THE LAST MODERNIST WAVE

A Metamodernist Approach to Greek Literature of the 1960s



CLAUDIO RUSSELLO
Merton College
University of Oxford

THESIS SUBMITTED FOR DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Trinity Term 2023

SHORT ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses the peculiar cultural landscape of Greece in the 'long 1960s,' arguing that this period, extending from around 1956 to 1974, constitute a case of metamodernism. Metamodernism, defined as a structure of feeling, emerges from the interplay between established modernist figures and emerging intellectuals, set against a backdrop of intense political instability and rapid economic growth.

The thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter One delves into the cultural production of the Greek 1960s, eliciting in the intellectual debates the 'condition of the boundary,' an affect linked to a diffused sense of crisis stemming from societal and cultural transformations. These elements converge in metamodernism, adopted from English Studies and retroactively adapted for the Greek long 1960s. The next three chapters examine four literary works that engage with classical mythology, a hallmark of modernism, and used in this thesis as a catalyst for discussing broader issues regarding metamodernism and the Greek 1960s. Chapter Two examines Yannis Ritsos's *Τέταρτη διάσταση*, exploring the role of the boundary-affect in the collection's development and reinterpreting the concept of the 'fourth dimension' as a Bergsonian *durée*. Chapter Three centres on Stelios Xefloudas's novel *Οδυσσέας* challenging the conventional use of the mythical method and delving into the violent cyclicality of history through Walter Benjamin's historiosophy. The final chapter explores Margarita Liberaki's screenplay for Jules Dassin's film *Phaedra* and her later play *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι ή Τηλέγονος*, problematising the question of Greekness from the standpoint of diasporic subjects and through a feminist lens, underscoring the performative nature of national identity and the transformation of the desire for nostos, shifting from the diaspora to Greece itself.

The major contribution of the thesis is the re-evaluation of the relationship between Greek modernism and the 1960s, as well as the more localised contribution to the contemporary theorisations of metamodernism, revealing its flexibility and productivity.

Long Abstract

This thesis is an exploration of an alternative way to read the Greek 1960s and the cultural production of the time, applying retrospectively the emerging theory of metamodernism. This research contributes to the critical efforts to conceive Greek literature beyond the traditional categories of 'generations,' putting the focus on the interaction between cultural phenomena and socio-historical contingencies. Greek culture of the 1960s is generally analysed from two parallel perspectives: that focusing on the Generation of the 1930s and its canonisation, on one side, and that of the First and Second Postwar Generations, emerging during and after the 1940s, on the other. At the same time, debates around the Greek 1960s are also focusing on two lines of research: the positive economic growth, on one hand, and the political instability that culminated in the military dictatorship of 1967-74, on the other. My thesis aims to break with such traditional analyses, proposing a more inclusive and comprehensive framework through which we can read the 1960s and the cultural production of the time, delving into the osmotic relations between the modernists of the 1930s and the younger intellectuals, as well as between the layered socio-historical context and the overall cultural production of the time.

In order to understand the Greek 1960s in a more comprehensive manner, I explore the possibilities offered by the emerging theory of metamodernism, adopted from current debates in English Studies, and adapted for the context of the Greek 1960s. Rather than a cultural movement, Greek metamodernism refers to the structure of feeling dominating the 'long 1960s,' a period extending from around 1956 to 1974. Framing it as a structure of feeling allows to create a common framework within which the socio-historical context enters in a dialogical relationship with the cultural developments.

This thesis is structured in four chapters, the first one delineating the new methodology, later applied in the case studies of the remaining three chapters. Chapter One delves into the theorisation of Greek metamodernism, exploiting the three main semantic variations of the prefix 'meta-:' *with*, *after*, and *between*. First, I analyse the peculiar cultural landscape of the 1960s in Greece, focusing on the interaction between younger and older intellectuals, as exemplified by the case of Nanos Valaoritis's attempt to have George Seferis collaborate in his new journal *Πάλι*. This example demonstrates

the anxiety felt by the so-called 'Postwar Generation' to enter in an open dialogue with the modernists of the 1930s, who in turn were establishing their role in the literary canon. In fact, I proceed to explore how the modernist language permeated the cultural landscape, through elements such as the exploration of the human consciousness, the return to classical mythology, and the representation of a fragmented temporality. I finally complete the overview of Greek culture in the 1960s with a closer look at the debates about contemporary literature of the time, which recorded a climate of crisis and a sense of defeat. Drawing on Zissimos Lorentzatos's and William Spanos's critical reading of Greek culture, I argue that the Greek 1960s are a forcefield of tensions and contrasts constitutive of an in-between reality, a reality at an ontological and intellectual 'boundary,' in transition and transformation. This 'boundary condition,' as I call it, subsumes in itself both the dialectics between modernism and the emerging intellectuals, as well as the fluidity of the economic and political landscape.

The following three chapters engage with the specific case studies of Yannis Ritsos, Stelios Xefloudas, and Margarita Liberaki, employing classical reception as a thread that joins the three authors together, while facilitating the analysis of the innovative metamodernist theory.

Chapter Two studies Yannis Ritsos's collection of long poems *Τέταρτη διάσταση* as an example of the boundary condition affecting cultural production. I first delve into the history of the collection itself, identifying three phases in the composition of the collection. These three moments are all connected to a moment of deep crisis or, as is the case in 1963, to the direct engagement with the modernist models of C.P. Cavafy and Vladimir Mayakovsky. I then move to analyse the content of the collection, arguing that the boundary is tightly interconnected with the issue of time, represented as a Bergsonian *durée*, which Ritsos calls 'fourth dimension.' From a purely modernist perspective, this is a space of negotiation between present and past, interpenetrating one another in the mythical personae of the monologues. The metamodernist boundary-affect, however, highlights the deep connections between the Bergsonian temporality and the transitional nature of the 1960s. The case of Yannis Ritsos, I conclude, shows the full extent of modernism's ongoing relevance, and yet how modernism becomes readjusted, in dialogue with the long 1960s.

Chapter Three focuses on a minor novel of the 1960s, Stelios Xefloudas's *Οδυσσέας*, which however assumes a paradigmatic position in the theory of Greek metamodernism,

both for its open dialogue with the European modernist model of James Joyce and for its deep sensitivity to the contemporary tensions of the Cold War. While maintaining a clear intertextual conversation with the Joycean model, Xefloudas adopts the mythical method and twists it to better suit the contemporary challenges of a new era. Depicting Odysseus as a *flâneur* in the 1960s, who denies his traditional heroism and acknowledges his crimes in Troy, Xefloudas exposes the chaos of the 1960s, the loss of moral values, and the risks posed by technological advancements. Resonating with Walter Benjamin's philosophy of history, in the process of reconfiguring Greek mythology, Xefloudas questions his contemporary world, bringing to surface the cyclicality of history with the mythical Trojan War as a mould for all subsequent wars, and the violence inherent in historical progress. Xefloudas's *Οδυσσέας* exemplifies Greek metamodernism exactly in its use of Joyce's and Benjamin's modernist models in order to create a new model of cultural and political critique.

Finally, Chapter Four discusses Margarita Liberaki's screenplay of Jules Dassin's film *Phaedra* and her mythical play *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι ή Τηλέγονος*, which introduce the internationalising aspect of the Greek 1960s and of the metamodernist theory. As a Greek woman living abroad, Liberaki returns to the question of Greekness, a much-debated issue in Greek modernism, and challenged by the internal strife of the Greek Civil War and by the large waves of migrations in the postwar period. In fact, Liberaki's own diasporic perspective shows how Greekness intersects with and complicates the desire of homecoming or, in Homeric terms, *nostos*. Already in the screenplay, Greekness is detached from its modernist Seferian conceptualisation, highlighting the performative aspect of it. Facing the rapid development of tourism and the inevitable confrontation with the outside world, Greekness becomes more of a performance for the non-Greeks, thus complicating the homecoming. As Liberaki's later mythical play stages, the concept of *nostos* transforms from the diasporic subject's frustrated desire of homecoming into multiple forms: nostos is unaccomplished or rejected altogether, transferring the desire from the diaspora to the Greek homeland. In this transformational process, the figure of the woman takes central stage, as the managing force that ensures a stable point of reference at a time of political turmoil and transitions.

By introducing the concept of metamodernism in the analysis of the Greek 1960s and its culture, this thesis inevitably problematised questions of Greek modernism, such as the issue of Greekness and of the classical cultural inheritance, showing the peculiar

condition of the 1960s where modernism had large relevance and yet started to be deconstructed. In this sense, this thesis also intervenes in the ever-changing field of Metamodernist Studies, providing a localised interpretation of the concept, usually applied to the Anglosphere and to the global West in general. This thesis stretches and expands the emerging metamodernist theory, exploring its affordances beyond the contemporaneity of the 21st century or, rather, exploring its applicability to different historical realities, such the Greek long 1960s. Not only this adaptation of the concept to the Greek context yields interesting new insights into a major work of the Greek canon, as Ritsos's *Τέταρτη διάσταση* is, but it also enables the rediscovery of works left in the shadows of literary criticism, such as Xefloudas's fascinating *Οδυσσέας* and Liberaki's mythical theatre.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

They say it takes a village to raise a child. In the case of this thesis, it took a community for me to complete it. Without the support, feedback, and encouragement that this wide community offered me, I could not have chased my passion and make it something real.

A few sentences can never do justice to the support and friendship I received from my supervisor, PROF. DIMITRIS PAPANIKOLAOU, to whom I am forever grateful for believing in my ideas and for showing an incredible amount of patience with me in these many years. His support and feedback have been precious in helping me find my intellectual voice, always challenging my preconceptions and stimulating me to always think outside the box. He taught me to not be afraid of my ideas and to always think freely. I would also like to thank PROF. CONSTANZE GÜTHENKE, PROF. GONDA VAN STEEN, PROF. MARIA BOLETSI, and DR ELENI PAPARGYRIOU for reading parts of this thesis in its earlier stages for my milestone vivas, and for the discussions and precious inputs that helped me shape it as it is now. Special thanks also go to KOSTAS SKORDYLES for all the good teaching, advice, and support. I also want to express my profound gratitude to PROF. CATERINA CARPINATO, who introduced me to Modern Greek literature during my undergraduate studies and always encouraged me to continue on this path. I would not have made it to Oxford without her support – thank you.

This research was made possible thanks to the generous support of the Wolfson Foundation, which awarded me with a Wolfson Postgraduate Scholarship in the Humanities, while my fieldwork in Greece was kindly sponsored by Merton College, my home away from home during these years, and by a Santander Academic Travel Award. Many thanks to SOFIA BORA and YORGOS KOUMARIDIS at ELIA-MIET in Athens and Thessaloniki, for introducing me to the Greek archives and their treasures; to TASSOS SAKELLAROPOULOS at the Historical Archives of the Benaki Museum, for allowing me to get lost among the Ritsos Papers even outside working hours; and to the staff of the Archives of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, for letting me spend some time with Margarita Liberaki, despite the very short notice.

