered by the stories people share, the images they picture, the situations they commemorate.³³

Katti Osorio wrote about the spirit of the place that it is “an emotional response to the place; it’s an abstract, wordless form of understanding” because “is born in the aftermath of human events, conferring importance to the place in which such events occurred” (1). Reading urbanity in terms of the local narratives and the attributed meanings requires the caring property of the eager, good-intended and consciously dedicated listener. An urban story “triggers activity in the mind and agitates it (and even the body), it arouses the senses and these form into emotion and then thought” (Charles Landry 251). Emotions and thoughts give pulse to the readings of the city. “Cities need stories or cultural narratives about themselves to both anchor and drive identity as well as to galvanize citizens. These stories allow individuals to submerge themselves into bigger, loftier endeavours” (Charles Landry 3). Bigger endeavours imply not only adventurous discoveries of yet unimagined places of secret stories, but also bigger numbers of travellers, more and more people. “The world of a story is a thing we create or summon into being, but which the reader/receiver participates in creating and understanding” (Peter Turchi 166). In such explorations collectives bond effortlessly and Interculturalism is triumphantly celebrated.

“Reading urban spaces according to Kevin Lynch (1960) involves *imageability* ‘that quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer’ (1960:9)” (Baldwin et al, 409). Lynch’s theories are helpful to the understanding of the bonding relationship between the people and the city in terms of the experience patterns and the localities. Evoking a strong image in the mind of the observer is a quality that space possesses which is very interesting for the urban tellers because they capture the image, (re)shape it and narrate it orally, visually, etc. Lynch was interested in how people perceive urbanism and if and how the architectural design and planning can grasp the people’s vision for a more psychological satisfying environment. In *The Image of the City*, he identified five city realities which are juxtaposed to the living experience. In detail, he introduced the concepts of: paths which “are the channels (streets, canals, railroads) along which the observer customarily, occasionally, or potentially moves” (Kevin Lynch 99), edges which “are linear breaks in continuity (railroad cuts, walls)” (Kevin Lynch 99), districts, nodes (junctions, crossings) and landmarks (buildings, signs, stores) (Kevin Lynch 100). These concepts map out geographically

³³ Further reading: David Harvey’s *Consciousness and the urban experience* (1985).

the experiences of the citizens and develop patterns which organize the images the people picture in correspondence with the localities.

“How you view the city varies according to who you are, where you come from, your culture, your status, your life stage and your interests. Yet some experiences of the city are the same for everyone. The city announces itself a long way off through the senses; sight, sound and smell” (Charles Landry 27). “The city can be the site of excitement and pleasure or of sin and danger” (Baldwin et al, 149). “The city is an assault on the senses. Cities are sensory, emotional experiences, for good or for bad; we thus experience the city at a low level of awareness” but we can articulate the urban stimuli or overload via storytelling (Charles Landry 39). “The city, as has been said above, can be seen as positive or negative. Moreover, both happen *at the same time* as different people interpret in different ways the social structures and cultural changes indicated by the shifting urban scene” (Baldwin et al, 154). The meanings attached to the place can be read from its stories. Urban stories encapsulate the physical activity of the people, the mentality, the ideology, the routinized civility, the incarnated memories, the dreams and hopes, the neglected or over-expressed fears, the contemplated projection of their life. To understand how the people in the city feel and live is to understand the character and flavour of the city. “Urbanism is the discipline which helps us understand this aura and see the dynamics, resources and potential of the city and city-ness in a richer way; urban literacy [and cultural literacy] is the ability and skill to ‘read’ the city” (Charles Landry 20).

Brecknock (2006) introduced cultural literacy as the capacity to understand, to appropriate and to develop the meaning of the city structures, city icons and city elements, such as neighbourhoods and public spaces, seems to be an important part of contemporary city cultural capital. “Cultural literacy is the ability to read, understand, find significance in, evaluate, compare and decode the local cultures in a place. This allows one to work out what is meaningful and significance to people who live there. We understand better the life cycle of the city in motion. We understand more what we see, feel, smell and hear” (Charles Landry 245). We understand more when we energize our senses, stimulate our minds, open up our ears and grasp the insight from the stories the city narrates. We surely understand more when we tell our stories and communicate them to others. This is the way to understand the nature and culture of our city, to rethink “the way we construct our houses [which] reflects as much our bodily as our cultural determination” (Felix Stalder 66).

As Hayes states, “experience is necessary for creativity” (Kaufman et al, 221). On cognitive science and the semiotics of art, Semir Zeki states “that seeing consists not of the passive reception of a scene but of the active construction of that scene” (Jackson Barry 128).

When people participate as a collective in the re-enchantment of the urban space, they become conscious of their position, role and potential as active citizens; with their creativity inspired by their experiences. For instance, the showcase of the *Urban Tellers* in Portland, Oregon managed by Lawrence Howard and Lynne Duddy who work in the *Portland Story Theatre*, is an exemplar of such theories put into action. The project offers citizens the chance to showcase their personal stories and share them with no notes or script. The apparent advice is to give to the people room to voice their needs, desires and hopes. The advice implied in swings and roundabouts is to “discover, craft and shape personal stories; incorporate feedback and collaboration; sprinkle with laughter, feeling, meaning and authenticity; serve stories face-to-face, eye-to-eye, and heart-to-heart; and enjoy”³⁴. Following such principles and engaging in activities which resemble rituals where “rituals anchor individuals in time and place [and] they bond groups together” (Charles Landry 176), the collective becomes aware of its power to inspire, motivate, challenge, alter and improve. The storytelling ritual transforms the city into a stage and invites as much more people as possible to play along the role of the urban teller. This is an open invitation to intercultural mediation and creative interaction between the citizens.

VI. Conquering ideasclerosis and imagination by interaction

“Narrative is, among other things, a communicative speech act,
a message transacted between a sender and a receiver.”

-Susana Onega and José Angel Garcia Landa³⁵

Storytelling is about relationships and connecting people with and to stories. The communication built between the storyteller and the audience is strong, solid and organic. Through this communicative speech act people come closer to one another, they share ideas and opinions and become witnesses of a living art, and even better, an art which invites and in a way demands their reaction and active participation. Storytelling is built on interaction and, a responsive creation and circulation of stories can conquer ideasclerosis. When dealing with such live performances, it is expected the storyteller to experience stagnation of imagination or ideasclerosis. To tackle the issue and manage the story recipe, originality and practicality are needed as creativity ingredients. According to Sophia Nikolaidou, the conception and delivery of stories is “the most humane and

³⁴ For more information, please visit: <http://www.portlandstorytheater.com/urban.tellers/urban.tellers.htm>.

³⁵ The quote is taken from Susana Onega and José Angel Garcia Landa’s book *Narratology: An Introduction*.

the most humanistic art, [...] based on human experience and the writer’s imagination, [...] the stolen images, [...] [wishing] to interpret the world, to hand the keys of understanding human behaviour over”³⁶ (43). This kind of theft is aided by interaction and causes merely no harm.

Social interaction facilitates and propels creative activities. Erving Goffman described the condition of “face-to-face interaction” divided into informational and ritual interactions. When people mingle these engagements which are culturally specific stigmatize the experience of interaction accordingly. What Goffman “distinguishes as ‘anonymous relations’ from ‘anchored relations’ on the basis of ‘body placement, posture, gesture, and vocal expression’ (1971:195)” (Baldwin et al, 396), is part of the debate here. There is a “tendency of novel ideas to be structured in predictable ways by existing conceptual frameworks” (98) showcasing that “the information used in creative generation can be *predicted* on the basis of accessibility data [...] and *controlled*, at least to some extent, by manipulating the accessibility of category items” (Thomas B. Ward and Yuliya Kolomyts 101). Even in storytelling where in most of the cases, apart from complete improvised acts, there is a predetermined delivery plan about the content and form of the story, predictability and control are difficult to have. Group interaction can serve as the communication frame which sets up the principles and tools for dialogue, knowledge, motivation and inspiration transfer. “Imagination cannot be the canvas; [...] it is cultivated as much someone plays with her, tests her speeds and brakes experimenting with the elements that trigger and nourish her”³⁷ (Sophia Nikolaidou 114-115). And interaction with the audience does that.

Because “culture is presented as a system of coded meanings which are produced and reproduced through social interaction” (Baldwin et al, 32), stories as mentioned above function well in networks and encourage interaction as a generator of creative ideas. “The flow of information does not simply connect two sides; by being connected they change. A bridge does not simply couple two independent villages across a river but it creates a new city” (Felix Stalder 63). In most of the times, this is achieved by the combination of original ideas with suitable ideas.

The elements to be combined can be words, concepts, visual forms, and other simple elements, or at a more abstract level, they can be hypothetical scientific constructs, musical styles, artistic genres, and so on. Whether in science, technology, art, music, literature, or other creative realms, combinations are seen

³⁶ « , [...] , [...] μ , [...] [μ] μ μ , μ , μ » (Sophia Nikolaidou 43).

³⁷ « μ μ ; [...] μ , μ » (Sophia Nikolaidou 114-115).

as stimulants to creativity, and they have been mentioned frequently in historical accounts of creative accomplishments. (Thomas B. Ward and Yuliya Kolomyts 101)

We can go “beyond ordinary meanings toward more metaphoric ones [...] in a combination [that] does not have to include verbal units at all to be a stimulus for creativity, merging visually abstract forms” (Thomas B. Ward and Yuliya Kolomyts 103). Conceptual combination works well with imagination and can easily be facilitated by group interaction.

Conceptual combinations and creativity enforcement are part of the storyteller’s awareness of the times when the story is better to follow up to the audience’s expectations and reactions. The storyteller should be well-aware of his/her intentions and creativity capacities, and also extremely sensitive to the responses of the audience. As “creative cognition is concerned with explicating how fundamental cognitive processes, available to virtually all humans, operate on stored knowledge to yield ideas that are novel and appropriate to a task at hand” (Thomas B. Ward and Yuliya Kolomyts 93); the storyteller is an artist who can retrieve ideas from experience and navigate them accordingly or create new ideas along the way in interactive dialogue with the audience. Ideally, both situations should be in interplay. By doing so, storytelling can enliven all the following:

[The] human capital: the skills, talents and special knowledge of the people; [the] social capital: the complex web of relationships between organizations, communities and interest groups which make up civil society; [the] cultural capital: the sense of belonging in and understanding of the unique identity [...]; [the] intellectual capital: the ideas and innovative potential of a community; [the] creativity capital: the capacity to stand back, to connect the seemingly disconnected, to relax into ambiguity, to be original and inventive; [the] leadership capital: the motivation, will, energy and capacity to take responsibility and lead; and [the] environmental capital: the built and natural landscape and ecological diversity of an area. (Charles Landry 288)

Following such practices, ideasclerosis is in every aspect combated by reciprocal communication, exchange of knowledge, productive collisions, co-creation and mutual appreciation of the creative experience which boost equitable interaction of diverse cultures.

VII. *Beyond the shoreline of theory: treasuring participatory creativity*

“Man cannot discover new oceans unless he has
the courage to lose sight of the shore.”

-Andre Gide³⁸

The courage to move beyond established perceptions and images is for storytelling voyeurs what a lollipop is for the children. Intriguing, irresistibly desirable and bound by imagination, this principle makes people more and more enamoured with stories. The oldest navigator in such explorations has always been group creativity and most notable is still intercultural group creativity. The likelihood and the magnitude of a creative outcome is situationally social and cultural specific. Academic research should “redefine the scope of creativity, focusing much more on unleashing the mass of ordinary, day-to-day, dormant creativity that lies within most of us; [...] finding imaginative solutions and engaging and moving people” (Charles Landry 4). “Creativity might be best explained in terms of properties and laws about people’s mental states, personality traits, and behaviours” (Keith R. Sawyer 366) and attention is to be drawn upon participatory and group creativity. “A culture is an active, dynamic, living organism only because of the active participation of its members in its codes of communication” (John Fiske 82). Resulting from the interaction of the individuals, “group creativity emerges from individual creative acts, [...] [where] one person’s idea is often transformed and reinterpreted by the ensuing thought process of the group” (Keith R. Sawyer 371). The willingness to share and contribute is the foundation for group creativity and makes creative endeavours participatory “where face-to-face interaction creates new ideas, artefacts, products, services and institutions” (Charles Landry 281). Nowadays, people are much accustomed to interactivity and any art that reflects such reciprocation and proactive involvement resonates deeply in their minds.

Finke introduced a framework for cognition in creativity, “the Geneplore model which characterizes the development of novel and useful ideas as resulting from an interplay of *generative* processes that produce candidate ideas of varying degrees of creative potential and *exploratory* processes that expand on that potential” (Thomas B. Ward and Yuliya Kolomyts 94). “The generative processes include retrieval of various types of information, such as specific category exemplars, general knowledge, images, source analogs as well as association and combining of concepts and images [...] which represent possible starting points that can either

³⁸ The quote appears at this link:

http://thinkexist.com/quotation/man_cannot_discover_new_oceans_unless_he_has_the/12700.html.

facilitate or inhibit creative outcomes; [...], then the exploratory processes modify, elaborate, consider the implications, assess the limitations, or otherwise transform the candidate ideas” (Thomas B. Ward and Yuliya Kolomyts 94). In participatory storytelling, the people are prompted to recall from prior experience interesting concepts and images, retrieve and manage them and together assess them, modify and enhance in order to create a story. Such processes reinforce the creative capital of the collective and challenge its development.

“Collectives possess emergent properties that are irreducibly complex and thus cannot be reduced to individual properties; [...] creative outputs from social systems have the following characteristics: unpredictability, non-reducibility to models of participating agents, inter-subjectivity, individual agency and creative potential, and the cost of explanation” (Keith R. Sawyer 372). The most valuable qualities are unpredictability and inter-subjectivity. “An emergent social product it is ever-changing, created in a bottom-up fashion from the actions of individual actors, yet once created, it constrains and influences the late actions of those individuals in a top-down fashion” (Keith R. Sawyer 373). It is self-explanatory how unpredictability is met in the co-creation of stories when people exchange information and contribute with spontaneity, intuition and on the spot decisions about the creation and evaluation of their ideas. But, how inter-subjectivity is featured is indeed overwhelming. People collaborate; they put forth their subjective perceptions and debate. The stories are born out of a collective who is not confused but just well-mixed. People propose ideas, reject, add new ones and reshape them and the emergent product belongs to the collective and not to the subject.

The book *Group Creativity: Innovation through Collaboration* edited by Paul B. Paulus and Bernard A. Nijstad is an asset to creativity researchers and cultural practitioners interested in cultural mediation and dialogue because it features how diversity and creativity function in idea-generating work groups. It is a great book because it develops important concepts set by well-established arguments. For instance, it’s written that “more organizations and much of the scientific process now rely on the work of teams with diverse skills and knowledge” (3) and that “teamwork represents a major source of innovation in organizations” (8). “Creativity and cognitive researchers have examined the role of social and cognitive influences on the creative process; organizational researchers have examined team innovation, organizational learning, and knowledge transfer; group researchers have studied group brainstorming” (Paul B. Paulus and Bernard A. Nijstad 5) all suggesting that novel ideas are more likely to be born in groups.

