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"For the poetry as performance, for the ephemeral triumph of the momentary" – About Demosthenes Agrafiotis

Evi Karkiti

Journalist, Writer

"For the poetry as performance, for the ephemeral triumph of the momentary"; this was the characterization given by Demosthenes Agrafiotis in an interview, when asked about the life span of an oral poem. For what its imprint might be and what remains with the audience after the performance.

It was a rather interesting answer, since this ephemeral triumph of the momentary, in the good performances that are few, as well as the good poems that we read printed in a book, aim to create beginnings and conditions of personal and collective rearrangements.

The personal and the collective. The social scientist and the artist-performer. These qualities seem to run through the entire rich and complex work of Demosthenis Agrafiotis, who for more than forty years did not stop acting, researching, constantly asking new questions through this double role. The theoretical and the researcher on one hand, the artist on the other, offers us a solid narrative about the history and imprint of Poetry Performance not only internationally but also in our own country and this is a very important matter. His book "Performance" published in 2022 with texts originated from his experience of festivals, artistic actions, organization of various projects, and even texts of his interviews with the press, does not only run through the Greek pre-history and history of performance. It is also very informative about the range of the interaction between performers and various other artists involved as well as the path that a project can take, from the conception to the realization as well as the imprint it leaves behind. A book that has the same performative character through its graphic conception.

In his other-quality as an artist, Demosthenes Agrafiotis really acted in all the lengths and widths of the earth, something that allows us to understand his views on the nature of creation in a continuously changing environment.

The life of Demosthenes Agrafiotis has got important milestones connected with the innovations or, if you like, with the cultural cosmogony of the 20th century. The 1960s find him in the US with the movement of doubt - and how this affected the western culture - in full bloom. In the 70s he is in

Paris, which meant to become his second home. He meets artists, lives the unique atmosphere of the alternative printing houses, discovers the charm of the coexistence or better said the eternal conversation between poetry and other arts, mainly that of music, but in a way that goes beyond and becomes deeper than that of the poetry plainly set. He discovers what it could mean for poetry to skip the pages of a book and seek its place - and perhaps its new function - in the social space.

In the extroversion of the 80s he lives the atmosphere of the festivals and in the 90s he sees all these efforts while they multiply and many of them due to his own initiative. And in the 21st century, his interest turns towards Asia, where a new world opens up there, with perhaps a different philosophy and a different perception of the private and the public and even the function of art itself.

Poet, artist of medians, as he chooses to introduce himself, Emeritus Professor of Sociology, Demosthenes Agraftotis constantly talks about the common characteristics of performance with the pre-industrial societies, their cultural origins and cultural perspectives, the challenges in the new digital environments, in environments of crises, his contribution to the understanding of crisis as a concept is very important, while he seeks for the eternal conversation between the word performance and a multitude of other words, such as ceremony, end, end, luxury, imperfection, meanness, ritual, rite.

Obviously we have left out a lot in this short welcome to which must be added his very dense presence in the publishing matters, both in printed books as well as in e-books.

And of course it would be very difficult to attempt to classify this entire work into themes, directions, aesthetic pursuits. But one thing we could perhaps say is that in a time of confusion like ours, both the research and the artistic activity of Demosthenes Agraftotis, move us and motivate us to perhaps search for some meaning.