The truth is that, if I managed to get to the end of the DPhil, I owe it to my friends and to my family, who have always been there to pick me up, holding out their hands even in

the hardest moments. I can never thank enough my Oxonian family, the Juxonites, the Pierlingtonians: ALICE GUSSONI, EMILY DI DODO, VALERIA TADDEI, OLMO CALZOLARI, and ALICE PARRINELLO. Thank you for always being there, every step of the way, despite the ups and the many many downs. Working with you, partying with you, Sanremo-ing with you, just being with you, has been a privilege. I could not ask for better companions in this crazy journey we call academia. Special thanks also go to ANNA SAROLDI, FANNY CLEMENTE, LUCA MAZZOCCHI, SERENA VANDI, and GIACOMO COMIATI, for always believing that I could make it and for walking beside me through it all.

I am indebted to DR KRISTINA GEDGAUDAITĖ for mentoring me, encouraging me, and supporting me blindly since my very first days in Oxford. Your faith in my work and in myself has given me strength and confidence at all stages of my research. Infinite thanks to BILLIE MITSIKAKOS for too many reasons, among which thinking with me, vibing with me, and surviving with me. Also, great thanks to TRISEVGENI BILIA and ORESTIS TZIRTZILAKIS for being a part of this crazy Greek crew, teaching me all the Greek I could never learn otherwise and always believing in my work; and to FIONA ANTONELAKI for being my Athenian fairy, recommending me readings and archives, and helping me find my way in the big city. I would also like to thank TATIANA FAIA for our Saturday morning coffees, for giving me shelter when I most needed it, and most importantly for her poetic friendship; and to DIGNA MARTINEZ-SABARIS for the precious company and support at crucial moments of my writing up, and for being the most caring of friends.

The most special thanks go to my closest friends in life, CLAUDIA DI GLORIA, CARLOTTA GELMINI, FRANCESCA BARBIERATO, CAMILLA TIOZZO, and MATTEO PASINI. I cannot even begin to list the reasons to thank you. You are Home, this says it all. I am especially indebted to ALESSANDRA LOVATTI BERNINI, for changing my life, introducing me to Yannis Ritsos and to the fourth dimension of Poetry. This thesis would literally not exist if it was not for you. Ἄφησέ με νἄρθω μαζί σου, now and always.

Finally, I need to thank with my whole heart ANDY T. NGUYỄN, for always holding my hand and for constantly reminding me that there is a future. Nếu có một lý do anh biết ơn học tiến sĩ, đó là anh đã gặp được em.

This thesis belongs to my mother, AGATA, and my father, ALFONSO, who gave their everything so that I could be myself and chase whatever dream I had. Becoming a Doctor in Modern Greek Studies, for one.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES 1

INTRODUCTION 5

0.1 THE TENSE 'LONG 1960S' 7

0.2 MODERNISM – POSTMODERNISM – METAMODERNISM 14

0.3 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS 20

1 – ΜΙΑ ΣΥΛΛΟΓΙΚΗ ΕΥΘΥΝΗ – THE GREEK 1960S AS A CASE OF METAMODERNISM 25

1.1 THE SHADOW OF THE ELDERS: THE CASE OF *ΠΑΛΙ* 27

1.2 WHAT MODERNISM AFTER MODERNISM? 33

1.3 THE DEAD-END, THE LOST CENTRE, THE BOUNDARY 40

1.4 METAMODERNISM: THEORY AND (GREEK) PRACTICE 51

1.5 CONCLUSIONS 59

2 – Ω, ΑΥΤΗ Η ΞΕΝΙΤΕΙΑ ΜΑΣ – YANNIS RITSOS'S ΤΕΤΑΡΤΗ ΔΙΑΣΤΑΣΗ *AND THE BERGSONIAN TEMPORALITY* 61

2.1 BUILDING THE FOURTH DIMENSION 65

2.1.1 The history of *Fourth Dimension* 67

2.1.2 At the origins of the *Fourth Dimension* (1956-1963) 78

2.1.3 The mythological turn and the encounter with modernism (1963-1966) 85

2.1.4 The experience of exile as the ultimate boundary (1967-1972) 95

2.2 BERGSONIAN TEMPORALITY IN THE FOURTH DIMENSION 101

2.3 CONCLUSIONS 12626

3 – Η ΑΡΧΗ ΜΙΑΣ ΚΑΙΝΟΥΡΙΑΣ ΟΔΥΣΣΕΙΑΣ – STELIOS XEFLOUDAS'S ΟΔΥΣΣΕΑΣ *AND BENJAMINIAN MODERNISM* 131

3.1 A METAMODERNIST ODYSSEUS 138

3.2 OPPRESSION AND REPETITIONS 152

3.3 ODYSSEUS IN THE *JETZTZEIT* 162

3.4 ODYSSEUS AND THE ANGEL OF HISTORY 170

3.5 CONCLUSIONS 180

4 – ΔΕΝ ΣΕ ΔΙΩΧΝΕΙ Η ΙΘΑΚΗ – GREEKNESS, NOSTOS, AND THE MOTHER/LAND IN MARGARITA LIBERAKI'S MYTHICAL STAGE 186

4.1 A PHAEDRA FOR THE 1960s 189

4.1.1 Sources and variations 191

4.1.2 Archetype and nostalgia 197

4.1.3 Performative Greekness and *nostos* denied 209

4.2 THE REVERSED ODYSSEY 219

4.2.1 The creative gap 221

4.2.2 Multidirectional *nostoi* 228

4.2.3 Penelope's claim 242

4.3 CONCLUSIONS 255

CONCLUSIONS 260

BIBLIOGRAPHY 267

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 – The development of Yannis Ritsos's *Fourth Dimension* project.....76

Figure 2 – Henri Bergson's representation of time as an inverted cone 107

Figure 3 – Opening titles of *Phaedra* with the Parthenon frieze on the background 206

Figure 4 – Alexis (Antony Perkins) standing in front of the Parthenon Marbles..... 207

Figure 5 – Phaedra (Melina Mercouri) in front of the statue of Aphrodite 208

Figure 6 – Alexis (Antony Perkins) speaking Greek to the lemonade stall vendor..... 213

Figure 7 – Alexis (Antony Perkins) with the car of his dreams..... 214

Figure 8 – Alexis (Antony Perkins) mimicking the statue of the Discobolus..... 215

Figure 9 – Alexis (Antony Perkins) screaming at the Greek landscape 218

Εδώ που έφθασες, λίγο δεν είναι·
τόσο που έκαμες, μεγάλη δόξα.

(C.P. Cavafy, *Το πρώτο σκαλί*, vv. 25-26)

INTRODUCTION

The general consensus when discussing Greek modernism and its periodisation is that "[i]f the 1930s represent the beginning of modernism, the 1960s represent its culmination" (Tziovas 1997, 30). To support this claim, Dimitris Tziovas continues by listing a number of cultural events perceived as the culmination, or rather the affirmation, of modernist aesthetics in Greece: the award of the Nobel prize for literature to George Seferis in 1963, the publication of Odysseas Elytis's *Άξιον εστί* (*Dignum Est*) in 1960s, but also the appearance of Stratis Tsirkas's trilogy *Ακυβέρνητες πολιτείες* (Drifting Cities) between 1961-65[1] and Yannis Ritsos's turn throughout the whole decade towards myth and the dramatic monologue with *Τέταρτη διάσταση* (Fourth Dimension) and *Μαρτυρίες* (Testimonies). While these events cannot be contested, my thesis sets to challenge the idea that the 1960s constituted the "culmination" of Greek modernism; or rather to suggest a different way to read and analyse the Greek 1960s, without discarding its modernist character altogether. It is true that the Greek modernists produced some of their finest works during this decade, but it is also necessary to contextualise them within the landscape of the 1960s, that is, in the postwar years grappling with the tense heritage of the wars that intervened between the 1930s and the 1960s, and with a new generation of writers that was then emerging.

The present thesis is the result of an intellectual journey initiated with my master's dissertation, in which I explored the position of Yannis Ritsos's collection *Τέταρτη διάσταση* within the broader setting of European modernism, drawing a comparison

[1] Roderick Beaton defines Tsirkas's trilogy as "Greece's most fully realized modernist novel" (Beaton 2011, 242).

between his long poems and Virginia Woolf's novels. Specifically, my research focused on their use of a disrupted (and disruptive) temporality, as well as on the form of the monologue as an instrument of introspection and exploration of the modern fragmented subjectivity, both feature of a modernist poetics.[2] With that research, I argued that the case of Ritsos disrupts the dichotomy centre/periphery, showing his tight aesthetic connections to an emblematic modernist novelist such as Virginia Woolf.

At a later stage, I started to problematise this comparison from a temporal perspective, which led me to initiate the present study. In fact, if Ritsos and Woolf are comparable in modernist terms, how can it be that the former wrote his modernists monologues in the 1960s, while the British novelist wrote her novels in the 1920s and 1930s? How can we still be talking of modernism in the 1960s, when so much happened in between? In more simple terms, how could Woolfian high modernism still be valid for the cultural explorations of the Greek 1960s?

This doctoral thesis, then, sets to address these questions, exploring the Greek literary culture of the 1960s from a new perspective, which highlights the intersection of modernism and postwar culture, the interaction between emerging intellectuals and the established modernists, and the negotiation of domestic instability with internationalisation. For this purpose, I employ the concept of *metamodernism*, which, as I explore in more detail in the first chapter, allows me to complicate and challenge Tziovas's argument. In the present research, metamodernism serves as a valuable heuristic tool, used to provide a more comprehensive picture of the literary (and broader cultural) scene of the Greek 1960s. In fact, drawing, among others, on the theorisations of Robin van den Akker and Timotheus Vermeulen (2010; 2017), I propose

[2] See Russello (2017).

metamodernism as a structure of feeling that permeated the Greek 1960s, shaping the cultural developments of the nation. This new approach, taking account of the tensions stemming from the complex socio-political context within which Greek intellectuals operated, brings together in a coherent framework the significant contributions of modernist writers (as described by Tziovas) and the emergence of a new generation of authors, who responded to the tensions of their time while maintaining an ongoing engagement with modernist models.

In order to address the cultural specificities of the Greek 'metamodernist 1960s' theorised in the present study, it is necessary to offer an overview of the historical developments of postwar Greece, with special attention to the issue of periodisation. Delineating the temporal boundaries of historical processes always risks being arbitrary and open to debate; this is especially true for the 1960s, a much-discussed period that could hardly be limited to the years between 1960 and 1969. In the Greek context, the establishment of the military dictatorship in 1967 represented a contested moment, which led historians and cultural analysts to consider the Greek 1960s as either a 'short' or a 'long' decade. In this thesis, the 1960s are intended as a long period spanning from circa 1956-8 to the end of the dictatorship in 1974.