Equally notable and important to treasure is the interactive effect of group creativity that of participation. Participatory creativity calls for bouncing ideas back and forth, stimulations, conversations, experimentations and collective inspirational and motivational imaginative

explorations overflowing. Participation in culture should suit the needs and desires of the people and as Nina Simon in *The Participatory Museum* claims, contribution, collaborative participation and co-creation are very important in establishing a reciprocal relationship between culture production and consumption. Access is no longer enough. Experience and active participation with responsive attitude are methods of engagement and establish idea-generating environments. Technology contributes everyday new additions to these practices and popularizes them. But storytelling also contributes with invitations to protect cultural heritage and share stories, urban tales of artistic value of oral or written nature. Getting creative with storytelling is more than coming up with novel ideas and forming a structure of continuity; it is about communicating these ideas and embellishing them via social and cultural interaction, exchange of knowledge and the interplay with diverse creative cognitions; it is about contributing to the ideas' generation, adding to their form and playing with the variety of their delivery. Policies should “foster a spirit of participatory collaboration designed to encourage new ideas to emerge from the group’s conversation” (Keith R. Sawyer 370). Participation in storytelling practices is creativity in process. The field research that follows offers plenty food for thought to tackle that issue.

Methodology of research

I. The aim of academic research and the debatable expectations

“Before beginning, plan carefully.”

-Marcus Tullius Cicero³⁹

Stories navigate our minding, motivation and contact. And since stories make us experience, our perception is bound by experience. The theme of this research is to unfold and tell the story behind storytelling and urban collective consciousness and creative cognition. The research question emerges from the blending of the art of storytelling with the collective’s consciousness and perception of a multicultural urban space positioning the question mark on the potential of participatory creativity and artistic engagement to enliven domesticity and social cohesion and intercultural mediation in urbanism. In other words, how it is possible stories to shape our mindsets about our city and if this can be added to a creative approach of urban designing, remapping, reconstructing, reimagining, reigniting and re-enchanting the multicultural city. The

³⁹ The quote appears at this link:

<http://www.englishforums.com/English/MarcusTulliusCiceroBeginningPlan-Carefully/lxrcq/post.htm>.

research aim is to investigate, explore and define the meaningful bridges between storytelling and participatory creativity in urban environments and more explicitly in Thessaloniki.

Having introduced already the conceptual framework with the showcases and having analyzed how the subject matter is treated in this research, at this point a field study will inspect the rationality of the established objectives. The subject matter is structured around the concepts of: social networks and how ideas spread, empirical, cognitive and social psychology and the geopolitics of emotions, the physiology of building urban domesticity, the interactive relationship between storytelling and urban collective consciousness, and participatory creativity. Cultural policy is the cardinal point because policy-makers should acknowledge storytelling as an organic instrument to boost the collective's creativity and intercultural mediation, and group creativity as a possible pathway to city revitalisation and public intervention. The theory consists of the dynamics built when stories are created and shared within diverse communities in a public space; and the connotations attached which impregnate the space with emotions and a debatable unit of perceptions. The elaborated research methods are the collection and analysis of multiple data, not only academic texts and research published, but also, new data which will be generated in order to serve the objectives.

The new data refers to the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data from the Storytelling Project, a case study accounting the development of the hypotheses over a small period of time especially designed for this field research. The conception, idea development, realization, resolution and evaluation stages build up a body of measurable data which wishes to respond to the objectives. The Storytelling Project is a small-scaled social research taking place in the port of the city of Thessaloniki inviting people to engage actively and creatively with the concepts of interest. The programming involves creativity content activities, a participatory workshop and open discussions to introduce storytelling to the people of Thessaloniki and to explore the meaningful and fruitful portages between the art of storytelling and urban collective consciousness. More details on the conception, organization, realization and evaluation of the project will be offered in the following parts dedicated to the research design.

The expectations of this case study are of course debatable. First, it is expected the participants to embrace the endeavour warmly because it is the first storytelling event for the people of Thessaloniki. Second, it is expected from them to understand the concepts and engage pro-actively by participating in the activities and by contributing to the workshop. This is a challenge but the programme of the project secures a familiarization introductory phase, a toolkit/guide offered and a key-note speaker giving instructive explanations. Third, it is expected from them to respond to the interviewing and to complete the questionnaires and give feedback

with further commentaries. Forth, from the event in its totality it is expected to provide the researcher with a body of data relevant and useful for interpretation and analysis. The evaluation and assessment of the cultural event is very important to either confirm or contradict the hypotheses of the research. And fifth, the all-embracing wish and aspiration is to sustain the event and broaden up in ripples the beneficial effects of protecting and promoting storytelling in Thessaloniki.

Focal point of this study is to find out and understand how stories become the ties themselves in the relationship between the heterogeneous communities and the city of Thessaloniki. Afterwards, it is important to acknowledge the significance of storytelling as an instrument to establish intercultural mediation and boost participatory creativity, and to propose cultural policy strategies for the safeguarding and appropriate treatment of this art. And then, it is suggested to rethink and re-evaluate the ways people perceive the multifaceted, diverse and multi-flavoured aspects of the city. The urban designers and engineers can profit from a reciprocal discussion with the citizens, the true storytellers of the urban life. Cultural institutions and organizations can serve as the palette for this participatory interaction where both professionals and amateurs through the art of storytelling debate their perceptions, consciousnesses and images of Thessaloniki as a multiethnic Balkan city. Not to forget, the cultural scene in the country needs a different approach to creativity, an approach that embraces people as a diverse yet inspiring community, an approach that endorses active participation, dialogue and meaningful exchanges of knowledge, skills and artistic inspiration. In general, because people via experiencing the city, they create its meanings and readings, it is a marvellous opportunity to re-capture the vibrating pulse of this city, to alter the way we think about it and treat it, to engage in collaborative artistic and creative actions which cement a better communication and a more enjoyable and lovable city-making and city-living.

II. Analytic or synthetic progression of hypotheses?

“A story is a cognitive scheme of events.”

-Susana Onega & José Angel Garcia Landa⁴⁰

The research hypotheses are treated as events; as temporally and spatially located entities, events happening during the conceptualization and realization of the research. The eventuality derives

⁴⁰ The quote is taken from Susana Onega and José Angel Garcia Landa's book *Narratology: An Introduction*.

from the organic relationship they build with each other. The hypotheses are not static; they carry dynamic qualities and their logic of action derives from the underpinning interdependence. The causal explanation in the progression of the hypotheses is not purely homogeneous. Like in a story where the events unfold heterogeneously and weave the concepts together in the end, in this study, the hypotheses blend the concepts and reach the objectives accordingly. The hypotheses are:

1. The art of storytelling expands from the 1:1 engagement to the “me-to-we” encounter feeding social interaction and the transfer of ideas and knowledge via neuro-imaging and neuro-imaging empowering social networks within multicultural communities.
2. The reciprocity in the ties intensifies participatory creativity which unleashes and harnesses the creative cognition of the multiracial collective via imagination roots and emotional arousal.
3. Through the experiential strata of empirical and cognitive psychology and the network effect, the senses and perception weave the image of the city and impregnate it with familiarity which nurtures domesticity.
4. Co-creating stories can channel the perception people have about the urban environment and via domesticity can build intercultural creative mediation.
5. The urban collective consciousness becomes an organic brew of intercultural interaction via storytelling which brings people closer to one another and closer to the city as well.

The question “analytic or synthetic progression” touches upon what Willard Van Orman Quine wrote in the *Two Dogmas of Empiricism* that “a statement is analytic when it is true by virtue of meanings and independently of fact; [...] meaning is what essence becomes when it is divorced from the object of reference and wedded to the word” (21-22).

From the theories of Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason*⁴¹ about statements of philosophical matters, the analytical approach is an uninformative tautology because it contains the truth it describes and presents scientific detailed examinations of. Whereas the synthetic approach treats the subject matter from the scope of observation and experience concluding on its value after developing a synthesis of logic, investigation and evaluation. This study develops explorative and interpretive hypotheses tested as much possible adequately and affirmatively. The progression of the hypotheses is not much of a theory tester but more of a flexible theory generator for empiricism which normatively treats sense experience as a major source of ideas, concepts and accumulated knowledge a posteriori⁴². But, in this study, empiricism is embodied in

⁴¹ For more information, please visit: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/analytic-synthetic/>.

⁴² For more information, please visit: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rationalism-empiricism/>.

a rationalized synthesis of collection and assessment of data to confirm or contradict the research objectives. Therefore, even if “the aims of empiricism are: to collect and categorize objective facts or data about the world; to form hypotheses to explain them; to eliminate, as far as possible, any human element or bias from the process; and to devise experimental methods to test and prove (or disapprove) the reliability of data and the hypotheses” (John Fiske 135), this study is not strictly empirical. The hypotheses are set as such in order to allow observation, documentation and analysis. The point is to elaborate on the theories mentioned in the conceptual framework and to reach a conclusion with measurable entities.

III. Research design: instruments of measurement and limitations

“A story should be told eye to eye, mind to mind, heart to heart.”

-Stanley Robertson⁴³

The research design of the Storytelling Project treats the words of Stanley Robertson (1940-2009), a Scottish storyteller, folk singer and Honorary Research Associate at the Aberdeen University’s Elphinstone Institute, as principal instructions. Shooting for the human mind and soul was from the start a tender-hearted objective. The scope of the study is not to determine strictly empirically facts, but to approach, address, attempt to understand and analyze the things which affect the hypotheses. “There is no way to make factually grounded recommendations about the best ways to facilitate future creative endeavours” (Thomas B. Ward and Yuliya Kolomyts 95). Therefore, factitious and over-deterministic instructions are avoided. The research design assembles the set up for the collection and analysis of data and it develops in collecting, preserving, analyzing and interpreting data, evaluating and presenting the research findings, advocating for the source of the data and proposing developmental philosophies.

The research design is structured around the norms of the case study social survey design which “as Stake (1995) observes, [...] is concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question” (Alan Bryman 47) and in this case with a particular cultural event, the Storytelling Project, associated with a specific location. The research methods/techniques for collecting intensively the data during the Storytelling Project are qualitative and quantitative as well undertaking in a single location, the port. Under the umbrella of deduction (theory - hypotheses subjected to empirical scrutiny - data collection – findings - confirmation or rejection-

⁴³ The quote appears at this link: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/culture-obituaries/music-obituaries/6068547/Stanley-Robertson.html>.

revision of theory), the qualitative methods include observation of storytelling practices and semi-structured interviews of the practitioners and the quantitative methods include closed-format questionnaires. Listening to conversations and documenting impressions and experiences in field notes is very important for this research.

In detail, regarding the instruments of data collection and measurement, for the qualitative approach inspired by inductive constructionism during the project's activities there is observation of the participants and interviewing semi-structured with an interview guide document handed over from the start to supplement the process. Major guideline is to ensure that every participant receives the same face-to-face stimulus and the responses can be aggregated. For the quantitative approach inspired by deductive objectivism during the event apart from the informative interviews there are questionnaires intended to capture the participants' attitudes toward the event and the projected concepts of study. To deal with reliability, replicability and validity, "it is important to appreciate that case study researchers do not delude themselves that [...] a case study is a sample of one" with findings that be generalised and universalized (Alan Bryman 50). Interested in both behaviour and meaning of action, the Storytelling Project is a cultural event which proposes an enduring freshness of vision and takes place in an almost natural setting targeting the process, the experience, the collection of rich and semi-structured data. Of course, similar events can take place in Belgrade or Bucharest.

A major concern is the location selected for this project. The city port, from the Roman times till today a cosmopolitan commercial centre, is particularly chosen to serve as the multicultural canvas upon which stories are pictured. The port undertakes many roles: it is a venue of commerce, of social interaction between the tourists and the locals, of entertainment during the International Film festival and because of the cafés and clubs there, of education because of the Museum of Photography and the Cinematography Museum there, and of identity because it represents the city's exit and entry point by the sea. Artistic and spiritual life remains very intense today making a strong and picturesque impression. The significance of the location is not uttered solely in intellectual or symbolical terms. The port is not only the symbolic place where cultures collide and combine, where intellectually the Orient and the Occident blend.

The significance of the port as a contemporary cultural crossroad lies on the practicalities, the geopolitical and socio-economic dimensions of it. Almost all the countries in the Balkan Peninsula and South-eastern Europe viewed and view the port as their natural exit to the Mediterranean Sea. Issued by the European Union, the shipping lines serve the transportation of passengers and commercial trucks of international transport companies with direction to the south, the east and the west. Therefore, the port is a minor mirroring melting pot where people

from different countries, religions, ethnicities and cultures meet for work or fun and interact socially. It is not simply a hub of transported ideas but rather a spirited place where these ideas get incarnated in everyday social contact. For that reason, it is pragmatically wise to witness how storytelling functions in the port and if and how urban stories inherit any fragrance of the identity of this multicultural place which then gets itself attached to the overall perception of the city's character and flavour. The project can act as an interesting yet initial opportunity to document such realities and critically reflect upon.

Undoubtedly, there are limitations. One of the limitations is the language employed in the project, the Greek language, but "language is flexible because it is simultaneously both regulated and creative" (Baldwin et al, 76). Another limitation is the temporal and spatial dimensions of the project which shortened the preparation time of the project. More people could have got involved and more representatives of diverse communities could have been interviewed. Etienne Wenger stated that "methodology is not a recipe [...] rather it acts as a guide about what to pay attention to" (1998:9), and the theories explained in the conceptual framework serve as a guide to explore and discuss the field research findings which are more or less dependable to the exegetic theories. When it comes to the design of a project that involves creativity measurement, we can:

Allow a manipulation of independent variables thought to be of interest, precise control over any extraneous variables (at least those the experimenter is cognizant of), and careful measurement of outcome or dependent variables; [...] however, there is also the risk that in the very act of gaining control over the variables, an artificial situation is created that makes any results obtained of questionable value for understanding real world phenomena. (Thomas B. Ward and Yuliya Kolomyts 95)

These concerns are prominent but the project functions partially as a theory tester and more as a theory generator. The interdisciplinary nature of the thesis hopes in merging concepts and enriching them with new data and a fresh attitude toward stories, urbanism and participatory creativity for intercultural dialogue. Indeed, when dealing with the storytelling art and human perceptive mechanisms and with intercultural communication it is overwhelming to document everything. The glory is as much in the journey as in the destination. The Storytelling Project is both.

IV. The storytelling project:

Collection, monitored analysis and evaluation of data

“A play should give you something to think about.”

-T.S. Eliot⁴⁴

“Humans have an extraordinary knack for detecting even small changes in facial expressions. This ability is localized in a particular area of the brain and can even be lost, a condition tongue-twistingly known as *prosopagnosia*. Reading the expressions of others was probably a key step on the way towards synchronizing feelings and developing the emotional empathy that underlies the process of emotional contagion” (Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler 38). Realizing the project and collecting the data for this field research proved to be an interesting examination of emotional contagion. Bringing the people of Thessaloniki closer to the storytelling art proved to be more of a happy surprise than an indifferent strategically executed task. When people undertake the role of the flâneur in the city and of the urban storyteller a lot of things can be noticed and monitored.

To begin with, the participants were fifty in number coming from diverse communities since we had locals and immigrants as well, and they were all invited for two hours to engage with storytelling in the port. At the beginning, they were handed a toolkit/guide and an interviewing guide document with the questions in it. The key-note speaker presented the workshop’s structure and the point of this project. There were two questions posed by the audience: 1. “What do you mean by storytelling?” and 2. “If I do not know any stories, how can I participate?”. These questions were justified. The key-note speaker gave the answers as much explanatorily as possible: 1. “Storytelling is when you tell what happened to you or to someone you know or when you narrate an imaginary event to someone” and 2. “Of course you can participate even if you do not have a story to tell. The important thing is to listen to the other people’s stories”. Then, the participants were given a couple of examples of what is happening to other storytelling events in the UK and they were asked to read the toolkit/guide.

