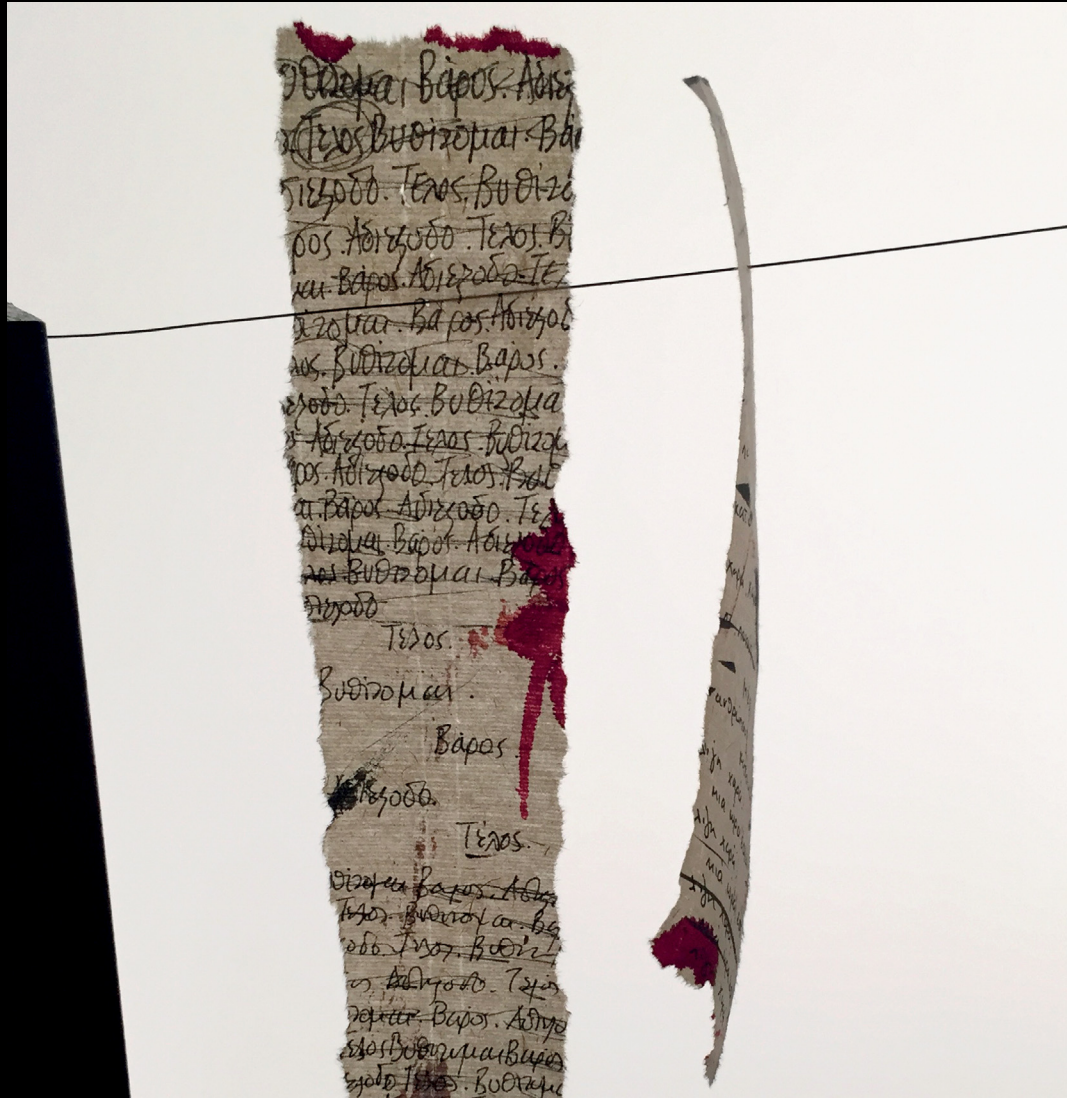


# MIRRORS

Polyphonic narrations on a social world in crisis



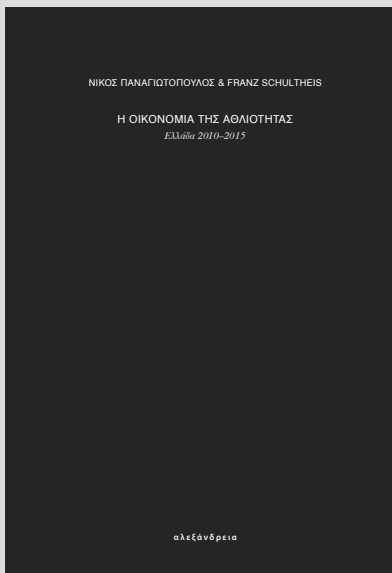
**Nikos Panayotopoulos**  
**Franz Schultheis**  
**Venia Dimitrakopoulou**