0.1 THE TENSE 'LONG 1960S'

There is no doubt that the 1960s were a period of radical changes throughout Europe. The end of the Second World War led to a soaring need of reconstruction, not only in the concrete sense of rebuilding infrastructures destroyed by the conflict, but also in a more abstract way. The war had taken its toll on the communities, whose values and morale had been challenged. The world order was changing under the effects of the Cold War,

while radical innovations had to take place in the postwar era. The 1950s saw a considerable effort in economic reconstruction, associated to a literal rebuilding of nations. The improving living conditions, consequently, resulted in a boom of the birth rate throughout the continent and thus catalysed the cultural and social 'revolutions' that took place during the 1960s. The relevance of the events of the 1960s is so considerable that the great historian of this period Arthur Marwick asserts that this was a period "of outstanding historical significance in that what happened during this period transformed social and cultural developments for the rest of the century" (Marwick 1999, 5).

Granting that cultural and socio-historical changes are the result of a more or less gradual process, the use of temporal boundaries is necessary to limit and facilitate the discussion of this study. When considering the cultural landscape in Greece, the 1960s appear to be problematic, the Junta being the 'point of dispute.' The military dictatorship had certainly disrupted the progressive movements under way in all fields, so that several scholars would rather talk of the 'short 1960s,'[3] or use 1967 as a watershed in the literary history of Greece (Beaton 1999). On the contrary, I would argue that a literary and cultural analysis of the Greek 1960s could not ignore the fact that new sensibilities emerged before the official beginning of the decade and that the sense of emergency that the establishment of the dictatorship in 1967 provoked actually contributed to the perpetuation of a (meta)modernist poetics until at least 1974.

It is, therefore, more suitable to adopt the perspective of the 'long 1960s,' already demonstrated to be useful in the historiographical and cultural analyses of this period, in Greece and elsewhere. Already Fredric Jameson discussed, in his fascinating essay 'Periodizing the 60s' (1984), an expanded conceptualisation of the 1960s, marking the

[3] See, for example, the essays in Rigos, Seferiadis and Chatzivasiliou (2008) and Diamantopoulos (2017).

beginning of this period with the decolonisation of Africa, starting with Ghana's independence in 1957. Jameson then locates two significant breaks in the historical and cultural history of this decade. The first one is to be identified around 1967-8, in correspondence with the recession in the western countries; the second, on the other hand, pushes the temporal boundaries of the decade until around 1973-74, "the onset of a worldwide economic crisis […] which put a decisive full stop to the economic expansion and prosperity characteristic of the postwar period generally and of the 60s in particular" (Jameson 1984, 205). Marwick (1999) also postulated this extended vision of the 1960s, identifying in 1958-9 a significant year of change in Europe and the United States, when the youth subcultures became visible and gained currency in the public debates. Similarly to Jameson, he also posited 1974 as the closing moment of the revolutionary tendencies of the previous decade, linked to the end of the Vietnam War and the passing, in the United States and in other western countries, of several civil rights laws, such as the right to divorce and right to abortion.

A similar case can be made for Greece, as the years 1956-8 may indeed be regarded as the beginning of a new historical phase. With the end of the Greek Civil War in 1949 and the definitive defeat of the communist Democratic Army (Δημοκρατικός Στρατός Ελλάδας), Greece had to grapple with a difficult economic reconstruction and a frail political landscape, marked by three general elections between 1950 and 1952. Elected with the change of the electoral system into a first-past-the-post voting system (which gave a big parliamentary majority to the winner and almost no representation to the Left), and supported by the United States, the Papagos government (1952-55) set the basis for Greek economic growth and, at the same time, had to face the complexity of the decolonisation process in Cyprus. However, it is only with Papagos's death in October 1955 and the premiership of Konstantinos Karamanlis that a new phase of financial

stability and growth for the country was possible, as well as the independence of Cyprus from the British Empire in 1960.

Leader of the right-wing party Εθνική Ριζοσπαστική Ένωσις (ERE, National Radical Union), Karamanlis formed a first government in 1956 and was finally confirmed with the 1958 elections. Karamanlis's victory in 1958 also corresponded to the rise of the parliamentary Left, represented by the Ενιαία Δημοκρατική Αριστερά (EDA, United Democratic Left). During the Greek Civil War, in 1947, the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) had been banned and, with their defeat in the war, the majority of their members were imprisoned or fled into exile. Despite the end of the conflict, the KKE continued to be outlawed and its members found parliamentary representation in the EDA, formed from the union of smaller legal left-wing parties in 1951. EDA's result in the 1958 elections was significant in showing the dissatisfaction towards the unresolved Cypriot question, as well as the vitality of the leftist movement despite the repressive policies of previous governments.

In 1961, Konstantinos Karamanlis was re-elected prime minister; however, he was immediately accused of vote rigging by George Papandreou, main leader of the main opposition party Ένωσις Κέντρου (EK, Centre Union). Papandreou declared a "relentless struggle" (ανένδοτος αγώνας) against the prime minister and his government, calling for new elections and denouncing the repressive methods of the police against leftists. The tensions persisted more than a year, culminating in May 1963 with the assassination of Grigoris Lambrakis, an MP for the EDA. Members of the far-right movement were responsible for the murder and a series of clashes and instabilities ensued, which forced Karamanlis to resign and go into self-exile. Papandreou, then, became prime minister, managing to obtain a parliamentary majority in 1964. Clashes with the new king Constantine II in July 1965 (the so-called Ιουλιανά) led to his resignation and to political

instability again, resolved with the Colonels' coup in 1967. Their regime lasted for seven years, finally starting a new process of democratisation only in 1974.

The Greek 1960s were a moment of rapid transformations, of economic and social progress, and of a fluid political landscape marked by the tensions that culminated in the military dictatorship of 1967-1974. In his history of the Greek 20th century, Antonis Liakos (2019) anticipates the beginnings of a new phase in 1953, when Greek economy and society changed after the creation of the new drachma, speaking of a "flowering of the Greek economy that would last twenty years until 1972 or 1973" (Liakos 2019, 354. My translation). The Greek long 1960s, therefore, constituted a transitional period from the destruction of the wars of the 1940s to a more stable country, projected towards western Europe after the restoration of democracy in 1974. Despite the political instability, the 'long 1960s' were characterised by deep transformations which brought about an unprecedented economic growth: major infrastructural projects, foreign investments, and new services radically changed people's lives in Greece.[4] As a result, the fabric of Greek society changed as well, with the rise of the middle class and the significant expansion of Athens, which attracted a large number of domestic migrants.

Two aspects that had a considerable effect on the social and economic developments of the 1960s were the transformation of Greece into a favourite destination for mass tourism and the phenomenon of migration, both domestic and international. Largely encouraged by the postwar governments and the military dictatorship, tourism in Greece grew exponentially, reaching 3 million visitors in 1973 and stimulating large investments in the infrastructure and in the private business sectors. Greece as a destination was largely popularised through cinema already at the end of the 1950s with the production

[4] See Liakos and Doumanis (2023, 229-65).

of *The Boy and the Dolphin* (1957), starring Italian famous actress Sophia Loren, and later of *Never on Sunday* (1961), directed by Jules Dassin with Greek star Melina Mercouri, and Michael Cacoyannis's *Zorba the Greek* (1964) with American star Anthony Quinn. As a result, Greece opened up to the world and to international economic competition.[5] Alongside tourism, Greece witnessed in those years an unprecedented wave of emigration, triggered by the Greek Civil War and the need for better living conditions. As Liakos and Doumanis (2023, 293-301) point out, Greeks were mostly economic migrants, with a first postwar wave moving in the 1950s towards Australia, Canada, and the United States, and a second wave in the 1960s oriented mostly towards northern Europe, especially West Germany and Belgium. This phenomenon had also an impact on the social fabric, resulting in split families and in a new generation of hyphenated Greeks and their complex relationship to their country of origin, as I explore in more detail in chapter 4 of this thesis.

From the historical overview I offered here, it emerges that the social and cultural developments of 1960s Greece are deeply rooted in the immediate postwar years of the 1950s and that the military dictatorship of 1967-74 represented only a partial disruption, exacerbating and precipitating the social movements of the 1960s. It is for these reasons that the perspective of the 'long' 1960s results in a productive understanding and reading of the cultural developments of this decade. As Kostis Kornetis (2013) argued in his study of the social movements before and under the Colonels, the years that preceded the Junta are indeed inextricably linked to the political and social developments of the dictatorship years:

[5] For an insight in the imbrication of cinema and touristic development in Greece, see Nikolakakis (2017), Papadimitriou (2022), and Plantzos (2022).

> This period must be understood not only in terms of ruptures, but also of continuities, and as such it must be studied in order to achieve a true understanding of the evolution of social actors. Rather than fostering a total segregation from the world and international developments – as is often argued – the Junta unwittingly provided the complex and intricate terrain for the unfolding of the Greek "long 1960s." (Kornetis 2013, 4)

The experience of the Junta, therefore, expands the temporal boundaries of the 1960s up to the mid-1970s. Indeed, the Colonels' years incorporated the social struggles, especially the students' resistance movements that had dominated the political landscape in the rest of the continent throughout the decade. Dimitris Papanikolaou (2007, 101-56) has also explored the applicability of the 'long 1960s' in his discussion of 'sixties culture.' This perspective allowed Papanikolaou to contextualise Dionysis Savvopoulos's songwriting, which reflected the rupture of the 1967 coup in the representation of a shifting "performing self," continuing in the early 1970s the discourse of a fragmented self that characterised the 1960s as a whole.

In my study of the Greek 1960s, I also suggest pushing the boundaries of this period in both directions, so as to include not only the dictatorship years, but also the second half of the 1950s. This is a perspective similar to that adopted by Anastasia Natsina et al. (2015) in their overview of Greek prose writing in the 1960s; according to them, the inventive and innovative spirit of Greek prose writers, who under the dictatorship sought for new ways to avoid censorship and criticise the regime, actually takes shape already towards the end of the 1950s. The second half of the 1950s is indeed a significant moment in the Greek literary and, in general, cultural landscape, with the diffuse resurfacing of modernist aesthetics, such as the aforementioned monologues of Yannis Ritsos's *Τέταρτη διάσταση* and Odysseas Elytis's *Άξιον εστί*, excerpts of which started to be published in 1958.

Returning to Tziovas's claim in the opening, modernism seemed to continue beyond the disruption of the wars in the 1940s, flourishing throughout the 1960s, at a moment when cultural critics in the West started arguing about the emergence of a postmodern aesthetics. As I will explain later in my thesis, I suggest addressing the tension between modernism and postmodernism in the Greek 1960s with the 'middle way' offered by the concept of *meta*modernism, which, rather than solving the tension between the two, conceptualises it and aestheticises it.

0.2 MODERNISM – POSTMODERNISM – METAMODERNISM

Discussing modernism, its nature, and its features is not easily done and the bibliography on this matter is varied and abundant, to say the least. In fact, an agreed-upon definition of modernism does not seem to exist at all; as Kolocotroni, Goldman, and Taxidou (1998, xvii) explain, "[m]odernism is not a movement. It is a term that masks conflict and upheaval and any number of contradictory positions." What scholars seem to agree on, however, is that modernism is an umbrella term, indicating the great variety of forms in which artists, and cultural producers in general, reacted to the changes at the turn of the 20th century and to the cultural shocks of the Great War of 1914-18. Generally analysed from a Euro-American perspective, the phenomenon of modernism has been going through a transformation in itself in recent years, decolonising the scope of Modernist Studies to encompass the wider number of modernist manifestations, with scholars then referring to 'modernism*s*' in the plural form (Brooker et al. 2010), or to 'global modernisms' (Wollaeger and Eatough 2012), or even to 'planetary modernisms' (Friedman 2015) which expands the concept not just in geographical, but also in temporal terms, "open[ing] up the possibility of thinking about nonhuman modernities

or the interconnections of the human and nonhuman in rethinking modernity and modernism" (Friedman 2015, 8).