After that, a short discussion followed to introduce them to the questionnaires. They answered to the twenty-five questions in the questionnaires. Then, the interviewing part followed. The participants were asked to give a short answer to five questions which addressed the hypotheses of this thesis. Not all of them answered but the answers were of different nature and

⁴⁴ The quote appears at this link:

http://thinkexist.com/quotation/a_play_should_give_you_something_to_think_about/225383.html.

quite diverse. After that, there was a five minutes break. Then, the project organizers asked the people to group in small groups and to create a story, an urban tale of their own. At first, there was dissatisfaction because only two or three knew each other and the majority of the people did not wish to group with strangers. Then, they were separated in five groups randomly and were asked to sit down and discuss a theme of common interest and following the instructions to come up with a story. They were given twenty minutes and ten stories were ready to be narrated. At least, ready to be discussed. “Narrative communication is concerned with creating arguments; it takes time and promotes reflection; [...] it is about creating meaning” and “the challenge of creative urban initiatives is to embed narrative qualities and deeper, principles understandings within projects which have iconic power” (Charles Landry 146).

The ending part of the project was a long discussion after listening to all the stories about the issues raised in them. Undoubtedly, the stories were not finished, some did not have any clear structure or end and some of them were too ambitious with imaginary blends of history and fiction. But, even though the stories were raw, even though some people denied their value and even though some of the concepts of the hypotheses were a little difficult to comprehend, the project was quite successful. The reasons are: first, they seemed to be really interested in finding what this art is and what it means for the citizens of this city; second, they answered to the questionnaires and to the interviews and there were twelve or thirteen people who were really active in the discussions asking questions all the time and expressing their opinions openly; third, the necessary data for confirming or contradicting the hypotheses was collected and it will be shortly afterwards presented; and last but most importantly, after the end of the project, not longer after the two hours, there were some people who asked if this is going to take place again because they wanted to participate again in a storytelling event. But, evaluating the project is a long process which involves serious contemplation and critical thinking.

Nowadays, the citizens of Thessaloniki feel helpless to express their voices and mostly they remain passive in a solitary world. But, storytelling awakens and nourishes the timeless and archetypal experiences, symbols, and forces of our inner lives. Story-making and storytelling help people dive into the local creative wisdom within the archetypal characters, landscapes and plots found in tales throughout the decades. The art of the imagination and narrative help them find artistic courage in the midst of even the direst stresses of daily life. One thing is for sure, that there is a lot of potential in this city to become a multicultural frying pan where new ideas are born collectively, where history meets alternative ways of perceiving and creating a collective consciousness, where diverse communities listen to each other’s stories and get inspired by what differentiates them. Stephanos Tsitsopoulos writes that “Thessaloniki [is] like a sum up of images

and sounds, a motion picture where the leading stars are disco highlife people or rock emotion walkers. And if you think that the transport ships or the cargos, which during the night shine in the Thermaic Gulf like long-travelling fireflies until they return to the south, they just rest there, then you are fooled. The ships loo at Thessaloniki and gossip about her, they look at her habits carefully with binoculars, they write cartography and discuss about her”⁴⁵ (15).

The project produced the following data for analysis. To the first hypothesis arguing that the art of storytelling expands from the 1:1 engagement to the “me-to-we” encounter feeding social interaction and the transfer of ideas and knowledge via neuro-imaging and neuro-imagining empowering social networks within multicultural communities, the positive responses out of fifty answers were 44 which make 88%. To the second hypothesis arguing that the reciprocity in the ties intensifies participatory creativity which unleashes and harnesses the creative cognition of the multiracial collective via imagination roots and emotional arousal, the positive responses out of fifty answers were 26 which make 52%. To the third hypothesis arguing that through the experiential strata of empirical and cognitive psychology and the network effect, sensation and perception weave the image of the city and impregnate it with familiarity which nurtures domesticity, the positive responses out of fifty answers were 47 which make 94%. To the fourth hypothesis arguing that co-creating stories can channel the perception people have about the urban environment and can impregnate it with domesticity which builds intercultural mediation, the positive responses out of fifty answers were 24 which make 48%. And to the fifth hypothesis arguing that the urban collective consciousness becomes an organic brew of intercultural interaction via storytelling which brings people closer to one another and closer to the city as well, the positive responses out of fifty answers were 43 which make 86%.

Regarding the documented outcomes, the results from the yes/no questions and the interviews present some interesting diversity. These percentages respond to the five main hypotheses and they confirm them. However, the most significant part is not just to confirm the hypotheses of this field research but to underline the interplay between the high and the low percentages. In fact, even though the percentages responding to whether the storytelling art intensifies social interaction and strengthens the ties of the social networks and whether intercultural interaction influences the urban collective consciousness are high, the percentages responding to whether participatory creativity feeds domesticity, intercultural mediation and

⁴⁵ « [] , disco highlife
 rock emotion . μ μ ,
 μ μ μ μ μ ,
 , . μ ,
 » (Stephanos Tsitsopoulos
 15).

reciprocity are low, both reaching half of the total. This shows that even though people believe in the positive aspects of storytelling to bring people closer to one another, they seem not to believe that this engagement can handle sensitive issues of Interculturalism. Nonetheless, a great surprise was the results of the questions for the third hypothesis which showed that the emotions, the experiences and the network effect influence the image of the city; affect the consciousness of the people and play a significant role in the feeling of domesticity. This means that the road towards urban collective consciousness goes through the people's experiences, emotional journeys and perceptive mechanisms. This can be the key concept in the design and implementation of amended cultural policies and urban planning policies.

Also, the questions were twenty-five in total and the most interesting positive answers had to do with the issue of listening to the stories of the immigrants and with the issue of co-creating stories with them. Because in the group of the participants there were not only locals, the answers differed. To the first issue, the positive answers were 43 out of fifty which make 86% showing that the people are eager to listen to someone else's story and open up to intercultural dialogue. But, to the second issue, the positive answers were only 19 which make 38% showing that people are not ready to sit together down and co-create based on cultural diversity, intercultural creativity and mediation projects. This result is not to be taken lightly. Thessaloniki is a city with rich diversity in its population. The willingness of the people to listen is not enough to handle integration, social cohesion and prosperity based on diversity. "Thessaloniki, like and every metropolis, I keep her in my mind as this twenty-four hours working cinema studio. Balkan Cinecitta!"⁴⁶ (Stephanos Tsitsopoulos 171). It is indeed a city like a Balkan cine city where everyone can arrive and fabricate storyboards about each building, each neighbourhood tracking down every cornerstone in the behavioural models of the locals. But, more initiatives should be taken to foster participation in intercultural dialogue and participatory creative endeavours which promote reciprocity, understanding and appreciation.

Moreover, another interesting result addresses the issue of whether the storytelling is present in the cultural scene of Thessaloniki. Sadly but reasonably, the percentage of the positive answers was low at 24% with only 12 yes answers. This makes the research of this thesis a lot more relevant than expected and the need to familiarise the citizens with this art and to animate them in order to engage, organize and participate in storytelling events for safeguarding cultural heritage and voicing contemporary burning issues through urban tales, a lot more prominent. Also, a high percentage of positive answers at 62% had to do with whether the people wished to

⁴⁶ « μ , μ , μ μ !» (Stephanos Tsitsopoulos 171).

listen to the stories of a neighbouring culture about a neighbouring area and whether they wished to discover this area through tales. This is an indication that people are interested to reach out to the stories of other countries in the Balkan region and beyond. It can be a starting point for organizing projects with storytellers of other Balkan cities and initiate intercultural events. All in all, the hypotheses were confirmed but this is not enough because what the results captured is that there is a lot more to be done in terms of public animation, of intercultural mediation, of participatory creativity, and of cultural policy-making.

V. Developmental philosophies

“The human spirit endures through the magic of storytelling.

So, let me tell you a story.”

-Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti⁴⁷

The port is seen as a Balkan-Mediterranean port where cultural identity depends on heritage and intercultural dialogue. Interethnic readings of the place rely heavily upon the communication channels and the exchange not only of services and goods but of cultural values as well. The port is an irreplaceable part of the city and the authorities work hard to strengthen that tie between the citizens of Thessaloniki, the workforce of the port and the passing-through people. The support comes from economic revitalisation, architectural reconstruction, social animation and cultural hearths which cease to lie dormant mostly in Dock A . In other words, the port undertakes the role of a storyteller aware of history and open to new philosophies and developmental strategies to enchant the people of Thessaloniki. Much like the port, the urban tales are the gate through which the magic of this city can unfold. As Thomas Korovinis presents in his anthology, Thessaloniki is a melting pot of cultures and religions like a premature New York of the South-eastern Balkan Europe where what suits the city best is “a shining sunrise in the Castles, a reddish sunset in the port, markets and bazaars, where the languages of the people are to be discussed like they used to be long ago”⁴⁸ (10). The languages are to be spoken and the stories are to be told and retold no matter how much time has passed.

This project is strongly suggested to take place elsewhere. For example, it would be much interesting to document similar cultural events happening in Bucharest or Belgrade. In detail, the

⁴⁷ The quote appears at this link: <http://www.asiansinmedia.org/news/article.php/theatre/747>.

⁴⁸ «[] μ , μ , , » (Thomas Korovinis 10).

commonalities in the myths between Serbian and Greek cultural heritage can be addressed in intercultural projects wishing to achieve mediation and reciprocal communication. A really good study is also the book *The Mysteries of Thessaloniki* by Evangelos Chekimoglou (2001) where lots of the lost stories about numerous monumental areas in the city are studied throughout the history of time and tradition. Oral storytelling entertains, enlightens, and gives to the people enormous scope to interpret the stories in their own way. Humans think in narrative, the story form is as natural to us as breathing; oral storytelling is an extension of this and reflects our experience and environment. Therefore, when reading such a multicultural place as the port and when attempting to decode the collective consciousness people have about the city of Thessaloniki, it is suggested to take urban tales told from diverse sources under serious consideration.

One should also consider in what way the peripheral regions of the city can also participate in the revitalization of regional cultural development. In the conduct of cultural policies in Greece, Thessaloniki is the most vibrant and hearted cultural city since it produces a specific quality of culture depended on geography, language and tradition. However, the periphery of the city has also cultural value and people should be animated to enliven it. Cultural policies should give the regions around the city a chance to conduct and coordinate community cultural activities. This is worthy because in the regional area cultural heritage and myths and legends and memorabilia exist in large quantities mounting like mushrooms in every village's folkloric art. Stories can confer value upon objects. The book *Significant Objects: 100 Extraordinary Stories about Ordinary Things* "tells the tale of this irreverent testament to the power of storytelling through a hundred of the best stories"⁴⁹ and underscores the storiness of a lived materiality, of the artefacts imbued with meaning.

It is suggested to review the results and conduct more field research with enhanced hypotheses and more parameters in order to explore more connections between the brewed concepts. Because the storytelling art is not familiar to the people of Thessaloniki, it is advised to embrace this art and invite professionals, amateurs and others to work on it. By conducting further research, there is a lot to be discovered in more practical terms than the ones set by this thesis as theory generators. Thessaloniki is an urban soil good to fertilize it with narratology and creativity of the collective because people seem easy to talk to, people get emotionally attached to a place, an event, a community naturally, and the communication codes feature low boundaries.

⁴⁹ For more information, please visit: <http://www.brainpickings.org/index.php/2012/08/06/significant-objects-book/>.

According to an article in the New York Times by Charly Wilder⁵⁰, Thessaloniki is a city rich in cultural sites and creativity “embracing a do-it-yourself ethos [...] open to century-old marketplaces where ripe produce, freshly dismembered livestock and an extravagance of spices still form the city’s commercial heart”. For these reasons and many more, the tales of the city should be heard widely.

Hosting policy recommendations

I. Quitting soft-peddalling: theory-based cultural realities

“Real life boiling [in words].”

-Sophia Nikolaidou⁵¹

Cultural policies in Greece constitute an almost bewildered field of action and academic research. Practitioners, professionals and researchers strive to explore the territory and expand the political and social awareness. Cultural policy-making ought to correspond to the needs and desires of the people and to translate real life in words of legislative nature. Cultural realities should be considered sincerely and sufficiently. “Culture is who we are, the sum of our beliefs, attitudes and habits” (Charles Landry 245). Dragan Klaić argued that “intangible cultural heritage covers skills, cultural practices, and forms of cultural memory such as languages and dialects, songs and music, traditional dances, legends, proverbs, rituals, ceremonies, feasts and festivals” and that “communities have been accumulating, preserving and transforming these artefacts of human creativity throughout the centuries as a resource and a distinct marker of their collective identity” (31). Thus, the people in charge and the decision-makers in the public and private sectors are advised to quit soft-peddalling and start reconsidering to grasp the current feelings and tendencies in order to understand and minimize what weakens nowadays the pulses of cultural achievement.

Theory-based cultural realities constitute readings of research and the applications in everyday cultural encounters. Cultural policy would benefit from mind-flow and mind-shift strategies. In other words, the policies should meet the voices of the people who experience, produce, consume, approve or disapprove the cultural capital. The development of the policies would better work as a life-long, built-in mechanism to improve the immunity of the cultural

⁵⁰ For more information, please visit: <http://travel.nytimes.com/2011/11/06/travel/salonika-greeces-cultural-capital.html>.

⁵¹ « μ [μ]» (Sophia Nikolaidou 44). The quote is taken from the book

scene's health to renew itself inclusive principles. "Some of the oldest stories we know, including creation myths, were attempts to make sense of the world. Those early storytellers invented answers to the mysteries all around them." (Peter Turchi 13). Nowadays, what weakens the pulses of storytelling is that the nature of cultural production, preservation and promotion remains fictive with lax links to reality and even laxer links to intercultural communication with the Balkan region and beyond. Because "representations [...] do not simply copy the world; they produce a *version* of it" (Baldwin et al, 43); stories can help with managing these versions by responding creatively to the ones worth keeping and promoting as most representative.

Specifically, storytelling in Greece should be publically recognized with strategies of advocacy and public outreach. Within the arts communities on state level, people can invest money, time, passionate energy and skills in storytelling to promote it as a top-notch performance art and to broadcast, support and strengthen its beneficial character for many disciplines and for safeguarding cultural diversity and intercultural mediation. Storytelling practices can illuminate human experience and reinforce human contact and creativity in a kaleidoscope of manners. Increased mobility, networked transfer of knowledge and multilateral cooperation among practitioners, amateurs and researchers can pave the way for deepened understanding, reciprocal communication and fruitful development. Cultural practices are expected to gain innumerable by outreaching to practitioners and artists who use story in their art and work. Proactive policy-making should secure a balanced cultural exchange between Greece and other Balkan countries whether EU or Non-EU members; an exchange that is structured around these principles: to identify the best possibilities for encouraging cooperation, to protect and promote oral and written storytelling heritage, to foster participation in such, to facilitate contacts and networking and to better coordinate this intercultural exchange.

On national level, policy-makers should establish a cross-departmental approach to community cohesion, incorporate intercultural mediation and give motivation for cultural expressions of storytelling from diverse sources. On regional level, in Thessaloniki there should be collective forces to raise awareness of the existing resources of creative capital and cultural heritage, funding schemes that bridge the storytelling communities, nurturing and mentoring of intercultural innovators and there should be accessibility and flexibility of multicultural services and products in storytelling events. Establishing a well-run and well-managed field of action will bring novice storytellers and will encourage new initiatives from enthusiastic and diverse sources of inspiration. Artists, managers, teachers, librarians, attorneys, health care professionals, counsellors and social workers, cultural and educational organizations and institutions from the country and the Balkan region as well, can benefit immensely, for example

in human resources management, team-building and leadership reinforcement areas, from a public recognition and encouragement of the storytelling art. Because storytelling deals with social human behaviour, all types of organizations can redefine the decision processes and communication strategies within and between them such as human resources management via practices which favour fruitful intercultural collaboration and freedom of expression.