// **3 books**

// **2 sociologists & 1 artist**

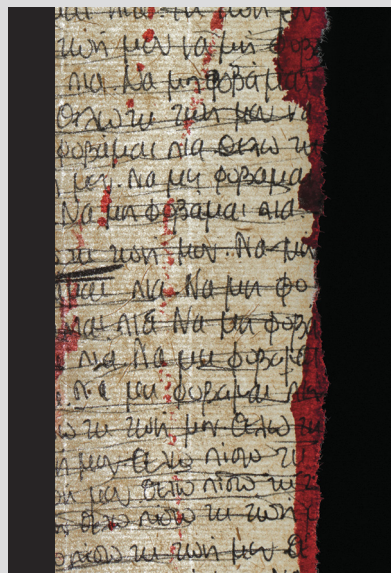
// **Greece & Germany**

// **The era of “Great Depression”**



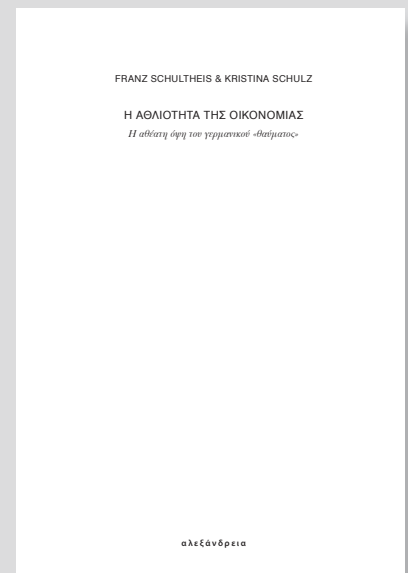
Nikos Panayotopoulos  
& Franz Schultheis  
**The economy of misery**  
Greece 2010-2015

16,5 x 24 cm / 880 p.  
ISBN 978-960-221-662-0



Venia Dimitrakopoulou,  
Nikos Panayotopoulos  
& Franz Schultheis  
**Dialogues**

16,5 x 24 cm / 72 p. / hard cover  
/ bilingual (greek - english)  
ISBN 978-960-221-666-8



Franz Schultheis  
& Kristina Schulz  
**The misery of economy**  
The unseen side of the  
German “miracle”

16,5 x 24 cm / 424 p.  
ISBN 978-960-221-661-3

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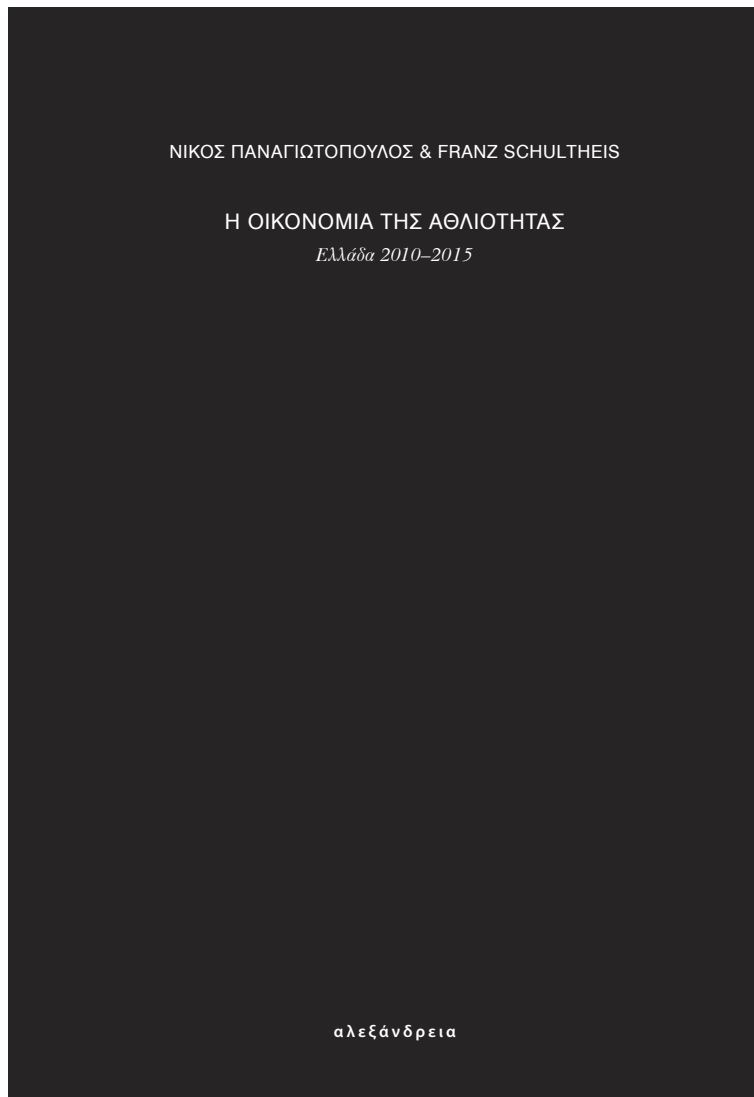
## MIRRORS – The concept