While acknowledging and contributing to the global turn of Modernist Studies, I employ the term 'modernism' to refer to the phenomenon that shocked and reorganised culture, especially in Europe, in the first half of the 20th century, and with which Greek intellectuals strove to enter in dialogue and assimilate in their own cultural practices. European modernism is generally understood as originating towards the end of the nineteenth century, reaching its heyday between 1910 and 1930 (Bradbury and McFarlane 1991; Gąsiorek 2015), with the year 1913 regarded as "the year of French modernism" (Rentzou and Benhaïm 2020), and the year 1922 often regarded as the *annus mirabilis* of English modernism, when three major works were published, namely T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room* (Childs 2017).

Modernism is identified as an era of clear division with the past and took numerous stylistic forms; in fact, "[t]he term has been used to cover a wide variety of movements subversive of the realist or the romantic impulse and disposed towards abstraction (Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism, Futurism, Symbolism, Imagism, Vorticism, Dadaism, Surrealism)" (Bradbury and McFarlane 1991, 23).[6] The subversive element of modernism developed in the desire of writers and artists to shock and to break any expected continuity with the past, especially in terms of literary forms, such as the introduction of free verse in poetry and the disruption of the orderly temporal succession of events in novels. History was problematised as the artist was not perceived as a free agent, but as an individual strained by the critical historical conditions.

[6] For detailed definitions of all the different manifestations of modernism, see Kolocotroni and Taxidou (2018).

Modernists were interested in experimenting and revolutionising the arts, engaging in a process of rethinking and reinvention. Influenced by Freud's exploration of the human mind, modernists put the emphasis on the inner consciousness of the individual and on the effects of modernity on the psychological world of people. Explored in more detail in chapter 3 of this thesis, myth and myth-making are another important element of modernism, expression not only of "the 'primitive' fantasies of contemporary human beings, but also the child-like nature of the beginnings of the race" (Butler 2010, 45). Myth is used to reset the relationship of arts and history: mythical stories underlie a nation's history and history itself becomes a form of myth-making.

In Greece, modernist ideas started to spread with some delay compared to the rest of Europe, assuming traits which are very specific to the country. In terms of periodisation, Tziovas (1997) argues that Greek modernism began in 1929, when Yorgos Theotokas published his seminal essay *Ελεύθερο πνεύμα* (Free Spirit), considered to be a manifesto of his generation and a call to overcome Greek cultural belatedness, establishing an equal conversation with European culture. Greek modernism is then often associated to the so-called 'Generation of the 1930s,' described by Mario Vitti as follows:

> [Μ]ια ομάδα λογοτεχνών που παρουσιάζονται νέοι, με πρωτοποριακές φιλοδοξίες, με διάθεση να έρθουν σε ρήξη με το παρελθόν ή τουλάχιστο να διαφοροποιηθούν από αυτό και από την κατεστημένη τάξη· που αποβλέπουν σε θέματα και μορφές νέες και ομοιογενείς, στηριγμένες σε εμπειρίες κοινές βιωμένες με κάποια συγγένεια. (Vitti 1979, 48)

Also pushed by the intention to break from and renew past traditions, the Generation of the 1930s is mainly associated to the city of Athens and the circle of intellectuals collaborating in the periodical *Τα νέα γράμματα* (New Letters, 1935-40) and who expressed their modernism best in poetic free verse. It is not a coincidence that the *annus*

mirabilis of Greek modernism is identified as 1935, with the publication of two free-verse collections of poems, George Seferis's *Μυθιστόρημα* (Mythistorima) and Andreas Embirikos's surrealist poems of *Υψικάμινος* (Blast Furnace). Two features of Greek modernism are central in the present study: on the one hand, intellectuals had to tackle the imposing cultural inheritance of the classics and of classical mythology. Seferis, for example, a close reader and translator of T.S. Eliot, made large use of the mythical method, drawing from antiquity without any trace of worship or rhetoric. Mythology became a contested site, a heavy weight that was hindering Greek culture to move at the same speed as the rest of Europe. On the other hand, the harsh defeat in Asia Minor in 1922 and the abrupt end of the irredentist project of the Μεγάλη Ιδέα initiated a wider debate on national identity and on the redefinition of ελληνικότητα, Greekness. As I explore in more detail in chapter 4, Seferis advocated for a rediscovery of a more authentic and immediate Greek character in cultural production. In Seferis's view, this approach would have contributed to the wider cultural renovation in Europe, preventing Greek letters from blindly absorbing foreign models.

The association of Greek literary modernism with the Generation of the 1930s has been later contested by Tziovas (2011), who suggests the term 'Generation of the 1930s' "to be understood more like a cultural formation and ideology, rather than as an instrument of literary or historical periodisation" (Tziovas 2011, 53. My translation). In fact, Greek modernism cannot and should not be limited to the Athenian circles. Developing at the same time as the Generation of the 1930s, a group of intellectuals based in Thessaloniki and contributing to the periodical *Μακεδονικές ημέρες* (Macedonian Days) set to translate and introduce in the country the major modernist authors of the West. This group, identified as the 'School of Thessaloniki,' contributed to the renovation of the

Greek novel and included writers such as Nikos G. Pentzikis and Stelios Xefloudas, who experimented with the interior monologue and the exploration of human subjectivity.[7] [8]

Greek modernism in all its different manifestations remained an influential cultural referent well beyond the 1930s, continuing to develop and to be relevant also in the postwar years, as already discussed at the onset of this introduction. What remains to be addressed and discussed is the position of Greece *vis-à-vis* the question of postmodernism, which emerged in the Anglo-Saxon academic circles in the early 1970s. Just like modernism, also the concept of postmodernism and of a 'postmodern condition' are not easy to pinpoint and describe. What is clear is that the technological advancements around the Second World War and the development of mass media determined a change in the modernist aesthetic and culture. Interestingly, it is a Greek-American scholar, William Spanos, one of the first intellectuals to initiate a large debate on postmodernism in literature with the creation of the journal *boundary 2*, aptly subtitled 'Journal of Postmodern Literature and Culture,' in 1972. Since then, the concept has transformed numerous times and was conceptualised in many different ways, from a strictly literary perspective to a broader cultural reading of the late 20th century. One of the key texts for the understanding of this concept is Fredric Jameson's *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991 [1984]), which marked the definitive move from a strict aesthetic issue to a "cultural signal of a new stage in the history of the regnant mode of production" (Anderson 1998, 55). In fact, generally speaking, postmodernism and postmodernist art was impacted by the late capitalist economical structures and the technological advancements of the postwar years, such as the spread of television. Rooted

[7] On the School of Thessaloniki, see Tsakonas (1990) and Kazantzis (1991).

[8] For the sake of my discussion of metamodernism in the Greek 1960s, I keep a more 'traditional' focus on modernism, while acknowledging the more inclusive debates around modernism, which lead us to reconsider the beginnings of Greek modernism, especially taking into account cases like Cavafy's.

in the historical turmoil of the 1960s, postmodernist art is commodified, responding to market rules and to the logic of reproduction. As a result, postmodernist features include the decentring of the subject, a pastiche of different traditions, and a popularisation of art.

The 1960s hold a complicated place in the discussion about postmodernism. They are seen as a decade of transition from the late modernism of the 1930s-1940s to the emergence of a fully-fledged postmodernism in the 1970s-1980s. The case of Greece in the postmodernist discourse is particularly interesting. Already William Spanos identified Greece as a striking example of the postmodern sensibility by dedicating, in 1973, a special issue of *boundary 2* to the contemporary Greek literature, presenting among others works by George Seferis, Stratis Tsirkas, C.P. Cavafy, Odysseas Elitis, and Yannis Ritsos, all authors traditionally associated to the modernist turn of the 1930s. It is not surprising, then, that Spanos's presentation of a postmodernist Greece has now been challenged. Dimitris Papanikolaou (2005), in fact, links Spanos's gesture to a cryptocolonial attitude, "capitaliz[ing] on the relative obscurity and remoteness of Greek writing, its exoticism, as it were, for American intellectuals, which it turned into pure difference" (Papanikolaou 2005, 136). While elements of a postmodern sensibility can surely be traced in Greek texts, postmodernism is generally seen as alien to Greece[9] or, when tackled, is used to discuss post-dictatorship literature, i.e., after 1974.[10]

Despite the openness in the definition of modernism and postmodernism, the case of the 1960s, and especially of the Greek 1960s, challenges them both and resists specific readings from one or the other perspective. Focusing on Greece, which is at the centre of the present study, modernism is insufficient to discuss the cultural landscape of the long 1960s. If, on the one hand, it becomes an unavoidable point of reference for the new

[9] See Jusdanis (1987) and Lambropoulos (1988).

[10] See Natsina (2012).

generation of intellectuals emerging during and after the 1940s, modernism appears shifted, having to account for the radical transformations occurring in postwar Greece. At the same time, also the postmodernist approach risks being partial. It is true that, during the 1960s, popular culture played a more decisive role in redefining the boundaries between high and low art and the taxonomies of national culture(s) – the great success of Mikis Theodorakis's μελοποιημένη ποίηση is a case in point. However, the cultural rupture with previous traditions was to a wide extent forestalled or, anyway, not deemed necessary, as modernism was still regarded as the obvious model to adopt *and* adapt for the Greek 1960s – it is no coincidence that Theodorakis starts by adapting, in the 1960s, Ritsos, Seferis, and Elytis. The Greek 1960s were in fact characterised by political and intellectual tensions, including modernism vs. the younger avant-garde/postmodernism. These tensions were constitutive of what I propose here as the metamodernist structure of feeling and explain further in chapter 1. I offer metamodernism as a hermeneutical tool to re-read the Greek 1960s as a moment in which these tensions are thematised without the need to overcome them. Metamodernism, in other words, transcends the dichotomy modernism/postmodernism, being at the same time both and neither.

0.3 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis explores in four chapters the concept of metamodernism and its affordances in the Greek context through three case studies, which present and elucidate specific aspects of the Greek long 1960s: Yannis Ritsos's *Τέταρτη διάσταση* (Fourth Dimension, 1956-75), Stelios Xefloudas's *Οδυσσέας* (Odysseus, 1965-74), and Margarita Liberaki's *Phaedra* (1960) and *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι ή Τηλέγονος* (The Secret Bed, or Telegonus, 1967-72). While my theorisation of metamodernism aims to have a larger cultural scope, the

present study focuses on the literary manifestation of metamodernism in Greece, drawing from different genres, namely a collection of poetry (Ritsos), a novel (Xefloudas), a screenplay for the cinema and a play (Liberaki). As the title of the works suggest, the present analysis follows the thread of myth and the modalities in which the three authors manipulated the classical material to adapt it to their poetic needs. While issues of classical reception are addressed throughout the thesis, mythology is used in this thesis rather as a catalyst for discussing broader issues regarding metamodernism and the cultural landscape of the Greek 1960s.