Part of narrating the cultural realities of Thessaloniki is also the Balkan part of the city's identity and image which has a long and very rich history. Researchers such as Mark Mazower with his books *Salonica: City of Ghosts* and *The Balkans: A Short History*, dedicated time and energy to that history and its stories. For example, in the firstly mentioned book, he states that the city is “less in thrall to an ancient past, more intimately linked to neighbouring peoples, languages and cultures” (1) and that Christians, Muslims and Jews all added to the multiculturalism here and “everyone, it seemed, had their story to tell” (7) about what this multiculturalism in the Balkan region meant for the city's prosperity and character throughout the history. “It follows that the real challenge is not merely to tell the story of this remarkable city as one of cultural and religious co-existence –in the early twenty-first century such long-forgotten stories are eagerly awaited and sought out- but to see the experiences of Christians, Jews and Muslims within the terms of a single encompassing historical narrative” (10).

Marija Todorova's book *Imagining the Balkans* (1999) is a careful examination of the image of the Balkans in terms of symbolic and realistic representations, useful to every researcher who wishes to explore the perplexities and complexities of the arts in that region. To strive for intercultural creative dialogue between individuals/communities/countries in the Balkan region, is difficult to achieve because of the dominance which the rigid national identities have on cultural production and consumption. Sadly, as Dr. Milena Dragi evi Šeši and Sanjin Dragojevi argue in the book *Intercultural Mediation*, the “fascination for national historiographies and national myths from the nineteenth century has raised stronger barriers for internal communication in the Balkans” (10). However, the storytelling art can break through the barriers and initiate a dialogue on folkloric arts, mythology and performing arts. It is significant for intercultural mediation in the Balkans to establish a communicative network of professionals and practitioners who by engaging with storytelling in their work and art, can witness the different nuances in the art between the countries, document the unique aspects, elaborate on the common concepts and collaborate on preservation and promotion of cultural diversity.

Stories are a good way to start discussing about our cultures and traditions. Dr. Milena Dragi evi Šeši and Sanjin Dragojevi also comment that “the customs and everyday life of people in this region are in great part characterized by similarities, rather than differences” (11).

The similar practices of living are traceable in the stories that the Balkan countries have. The issue is to share them. Stories which relate to the Balkans are part of the urban storytelling of Thessaloniki in terms that Balkan traditions and myths have been integrated in the readings of the city images. The Byzantine and the Ottoman Empires have influenced geographically and culturally the whole region resulting in a multicultural mosaic of the Balkans with diversity in religions, languages and lifestyles where the Orient and the Occident meet. The set of ancient myths, legends, stories which are fallacies yet popular folkloric tales, which is present in the cultural heritage of the city, depicts the ideas of the collectives found at the exchange of cultural and social capital representing values, beliefs and behaviours.

Philip Wilkinson writes that “myths reinforce the cultural identity of the people who tell them” (9). This is not only a matter of cultural hence national identity but also a matter of cultural reality including lifestyle, mindset and intra-and-inter-personal relationships which of course address cross-border cultural exchange. Thus, myths whether attributed to imaginative worlds or highly inspired by reality are part of the mindset that people have and project in their relationships with one another. One should consult Stuart Hall’s *Questions of Cultural Identity* (1996) for further information on the issue. Now, the production, distribution, representation and consumption of cultural content can benefit from storytelling practices. Especially in the Balkan region, the mentality of telling a story can respond to the realities of these countries because every country has a story to tell and that story culturally speaking presents more similarities than differences. The intercultural exchange by storytellers, artists and scholars of the art can point at the similarities and the differences between the cultures and can provoke creative discussions about them. The policies are invited through strategic documents, legislative frameworks and normative administration to tackle national issues at grass roots level fighting social exclusion and the lack of community cohesion.

Moreover, storytelling can help with Diaspora and Xenophobia because it is an art responsible for voicing human contact even in sensitive terms. Diaspora features displacement as after an enforced separation due to political, social or economic repression and seems to include nostalgia for the homeland. But, in Thessaloniki there is more of a “neocommunitarianism” which features strong community ties and a distinguishable ethnic culture in certain areas of the city of settlement. In such situations, migrants live “dual lives” with a “bi-focal” vision directed at both the new and the old home communities (Vertovec, 2004; Portes et al, 1999: 217). The two cultures, that of origin and that of the receiving society, are seen as relatively homogenous and stable units and the migrant is seen as belonging to both being in a way the link between them. Minority cultural expression and activities are thus interpreted as realization, continuation and

preservation of the culture and identity of origin. Narrating stories either from the land of origin or not can bridge the generations and show how people share the same emotions and challenges.

By doing so, xenophobic attitudes are weakened because there is direct contact and enlivened communication transferring knowledge about the tradition and cultural heritage of all within a multicultural collective. For instance, by treasuring and narrating old and new stories about people who fought for their countries, families and lives and coped with expatriation, people get familiarised with the physical, psychological and mental effects that these misfortunes have upon humanity. Especially the people who were born and live in urban contexts have a lot to gain from listening to stories about/from the ones who fought hard to sustain themselves through war or illness and settle to other areas or countries. By involving them to the narrative, people are introduced to the situations and invited to manage and challenge their opinions and feelings about such social phenomena just like a book aims to do. But what is more valued in storytelling is that the story is lived in real time and it can be openly discussed. The experience makes stronger impressions and the emotional transfer is more intense. Thus, living the misfortunes through the voice, eyes and movement of the storyteller is much more influential than just imagining the situations whilst reading a memoir and is much more possible for a positive mind-shift to occur.

Regarding the cultural policies about ethnic minorities in Thessaloniki, there should be cohesion in the inclusive strategies, respect and tolerance for the national identities and cultural rights, and preservation and visibility of any diverse folkloric realities. Because the city is a multicultural city and storytelling practices can highlight that, cultural policies are expected to respond to that diversity and invest in intercultural mediation and communication among the ethnic communities fostering freedom of creative expression. Bhikhu Parekh wrote in *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* that “multiculturalism is about the proper terms of relationship between difference cultural communities” and about culturally embedded differences (13). Storytelling inclusive events can animate mediation between the communities and can shed light upon the values and beliefs each possesses and cherishes through the stories and the characters in them. It is of crucial significance to mention at this point the initiative by Goethe Institut in Thessaloniki (and Athens) entitled *A Balkan Tale*⁵² April-May 2012 which addresses the cultural heritage of the Ottoman Era in the Balkan region with documentaries, exhibitions, events and open discussions, and aims to stimulate public discourse to promote a sense of history based on Interculturalism, religious co-existence and interethnic communication. A project wishing to engage people with the history of the Balkans in the city of Thessaloniki through photography, architecture, films and discussions. Also, the book *Daring to*

⁵² For more information, please visit: www.balkantale.com.

Remember: Short Stories and Poems from South-eastern Europe (2011) is a collection of literary works from twenty-four writers of the Balkan region more about what unites the countries of South-eastern Europe in cultural terms rather than what separates them.

Furthermore, constructed community driven cultural policy-making which promotes living with diversity in Thessaloniki can question the collective awareness and feeling of belonging and further redefine it. Storytelling events with multiethnic character can energize the dynamic interplay and transfer of knowledge and tradition between different cultural groups in the city such as between the Serbs and the Greeks or between the Albanians and the Greeks. Such events of socio-cultural animation through the familiarization with the customs and values of our neighbouring countries can help with fighting stereotypes and prejudices and with setting up mediation channels to ensure communication. Cultural policies ought to enhance cooperation, partnership and active participation via legislation and strategies of advocacy and public outreach which cement a deepened way of regional artistic creation and development. Protecting the stories of a community means protecting the quality of artistic value and investing in the enrichment of the storytelling art means investing in the empowerment of cultural communication. Further exemplified recommendations for cultural policy-making are proposed in the following parts of this chapter of the thesis.

II. Amending cultural policies: stories/smiles from ear to ear

“Happiness is like those palaces in fairytales whose gates are guarded
by dragons; we must fight in order to conquer it.”
-Alexandre Dumas⁵³

Just like people beam with pleasure from ear to ear, stories can be spread from ear and ear and altogether spread all over warm-hearted smiles. According to Jackson Barry, “the study of the arts -literary, visual, aural, etc.- has always had some recourse to a notion of the creating/perceiving mechanism through which the aesthetic object is enjoyed” (119). Joy and the spread of happiness are ultimately desired in storytelling. When the storyteller touches the hearts of the audience and their feelings translate into glowing merriment, there is no better reward for him/her than that.

⁵³ The quote appears at this link: <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/152039-happiness-is-like-those-palaces-in-fairytales-whose-gates-are>.

Scholars and researchers who studied the arts and the emotions⁵⁴ have argued that engaging in artistic activities brings more joy than other leisure activities do and that the people's willingness to reach out and connect with each other is reinforced. From the very temporalities of every art work to the subjects who are induced to engage their lives in a spirit of an unfolding emotional telos, happiness becomes a potential for individual wellbeing for which we take responsibility to free from the constraining passivity. The European agenda for culture has a strand⁵⁵ aiming at supporting cooperation projects which focus on the exchange, analysis and evaluation of participatory productions at local, regional, national and international levels in an attempt to engage people in the process of "living the arts, living better lives".

Robert D. Putnam wrote an article in *The American Prospect* entitled *The Prosperous Community: Social Capital and Public Life* in which he argued that "everyone would be better off if everyone could cooperate; in the absence of coordination and credible mutual commitment, however, everyone defects, ruefully but rationally, confirming one another's melancholy expectations" (1). "Working together is easier in a community blessed with a substantial stock of social capital" which is featured by "social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust" (Robert Putnam 2). For establishing the prosperity of a place, it is suggested to strengthen the social engagement and empower collaboration and trust, the social assets of a community. "Networks of civic engagement also facilitate coordination and communication and amplify information about the trustworthiness of other[s]" leading into strong ties within the social networks, building prosperity upon reciprocal relationships and forming new partnering strategies for development. Storytelling offers "connection" like opening a window into the minds of the listeners, understanding of diversity and different ways of perceiving and thinking, and intimacy bringing people closer to one another by shared experiences. Accordingly, Rolf Jensen wrote the book *The Dream Society* where he claimed that gradually the Information Society transforms itself in a Dream Society which "appeal[s] to our hearts, not to our heads" (1) and in which "businesses, communities, and people as individuals will thrive on the basis of their stories, not just data and information" (3) "where the emotions, the stories and narratives, the values" (5) prevail in a way.

Dr. Milena Dragi evi Šeši and Blanimir Stojkovic claimed in their book *Culture-Management, Animation, Marketing* that the position of culture in the prosperity of the society "to

⁵⁴ These are two studies to be consulted: a) Michael Argyle, "Subjective Well-Being," *In Pursuit of the Quality of Life*, ed. Avner Offer (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 30-33. b) Lars Olov Bygren, Boinkum Benson Konlaan, and Sven-Erik Johansson, "Attendance at cultural events, reading books or periodicals, and making music or singing in a choir as determinants for survival: Swedish interview survey of living conditions," *British Medical Journal*, 3 (13), 1577-1580, 21 December 1996.

⁵⁵ For more information, please visit: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/programme/strands3_en.php.

reconcile, or establish a certain order of human needs, work and creativity [...] so that cultural life of the community could be as complete and dynamic as possible” (7) should not be taken lightly. On the contrary, from the 1960’s the cultural worker’s role evolved into the one of “cultural mediator”, “cultural animator” (4) suggesting the key concepts of mediation, collaboration and participation. And for these concepts to be implemented in activities, cultural policies should be adequately stated and self-reflectively amended. Cultural policies in Greece should focus on a genuine cross-cultural collaboration of partnerships and combined expertise axed by a participatory process of mutual decision-making in terms of strategy, programme and finance. There should be a stable and sustainable practice of interaction, collaboration and networking on national and international levels equally which secure new forms of collectivism, social activism and critical self-organization. Alongside, there should be established a coordinated alliance with urban policies and policies of space management focusing on long-term visions on how to develop urban culture locally and beyond implementing the creativity of the civic society.

To experience cultural diversity through the arts motivates people to get rid of ethnic and racial stereotypes and inspires them to collaborate and be active. Investing in participation and in participatory creativity especially in storytelling events is an invitation for the citizens of every city and of Thessaloniki to exercise their cultural rights productively empowering creative societal relationships and democratic intercultural communication. To have access and to participate in the cultural scene means to make your voice heard, get involved in the value chain of creating, diffusing, educating, consuming cultural content, and critically reflect on the changes that occur simultaneously. Active participation fills up the hearts of people with the pride and merriment of being artistically engaged and that influences their social networks positively. In order to encapsulate the above principles of living and grasping happiness from cultural and creative endeavours, cultural policy-making requires some amendments.

For starters, as mentioned before, expanding the storytelling art by creating awareness of and appreciation for it, building credibility for its longstanding tradition and incorporating it in other cultural activities such as in theatre and stand-up comedy, professionals, practitioners and audience have a lot to benefit from. In addition, because it is an art which expresses, teaches and protects values and beliefs, it provides a community with the cultural historical knowledge needed to inspire collective action. For instance, organizing a storytelling club in Thessaloniki (the idea of such clubs belongs to the Society for Storytelling⁵⁶) is a lovely way to familiarize people with the myths of/about the city and the diverse communities which inhabit it. The

⁵⁶ For more information, please visit: <http://www.sfs.org.uk/nswresources>.

programme can be initiated by University students who can assemble an agenda of urban stories or stories from the Balkan region and then start visiting schools, libraries, museums, cafés and sharing their stories with the people. The financial aspect is to be discussed but motivation, will power and commitment are enough to start with. Later on, the club can apply for financial support from local authorities, museums, Universities, from private enterprises and sponsors.

Also, because listening to stories is essential to the boost of imagination, creativity and abstract thought processes, storytelling can help in the workplace, in organizations, government agencies, non-profits and other businesses. Diverse and even antagonistic communities can build their strategies upon respect, mutual understanding, inspirational team-building and motivational peacemaking. For instance, professional storytellers can work with the managers of human resources and resolve misconceptions and miscommunications. What is more, storytelling can help with leadership skills. There is storytelling for leaders where in workshops participants gain hugely in confidence, feel one metaphoric foot taller and become more influential. Experiential storytelling for leaders can help with strategic management, corporate communication, strengthening corporate identity, team-building strategies, increasing productivity, managing change, delegating, mentoring, etc. Through cultivating integrity, sincerity, consistency, substance and working with the personality matrix and the different leadership styles, people can obtain the tools and capabilities to creatively and efficiently motivate and direct others in an organization.

Not to go unnoticed that recent studies⁵⁷ have shown that storytelling contributes to healing and therapeutic psychology particularly involving collective memory and traumatic states and thus it is an art in the hands of therapists, social services agents, health care practitioners and artists who elaborate on cultural healing. This is an open invitation to the artists of the Balkan region who would like to build intercultural links and resolve through the art issues of exclusion, collective traumatized memories, etc. All in all, cultural policies are responsible for ensuring and securing sincerity, credibility, transparency, accessibility and sustainability for managing culture but this does not exclude the alignment with an inspirational and motivational objective: to engage people, make them happy and make them think.

⁵⁷ For more information, please visit: <http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/02/10/healing-through-storytelling/>; or this: <http://storytellingtherapy.com/home.html>; and consult Richard Stone's book *The Healing Art of Storytelling: A Sacred Journey of Personal Discovery*; and the book *Storytelling in Therapy* by Rhiannon Crawford, Paul Crawford and Brian Brown.