Two social scientists and an artist juxtapose two different ways of speaking about society, science and art. Sociologists Nikos Panayotopoulos and Franz Schultheis, and sculptress Venia Dimitrakopoulou attempt, in their joint publication entitled **MIRRORS: Polyphonic narrations on a social world in crisis**, to make known and recognizable one of the major stakes of our times: that it is the kairos or moment of truth for the arts and the social sciences when they must combine their symbolic weapons in order to defend a social world shaken and deconstructed by new and bold international forms of domination.

With their concern focused on the Europe of today, which is moving further and further away from the realist utopia that originally often characterized it, all the while turning the political dreams of many of its citizens into a nightmare, the two sociologists studied both Greece and Germany in order to trace the deep contradictions of neoliberal capitalism. Placing side by side the findings of their research, they present the reader with a comparative tomography of two societies which, for all their apparently contrasting positions in a multi-speed and multi-power Europe, are essentially two sides of the same coin: they are both traversed by a powerful sociohistorical dynamics linked to the radicalized financial logic of globalized capitalism. In two complementary books, *The Economy of Misery* and *The Misery of Economy*, numerous women and men testify on their every day experience in an anomic social world and speak about their lives, for which the global crisis seems to have precluded any clear and realizable future.

In response to this research portfolio, the visual language of Venia Dimitrakopoulou explores such polarities of these human beings at both material and symbolic levels; by creating a visual work titled **MIRRORS**, published in the book *Dialogues*, which functions as an “instrument” of recuperation and emancipation, and so enabling the realization of the principal aim of her colleagues. To wit, offering to all “everyday people”, who experience the crumbling-down of their relations with the feasible, the probable and the permissible, an opportunity to escape from the darkness, to turn into mirrors, in which observers can recognize themselves and try to better understand their own social situation.

**Book 1** Nikos Panayotopoulos & Franz Schultheis  
**The economy of misery**  
Greece 2010-2015



*The Economy of Misery* is a piece of sociological research into the effects of a social and economic transformation on the life of Greek citizens, brought about by the imported economic model of “structural adaptation”.