Chapter 1 explores the case of the Greek 1960s, moving from the interesting episode of Nanos Valaoritis attempting to have George Seferis contributing to his new avant-garde journal *Πάλι* (Again) to an analysis of the ongoing relevance of modernism and the modernists in the cultural production of the time. This chapter draws the picture of a peculiar intellectual moment in Greece, characterised by a productive interaction between the established modernist generation and the younger emerging authors, anxious to reach out to the older models in order to resolve the cultural stagnation they perceived in postwar Greece. In fact, the Greek long 1960s are also discussed in this chapter as a critical moment of social and cultural transformations, that not only resulted in a diffused sense of moral and cultural crisis, but also in what I identify as the 'condition of the boundary,' a pervasive affect or, in other words, an unconscious perception of losing fixed points of reference and of being pushed in an ontological and intellectual in-between zone. All these elements come together in the concept of *metamodernism*, adopted from current debates in English Studies, and retroactively adapted for the context of the Greek 1960s. Following van den Akker and Vermeulen (2010; 2017), metamodernism is intended as a structure of feeling dominating the Greek long 1960s, a concept that brings together in a common framework both the 'culmination of Greek

modernism' and the perceived instability and tensions that pushed intellectuals to shake the modernist tradition in order to make sense of the rapidly changing present.

Linked by their engagement with classical mythology, the chapters that follow expand on specific features of Greek metamodernism through the reading of three case studies. Chapter 2 revolves around Yannis Ritsos's famous collection of dramatic monologues, *Τέταρτη διάσταση*, whose first edition was published in 1972 but conceived and written between 1956 and 1972. The history of the collection and the content of the long poems exemplify how the aforementioned condition of the boundary had an impact in the cultural production of the time. At the same time, the metamodernist reading of Ritsos's poems allows for a recontextualisation of what is considered to be his poetic masterpiece, throwing into relief not just the strong modernist influences but also the high sensibility to the contemporary moment of composition. In the first part, I discuss in detail the development of the collection itself, drawing from archival research, arguing that this history is marked by three phases, connected to an internalisation of the boundary-affect and to the encounter with the modernist models of C.P. Cavafy and Vladimir Mayakovsky. In the second part, I move to the content of the poems, delineating the modalities in which Ritsos encompasses the condition of the boundary, framing the mythical monologues within a Bergsonian temporality.

The following case study in chapter 3 explores Stelios Xefloudas's overlooked novel *Οδυσσέας*, written between 1965-7 and published in 1974. Engaged in an open dialogue with James Joyce's modernist novel of the same title, *Ulysses*, this novel exemplifies the shift that the mythical method underwent in Greece after the traumas of the 1940s wars and the mounting tensions of the Cold War. I argue that Xefloudas's mythical method exposes the chaos and the violence of the contemporary world, instead of providing an ordering structure. Xefloudas's critique of the present of the 1960s is further highlighted

when read through Walter Benjamin's historiosophy, which empties the classical tradition of all its values, and reveals the cyclicality of history and the unescapable cycle of violence hidden in the technological advancements of the time. Xefloudas's novel, in other words, encapsulates the uncertainties and tensions of the 1960s, dislocating and expanding the scope of his novel from Greece to the broader context of the Cold War nuclear threat on a global scale.

The international projection of Greek metamodernism is explored in the final chapter of the thesis, revolving around Margarita Liberaki's screenplay for Jules Dassin's film *Phaedra* (1962) and her later mythical play *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι ή Τηλέγονος*, originally written in French in 1967-8 and later translated into Greek in 1971-2. Belonging to the younger generation of intellectuals who were educated abroad during the 1940s, Liberaki recurs to the mythical dimension to give voice to the experience of the diasporic Greek at a time of mass migration and mass tourism. I argue that these works are crucial in understanding Liberaki's reconfiguration of Greekness, which reveals a more performative aspect rather than a Seferian spontaneity, and problematises the desire for *nostos*. From the perspective of a diasporic female subjectivity, *nostos* appears to be denied or simply rejected, transferring the desire of homecoming from the diaspora to Greece itself. Lastly, I suggest that Liberaki takes advantage of the gaps in the classical sources to reconfigure mythology itself and make it relevant for the transitional moment that the Greek 1960s represented.

Situated at the intersection of Modernist, Modern Greek, and Classical Reception Studies, the present thesis invites a reconsideration of the Greek long 1960s as a cultural moment where different instances converged, from the establishment of the modernists to the emergence of a new generation of artists, from claiming a global stance for Greece to domestic restructuring of social ties. This is what I propose as metamodernism: a

heuristic space that answers to the apparently contradicting and tense landscape of the Greek 1960s.

CHAPTER 1

ΜΙΑ ΣΥΛΛΟΓΙΚΗ ΕΥΘΥΝΗ

THE GREEK 1960S AS A CASE OF METAMODERNISM

There is no doubt that the 1960s represented a turning point for Greece – politically, economically, socially, and culturally. Recovering from the open wounds of the Greek Civil War (1946-1949), Greece underwent a series of radical changes that from a country in rubbles transformed it, after the return to democracy in 1974, into a country projected towards Western Europe. If on the political level, the 1950s and especially the 1960s were characterised by tensions and high instability, the Greek economy (and society, with it) experienced a transformative growth, that had the country open up to the world. The fluidity and transformations of the time represented a challenge for Greek intellectuals, who addressed their concerns and questions in their work. Those concerns mainly regarded the impact of social developments on the population and the new place of humanity at such a critical moment. This chapter explores this fascinating cultural moment, putting it, first, in relation to the wider socio-historical context and drawing, later, its connections to modernism. I will finally suggest the theory of metamodernism as an interpretative space that elicits the peculiar interaction of modernism with contemporary issues of the Greek 1960s.

As Tziovas (1997) pointed out, the 1960s mirrored in many ways the 1930s, including the cultural landscape. So much so that, as already mentioned in the introduction, he finally argues that the 1960s represented the culmination of Greek modernism, which had begun indeed with the so-called 'Generation of the 1930s.' The indicators that modernism was still a relevant cultural language in postwar Greece are

many: on the one hand, members of the Generation of the 1930s became fundamental referents in the cultural landscape of the 1960s and produced some of their most accomplished works in those years; on the other hand, modernist tropes and trends (such as the preoccupation with time, the use of interior monologue, and the exploration of Greekness) are clearly traceable in the cultural production of also younger generations of intellectuals, writers, and artists who were active in the 1960s.

Returning to these observations, however, one can soon realise that the parallelism with the modernist 1930s is surely there, but it can also be misleading. 1960s Greece is simply not 1930s Greece, because, between these two moments, the traumatic events of the 1940s, i.e., the German Occupation during the Second World War and the Civil War, unfolded and left the country in urgent need of reconstruction, not just in a material sense, but also in a cultural sense. In fact, the ideological fracture that the Civil War caused remained substantial and impacted the political, as well as the intellectual life of the nation. The economic development and the technological advancements brought about a different type of ontological questioning, at a moment when Greece was also finding its position in the Cold War global context. Finally, while the the older Generation of the 1930s were producing their mature works, their interaction with the younger generation of intellectuals is peculiar of a specific and fast evolving cultural atmosphere of the 1960s, creating a fertile ground for experimentations within modernism itself.

How to make sense of this 'last wave of modernism' in the 1960s and of the new, changed, cultural context in which it flourishes? To address this question, I will first review three major questions that framed intellectual debate in the Greek 1960s. First, the presence of (and the need to work with but also after) the modernist Generation of the 1930s; second, the pervasive feeling of a crisis, a dead-end, or a "lost centre," as the famous 1961 essay by Zissimos Lorentzatos put it; third, the related analytics of (the

country as) a boundary. All three questions, as I will show, point to a certain revisiting of modernism, but in specific local terms, and in ways that, as I will explain, allow me to speak, not of postmodernism, but of a very peculiar cultural environment that, I argue, should be considered a case of *meta*-modernism, a concept that I adopt and adapt from current debates in English Studies about the 2000s post-postmodern moment.

In the last part of this chapter, I will explore the concept of metamodernism and assess its affordances in the Greek 1960s. Metamodernism, as an analytical term, allows me to discuss diverse aspects of this period in Greece together, especially by bringing together the three main meanings of the prefix 'meta-': after, with, and between. The purpose of this chapter is first to offer a context for Greek intellectual debates of the 1960s, and then to provide a useful methodology and explain why metamodernism can efficiently unlock our discussion of literature and culture during the Greek long 1960s.

1.1 The Shadow of the Elders: The Case of *Παλι*

When in the early 1960s Nanos Valaoritis brought together a group of young intellectuals with the intention to launch a new journal, he also started to seek validation from established intellectuals, inviting them to participate in his venture to shake the stagnation that was dominating the cultural scenes in Greece at the time. The older generation, often associated to the Generation of the 1930s and to the School of Thessaloniki, at that point was highly regarded and represented a model to follow for the cultural reconstruction the new intellectuals sought. This peculiar intergenerational interaction characterised the Greek 1960s and contributed, on the one hand, to the 'mythologisation' of the modernists – as Tziovas (2011) aptly put it – and, on the other hand, to the stimulating debates and questioning that permitted the reconfiguration of

modernist techniques and texts during the transformative years of the 1960s. A case in point is the intellectual activity of Nanos Valaoritis and his initiative in reaching out to George Seferis for the creation of the avant-gardist journal *Πάλι* in 1962-3.

George Seferis is representative of the 'old guard,' the pivot around which the Greek modernist movement seems to have developed during the 1930s. At that time, Seferis was highly regarded in Greece, and he was also widely known and appreciated abroad, also thanks to Nanos Valaoritis's translations of his work into English. The Nobel Prize for literature he won in 1963 crowned him internationally and, with him, provided a global recognition to the achievements of his generation and of Modern Greek letters in general. On the other hand, Nanos Valaoritis, twenty years younger than Seferis, represents the younger generation of intellectuals who emerged during the 1940s and 1950s, at a critical time for their country that was coming to terms with the tragic effects of the Second World War and of the following Civil War.

In February 1962, George Seferis was in London, where he had been living for five years as Greek ambassador to the UK. He was weary of his duties and pleaded with the Foreign Secretary Evangelos Averoff to relieve him of his diplomatic position, so as to be able to return to Athens (Beaton 2003, 375). In the meantime, Nanos Valaoritis, enriched by his experiences in Paris, was resolute to create a new journal in Athens that would gather the innovative and avant-gardist tendencies, emerging in those years in Greece. This journal, *Πάλι*, would eventually see the light in January 1963 thanks to the collective effort of a group of emerging artists[11] and of 'older' poets and artists, such as Odysseas

[11] As Valaoritis recalls in the preface to the reprint of *Πάλι* in 1975: "Το φθινόπωρο [...] του 1962 γνώρισα μιαν ομάδα νέων ποιητών, που είχαν πολύ ζωντάνια. Ήταν τότε ο Δημήτρης Πουλικάκος, ο Πάνος Κουτρουμπούσης, ο Τάσος Δενεγέγρης [*sic*] η Εύα Μυλωνά και ο Νίκος Στάγκος, . . Τη χρονιά αυτή, η Μαντώ Αραβαντινού είχε βγάλει πρόσφατα τη Γραφή Α', και ο Κώστας Ταχτσής είχε ξαναγυρίσει από ταξίδι στην Αμερική. . . Αυτά όλα ενεργήσανε σα καταλυτικά σημάδια και μου δώσανε θάρρος. ." (Valaoritis 1975)

Elytis and the surrealists Andreas Embirikos, Nikos Engonopoulos, and Nicolas Calas. *Πάλι* would run for six issues until the end of 1966, a few months before the Colonel's coup.