III. Mouth to mouth resuscitation of urban sites: imagined communities

“There are no strangers here. Only friends you haven’t yet met.”

-William Butler Yeats⁵⁸

Greg Richards and Robert Palmer argued in *Eventful Cities: Cultural Management and Urban Revitalization* that more and more cities in the world wish to become identified as “eventful” either via festivals or other distinct cultural activities and “cultural events have become central to processes of urban development and revitalization, as cultural production becomes a major element of the urban economy, and cultural consumption can dominate both the image of places and urban life in general” (3) but “eventfulness should not be an aim in itself, but a means of improving the city and making it more attractive and liveable” (4). Edward Soja (1996) elaborated on Lefebvre’s ideas on spatiality and stated that space, and in our case urban space, is a combination of materially built space (the perceived), of imagined, calculated or abstract space, the space of images (the conceived) and of social space in which people experience things (the lived). *Intimate Metropolis: Urban Subjects in the Modern City* is a book edited by Vittoria Di Palma, Diana Periton and Marina Lathouri which concentrates on how the concept of intimacy can be applied for resuscitating urban sites. “‘Intimate’ is a term used in conjunction with objects or ideas that are held close –ones that are worn next to the skin, or that lie within the recesses of the mind or heart; but it also implies an unveiling of the self, a sharing of hopes and fears” (Vittoria Di Palma, Diana Periton and Marina Lathouri 5) and a city such as Thessaloniki should offer that.

The intimate metropolis is thus a place in which boundaries between public and private, individual and multitude have been blurred [...] by imagining the city as an organism -as an entity in flux, capable of variation, growth and decline, rather than as an assembly of fixed parts; as a collective made up of subjects whose actions, needs and proclivities change constantly, rather than following the predictable dictates of “human nature”- the developing techniques of statistics suggested the possibility of a fluid model of city planning, in which the general laws regulating urban life could be ascertained. (Vittoria Di Palma, Diana Periton and Marina Lathouri 6)

⁵⁸ The quote appears at this link: <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/w/williambut383082.html>.

The idea is simple: *enable, educate and engage*. Among the objectives should be to provide social pedagogy of cultural diversity and put in place cultural policies which efficiently and effectively minimize the threats and maximize the benefits of intercultural cooperation and collaboration. To resuscitate urban spaces via participation to the intercultural activities calls for honest communication about the realities of migration and diversity in the city, for open debates about cultural conflict and for freedom of artistic expression protected by agreements and programmes between the EU and the Non-EU countries. Cities across Europe have become increasingly diverse in ethnic, cultural and religious terms. The changing nature of urban societies calls for mutual understanding, managing native and migrant groups and improving intercultural mediation through artistic processes of inclusion and experimentation. Storytelling can provide ground for such practices in projects for intercultural cities as active learning communities going through processes of inclusion to understand the complexities of the issue. Richard Brecknock worked with cultural literacy and argued that even infrastructure projects such as highways and bridges have a cultural impact and need to be considered in new ways especially nowadays with an increased mobility, migration and the growth of the intercultural city.

Lia Ghilardi in *Cultural Planning and Cultural Diversity* mentioned that there is “a condition of ‘in-betweenness’ (Bhabha) [which] presupposes a deeper acceptance of human existence as a porous, constant flux of definitions and redefinitions where nobody belongs completely to any one identity” (2). “The idea of a territory as a living ecosystem, made up of diverse resources which need to be surveyed and acknowledged by the local communities at large before policy can intervene, is very much at heart of cultural planning” (Ghilardi 5). Cultural mapping deals with the identification and documentation of a place’s indigenous cultural resources in socio-economic and cultural terms and through the recordings of the practices and existing creative capital, the sense of place, the social values and behaviours obtain an important role in the cultural map of the city. Colin Mercer wrote in 2002 a report about the city of Stockholm entitled *Towards Cultural Citizenship: Tools for Cultural Policy and Development* which later developed into a book in which he stated that “we often forget that the land and environment are also cultural resources in which we invest with meaning and significance” (6) and thus cultural mapping and planning should involve cultural diversity and free and diversified access to culture. In other words, cultural mapping refers to the “scanning [of] the cultural resource base of a given community in order to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats” and cultural planning comes to ensure “that cultural considerations are present in all processes of planning and development” of an urban site (10). Cultural and urban policy-making

should consider these theories and try to implement them in the strategic management and development agendas.

After drawing a rich and honest cultural map in the city of Thessaloniki, decision makers can prioritize Interculturalism in cultural policy-making and strategies of inclusion to improve coordination, cooperation and multicultural prosperity in the Balkan region and beyond. How can a city foster dialogue through storytelling between the communities from different cultures in their daily lives is a matter of viewing the city as a multicultural canvas full of potential, creativity and innovation. Urban collective consciousness can work hand in hand with participatory creativity to make Thessaloniki a prosperous intercultural city. Inspired by the Intercultural Cities Project (with Subotica from Serbia and Patra from Greece among others) of the European Commission and the Council of Europe (www.coe.int/interculturalcities) from 2008, the decision makers in Thessaloniki can do a lot of things to achieve that cultural resuscitation. With specific cultural policies about storytelling in the region harmonized with diversity and with tools such as expert reviews, study visits, thematic workshops and public events, it is possible to stimulate intercultural and international dialogue, to inspire cooperative initiatives and to build upon diversity a spirit of conscious participation in cultural creative endeavours on national and international levels. Urban resuscitation refers also to public spaces, homes and workplaces designed to enable people to mix, exchange and interact productively and creatively.

To make this vision a reality, cities must develop an intercultural strategy to alter and ameliorate their cultural policies, public spaces and the relationships between the diverse communities and all the above factors. For instance, the *Agenda 21 for Culture* (Barcelona 2006)⁵⁹ calls upon policies, programmes and projects on culture and urban planning/urban regeneration, the use of public spaces for cultural projects and territorial balance of the cultural supply in the city. It explores local policies for cultural diversity social inclusion to promote the involvement of citizens in cultural production and/or cultural mediation processes and views public spaces as areas of conviviality and meaningful interaction. It is important to think about what cultural activities punctuate the city in a positive and waterproof way and to consider the variety of different representations of the city, and the ways in which they understand the specificity of urban experience itself. The tales of the city and the outcome of narrating them in a face-to-face interaction can play the role of the mediator.

Moreover, Benedict Anderson presented in his book *Imagined Communities* his idea of “imagined communities” in relation to the notion of nation and cultural geographies to figure out

⁵⁹ For more information, please visit: <http://www.agenda21culture.net>.

the personal relations and attachments to nations. The nation is seen as “an imagined political community –and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (6) and as a cultural artefact of a particular kind (4). He studied “the ways in which nations offer a sense of identity and security in the modern world” making sites “‘imagined’ ‘because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion’ (1991:6)” and viewed as communities “‘because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship’ (1991:7)” (Baldwin et al, 158). “The imagining of this community is a collective (or inter-subjective) cultural process. It is about creating the nation through its representation to both members and outsiders through writing fictions and histories, painting landscapes and portraits, and choreographing parades and ceremonies” (Baldwin et al, 159). Stephen Daniels advanced Anderson’s ideas and perceived nations “as being given shape and content by legends and landscapes, as being formed by stories of golden ages, traditions, heroic deeds and dramatic destinies located in ancient or promised homelands, with hallowed sites and scenery” (Baldwin et al, 162). From nations to urban spaces, the cultural referential code of a shared story codifies the references which the story makes to a reality outside the text because apart from the inherent hermeneutic code of all narratives, that is, the interrelationship between its events in terms of story logic; narrative meaning is also dependent on the relation of the contents of the context-frame with everything outside it, that is, relations with the reality of the outside world.

Why not to create a live community of supporters, collaborators and most importantly of participants, motivated practitioners, conscious producers, idea generators and providers of social networks of trust, freedom of artistic expression and experimentation. To alter the irrevocable urban space we should build upon emotional cognition and venture to a coastal island of reciprocal understanding, harmonious co-existence and creative development. “The spirit of city-making, with its necessary creativity and imagination, is more like improvised jazz” (Charles Landry 7). This is why civic creativity and idea generation, qualities which can be nurtured and cultivated via storytelling practices, are very important. The policies of the local authorities should “foster civic creativity as the ethos of the city. Civic creativity is imaginative problem-solving applied to public good objectives” (Charles Landry 2). Civic creativity wishes to make the city a better place. “The ability to generate civic creativity is where the public sector learns to be more entrepreneurial and the private sector more socially responsible in pursuing joint aims and the willingness to share power, with a goal of having greater influence over an enlarged more successful whole” (Charles Landry 338).

Franco Bianchini wrote in *A Crisis in Urban Creativity?* that “the increasingly multi-ethnic and multicultural character of European cities (Borja and Castells, 1997) [...] could provide opportunities for artistic, cultural, social, economic, organizational and political creativity and innovation, rooted in genuine local distinctiveness” (4). This proposition is of immense value because in an urban place such as Thessaloniki which undergoes a transformation of cultural pluralism, it is important to provide opportunities for intercultural mediation and artistic exchange rooted in and guided by the respect to diversity.

An intercultural approach aims to facilitate dialogue, exchange and reciprocal understanding between people of different cultural backgrounds. Urban cultural policies based on this approach, for example, would prioritize funding for projects where different cultures intersect, ‘contaminate’ each other and hybridize. This contrasts with the multicultural model, where funding is directed within the well-defined boundaries of recognized cultural communities. In other words, intercultural urban policies would be aimed at promoting cross-fertilization across all cultural boundaries, between ‘majority’ and ‘minorities,’ ‘dominant’ and ‘sub’ cultures, localities, classes, faiths, disciplines and genres, as the source of cultural, social, political and economic innovation. (Franco Bianchini 5)

Whilst protecting the storytelling art and whilst inviting people to engage actively in the dynamic interexchange of cultural creative capital between diverse communities and even countries, what is expected is not only to strengthen the communication ties between the communities but also to revitalise through the art the ways they perceive and treat the city.

The art of city-making elaborates all the arts as well as science. “The art of understanding human needs, wants and desires; the art of generating wealth and bending the dynamics of the market and economics to the city’s needs; the art of circulation and city movement; the art of urban design; and the art of trading power for creative influence so the power of people is unleashed” (Charles Landry 5). The policy-makers should ask themselves “how it feels to live in this city?” and then plan their strategies of action of hard and soft infrastructure. It is important to bear in mind that “the city is a multifaceted entity” with an economy, a society, an artefact, an ecosystem, a polity, a culture, and above all a flavour and patina (Charles Landry 6). And the storytelling art can utter such characteristics and enrich the urban tales with unique combinations of flavours. Through urban narratives people can grasp the true aromas of the city and make up a conscious perception “not just of architectural beauty but of the character of a place, or its essential spirit, or the quality of the life there, or of its livability, genius, flavour, feeling,

ambience, essence, resonance, presence, aura, harmony, grace, charm, or seamliness” (Tony Hiss 15). “Because people can get many kinds of messages from each place they encounter, any building or piece of land used or seen by more than one person has a public-use component that always needs to be managed in ways that take simultaneous perception into account” (Tony Hiss 26). “Our sense of ourselves now has more to do with noticing how we are connected to the people and things around us –as part of a family, a crowd, a community, a species, the biosphere” (Tony Hiss 21-22). And by prompting people to voice their stories and exchange intercultural content via storytelling is a great way to establish creativity networks and networks of trust which can serve as the ground for mediation and urban resuscitation dialogue.

Dr. Milena Dragičević Šešić wrote an article in *The Creative City: Crossing Visions and New Realities in the Region* entitled *Culture as a resource of city development* which deals with the merging of urban development strategies with cultural development strategies of public policies in a contemporary and meaningful way. In detail, she argues that “in contemporary cultural life, myths and stories, memories developed throughout centuries in the European cities, are used not only as part of cultural policy programs for the sake of preserving the cultural heritage or in difference forms of ‘cultural tourism,’ but even more in the ‘branding’ processes developed to inaugurate the city as a product” (Milena Dragičević Šešić 2). “What is more important is the creation of a ‘positive’ town image and of new town myths, in order to propagate new town economy and cultural policy leading to prosperity” (Milena Dragičević Šešić 3). “Collective memories and collective consciousness should be stimulated through art in public places, in order to make contemporary living more open, dynamic, even pleasant, more modern, linking everyday life-style to a prosperous economy” (Milena Dragičević Šešić 3). “One of the main tasks of city public policies is to (re)define *city identity*, based on the *collective memories* of people, cultural *heritage* (built and intangible) and a *vision of the future* which succeeds in gathering consensus among the main political agents, but also among public opinion makers (intellectuals, educators, media practitioners, etc.)” (Milena Dragičević Šešić 4).

A good way to make all that happen would be to organize the city and its cultural activities with strategies of appreciative inquiry that is an organizational development method which focuses on what goes well and how to improve and maximize that instead of on what goes wrong. Through an inquiry which appreciates the positive aspects of the development process in the cultural and social scenes, it is possible to propose policies via an asset-based approach which builds upon the factors of productivity, prosperity, critical reflection and amelioration. Particularly concerning the cultural organizations and the cultural and creative industries, appreciative inquiry can benefit extremely their development with organizational effectiveness

tactics and strategies which strengthen the good aspects and reinforce them sufficiently. By elucidating the assets and personal motivations and by investing in them by building on the present potential positively, the identification of the weaknesses, the envisioning innovative and possible solutions and the reconstruction via reinforcement of the assets become from possible probable. The storyline of that approach is summarized in four verbs: *discover*, *dream*, *design* and *deliver*.



Illustration III; Source: <http://www.lasadev.com/articles/constellations.htm>.

In order to foster a sustained dialogue on the issue, it is suggested to incorporate that concept in built-in organization mechanisms for urban revitalization through culture. It is in cities that creative and ideological forces are prominent and the essence of the urban environment is the community thus the communication between diverse communities for city development is prominent. Thessaloniki struggles with a variety of issues such as the demise of formerly public spaces including shopping districts, streets, and parks, aging infrastructures etc. and in the attempt to revitalize old neighbourhoods and recreate public areas, communication is essential. This is what matters: the communication of cultural differences in the city such as race and ethnicity, of social movements, aesthetic, rhetorical dimensions of urban spaces including multimodal preservation of heritage and tradition. Through storytelling and urban tales, that communication is facilitated and animates the city, the voices of different identities and cultures which interact, intersect and/or compete. It is an art through which community-building can be explored in-depth.

IV. Creative Cities: community-building profitability by storytelling

“No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive.”

-Mahatma Gandhi⁶⁰

Creative experimentations with storytelling can suggest new readings of reality and alternate meanings and celebrate the simple act of imagining them. This does not mean that storytelling art is a remedy to all pathogenic social phenomena. Not at all but it is an art that invites people to imagine, create and participate. Most importantly, it is an art that cultivates and strengthens the ability to listen to other people’s stories. Listening is irreplaceably necessary for any kind of prosperity and development. Listening empowers people with knowledge and awareness and instils in them empathy and appreciation for diversity. To reach people, first listen and then respond. With storytelling practices and policies, community-building is manageable. Stories can connect generations, nurture communities and embrace diversity with a built-in reciprocity and enlivened communication inspired by performances. Doing so, creative communities can build creative cities and vice versa.