## Book 1

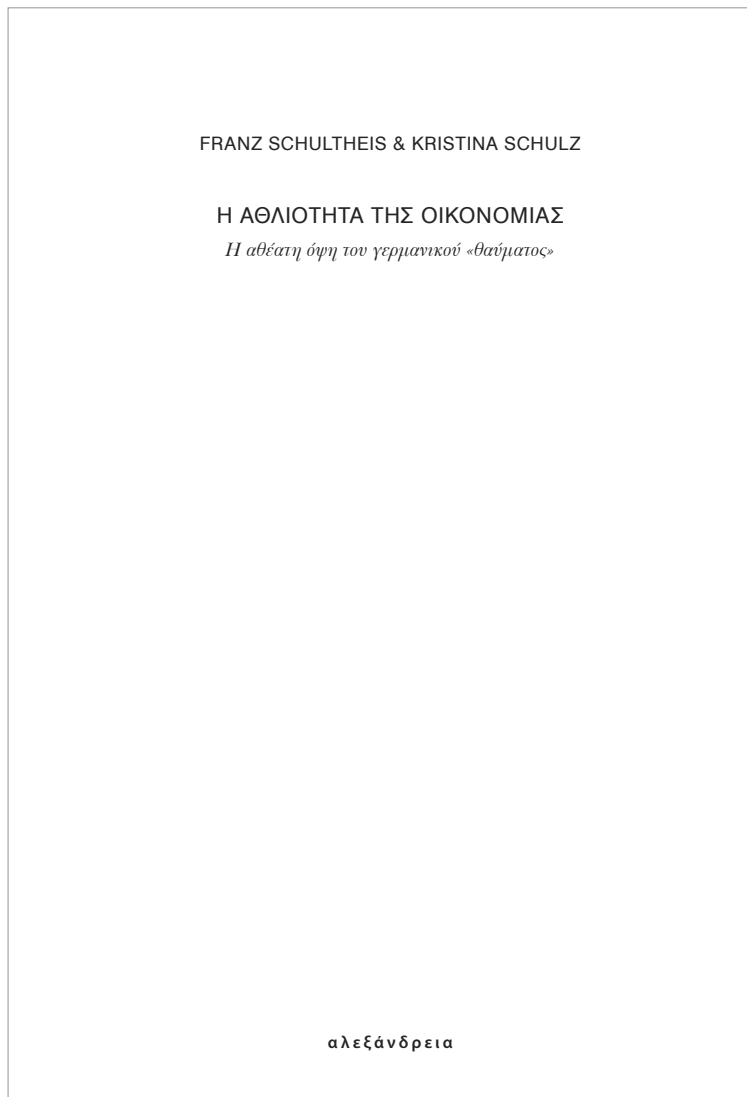
In the sociological laboratory which Greece has become, there is a violent clash and enforced co-existence of two economic systems with, to a great extent, contradictory principles and non-conformity between, on the one hand, the economic dispositions of social subjects shaped by the world economy of a dependent and under-developed liberal capitalism; and, on the other, the imported and imposed economic world of market capitalism. This research will show how the imported economic model for the management of the Greek crisis, which demands the adoption of a certain economic behaviour and stance, presupposes specific economic and social conditions not to be found in the social world where it is being imposed.

Under the direction of Nikos Panayotopoulos and Franz Schultheis, a team of researchers has devoted five years in an attempt to understand the conditions which have produced the forms of social misery characterizing Greece today, and to reveal a series of social spaces where testimony to the truth of social suffering is provided by those who are experiencing it.

We can read this book as a collection of potential short stories, which enable us to understand why we are what we are, why we are living through what we are living through, why we are doing what we are doing, why we are thinking what we are thinking, why we are feeling this or another contradiction or pain. Giving the opportunity to speak to people who are usually excluded from the public platform, the writers as public authors bring to light the means of weaving polyphonic narratives about a social reality as it is lived and interpreted by a series of citizens. In this way, the authors help to make it more difficult for those to make a living from describing and recording the crisis, but also and mainly, more difficult for all those who make a living out of the “management” of the crisis, refusing to accept any responsibility for those who experience it.

**This book proposes a different way to do politics, a radical ‘re-politicalization’ of politics.**

**Book 2** Franz Schultheis & Kristina Schulz  
**The misery of economy**  
The unseen side of the German “miracle”



Germany, despite having been held up as the prototype for financial austerity and economic correctness by liberal orthodoxy, has not avoided the consequences of fiscal cutbacks. In the first decade of 2000, the social liberal third way, as defined by Blair, Jospin and Schröder urges the transition from a social state with a global role to play, to a state that provides residual assistance.

**Book 2** This collective book has been designed and written as a testimony to the historic turnabout in modern German society. This turnabout is symbolized by the 2010 Agenda: a programme of economic and social reforms applied by the Social Democratic government of Chancellor Schröder after 2003. This period of radical change in the political, economic and social sectors, established a team of social scientists, from all the German states, in order to take a sort of X-ray from the grass-roots, based on the testimonies of citizens from various social backgrounds and trajectories, to throw light on the changes in the everyday lives of Germans. Ten years later, this book offers the reader a portrait gallery in the form of extended interviews, providing an original as well as accurate picture of Germany which does not conform to that conjured up in media presentations and comparative assessments regarding economic performance so often featured in Europe and internationally.