Valaoritis's correspondence is particularly illuminating on his overt intention to overcome the standstill he perceived Greek cultural life was at.[12] This negative view of Greek culture was diffused even among members of Seferis's generation; for instance, George Katsimbalis, co-founder of *Τα νέα γράμματα*, the journal that was at the centre of the modernist cultural innovation in Athens during the 1930s, hearing of Valaoritis's plan to create a new periodical, wrote to him on 12 February 1962:

> Καιρός είναι ν' αναταραχτούνε λίγο τα βαλτωμένα νερά και να εκδηλωθούνε επί τέλους και οι νεώτεροι. Να μας πούνε τι θέλουν και σε τι πιστεύουν, κι' όχι μόνο να μας αραδιάζουν στίχους με το στρέμμα... Αν είχα αρκετά χρήματα θα «πατρονάριζα» όχι ένα αλλά δέκα περιοδικά νέων για ν' αναζωογονηθεί η πνευματική ζωή που είναι σήμερα ψόφια και αποκαρδιωτική. (Katsimbalis, in Valaoritis and Seferis 2004, 214)

Nanos Valaoritis was indeed concerned about the state of postwar Greek culture. Some days later, on 17 February, Valaoritis explained to Seferis the modality whereby he intended to "revitalise Greece's stagnant and disheartening cultural life:" his plan was to include "παρουσιάσεις κειμένων που μ' ενδιαφέρουν και που μ' ενδιέφεραν τα τελευταία χρόνια – [...] ανακαλύψεις παλαιοτέρων – αποσπάσματα βιβλίων, και αναδημοσιέψεις ακόμη ωρισμένων [*sic*] σημαντικών πραγμάτων" (Valaoritis and Seferis 2004, 162). Valaoritis was therefore interested in both promoting new works and forms of writing that he found interesting in the Greek panorama and in offering again to the public

[12] "Βλέπεις που μας φέρνουν τα πράμματα – η πνευματική ζωή και η λογοτεχνία – στο αδιέξοδο" (Valaoritis to Seferis in a letter of 17.02.1962, in Valaoritis and Seferis 2004, 162). Valaoritis later insists that "[σ]ημέρα αντιμετωπίζουμε όχι μια ξεθυμασμένη παράδοση όπως [στη δεκαετία του 1930], αλλά ένα σωστό χάος και μια γενική διάλυση πνευμάτων και αξιών, σταθμών και μέτρων" (letter of 28.02.1962, in Valaoritis and Seferis 2004, 165).

important texts from the previous decades. In the same letter, Valaoritis anticipated that he would ask Seferis for some of his works to be published in the new journal.

This co-presence of two very productive generations of intellectuals is a particular characteristic of the Greek 1960s; instead of reacting against the 'old' models of the 1930s, postwar intellectuals actually looked up to them, assimilated them and adapted them to face the challenges of the country's political and moral reconstruction after the wars. Seferis's answer to Valaoritis's call, however, is rather cold:

> Δεν ξέρω τι να σου πω πάνω στις κουβέντες σου για ένα περιοδικό· η νεοελληνική πιάτσα (η λογοτεχνική) μου ξεφεύγει. Εξάλλου νομίζω πως ένα περιοδικό σήμερα είναι δουλειά των νεώτερων. Αυτών ο στοχασμός και η κρίση πρέπει να ακουστούν. (Valaoritis and Seferis 2004, 164)

At that stage of his life and career, Seferis believed that it was not time for him to take an active role in the 'revitalisation' of Greek letters anymore: his diplomatic career had led him to live abroad for many years, thus losing the tight contact with the Greek literary circles. He felt too old and hoped for younger intellectuals such as Valaoritis to take on the responsibility of the literary and cultural renovation in Greece.

Nanos Valaoritis did not give up on his intent to include at least Seferis's works in his journal, reminding him in his following letter, dated 28 February 1962, that even *Τα νέα γράμματα* in the 1930s "δεν βγήκαν από τόσο «νέους»" and that "[χ]ρειάστηκε μια σχετική προεργασία μερικών ανθρώπων" (Valaoritis and Seferis 2004, 165). He added that the younger generation of intellectuals in the 1960s did not have the initiative nor the means to produce a "περιοδικό αξιοπρεπές," wondering in conclusion: "[Μ]ήπως έχουμε, στο σύνολό μας, όσοι έχουμε τη μόρφωση και το επίπεδο και τη δυνατότητα, *μια συλλογική ευθύνη*;" (emphasis added).

Valaoritis's reference to the 1930s' journal *Τα νέα γράμματα* is indicative of the perceived similarities between the cultural systems of two decades in discussion, strengthening Tziovas's (1997, 30-1) argument. One could thus argue that the modernist language of the 1930s survived the wars and resurfaced in the 1960s as the language of crisis and resistance. Again, the role of periodicals was significant in shaping new cultural consciousness in fractured Greece. Just like the collective effort of those intellectuals gathering around *Τα νέα γράμματα* had given new impulse to the Greek letters of the 1930s, in the same way, by envisioning his new journal, Nanos Valaoritis assumed such "συλλογική ευθύνη," this collective responsibility to give new life to Greek culture of his time.

That letter of Valaoritis's remained unanswered, but in March 1962, the prospect of the publication of the journal became more concrete and led him to reach out to Seferis again. In his letter of 15 March, he firstly gave him the good news and secondly asked him once again to provide him with publishable material:

> Θα μας ενδιέφερε πάρα πολύ να έχουμε την μετάφραση της «Αποκάλυψης». Άκουσα ότι είχες μεταφράσει τον «Αγαμέμνονα» του Αισχύλου. Επειδή ένας από τους σκοπούς μας θα είνε [*sic*] η ανανέωση του θεάτρου – θα δοκιμάσουμε να προκαλέσουμε νέες μεταφράσεις των τραγικών. (Valaoritis and Seferis 2004, 167)

Despite the fact that Seferis had never published a translation of Aeschylus' tragedy, Valaoritis's request highlights the extent of the cultural 'innovation' he wished for – Greece's cultural development should not necessarily be limited to poetry and prose writing, but needed to involve all cultural forms, theatre included. The other interesting element that arises from this passage is that works from antiquity (tragedies, in this case) were perceived as an important source of renovation.

Seferis denied his participation in Valaoritis's project one last time, explaining that his priority was his own work and that he was not interested in any collective action:

> Όταν μπορέσω, ελπίζω να μην αργήσω πάρα πολύ, θέλω πρώτα να συγκεντρωθώ και να μαζέψω τα σπασμένα μου· έπειτα θα ιδώ τι θα μπορέσω να δώσω ακόμα. Έως τότε δε θέλω να κάνω λογοτεχνικές εμφανίσεις, ούτε να συμμετάσχω σε περιοδικά ή άλλες εκδηλώσεις. (Valaoritis and Seferis 2004, 168)

In a final unsuccessful attempt to convince him, Valaoritis explained in his letter from 20 March 1962 that the journal would circulate in a new format, in paperback, a smaller and cheaper edition, distributed all over the country: "Αυτό σημαίνει ότι θ' αγγίζει κυριολεκτικά όλη την Ελλάδα" (Valaoritis and Seferis 2004, 169). According to him, having Seferis's work spread and be known throughout the country was a precious occasion, not to be missed, as "τα τελευταία αυτά χρόνια απουσίαζαν οι καλύτεροι από τα γράμματά μας και κυριαρχούσαν παντού οι μέτριοι και οι κακοί. Αυτό πρέπει να λείψει, μια για πάντα – και η νέα γενιά να τραφεί με ό,τι υπάρχει καλύτερο" (Valaoritis and Seferis 2004, 169). Valaoritis's closing remark underlines the important role assigned to Seferis's works in the process of relaunching Greek letters: they were needed at that critical time as a source from which new authors and intellectuals could draw inspiration.

This correspondence is really significant, as it brings to the surface a number of issues and features of the Greek 1960s. First, what emerges from Valaoritis's letters to Seferis is the anxiety of recognition by the older generation, which pushed him to reach out to Seferis to ask for his support and contribution in the new journal. Despite Seferis's reluctance, other members of his generation, such as Odysseas Elytis and Nikos Engonopoulos, responded to Valaoritis's call, becoming valuable contributors in *Πάλι*. Moreover, this correspondence shows Valaoritis's attention to all cultural forms, not just

literature. His interest in publishing theatre and translations testify to his intention to offer a varied and an international array of readings. In all this, the classics, mythology, ancient tragedies played a central role. Even though Valaoritis's aim was to shake the 'stagnant waters' of contemporary Greek culture, he believed that the classics still represented a source of inspiration. In fact, in this exchange with Seferis, Valaoritis is very vocal about the need for Greek culture to reinvent itself and overcome stagnancy. Valaoritis's frequent use of expressions such as "αδιέξοδο," "βαλτωμένα νερά," "ξεθυμασμένη παράδοση," "χάος," "διάλυση," but also "ανανέωση" and "αναζωογονούμαι," speaks of a cultural moment at a critical standstill, at the end of one creative moment but at the same time on the verge of a transformation. As Valaoritis explained in summer 1965, in the fourth issue of the journal:

> Σε μια τέτοια στιγμή, η εμφάνιση του «ΠΑΛΙ» έχει μια σχεδόν συμβολική σημασία. […] Είν' ένα άνοιγμα του φράχτη, για να κυλήσει ΠΑΛΙ το νερό στ' αυλάκι. Είναι μια προσπάθεια για να σπάσει η γκίνια, και να ειπωθούν επί τέλους τα λόγια-κλειδιά που θα διαλύσουν την κατάρα της στειρότητας, που βαραίνει το μαγεμένο βασίλειο [= την Ελλάδα]. (Valaoritis 1965, 78)

In other words, Nanos Valaoritis and his project for *Πάλι* hint already at the metamodernist structure of feeling of the Greek 1960s, in which modernism still held cultural capital, but was in need to be re-appropriated and re-configured in order to break, using Valaoritis's metaphor, the 'sterility spell' cast over Greece.