Social Capital and Urban Networks of Trust edited by Jouni Häkli and Claudio Minca is a book on regional studies which showcases the importance of establishing urban networks of trust in order to discover the full potential of social capital. Urban networks of trust can deliver development as ideal laboratories for experimenting with social capital. Between Finland and Italy, the book stresses the role of networks in re-encapsulating the charm of the place and suggests trust as a social agent in regional development. “Enchantment asks us to rediscover and reanimate social tissues and repair the severances between us. [...] It expresses itself best in small acts of daily and ordinary consideration. [...] This means letting the city enrapture, enthrall and enamour us and to cast a spell [on us]” (Charles Landry 268). Graeme Evans assembled in 2009 an interesting paper on cultural policy and urban studies entitled *Creative Cities, Creative Spaces and Urban Policy* which presents the ways creative industries and creative economy influence city regeneration at a site-specific level imprinted on regional hubs of public and private investment interest. Cultural policy-making is much linked to such initiatives which target social regeneration, geopolitical creative economy and which evident the shift from the arts/culture industries to the creative industries aiming at regional growth as for example at architectural interventions, cultural tourism, etc. with specific spatial representations in city areas. “Capturing

⁶⁰ The quote appears at this link: http://thinkexist.com/quotation/no_culture_can_live-if_it_attempts_to_be/14114.html.

this particular shift from use value to exchange value is therefore represented in the production/consumption spaces” but “novelty in policy responses –between creative industry and urban policy and between cultural and economic policy- is still lacking in imagination” (Graeme Evans 1031-1032).

“Developing a culture is a process of meaning-making and identity-creation, and within that all products play a part because they embody symbolic value and trigger experiences” (Charles Landry 275). Working with the social capital introduced by Francis Fukuyama as “an instantiated informal norm that promotes co-operation between two or more individuals” (7), and bringing people closer to one another assists in community cohesion and coherence. The collision of interests and character cannot and should not be smoothed superficially but through engaging in creative participatory projects people can benefit from collaboration and exchange of principles, ideas, attitudes and visions. Social creativity can influence positively social capital and vice versa. “Bringing together different points of view and trying to create a shared understanding among all stakeholders can lead to new insights, new ideas, and new artefacts” (Gerhard Fischer et al, 1). “Social capital creates the resources upon which a person can draw to obtain knowledge, cooperation, and help from others; [...] it characterizes the interpersonal relationships that an individual has with other members in a surrounding community” (Gerhard Fischer et al, 3-4). And by promoting interaction and creative endeavours as Gerhard Fischer et al supported in their paper *Fostering Social Creativity by Increasing Social Capital*, these relationships are fostered by externalizations as encouraged by storytelling practices which in return nurture cooperation, collaboration and cohesion.

Storytelling can be a valuable engine of city and civic renewal by bringing people closer to the city and investing in the participatory creativity of diverse communities and by envisioning new images of the urban life. Storytelling can help with reviving cultural organizations as community institutions which anchor neighbourhood revitalization efforts, creative public interventions and participation in the arts production. In Thessaloniki, it is very important to revitalise the central area of the city by inviting people of all cultures and ages to share their stories. Because the city centre is inhabited mostly by first and second generation of immigrants and by elderly, there is a thirst for fostering communication between them and the people who have moved to the periphery. Cultural storytelling events which encourage diverse groups to participate can gather people together and explore what it means to a citizen in Thessaloniki. Open to the public storytelling practices can profit community-building and imbue people with a deeper understanding of the creative potential of this city allowing art to better the human condition. To better the urban life means to become aware of the identity and structure of the city

and to being able to articulate and picture alternative images which train the eye of the observer, stimulate the imagination of the flâneur and secure the imageability of the city which as Kevin Lynch wrote in *The Image of The City* “facilitates the making of vividly identified, powerfully structured, highly useful mental images of the environment” (9) which invite the observer to “absorb new sensuous impact” (10).

By increasing the aesthetic messages and promoting creative experimentations, people are free to pose their artistic and intellectual inquiries. This is possible in a city where the communities are connected and even more where the communities form networks and cooperate with each other. “A *network community* can be defined as a group of people who are much more connected to one another” (Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler 12-13). “Stanley Milgram (1970) suggests that the city’s large, dense and heterogeneous population makes for ‘stimulus overload’ in the individual’s experience. The ‘urbanite’ adapts to overload by choosing and prioritizing” (Baldwin et al, 392-393). Therefore, “urbanites minimize involvements with unacquainted persons by a range of measures; [...] these methods of dealing with overload can result in an attenuation or withdrawal of the common courtesies” (Baldwin et al, 393). “The result is a kind of a patchwork of cultures and their physical expressions jumbled together in agglomerations, sprawling metropolitan regions held together by fast transportation networks” (Felix Stalder 68). “Non-involvement becomes the shield that urbanites use to protect themselves from overload” (Baldwin et al, 393). But, through storytelling this shield can be lowered because it can enhance participation, and better connect communities by protecting, preserving and promoting cultural heritage and diversity.

Richard Florida wrote the book *Cities and the Creative Class* in 2005 where he argued that regional development depends on creativity, diversity and economic growth. The human creative capacity is a “vast storehouse and virtually limitless resource” (Richard Florida 4). And “the role of culture is much more expansive, that human beings have limitless potential, and that the key to economic growth is to enable and unleash that potential. This unleashing requires an open culture –one that does not discriminate, does not force people into boxes, allows us to be ourselves, and validates various forms of family and of human identity. [...] Open culture on the macro level is a spur to societal innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic development” (Richard Florida 5-6). Also, the book has references in an article he wrote in *City & Community* in 2003 where he debates the theories of Robert Putnam about social capital and claims that people prefer weak community ties than strong ones in a quasi-anonymity fashion where regional growth is a combination of low costs, traditional business recruitment attraction and family values. Another issue in this discussion is the representation of the cityscape. Dr. Nevena

Dakovi in the article *Cityscape and Cinema in The Creative City: Crossing Visions and New Realities in the Region* draws upon the relationship between Serbian cinematography and the urban narratives in contemporary Belgrade film productions. Similar to the storytelling art, cinematography depicts the city's narratives and "describes the story going on in the urban setting [...] charting the city topography" in "coherent urban discourse about popular culture, ideology, life-style, events, morals, identity and representations of sense and sensibility" (180). What Park, Burgess and McKenzie said about cities that "great cities have always been melting pots of races and cultures out of the vivid and subtle interactions" is wise to revise. It is important to collect more knowledge on how cultural interactions develop between individuals and groups of different ethnic background in Thessaloniki.

Andy Pratt in *Creative Cities: The Cultural Industries and the Creative Class* developed a critique on the concepts of urban regeneration via creativity, culture and the creative industries. In fact, he criticizes the emblematic site of the debate between culture and creativity and what Richard Florida suggested as means of achieving urban renewal: technology, talent and tolerance. Pratt clarifies that "there is intrinsic value in the cultural practices that they (the creative class) are either engaged in, or attracted to" (108). Furthermore, Charles Landry, Lesley Greene, Francois Matarasso and Franco Bianchini put together the study *The Art of Regeneration: Urban Renewal through Cultural Activity* in which they dealt with renewing citizenship through culture, enhancing social cohesion, improving the local image of a city, etc. They stated that "creativity, that complex imaginative force which can do so much for our towns and our lives, certainly involves experimentation and originality" (8); for urban regeneration and the creation of liveable cities policy-makers should be concerned with "what the artists are trying to achieve, who with, and how it relates to people, their needs and aspirations" (9). And part of the needs of the citizens of Thessaloniki is social cohesion and mediation between the diverse social groups and populations; and most importantly, is participation in the cultural activities.

There is this viewpoint that immigrants are too busy to survive and therefore their participation in the urban cultural scene is limited. It is true that they have tremendous difficulties getting or renewing their work and stay permits, and in finding work and accommodation. But, they are still interested in cultural participation which fosters intercultural communication, experimentation and diversified creative endeavours. Cultural policies should focus on the promotion of dialogue among different cultures, the prevention and reduction of prejudice and discrimination against immigrants and the promotion of a cosmopolitan image of Thessaloniki as a creative multicultural city. As Dr. Milena Dragičević Šešić wrote in *The Creative City: Crossing Visions and New Realities in the Region* entitled *Culture as a resource of city*

development “the question of the city as an intercultural space, as an interactive crossroads of all aspects of individual and social life, private and public interest, personal and social agendas and individual and community pride, might be discussed during the planning process, enabling the wide participation of citizens, not usually involved in cultural policy debates (mostly reserved to cultural professionals). That makes urban cultural policies and strategies a privileged platform for the democratization of cultural policies as such, and an important element in bringing innovation and creative solutions in cultural management and cultural policy theory and practice” (14).

Storytelling can boost intercultural competence. Stefanie Rathje in *Intercultural Competence* quotes Gardner and Wierlacher, and argues that “individuals equipped with an unusual capacity for intercultural communication along with an entire repertoire of personality traits that contribute to this success: integrity, stability, extroversion, socialization in universal values and including special intuitive and even telepathic abilities (Gardner, 1962:248)” (254); and that intercultural competence can be viewed “as a generalized cultural competence that ‘seeks to promote and facilitate a new system of orientation among people of different cultures’ (Wierlacher, 2003:216)” (258). Key elements are acceptance and socio-cultural integration. Accepting the perspective of others, enabling them to utter their concerns and respecting their cultural heritage can result in the integration of the differences and in the reinforcement of the collective’s creative capital. These principles are very important for community building. According to Jack Zipes and his book *Creative Storytelling: Building Community-Changing Lives*, mythmaking and celebrating stories especially in education can “create a home or community” (7) because “storytellers are not just performers; they may perform, but they are first and foremost listeners and animators; they listen to tales before telling or performing them; they listen to phenomena, experiences, and conditions, and they observe; then they share experiences and animate people to learn something from the shared moment of the telling” (7).

An interesting case is the project GEITONIES⁶¹ (“neighbourhoods” in Greek) funded by the EU’s 7th Framework Programme which addresses the interethnic relationships in the neighbourhoods of multicultural cities focusing on social cohesion, integration and tolerance via cultural interactions. Thessaloniki is one of the six cities which got involved in the project alongside Lisbon, Rotterdam, Bilbao, Warsaw and Vienna. Through the lens of place that of the neighbourhood this project wishes to explore the potential of intercultural communication and engagement to promote social cohesion, inclusion and participation in the arts. Cultural activities which address the social practices and representations of ordinary encounters such as storytelling give meaning and identity to both the physical space and to the inhabitants. Participation in such

⁶¹ For more information, please visit: <http://geitonies.fl.ul.pt/>.

and participatory creativity bound by neighbourhood bonding links influence the development of hindering of belonging, intercultural mediation and community-building. The willingness to communicate and to co-create is reinforced by such practices and what is more by storytelling intercultural practices. McCroskey and Richmond (1987) point out that the willingness to communicate describes the individual's general attitude toward communication with others; but this does not include the willingness to communicate inter-culturally as efficiently as intra-culturally. In order to establish such communication networks within neighbourhoods, cities and countries fostering intercultural mediation and creative exchanges, there should be new or renewed open spaces for the development of intercultural art projects such as storytelling events as mediators between history, tradition and contemporary urban tales. The potential of culture and specifically of the storytelling art as a vector of diversity and catalyst for intercultural communication is not yet fully recognized but this will certainly change.

For a creative city with a strong multicultural community-building profile, cultural policy-making should move towards cultural citizenship: cultural vitality, diversity, conviviality, access, participation, cohesion and creativity. "Cities that create a collective mindset to seek out new ideas, products, methods, markets, resources and alliances through the interaction of people with different cultural backgrounds will prosper" (Phil Wood, Charles Landry and Jude Bloomfield 64). There should be a strategic, integrated and holistic approach for community development in urban environments linked to a sustainable quality of cultural life. Because culture as mentioned above is key to social cohesion and prosperity, urban cultural activities should expand from audience participation to civic creativity. "Creative activity grows out of the relationship between an individual and the world of his or her work, and out of the ties between an individual and other human beings. Much human creativity arises from activities that take place in a social context in which interaction with other people and the artefacts that embody group knowledge are important contributors to the process" (Gerhard Fischer et al, 3).

Thus, to reinforce civic creativity there should be social interaction and cultural communication between the individuals and the countries as well. "Communication among people is, for example, conducted primarily within larger groups, emphasizing the collective division of values and the collective identity (socializing within a circle of relatives–tribalism, village members–friendly neighbours, sport fans–rooters, political activism–people who share the same opinions...)" (Milena Dragi evi Šeši and Sanjin Dragojevi 11). Cooperation, networking and inclusion should be the objectives of the local and international cultural policies in Greece and beyond. Not only will a city benefit by having an inclusive cultural policy and strategy, but each of the fields and actors will have enough stimuli for development and achievements. The

main task here is to optimize the cultural, individual and socio-economic benefits of the implementation of the cultural policy within the urban developmental plan. A good example is the project CREA.M.⁶². It is a mentoring programme for cultural managers focusing on training activities of intercultural mediation and international cooperation in the arts. “The challenge for policy-makers is to promote the conditions in which a learning city or community can unfold” reflecting from everyday encounters and experiences to build a firmer character as a living organism (Charles Landry 311). Creative cities do not just pop out of nowhere.

Chris Bilton in his book *Management and Creativity: From Creative Industries to Creative Management* argues that “creativity requires that we think irrationally and rationally, that we cross boundaries between different ways of thinking, that we not only have the ideas but the resources and inclinations to do something with them” and “it is, if anything, more likely to be found in groups of people working together, in teams, networks and systems, bringing together complementary competences and personalities” (xiv). Thus, as in the management of creative teams, the management of creative cities requires systematic reaffirmation of the processes the people undergo and perpetual evaluation of the dreamlike fluidity of their creative cognition and imagination. Since a city is a living organism, the creativity of the citizens is also a living entity opting for monitored analysis and flexibility toward change. A great idea would be to consult Scott Belsky’s book *Making Ideas Happen: Overcoming the Obstacles between Vision and Reality* in which he addresses the role of creativity in realizing ideas, the chemistry, energy lines and the management of a creative team.

Tipping surplus research

I. Festival wombs: weaving a safety net for artistic experimentation

“Dreams make the impossible possible, dedication makes the possible probable and hard work makes the probable happen.”

-Jim Trefethen⁶³

Taking as an example the literature events and festivals that grow in popularity in Thessaloniki, it can be said that a storytelling festival is expected to be famous too. By organizing and realizing

⁶² For more information, please visit:

http://www.ocio.deusto.es/servlet/Satellite/Page/1328546186532/_ingl/%231118058571810%231328546186532/c0/UniversidadDeusto/Page/PaginaCollTemplate.

⁶³ The quote appears at this link: <http://blog.workisnotajob.com/post/14162125821/dreams-make-the-impossible-possible-dedication>.

an annual storytelling festival in the city, not only cultural heritage is put on the discussion table but also artistic experimentation with tradition, language and performing arts is initiated. An event of such nature is expected to encourage dialogue between local and international artists, storytellers and amateurs, to shape and share the storytelling art in the region and foster new encounters between individuals and countries. “Artistic creation is a voyage into the unknown” (Peter Turchi 13). The storytelling art engages the people’s creativity and may lead to problem solving, enables dialogue between social groups, encourages the imagination and the mental inquiry, offers ground for expression and active participation. Arts play a major role in regional and interregional development and festivals are a wonderful opportunity to create international and transnational partnerships. Thus, such an event in the city of Thessaloniki would be a great opportunity to familiarize the people with storytelling, cultural heritage and intercultural storytelling. In fact, ideas can be drawn from the Festival of Ideas in Adelaide in Australia⁶⁴. Also, actors from the region can be invited to be trained as storytellers and participate in a community story festival in the city.