The dismantling of the legendary German model and health system, as crystallized in the idea of “one euro jobs”, has relegated an increasing proportion of the population to misery in a society which has now become one of “limited responsibility”. A team of twenty researchers under the direction of Franz Schultheis and Kristina Schulz, analyses the social situation in Germany and the real contradictions in its model, investigating through deeply revealing interviews, deriving inspiration from the work carried out under the direction of Pierre Bourdieu and presented in the book entitled *The Misery of the World (La Misère du Monde)*.

The construction of a sociological table composed of the selected testimonies in this book, shows how social insecurity is now imprinted on the heart of German society.

It is expected that the reading of this book will contribute to a rejection of the dominant version of the great narrative concerning the global success of the German model, offering an alternative view of the country’s social realities and a reminder of the social price which an ever-increasing number of citizens are being called upon to pay.



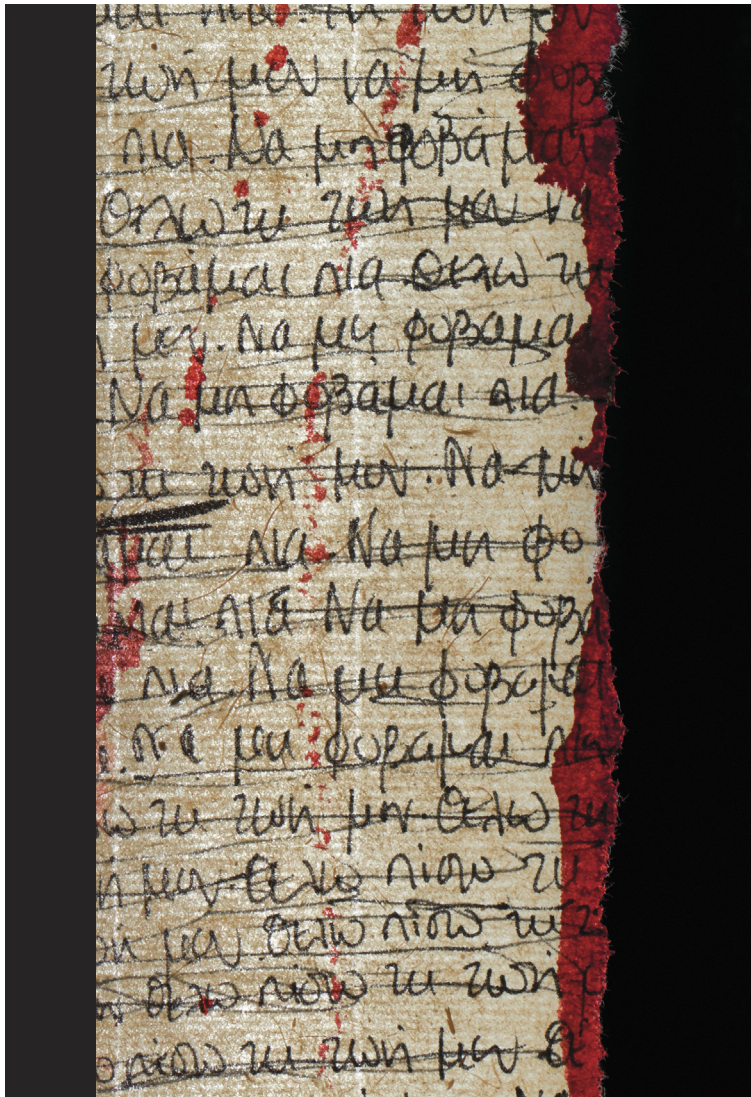
## Bool 2

The German model, if we wish to avoid political manoeuvrings and platitudes, is inextricably linked to neo-liberal reforms in the social state, and with the collective upheaval arising from the new demands and suffering which are not only one side of the economic miracle, but have become the means of its achievement. The new rules of the game being adopted by individuals are what this book aims to convey. This social analysis of the often dramatic social consequences of the neo-liberal transformation of a country long famed for its exemplary social model of social solidarity and its system of social protection, constitutes also a mirror which reflects the consequences of an international economic policy under German auspices, which has succeeded in exporting and making commonplace the neo-liberal spirit in Europe.