1.2 What Modernism after Modernism?

In order to discuss the modalities in which modernism was reconfigured in the 1960s, it is necessary to look at how modernism marked its presence in the cultural landscape of the time. In my discussion of Greek modernism, I stick to a more traditional

conceptualisation of this label, which associates it to the urban circles of the Generation of the 1930s in Athens and to the writers gravitating around the School of Thessaloniki. This allows me to create a direct conversation with previous scholarship on this topic, while also throwing in sharper relief the new alternative reading of the Greek 1960s that my research is suggesting. During this long and eventful decade for the country, modernism was realised in two 'forms' – in the ongoing output of works by the older modernists of the 1930s and in the resurfacing of modernist tropes and techniques in the new works of emerging cultural producers.

First, the presence of the Greek modernists in the cultural landscape of the 1960s is undeniably significant. As Tziovas (1997) already pointed out, between the 1950s and the 1960s, the members of the Generation of the 1930s were still particularly active and produced some of their finest works, which strengthened their position in the Greek literary field. It is in 1963 that George Seferis was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. Odysseas Elytis published his masterpiece *Άξιον εστί* in 1960, while Yannis Ritsos composed throughout the 1960s most of the monologues that would constitute his most famous collection *Τέταρτη διάσταση*, eventually published in 1972.[13] The surrealists Andreas Embirikos and Nikos Engonopoulos were also particularly active: in this period, Embirikos worked on the final draft of his impressively long novel *Ο Μέγας Ανατολικός* (originally written after the end of the German occupation), while Engonopoulos proved himself to be not only a poet, but also a surrealist painter with a growing audience in the 1960s. Similarly to what was happening in Athens, the novelists in Thessaloniki also produced some of their most modernist works during that period, especially N. G. Pentzikis with his *Το μυθιστόρημα της κυρίας Έρσης* (The Novel of Mrs Ersi, 1966) and,

[13] I explore in greater detail the history of Yannis Ritsos's *Τέταρτη διάσταση* and its connections to metamodernism in chapter 2.

as I will explore in detail in chapter 3, Stelios Xefloudas. A special case of modernism in the 1960s is Stratis Tsirkas's trilogy *Ακυβέρνητες πολιτείες*, appeared between 1960 and 1965. The three novels are set during the Second World War, whose events are told through the singular perspective of the characters. History infiltrates the different first-hand experiences: it becomes secondary, leaving space to the inner perceptions of the characters. The pivot is the leftist soldier Manos Simonidis and his first-person narrative, on which a great number of other narratives are grafted. Tsirkas creates a polyphony of voices and individual perspectives that interact with each other, reminiscent of the great British modernist works, so that, according to Roderick Beaton, Tsirkas's trilogy represents "Greece's most fully realized modernist novel" (Beaton 2011, 242) for its cosmopolitanism and the successful use of Eliot's mythical method, as well as of the stream of consciousness.

Tsirkas's novels introduce the 'second manifestation' of modernism during the 1960s, i.e., the resurfacing of modernist tropes and techniques in emerging authors. One reason could be traced, as Tziovas (1997) already identified, in the historical parallelisms between the 1930s and the 1960s, two decades bearing the traumas of Asia Minor and the Civil War, respectively:

> In these two periods, marked by two liberal political figures, Venizelos and George Papandreou, we also witness the results of an earlier and ongoing social mobility due to the exchange of populations and internal and external migration. In many respects, and particularly in cultural terms, these two decades were the most vibrant and they shared a number of similarities, For example, both of them began with periods of economic growth, and ended in dictatorships which might be perceived as the consequence of the cultural dynamism and ideological pluralism of their first parts. (Tziovas 1997, 29)

Considering these similarities, it should not surprise that also the intellectuals that emerged during or after the Second World War engaged with concerns akin to what the modernists had done before them. The ideological and political tensions inherited from the Civil War revealed the need to reconsider the meaning of national consciousness and of the role of the individual within the nation, similarly to what had happened after 1922 with the displacement of the Greek Orthodox populations that from Asia Minor were forced to migrate to Greece. Capitalised History, then, imposed itself on the individuals, forcing intellectuals and writers to focus on the interiority of human consciousness, on the inner developments of the mind, exploring the way it reacts and interacts with the social experiences of the individual.

This was the case of Tsirkas's novels, but it can also be traced in the interest towards (auto)biography, a common genre of the time. Numerous works produced during the 1960s engaged with life events, recording the tensions and the radical changes within society. In works like Kostas Tachtsis's collection of short stories *Τα ρέστα* (1972; some individually published throughout the 1960s), the narration of the personal past is instrumental for the author himself to dig deeper in his own psyche and reconstruct the passages that formed it:

> Αυτή η διφορούμενη θέση που πήραν από νωρίς οι γυναίκες στη ζωή μου [...] μ' έκανε από βρεφικής ακόμα ηλικίας [...] να στραφώ, για την ικανοποίηση της σεξουαλικής μου περιέργειας, κι αργότερα του σεξουαλικού μου ενστίκτου, προς τον Άντρα. ('Η πρώτη εικόνα,' Tachtsis 2021 [1972], 166)

The psychological insight is striking in this brief extract from the last short story of the collection, as if to suggest that each of the previous short stories recounts a passage that leads to the final self-awareness. It is almost like a personal diary, albeit fictionalised, in

which the author records the external conditions that influenced their personal development.

In terms of narrative form, this attention to the interior movements of the mind and its reaction to the external conditions is reflected in the widespread use of the the interior monologue, both in prose and in poetry, showing how this modernist technique was still relevant in the 1960s. This aspect is explored in depth in chapter 3, where I discuss Stelios Xefloudas's use of the interior monologue in his novel *Οδυσσέας* (1974), written from the personal perspective of an immortal Odysseus that travels the contemporary world. Also poets experimented with introspective monologues and dramatic monologues, such as Yannis Ritsos's *Τέταρτη διάσταση* (1972), but also Takis Sinopoulos, a poet of the younger generation, who published in 1961 *Το άσμα της Ιωάννας και του Κωνσταντίνου* (The Song of Ioanna and Constantine), a collection of monologues (some of which dramatic monologues in their form) and short dialogues between two lovers. Once again, the focus is on the emotional and inner dimension of the protagonists, whose consciousness filters the external events.

Another hallmark of modernism that returned in the 1960s was the issue of time, fragmented and constantly shifting between past and present. This appealed to artists, as it could express the disruptions that the 1940s brought to the country's history and development. At the same time, it was also used to express the author's concern about the country's and society's inability to change for the best, as if its history were bound to repeat itself. In this cycle where the beginning and the end lose relevance, writers privileged opening their narratives *in medias res*. See, for example, Kostas Tachtsis's famous novel *Το τρίτο στεφάνι* (The Third Wedding, 1962), which begins with a memorable outburst of the protagonist about her daughter's lack of character:

> Δε μπορώ, όχι, δε μπορώ να την υποφέρω πια!... Τι πληγή είν' αυτή που μούστειλες θε' μου; Τι αμαρτίες έχω κάνει για να με τιμωρείς τόσο σκληρά; Ως πότε θα την έχω στην καμπούρα μου; (Tachtsis 1978, 9)

No context is provided, so the reader is not told who is speaking and about whom. Tachtsis builds this picture little by little through what Virginia Woolf called 'tunnelling process' (Woolf 1978, 272), a narrative technique whereby the past moments of a character's life are excavated and brought to surface only when it is needed in the narration. In this process, memory plays a pivotal role, as it is the access to the past of the characters and thus allows the constant shift between different temporal planes.[14] Time and memory are typical concerns also in poetry, of which Yannis Ritsos's production of the 1960s constitutes again an example. Collections like *Μαρτυρίες* (Testimonies, 1963-66), *Επαναλήψεις* (Repetitions, 1972), and *Τέταρτη διάσταση* (1972), all refer to the memory of a past ('Testimonies') that seems to return ('Repetitions') and project the subject to a 'fourth dimension,' understood in the popular scientific discourse of the period as Time.

Among modernist discourses on time and memory, the use of myth maintained its centrality throughout the 1960s. Myth was re-appropriated both in order to strengthen national identity and to use it as a lens through which the present could be interpreted. Modernist writers, both Greek and European, used myth in a creative way, sometimes even subverting it or recreating it. Nikos G. Pentzikis's novel *Το μυθιστόρημα της κυρίας Έρσης* (1966), for instance, reconstructed an older novel of the 1920s under an ironic light, with a subtle but constant reference to James Joyce's *Ulysses* and its mythical

[14] Criticism on Kostas Tachtsis's oeuvre generally refrained from considering it modernist, highlighting the 'ethografic' element instead; however, in recent years, Tachtsis has been re-evaluated under a modernist light, see Robinson (1997).

structure. Myth, for Pentzikis, was necessary for the individual to survive the modern world (Voyiatzaki 2002, 116). In poetry, Takis Sinopoulos revisited ancient myths as allegories for the tormented present and recent past. In *Νεκρόδειπνος* (Last Supper, 1972), Sinopoulos applied T.S. Eliot's 'mythical method' to evoke the spirits of those fallen under German occupation and during the Civil War, like spirits of the dead in the Odyssey's Hades. Moreover, both Sinopoulos and Ritsos showed particular interest in minor characters of mythology, such as Elpenor, Chrysothemis, and Ismene, recalling C.P. Cavafy's poems on minor historical figures.

It is not only about ancient heroes, but also about creating new ones, especially after the traumas of the wars. Ritsos's dramatic monologue *Αποχαιρετισμός* (The Farewell, 1957) is dedicated to Grigoris Afxentiou, a hero of the Cypriot fight for liberation from the British rule. Portrayed in his final moments, locked inside a cave besieged by British soldiers, Afxentiou becomes a modern-day Antigone who fights for his ideals of freedom. Theodorakis's *Επιτάφιος* (Epitaph, 1960), based on the 1936 poem by Ritsos and arguably the most famous and discussed cultural text of 1960 (if not of the whole decade), hails a dead unionist worker as a national hero, using the form and verse of a demotic song (Papanikolaou 2007). And Michael Cacoyannis's film *Zorba the Greek* (1964), adaptation of Nikos Kazantzakis's novel *Βίος και πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* (1946) also produced a new hero of international reach (Basea 2011). Zorba represents the vitality of the spontaneous spirit, which does not break despite the difficulties of life. It is a modern myth of resilience, endurance, and simplicity. The persistence of modernist models, then, is not only traceable in literature, but also in other cultural spheres, such as music and cinema.

This idea of *persistence* is a central element in the present conceptualisation of what I will explain as Greek metamodernism: despite the difficult aftermath of the 1940s

tragedies, modernism continued to be relevant to read the present moment, offering formal and narrative instruments. As shown in this overview, the centrality of the subjective experience, the issue of time, as well as the creative use of the mythological tradition, they all persisted in the 1960s and, in a sense, they were recontextualised for the new challenges that the economic developments, the social transformations, and the political instability that characterised this decade presented. Challenges that contributed, however, to a diffused sense of moral and cultural crisis.

1.3 The Dead-End, the Lost Centre, the Boundary

Already the case of Nanos Valaoritis and of his journal *Πάλι* has shown that the cultural landscape of the Greek 1960s was dominated by a sense of defeat, stagnation, and loss of cultural references, further heightened during the repressive years of the dictatorship. This resulted in what I will call in this thesis the 'boundary condition,' an affect dominating the Greek long 1960s. In fact, the whole period was marked by transitions, a boundary in itself in the history of the country.