“Artistic creativity is expression [...] using the imaginative realm” (Charles Landry 250). “At its best artistic creativity involves a journey which artists are impelled to undertake, not knowing where it will lead or if and how they will arrive; it involves truth-searching and embodies a quest for the profound and true; it has no calculated purpose, it is not goal-oriented, nor measurable in easy ways, nor fully explicable rationally –its outcome can be mysterious” (Charles Landry 249). With a storytelling festival devoted to honour narratology and ensure participatory creativity, the city is granted a chance to voice stories about race relations, ethnic identity struggle and pride seeking to build bridges across divides. By celebrating diversity and encouraging artistic experimentation with traditional and original stories, awareness and civic creativity are reinforced. “The creative city needs the spark of the alternative; the sense of place, of non-branded space; the imagination of the ‘what could be’ displayed in action; younger and older people challenging conventions in behaviour, attitudes and even dress” (Charles Landry 340). And a storytelling festival can provide the entertaining linkages between history and modern temper balancing the bitter with the sweet, the old with the new, the habitual with the alternative.

Not only local economy is expected to flourish if people start appreciating the value, depth and richness of its history and potential, but also an artistic challenge is added to cultivate the storytelling art, to engage in collaborative projects and to exchange knowledge and skills with other cultures and regions. Storytelling festivals is like what Rebecca Solnit wrote about walking

⁶⁴ For more information, please visit: <http://adelaidefestivalofideas.com.au/>.

“it starts with a step and then another step and then another that adds up like taps on a drum to a rhythm; [...] The imagination has both shaped and been shaped by the spaces it passes through on two feet. Walking has created paths, roads, trade routes; generated local and cross-continental sense of place; shaped cities, parks; generated maps, guidebooks, gear, and, further afield, a vast library of walking stories and poems, of pilgrimages, mountaineering expeditions, meanders, and summer picnics. The landscapes, urban and rural, gestate the stories, and the stories bring us back to the sites” (4). Silvanto and Hellman argued that “festivals influence people’s idea of a city; they provide many points of identification and contribute to the birth of non-mainstream urban identities” (6).

Working with ideas from Bruno Bettelheim’s book *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (1976) can be a great beginning to contemplate on how a storytelling festival in Thessaloniki should be organized and then elaborating on the concepts introduced in the book *The Story-teller’s Start-Up Book: Finding, Learning, Performing and Using Folktales* (1993) by Margaret Read McDonald can be a great way to continue. In fact this book is a marvellous guide to finding and performing a story and this makes it a useful instrument to the hands of the festival’s organizers. As Jimmy Neil Smith wrote in *Homespun: Tales from America’s Favourite Storytellers* (1988) “everyone has a story to tell. [...] something as ordinary as the events of the day, an old joke, or a traditional story we heard as a child. Storytelling comes from the heart, not the head, and nothing should keep us from the exhilaration and sheer pleasure of telling a story” and having a storytelling festival in the city can bring magic into our lives.

II. Creative education: passing insight, planting inspiration

“By word the mind is winged.”

-Aristophanes⁶⁵

Storytelling is a way of connecting with the kids and a way of re-enchanting our relationship with them through education and fun. Passing insight to children should go hand in hand with planting inspiration and motivation. The storytelling art can do that in a fun and didactic fashion.

One of the surest signs of a belief in the educational power of the story is its introduction into the curriculum of the training-college and the classes of the elementary and secondary schools. It is just at the time when the imagination is

⁶⁵ The quote appears at this link: <http://www.festivalattheedge.org/index.php?id=7>.

most keen, the mind being unhampered by accumulation of facts, which stories appeal most vividly and are retained for all time. It is to be hoped that someday stories will be told to school groups only by experts who have devoted special time and preparation to the art of telling them. It is a great fallacy to suppose that the systematic study of story-telling destroys the spontaneity of narrative. After a long experience, I find the exact converse to be true, namely, that it is only when one has overcome the mechanical difficulties that one can "let one's self go" in the dramatic interest of the story. (Shedlock xiii)

Storytelling can bring children closer to cultural heritage, intercultural dialogue and creative endeavours with stories of diverse origins. "First, to give them dramatic joy, for which they have a natural craving; to develop a sense of humour, which is really a sense of proportion; then, to correct certain tendencies by showing the consequences in the career of the hero in the story; to present by means of example, not precept, such ideals as will sooner or later be translated into action; and finally, to develop the imagination, which really includes all the other points" (Shedlock xvi-xvii). "Fictional and nonfictional examples have always been powerful teaching tools" (Dee H. Andrews, Thomas D. Hull, and Jennifer A. Donahue 6).

Judith Baker claims in her article *The Creative Teacher* that a teacher should incorporate in his methods creative approaches to language learning engaging actively the students into the process of discovering language whilst apprehending. More explicitly, she writes that a teacher should "give positive and respectful correction, value the students' attempt to communicate, facilitate language development by encouraging the student to have a try, and pay attention to the deep structure (the meaning) of the language, not only the surface structure (the grammar)" (13-14). Further on, she continues analyzing Experiential Learning Psychology juxtaposed to Neuro-linguistic Programming and she posits the work of David Kolb and his book *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, where he "proposes that each learning act goes through four stages: a stage of observing, a stage of thinking, a stage of acting and a stage of feeling" (14). These principles align with the proposals of NLP which claim that "we process the world through our senses, through what we see, hear, feel, smell and taste" (Judith Baker 15). Stories are the perfect instrument to depict these models and elaborate them in the curriculum.

For every child, storytelling has become a beginning to literature and vocabulary, besides adding values and education. Stories are but a window to better moral principles and values. Projecting mental and emotional images with the use of the spoken words, the storyteller becomes the driver using oral literature as the vehicle. "A story, then, facilitates instruction

directly through verbal or linguistic means and indirectly by aiding in the mental construction of a sequence of events enacted for or by the learner. The semantic structures and temporal ordering of information in a story act as an attention-focusing mechanism (Gerrig, 1993) that aids in inquiry, decision-making, and learning” (Dee H. Andrews, Thomas D. Hull, and Jennifer A. Donahue 7). Storytelling is the heart and soul of education and can enhance teaching working with literacy development. According to Stan Koki, “stories enable teachers to learn about their students’ cultures, experiences, and meaningful relationships” (1) and vice versa and “because they rely so much on words, stories offer a tremendous source of language experience for children” (2).

As Wright argued in *Storytelling with Children* when children create and tell a story in their own or a second language, the language becomes theirs. Also, it is claimed that students with experience in hearing and telling stories such as myths, legends, and folklore are eager to begin creating or writing their own stories enhancing their critical thinking skills, vocabulary and grammar. By employing the storytelling art into language instruction and general into education, cultural awareness is enriched. It is important to turn to the work of Dyson, A. H., and Genishi, C. (1994) entitled *The need for story: Cultural diversity in classroom and community* and study how cultural awareness and Interculturalism are addressed by storytelling in the classroom. To sum up, Andrew Wright managed to articulate it nicely in *Storytelling with Children* when he wrote that children’s hunger for stories is never-ending because “children have a constant need for stories and they will always be willing to listen or to read” (4).

Conclusion

“Stories are equipment for living.”
-Kenneth Burke⁶⁶

To put it all in a nutshell, this research thesis has dealt with the storytelling art and the linkages between the collective’s consciousness, creative capital and the perception of an urban multicultural city that of Thessaloniki. The objectives were achieved and the hypotheses confirmed. In detail, it was explored how participatory creativity and artistic engagement can enliven domesticity and foster intercultural mediation; how storytelling empowers social networks within multicultural communities and intensifies social interaction; how empirical and

⁶⁶ The quote appears at this link: <http://twextra.com/ajnxx2>.

cognitive psychology harness the collective's creative capital and influence the consciousness people have and shape about the city they live in; how the co-creation of urban tales weaves the image of the city and how urban regeneration and re-enchantment can be in interplay with the art of storytelling.

Particularly, what was presented is the history of the storytelling art and the interest academics show in it; the relationship between the art and social networks, emotion-led urban collective consciousness, domesticity-building within a multicultural city, and the relationship between the art and participatory creativity for intercultural mediation. Also, what was presented is the field research with the project itself and the documented data. Most importantly, this thesis presented a critique on cultural policy-making and suggested policy recommendations. Culture plays a fundamental role for strengthening social cohesion and for developing local identities by means of participation processes. Social values do not only refer to the internal image the inhabitants of a community bear of themselves but also to the external reflection they reflect and conceptualize with interrelations with other communities on national and international levels. For the belief in intercultural mediation through the storytelling art to be substantiated, it is important to discuss social and cultural issues of the Balkan diverse communities, to make literary works and the storytelling heritage known, to invest in the richness and cultural diversity and to share the values of cooperation and participatory cultural activity.

Having as a main focus participatory art practices and especially participatory storytelling practices, the issue of Interculturalism will always be a primary issue for policy-makers in Greece and in the Balkan region. The role of the ethnographer who documents the myths, rituals, legends, folktales and ceremonies of communities merges with the role of the interpreter who communicates these realities to others. D. H. Lawrence said “never trust the teller, trust the tale”⁶⁷ and spotlighted exactly the issue of interpretation. The issue of the interpretation of a cultural product or process is not so much a question of authorship but more a socio-anthropological question of equitable participation and simultaneous interaction. All agents of cultural value have a right to know that their voices will be heard and acknowledged appreciatively. With storytelling practices this can be put into action. To recapitulate the links between the concepts of this thesis, let us discuss and envision.

Cooperative work is more likely to foster creativity because people who are engaged in participatory practices and cooperative projects get encouraged to perspective talking, multilateral thinking, sharing of information and knowledge, evaluating and re-evaluating content and seem to

⁶⁷ The quote appears at this link: <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/26137-never-trust-the-teller-trust-the-tale-the-proper-function>.

be highly intrinsically motivated. Creativity requires knowledge and the exchange of knowledge applied in new ways. To invest in participatory creativity and in the creative capital of the collective is something of great interest. Cultural policies in Greece are invited to depart from stereotypical frames about creative work and to invest in active cultural citizenship. The wealth of social networks is crucial for cultural citizenship. With cooperative work active in the creativity trait, the density of the exchange, the plurality of diverse thinking and the dynamics of collaborative work are all reinforced.

People, who interact and create, co-create and share cultural content, establish a community. The networked communication established is responsible for the exchange, the flow of idea-making and for the collective consciousness. The perception mechanisms influence the behavioural cornerstones of the people and when dealing with a multicultural city, the experience of the city influences the perception, the perception influences the consciousness, and this affects the experience once again and of course the behaviour. With strong ties of interaction and reciprocal communication and with access to participatory creativity, this circled relationship between the people and the city is strengthened. Being attentive to collective consciousness suggests being attentive to self-observation and self-amelioration. To follow up to postmodern urbanism with urban design as the way to establishing multi-national creative cities, it is suggested to engage with civic creativity and reconstruct that sense of collective's cooperation and participation in meaning-making. The idea is: think outside where no box is required and think about it together.

To ameliorate the urban life in Thessaloniki means to become aware of the identity and structure of the city and to being able to picture an art-led regeneration. Participation to intercultural activities can help with communicating the realities of migration and diversity in the city and with cultural conflict. If a storytelling society is to be created in Thessaloniki, it is significant to maintain the tradition's diversity and to invite mediation. Also, it is significant to establish networking channels with other Balkan countries in the region not only to animate people in favour of the variety of the art but also to elicit from people critical and creative thinking in favour of intercultural exchange. By doing so, cultural identity is treated as a channel through which people can learn about their own heritage, tradition and social values as well as learn about other cultures and ways of living. Reading urbanity and being active in the creation of urban stories are ways to familiarize people with their local identity and to invite them to discover new versions of it and other neighbouring ones. Discovering the similarities is as much important as learning about the differences and how people picture and treat their city can be mapped through the art of storytelling.

By bridging across discontinuities and by exploring the differences between cultures in the Balkan region, collective creativity can expand from the micro-level of co-constructing novel ideas to the macro-level of re-evaluating, re-defining and re-using of ideas across group dynamics. Creation is never *ex nihilo* but mostly it depends on reading and re-reading and advancing the awareness of the people's creative capital something much needed in problem-solving situations. With storytelling, not only new ideas can be born but also existing ideas can be applied to new situations expressing the diverse reflections and appreciations of other people. The book *Creative Collaboration* by John-Steiner (2000) should be studied carefully. Joint thinking, passionate conversations and interactive communication do not weaken individual creativity but what is more they position it at the core of social creativity and participatory creativity. To support intercultural mediation and foster group and participatory creativity, cultural policies are expected to support collective remembering of histories and stories, bridge across the differences and promote creative exchange of knowledge and skills. It is argued that people choose to reject over-generalized common identities and deny emotional attachments to them. With cultural policies that ensure that and promote diversity and active cultural citizenship, this argument becomes a reality.

Storytelling generates transportive experiences. It pulls people right into the experience of telling a story and triggers the imagination. Also, it empowers social networks within multicultural communities and intensifies social interaction. As Barbara Czarniawska wrote "narration is a mode of communication; people tell stories to entertain, teach, and to learn, to ask for an interpretation and to give one" (10). Storytelling practices work with social networks and talk about social networks, human contact and condition. The impact that stories have on the perceived images of the people has much to do with the experience itself, the emotional arousal, the feelings that modify attitudes and beliefs. Story concepts, narrative methodologies, personality, social and cultural psychology based on experience and cognition, personal myths, national and international myths, all exist in interplay with collective consciousness and cultural citizenship. Urban tales echo gender and class construction in the city and reflect some of the prevailing patterns of hegemony where human behaviour is situated. Urban tales attempt to reconstruct the past and imaginatively to anticipate the future; they portray and challenge the cultural values and power differentials inherent in the societal relationships of the citizens and they should be provided with audiences explicit or not. Thus, it is important for cultural policy-makers to embrace this art and to work upon its preservation and promotion.

Just like stories are equipment for living as Kenneth Burke claimed, this thesis has equipped me with knowledge, dedication and motivation for studying. This body of work is food

for my future research keeping the art of storytelling as a ship flag to navigate an intra-and-interdisciplinary study. My purpose is to scientifically address how stories emerge from and influence human interaction and to pencil the storytelling art in cultural policy-making and shed light upon its unique way to mediate in intercultural disputes. The leading part in this mediation plays participatory creativity. And “even if one cannot explain a creation using only psychological concepts and laws, creativity researchers might still be able to develop scientific explanations using concepts and laws of sociology, perhaps in combination with individual concepts and laws [...] [in] an interdisciplinary endeavour” (Keith R. Sawyer 378). W. J. T. Mitchell writes that there are “publications on ‘interrelationships of the arts,’ not because either discipline has forfeited its claim to territorial rights or rigor but because scholars have found themselves straying onto common -if sometimes disputed- ground in the pursuit of their disciplines” (2). Therefore, my work is dedicated to qualitative research that investigates the inter-and-intra-relationship between communities of practice and epistemic ones in an urban environment with cultural and creative industries playing an active part in the reciprocity between the individuals, the community and the living space. Of course, it has been no more than a small sketch suggesting some avenues of investigation that the field necessitates to be further explored.

It is a demanding task to understand the intricacies of the existence and development of storytelling when much remains enigmatic in its analysis through the neurobiological, behavioural, emotional and socio-cultural lens of human condition. Nonetheless, it is important to develop awareness of the art and of the urban environment’s dialectics with it providing a deeper sensitivity to the ideals of Interculturalism. Stories were and are created to represent, make meaning of, and convey various sentiments about human nature, society, and culture as well as to represent imaginary worlds and abstract concepts. Stories manage almost unconditionally to bring magic into our lives and carry a dynamism that can set our emotional baggage free. Sometimes stories become the powerboats on which we depart from reality as we know it and sail for the elusive world of imagination; and sometimes stories become the reality itself, a deconstruction of the bracing sea breeze of the hands-on engagement questioning perception for ostensible reasons which harvest our senses and hearts. Storytelling is the river and we the ones on the boat whirling downstream changing mindsets like sceneries. This academic endeavour is expected to utter more questions and inspire more explorations of creativity research more or less like a true story would do since “creativity is a journey not a destination, a process not a status; [...] [where] being creative is an attitude of mind” (Charles Landry 271).