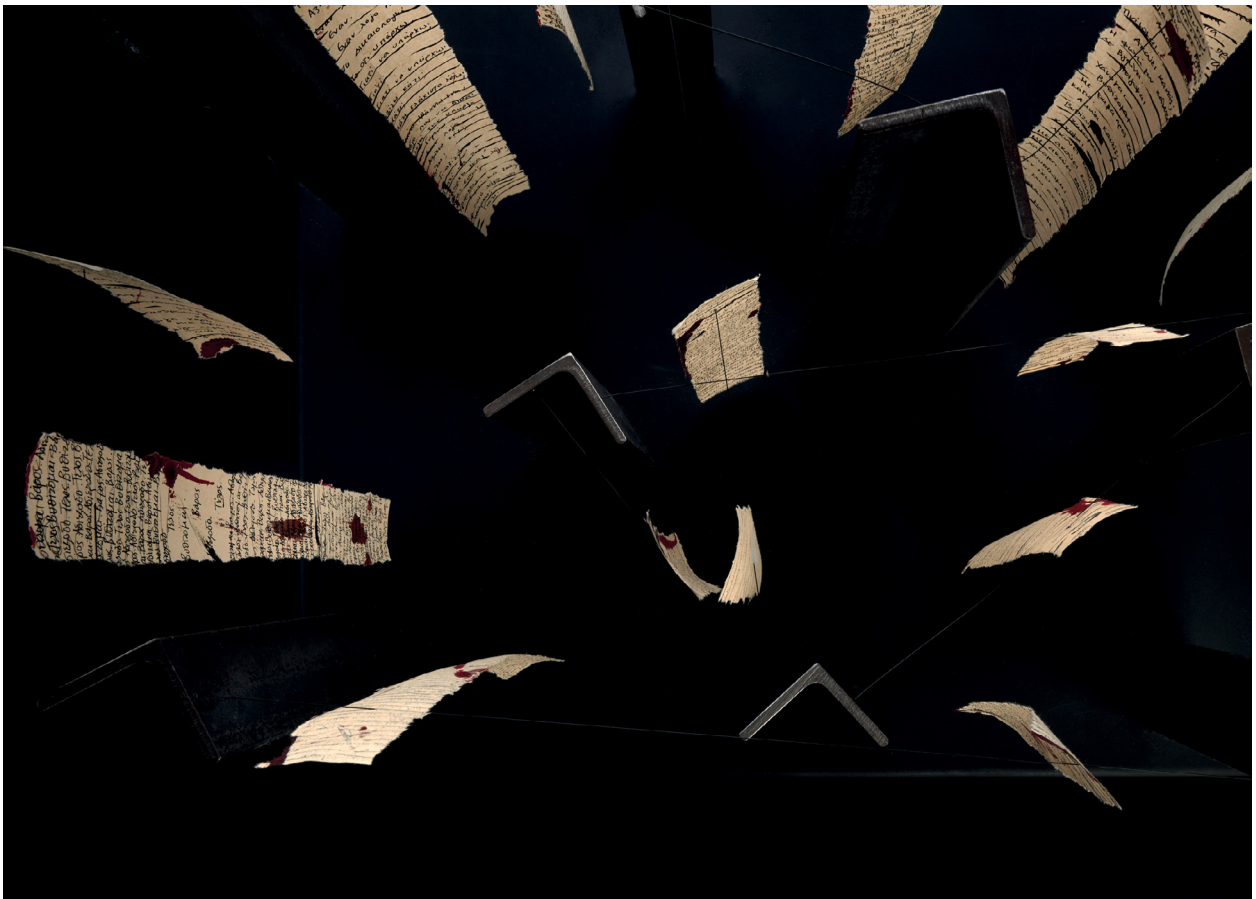
Through the narratives of European citizens collected in these two books, the candid picture which “juxtaposes” Germans and Greeks leads to acknowledgement of forms of international dominance that produce social coups d’états and human pain beyond borders. In just the same way, the acknowledgement that *The Economy of Misery* being imposed on the Greek people constitutes the other side of *The Misery of the Economy* is based on the logic of universal and radical commercialization “with no alternative” which was promoted by Thatcher and is being continued by her worthy heirs.



**Book 3** Venia Dimitrakopoulou,  
Nikos Panayotopoulos & Franz Schultheis  
**Διάλογοι / Dialogues**



The visual work of Venia Dimitrakopoulou *Mirrors* is presented in the third book entitled *Dialogues*.



© For the visual work *Mirrors*: Venia Dimitrakopoulou  
Photos *Mirrors*: Elias Eliadis

## Book 3 **Visual work *Mirrors* – Description**

A space. Angle shaped steel columns varying in height create a forest, a labyrinth where someone can wander in and around.

Between them hang long stripes of delicate Chinese paper of equal width but of different length.