References

- Anderson, B. (1983) *Imagined Communities*, London: Verso.
- Andrews, D.H., Hull, T. D. and Donahue, J. A. (2009) "Storytelling as an Instructional Method: Descriptions and Research Questions", *The Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-based Learning*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 6-23.
- Aristotle, (350BC) *Poetics*, (trans. S. H. Butcher), [Online] Available at: <http://pinkmonkey.com/dl/library1/aris21.pdf> (Accessed: 5 May 2012).
- , (350BC) *Rhetoric*, (trans. W. Rhys Roberts), [Online] Available at: <http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/aristotl/Aristotle-Rhetoric.pdf> (Accessed: 5 May 2012).
- Arnheim, R. (2008) *Visual Thinking*, London: Thames and Hudson.
- Baker, J. "The Creative Teacher", *Teacher Self-Development*, pp. 13-16.
- Baldwin, E., Longhurst, B., McCracken, S., Ogborn, M. and Smith, G. (2004) *Introducing Cultural Studies*, Harlow: Pearson Education Prentice Hall.
- Barry, J. (1999) *Art, Culture, and the Semiotics of Meaning*, New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Bianchini, F. (2004) "A Crisis in Urban Creativity", *The Age of the City: The Challenges for Creative Cities*, [Online] Available at: http://www.artfactories.net/IMG/pdf/crisis_urban_creatvity.pdf (Accessed: 14 May 2012).
- Bilton, C. (2007) *Management and Creativity: From Creative Industries to Creative Management*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Blumenthal, A. L. (1975) "A Reappraisal of Wilhelm Wundt", *American Psychologist*, November, pp. 1081-1088.
- Bower, G. H. and Gilligan, S. G. (1984) "Cognitive Consequences of Emotional Arousal", In C. Izard, J. Kagen, & R. Zajonc (eds.), *Emotions, cognition, and behavior*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Brecknock, R. (2006) *More than Just a Bridge: Planning and Designing Culturally*, Comedia, Bournes Green.
- Bryman, A. (2001) *Social Research Methods*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Castells, M. (2005) *The Network Society: From Knowledge to Policy*, Washington: Centre for Transatlantic Relations/Johns Hopkins University.
- Chatman, S. (1978) *Story and Discourse*, London: Cornell University Press.

- Christakis, N. & Fowler, J. (2010) *Connected: The Amazing Power of Social Networks and How they Shape Our Lives*, London: Harper Press.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997) *Finding Flow: The Psychology of Engagement with Everyday Life*, New York: Basic Books/Harper Collins Publishers, Inc.
- Czarniawska, B. (2004) *Narratives in Social Science Research*, London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Dakovi, N. (2007) "Cityscape and Cinema", *The Creative City: Crossing Visions and New Realities in the Region*, Zagreb: Institute for International Relations, [Online] Available at: http://www.culturelink.org/publics/joint/cultid08/Svob-Djokic_Creative_City.pdf (Accessed 3 May 2012).
- Debord, G. E. (1955) *Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography*, [Online] Available at: <http://library.nothingness.org/articles/SI/en/display/2> (Accessed: 5 May 2012).
- Di Palma, V., Periton, D. & Lathouri, M. (2009) *Intimate Metropolis*, New York: Routledge.
- Ekman, P. (1994) *The Nature of Emotion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Elgin, D. (1997) *Collective Consciousness and Cultural Healing*, Fetzer Institute, San Anselmo: Millennium Project.
- Evans, G. (2009) "Creative Cities, Creative Spaces and Urban Policy", *Urban Studies*, May, vol. 46, pp. 1003-1040, [Online] Available at: http://www.citiesinstitute.org/library/e87225_3.pdf (Accessed: 4 May 2012).
- Field, S. (2006) *The Screenwriter's Workbook*, New York: Bantam Dell.
- Fisher, G., Scharff, E. and Ye, Y. (2002) "Fostering Social Creativity by Increasing Social Capital", [Online] Available at: <http://l3d.cs.colorado.edu/~gerhard/papers/social-capital-2002.pdf> (Accessed 11 May 2012).
- Fiske, J. (1990) *Introduction to Communication Studies*, London: Routledge.
- Florida, R. (2005) *Cities and the Creative Class*, New York: Routledge.
- Ghilardi, L. (2001) "Cultural Planning and Cultural Diversity", In T. Bennett (ed.), *Differing Diversities: Cultural Policy and Cultural Diversity*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Gladwell, M. (2008) *Outliers: The Story of Success*, New York: Hachette Book Group, Inc.
- Hennessey, B. A. (2010) "The Creativity-Motivation Connection", In Kaufman, J. C. & Sternberg, R. J. (eds.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hiss, T. (1990) *The Experience of Place*, New York: Vintage Books of Random House, Inc.
- Jensen, R. (1999) *The Dream Society*, New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Jessup, K. (2012) *Emotion in Storytelling*, Available at: <http://www.storyteller.net/articles/310/> [Online] (Accessed: 9 May 2012).

- Jung, C. G. (1994) *Mapping the Field of Consciousness Studies*, Sausalito: Institute of Noetic Sciences.
- Kaufman, A. B., Kornilov, S. A., Bristol, A. S., Tan, M. and Grigorenko, E. L. (2010) “The Neurobiological Foundation of Creative Cognition”, In Kaufman, J. C. & Sternberg, R. J. (eds.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Klaic, D. (2007) *Mobility of Imagination: A companion Guide to International Cultural Cooperation*, Budapest: Centre for Arts and Culture/Central European University.
- Koki, S. (1998) “Storytelling: The Heart and Soul of Education”, *Pacific Resources for Education and Learning*, November, pp. 1-4.
- Kolb, D. (1983) *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, London: Prentice Hall.
- Korovinis, T. (2012) *Thessaloniki: 1912-2012*, : .
- Koutsostamati, S. (2008) , :
- Kovecses, Z. (2010) *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kress, G. & Van Leeuwen, T. (2006) *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, New York: Routledge.
- Landry, C. (2006) *The Art of City Making*, London: Earthscan.
- Landry, C., Greence, L., Matarasso, F. and Bianchini, F. (1996) *The Art of Regeneration: Urban Renewal through Cultural Activity*, Stroud: Comedia.
- Lynch, K. (1960) *The Image of the City*, Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Lyons, J. (1959) *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics*, London: Cambridge University Press.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943) *A Theory of Human Motivation*, [Online] Available at: <http://downloads.joomlancode.org/trackeritem/5/8/7/58799/AbrahamH.Maslow-ATheoryOfHumanMotivation.pdf> (Accessed: 8 May 2012).
- Mazower, M. (2005) *Salonica: City of Ghosts*, London: Harper Perennial.
- Mercer, C. (2002) *Towards Cultural Citizenship: Tools for Cultural Policy and Development*, Stockholm: Sida.
- Miliori, P. (2010) “ μ μ μ ”, In μ , . & , . (eds.) μ , : .
- Mitchell, W. J. T. (1980) *The Language of Images*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Neil Smith, J. (1988) *Homespun: Tales from America’s Favourite Storytellers*, London: Crown.
- Nikolaidou, S. (2010) “ μ , ” & “ μ ”, In

- μ , . & , . (eds.) μ
- Olson, T. (2011) "Poetry and Storytelling: Breathing Life into the Narrative", [Online] Available at: <http://www.storytellingcenter.net/learning/the-story-revolution/poetry-and-storytelling-breathing-life-into-the-narrative/> (Accessed: 9 May 2012).
- Onega, S. & Garcia Landa, J. A. (1996) *Narratology: An Introduction*, Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman Group Limited.
- Osorio, K. (2008) *Threats to the Spirit of the Place: Biased Interpretation*, [Online] Available at: http://www.international.icomos.org/quebec2008/cd/toindex/77_pdf/77-r8Go-292.pdf (Accessed: 19 May 2012) Tsukuba: University of Tsukuba.
- Parekh, B. (2000) *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*, New York: Palgrave.
- Paulus, P. B. & Nijstad, B. A. (2003) *Group Creativity: Innovation through Collaboration*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pease, A. (1991) μ , : . Original (1981) *Body Language*, North Sydney: Camel Publishing Company.
- Persson, P. (2003) *Understanding Cinema: A Psychological Theory of Moving Imagery*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pratt, A. (2008) "Creative cities: the cultural industries and the creative class", *Geografiska Annaler Series B Human geography*, June, vol. 90, no. 2, pp. 107-117.
- Putnam, R. (2001) "The Prosperous Community: Social Capital and Public Life", *The American Prospect*, December, vol. 4, [Online] Available at: <http://prospect.org/article/prosperous-community-social-capital-and-public-life> (Accessed: 14 May 2012).
- Quine, W. V. O. (1951) "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", *The Philosophical Review*, vol. 60, pp. 20-43.
- Ransome, A. (1909) *A History of Story-telling*, London: T. C. & E. C. Jack.
- Rathje, S. (2007) "Intercultural Competence", *Language and Intercultural Communication*, April, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 254-266.
- Refinetti, R. (1992) *Philosophy of Physiological Psychology*, Electronic publishing, Available at: www.circadian.org/PPP/ppp.html (Accessed: 11 May 2012).
- Reisenzein, R. (1983) "The Schachter Theory of Emotion: Two Decades Later", *Psychological Bulletin by the American Psychological Association Inc.*, [Online] Available at: <http://www.phil.uni->

- greifswald.de/fileadmin/mediapool/psychologie/lehrstuhl_allg2/Reisenzein1983_Schachter_Theory.pdf (Accessed: 8 May 2012) vol. 94, no. 2, pp. 239-264.
- Richards, G. & Palmer, R. (2010) *Eventful Cities: Cultural Management and Urban Revitalization*, Oxford: Elsevier Ltd.
- Sawyer, K. R. (2010) "Individual and Group Creativity", In Kaufman, J. C. & Sternberg, R. J. (eds.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Šeši, M. D. & Dragojević, S. (2004) *Intercultural Mediation*, Sarajevo: UNESCO/OKO.
- Šeši, M. D. & Stojkovic, B. (1994) *Culture-Management, Animation, Marketing*, Belgrade: CLIO.
- Šeši, M. D. (2007) "Culture as a resource of city development", *The Creative City: Crossing Visions and New Realities in the Region*, Zagreb: Institute for International Relations, [Online] Available at: http://www.culturelink.org/publics/joint/cultid08/Svob-Djokic_Creative_City.pdf (Accessed 3 May 2012).
- Seung, S. (2012) *Connectome: How the Brain's Wiring Makes Us Who We Are*, London: Allen Lane/Penguin Books.
- Shedlock, M. (1915) *The Art of the Story-teller*, New York: D. Appleton Company.
- Silvanto, S. & Hellman, T. (2005) *Helsinki - The festival city*, In L. Lankinen (ed.) *Arts and culture in Helsinki*, Helsinki: City of Helsinki.
- Solnit, R. (2000) *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*, New York: Penguin Books.
- Spaulding, A. E. (2011) *The Art of Storytelling: Telling Truths through Telling Stories*, Lanham: The Scarecrow Press.
- Stalder, F. (2005) *Open Cultures and the Nature of Networks*, Novi Sad: Futura Publikacije.
- Stamatis, A. (2010) "The Creative City: A New Model of Urban Development", In Kaufman, J. C. & Sternberg, R. J. (eds.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sternberg, R. J. (2006) *The International Handbook of Creativity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sturken, M. & Cartwright, L. (2001) *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Titley, G. (2004) *Resituating Culture*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Tsitsopoulos, S. (2010) *Flâneur*, Thessaloniki: IANOS.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu. (1974) "Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective", In C. Board, R. J. Chorley, P. Haggett, and D. R. Stoddart (eds.), *Progress in Geography*, vol. 6, pp. 211-252.

- Turchi, P. (2004) *Maps of the Imagination: The Writer as Cartographer*, San Antonio: Trinity University Press.
- Walsh, J. (2003) *The Art of Storytelling: Easy Steps to Presenting an Unforgettable Story*, Chicago: Moody Publishers.
- Ward, T. B. & Kolomyts, Y. (2010) “Cognition and Creativity”, In Kaufman, J. C. & Sternberg, R. J. (eds.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wenger, E. (1998) *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wilkinson, P. (2009) *Myths and Legends: An Illustrated Guide to their Origins and Meanings*, London: Dorling Kindersley Ltd.
- Wood, P., Landry, C. and Bloomfield, J. (2006) *Cultural Diversity in Britain: A toolkit for cross-cultural cooperation*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Wright, A. (2008) *Storytelling with children*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wundt, W. (1902) *Principles of Physiological Psychology*, (trans. Edward Bradford Titchener), [Online] Available at: <http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Wundt/Physio/> (Accessed: 11 May 2012).
- Yaguello, M. (1981) *Alice au Pays du Langage*, Paris: Editions du Seuil.
- Zipes, J. (1995) *Creative Storytelling: Building Community-Changing Lives*, New York: Routledge.

Illustrations:

Illustration I; Source: <http://www.pofa.uth.gr/>.

Illustration II; Source: Rainer Reisenzein’s “The Schachter Theory of Emotion: Two Decades Later”, *Psychological Bulletin* by the American Psychological Association Inc., p. 242.

Illustration III; Source: <http://www.lasadev.com/articles/constellations.htm>.

Interviews via email:

Tsiviltidou, Z. (2012) E-mail to Dr. Stavroula Mavrogeni, 19 May.

Tsiviltidou, Z. (2012) E-mail to Mrs. Anthi Thanou, 17 May.

Appendix

Sample questions in transcript from the questionnaire of the Storytelling Project:

15. Do you believe that with the sharing and exchange of stories and cultural knowledge the social networks of our multicultural city are strengthened? Yes or no?

22. Do you feel more familiar to an urban area when you know its stories? Yes or no?

9. Would you like to co-create an urban tale with an immigrant living in the same city as you? Yes or no?

17. Do urban tales influence the image you have about Thessaloniki? Yes or no?

23. Do you believe that listening to the stories of the citizens and investing in their collective creativity, can affect the revitalization of the infrastructural character of the city? Yes or no?

3. Do you think that the storytelling art can harness the creative capital and exercise the imagination of the people? Yes or no?

11. Do you believe that with the sharing of stories people come closer to one another through experiencing emotional arousal together? Yes or no?

18. Do you think that co-creating stories about Thessaloniki can channel the perception people have about the city? Yes or no?

7. Are you familiar with urban tales referring to the issues of immigration and integration? Yes or no?

14. Is it possible for intercultural interaction to be fostered in Thessaloniki via storytelling practices? Yes or no?

Curriculum vitae

Tsiviltidou Zoi (born in 1990) holds a BA degree in English Language & Literature from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and is currently in her Master studies in Cultural Policy & Management – Interculturalism and Mediation in the Balkans in the University of Arts in Belgrade joint the University Lumière Lyon II. Her academic research addresses the art of storytelling and cultural literacy, intercultural mediation, urban regeneration and the art of city making. She is mostly interested in how the storytelling art can foster community building in urban multicultural environments and public space intervention and reinvention via participatory creativity. Been awarded scholarships from international Universities and working abroad, having published articles in international journals and done some travelling, she was granted the wonderful opportunity to listen to many stories and grasp input for intellectual and creative endeavours; but, she still marvels at new academic discoveries, debates and experiences of cross-cultural nature. [Contact info: tsivizoi@yahoo.com].