The voices. Texts, phrases, words, extracts from the interviews cover the surface of the papers. Black and red ink creates images of a battlefield of words and thoughts.

The columns stand like a series of deconstructed-dismantled open books where pages are suspended between them.

Fragility vs solidity.

Ephemeral vs perpetual.

Levity vs gravity.

Organic vs industrial matter.

...

The columns and the sheets of paper, all in a parallel arrangement.

A strictly vertical coexistence of contrasting forces prepared to be enlivened in some way.

The places are fixed but different versions and formations may exist.

(The Spartans in their battle formations used to place the weaker ones in the middle.)

By giving dignity and authenticity to the testimonies of ordinary people who are generally excluded from public discourse and public view, the visual language of Venia Dimitrakopoulou functions as an “instrument” of recuperation and emancipation, enabling the realization of the principal aim of her colleagues, Nikos Panayotopoulos and Franz Schultheis. To wit, offering to all “everyday people”, who experience the crumbling-down of their relations with the feasible, the probable and the permissible, an opportunity to escape from the darkness, the nothingness, to turn into mirrors, in which observers can recognize themselves and try to better understand their own social situation.



**Book 3** This small book that is co-signed by the three creators is the product of the belief that the complexity of the social world, which is itself essentially “polyphonic”, requires an approach analogous to its degree of complexity, and that we need to collect every manner and way of speaking about it in order to attain a level of symbolic representation and critical reflection to enable us to be effective. We should develop collectively, step by step, a project which will unite in kaleidoscopic form the maximum number of ways and forms of “speaking about social issues” in a gigantic panorama of the social world, offering to our sight and hearing the colors and tonalities that would not be available by each separate way and form of speaking. This “meta”-language, cross-sectional, simultaneously symbolic and empirical, artistic and scientific, imaginative and objective, which we have tried to provisionally put in place outside those well-worn paths, with all their imperfections, difficulties, their about-turns and retreats, which we consider represent a first crystallization, seems to us to be a starting point for appealing for the creation of what we will call –with Pierre Bourdieu– a collective intellectual. This collectivity finds its purpose in the evident reasons for action dictated by the critical historical situation in which we find ourselves; a dramatic situation which, to put it succinctly, shows its face in a particularly brutal way here in Greece.

The experience itself, resulting from this cooperation, gave the opportunity to the three creators to invite, through the book *Dialogues*, all those who can contribute to the creation of a new form of effective intervention of the intellectuals, in order to answer the three key questions of the current social world in crisis: “What sort of society are we living in?”, “What sort of society do we wish to live in?” and “How can we get there?”, answers that presuppose and entail a radical repoliticization of a depoliticized politics in the hands of an international class of technocrats.

Η φωνή μου δε βγαί  
νει. Η φωνή μου και πο  
νεται δε βγαίνει. τι  
πνιχόται  
Ακούει κανείς  
πνιχόται.  
Ακούει κανείς;  
Η φωνή μου κάπου ε  
δε βγαίνει.  
πνιχόται  
Χάνεται  
Βουβίζομαι  
Με παβα προς τα  
κάτω.  
Ακούει κανείς;  
Βουβίζομαι  
Χάνεται  
Χάνεται  
Ακούει κανείς;  
Με ακούει κανείς  
Με ακούει κανείς;  
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Βουβίζομαι  
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## MIRRORS – The creators



**Nikos Panayotopoulos** is Professor of Sociology in the Department of Philosophy and Social Studies at the University of Crete, scientific associate of research centres and universities in Greece and abroad, Vice President of the Bourdieu Foundation (Switzerland), a member of the editorial board for international scientific journals and reviews, and director of the annual trilingual review of social research *Social Sciences*.



**Franz Schultheis** is Professor of Sociology at the University of St. Gallen (Switzerland). He received his PhD degree from the University of Konstanz and he did his habilitation at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris with Pierre Bourdieu. He is President of the Bourdieu Foundation (Switzerland) and a member of the Swiss Science Council. His main research domains are: social inequalities, the world of work and sociology of art.



**Venia Dimitrakopoulou** is a sculptress. Her last solo exhibition *Promahones*, winter 2014-2015, was held at Benaki Museum, Pireos Street Annexe. On the occasion of this exhibition the book *Venia Dimitrakopoulou Promahones* was published from Hatje Cantz publications. Her work is partly located to public spaces as well as to private collections in Greece and abroad.