This feeling was felt by intellectuals and writers of the time, in whose works one can trace a widespread sense of crisis: crisis of traditional values, crisis of literary models, political crisis, etc. In a 1960 essay on the ideological trends of postwar Greek poetry, the critic Vyron Leondaris already observed a progressive detachment from ideologies that had marked previous poetry. He saw this as a symptom of a transitional period, "όπου σημειώνεται πραγματικά ένα είδος «αποξένωση» των μαζών απ' τις ιδέες, που οφείλεται όχι σε εσωτερική χρεοκοπία των ιδεών αυτών, αλλά σε εξωτερικούς όρους και δυσκολίες της μεταβατικής ιστορικής φάσης που διανύει η ανθρωπότητα" (Leondaris 1960, 18). He later defined the poetry emerging from the ideological crisis as the 'poetry of defeat,'

in an influential article published in 1963 in the journal *Επιθεώρηση τέχνης* (Art Review), which sparked an intellectual debate in the following issues. According to Leondaris, "[η] ποίηση της ήττας βασικά είναι μια βαθειά κρίση και ίσως το τέλος της αντιστασιακής ιδεολογίας και της αντιστασιακής ποίησης" (Leondaris 1963, 520), as the poet of the resistance had lost the belief in personal and collective heroism and had begun to challenge the social and cultural achievements.

Cultural points of reference, including ideological ones, began to shift. What were traditional 'centres' began to fade, and, when a centre is lost, the border areas come into focus. Zissimos Lorentzatos's essay titled *Το χαμένο κέντρο* (The Lost Centre), published in 1961 and perhaps the most influential single essay of the decade and further afield, addressed precisely that issue. As he challenged Seferis's modernist poetry, Lorentzatos argued that the Greek letters had lost their original creative nucleus in the attempt to adopt the European literary trends of the time, which he thought to be in a critical state already. As Lorentzatos noticed, "η κρίση της Ευρώπης σήμερα ή ολοκλήρου του πολιτισμού είναι, πρώτα από όλα, πνευματική ή μεταφυσική" (Lorentzatos 1994, 369), a crisis that inevitably reflected onto Greek culture. In the main, he accused western culture of being too projected towards the outside, importing foreign elements in order to enrich their works. Similarly, Greek culture did the same since the revolution of 1821, in the attempt to demonstrate to Europe their continuity with the ancient world. This, however, determined the loss of a metaphysical centre and, therefore, the crisis of poetry in the 20th century. Hence, Lorentzatos called the attention to what this loss could mean for Greek culture and offered his own way forward: "Εμείς αντίθετα δεν έχομε παρά μόνο λίγο δρόμο να κάνομε ή σχεδόν καθόλου, για να βρούμε, κληρονομιά μας απείραχτη, την ολοζώντανη πνευματική παράδοση της Ανατολής" (Lorentzatos 1994, 369). In other words, according to Lorentzatos, in order to recover the lost metaphysical centre, Greek

writers had to reconnect with the Eastern Orthodox roots of Greek culture, which would have then provided the authors with a pure Greek voice.

Similarly to Lorentzatos, the composer Mikis Theodorakis also used a similar argument to support his musical innovations, despite belonging to the other side of the political spectrum. Already popular for his 1960 musical adaptation of Ritsos's *Επιτάφιος*, Theodorakis set to create the so-called Νέα Ελληνική Λαϊκή Μουσική, proposed in a series of concerts in 1961 that were followed by a lecture on contemporary music.[15] Of particular interest in this context is the short lecture he gave in July 1961, in which Theodorakis contrasted the new type of 'popular' music he advocated for with the then dominant 'light song:'

> Το ελαφρό τραγούδι είναι συνώνυμο στον τόπο μας με τη μίμηση του ευρωπαϊκού ή του αμερικάνικου τραγουδιού. Ίδια μελωδική γραμμή, ίδιοι ρυθμοί, ίδιος τόνος. Μόνο τα λόγια είναι ελληνικά, όμως, λόγια σχεδόν χωρίς περιεχόμενο και ειπωμένα με τέτοια άρθρωση που νομίζεις ότι ακούς ξένη γλώσσα. Έτσι ολοκληρώνεται η εντύπωση ότι πρόκειται για ξένο τραγούδι. (Theodorakis 1986, 241)

Theodorakis reprised Lorentzatos in criticising the trend in Greek culture to imitate, almost blindly, the models coming from the West. The European (and American) influence, in their opinion, was sterile and unnecessary, convinced as they both were of the richness of the 'authentic' and 'genuine' Greek spirit. Hence, Theodorakis's promotion of λαϊκή μουσική and the bouzouki, a distinctive Greek instrument. As Papanikolaou (2009) discusses in terms of Greek exceptionalism, Theodorakis's argument in this lecture appears to be contradictive – while recurring to the 'authentic Greek popular song,' he used European classical music as the yardstick, concluding that the singers of

[15] For a more in-depth analysis of Mikis Theodorakis's and Manos Hatzidakis's radical contribution to the development of a new popular music in the postwar years, see Papanikolaou 2007.

popular music "μπορούν να σταθούν μπροστά στη σκηνή όμοια και καλύτερα με τους πιο φτασμένους εκτελεστές και τραγουδιστές της κλασσικής μουσικής και [...] τέλος είναι γνήσιοι Έλληνες με ρίζες βαθειές μέσα στη ζωντανή παράδοση του έθνους" (Theodorakis 1986, 239). The dialectical opposition between Greek authenticity and Western models can be fully appreciated within the metamodernist approach to the 1960s, in which these contradictions are constitutive of the period's structure of feeling and therefore do not need to be resolved. In fact, "one of the reasons why Theodorakis's argument was so persuasive during the 1960s is that it gave voice to a Greece anxiously seeking "new common denominators" both in culture and in politics and national ideology" (Papanikolaou 2009, 134-5. My translation).

The dimension of the cultural issue raised by Zissimos Lorentzatos and suggested by Mikis Theodorakis in 1961, i.e., the idea of a lost metaphysical centre and of the ongoing crisis of Greek culture, is revealed in all its depth in the pages of periodicals of the time. Particularly interesting is the case of *Εποχές* (Epochs), circulated monthly between May 1963 and April 1967, when the Colonels' coup interrupted its publication.[16] Directed by Angelos Terzakis, the journal pursued throughout the 1960s an educational activity to counteract the perceived backwardness and isolation of the Greek cultural sphere, with the open intention "να γίνει πλατύτερο το μορφωμένο κοινό της χώρας μας και να του προσφερθεί ένα μέσο πνευματικής επικοινωνίας" (*Epoches*, 1, May 1963, introductory note). In a sense, they responded to Zissimos Lorentzatos's appeal to recover a centre, pursuing however a different direction. While Lorentzatos suggested to look back at Greek Eastern Orthodoxy as a renovating source for Greek culture, the team behind *Εποχές* had more secular solutions. In fact, *Εποχές* aimed to educate the Greek audience

[16] For an in-depth study of the journal *Εποχές*, its content and intellectual directions, see Skoura 2006.

about the cultural debates in the western world – as Greece was perceived to be left at the global margins, the editors strived to bridge this gap and place Greece in conversation with foreign intellectuals, among which there were Ernst Bloch, Benedetto Croce, Julian Huxley, and Jean Paul Sartre. From this perspective, starting in January 1965, they began to present the major thinkers of the 19th and of the 20th century in a series titled "Η σύγχρονη σκέψη," thinkers who "επηρέασαν με τρόπο αποφασιστικό τις αναζητήσεις του καιρού μας και καθόρισαν ως ένα σημείο την φιλοσοφική, ψυχολογική ή πολιτική φυσιογνωμία του" (*Epoches*, 19, Nov 1964, p. 96).

Beyond the translations of essays by foreign philosophers and thinkers and the consistent involvement of Greek intellectuals of the diaspora, issues related to the concept of 'boundary' were frequently addressed by many contributors since the very beginning of the journal, including debates about moral decay, the crisis of humanity, and a generic climate of anxiety observed in the new cultural products. In particular, Angelos Terzakis's article 'Η ηθική κρίση και η ηθική αξίωση' (Terzakis 1964) sparked a long debate with a great number of contributors responding via articles and letters in the subsequent issues of the journal. Terzakis argued that the biggest change of the time was not about technological innovations, but it had to be found in the moral corruption and that the contradictions and instabilities of the contemporary individual hindered the creation of a new ethics. Some responses connected such moral crisis to the 'immoral' youths, while others to the political landscape, or to a widespread nihilism, root of social and ethical decadence. Contrary to Terzakis's position, Christos Lambrakis, publisher of *Εποχές*, maintained a more positive position in his article 'Κρίση ή φυσιολογική επανεκτίμηση;' (Lambrakis 1964), claiming that the contemporary moral crisis had a progressive character and that, therefore, it was perceived so strongly as a crisis because society was actually transforming and transitioning.

Alongside debates of social character, *Εποχές* also dedicated space to literary reviews and cultural criticism. In general, reviewers and contributors again recorded the climate of deep changes within Greece and its cultural field, often associated also to feelings of anxiety and of being pushed to an extreme form of boundary, to a "dead end:" "Το αδιέξοδο αποτελεί κοινό τόπο για τη σύγχρονη ποίηση. Όλοι οι μεταπολεμικοί ποιητές αρχίζουν την πορεία τους από κει," claims Kostas Stergiopoulos (1964, 65) in his review of Dimitris Christodoulou's collection of poems. Gerasimos Lykiardopoulos (1965) expanded on this theme in his article 'Η ποίηση και το αδιέξοδο,' in which he correlated the formal crisis of Greek art with the general crisis of contemporary civilisation. In the following issue of the journal, Kostas Stergiopoulos reiterated the existential agony that pervaded contemporary poetry: "Η υπαρξιακή αγωνία κι' ο μεταφυσικός προβληματισμός, τόσο συνηθισμένα πια γνωρίσματα μέσα στη σύγχρονη ποιητική παραγωγή, πριν από τριανταπέντε χρόνια αποτελούσαν χώρο απάτητο για την ποίησή μας» (Stergiopoulos 1966a, 63). What the intellectuals of *Εποχές* registered in the cultural landscape of their time was an acute sense of crisis on numerous levels, echoing Lorentzatos's claim of a lost centre. The αδιέξοδο, then, a concept that kept returning in their debates and reviews, came to signify the ontological condition of Greek society throughout the 1960s, a society on the verge of radical transformations and seeking for new models and directions, a society pushed to new boundaries and new solutions.

The Colonels' coup on 21 April 1967 interrupted dramatically the intellectual debates and developments, introducing however new dimensions of the boundary, not just signified as an intellectual dead-end, but as the embodied experience of physical exile. The imposition of preventive censorship pushed in effect the writers to a marginal position, almost into hiding, as most chose to keep an 'editorial silence' to oppose the oppressive regime. For many intellectuals, boundary also meant exile during the years of

the dictatorship, when many authors were sent (once again) in political confinement to the prison islands, whereas others crossed the national borders into self-exile abroad.[17]

The support coming from the intellectuals outside Greece was pivotal in denouncing the atrocities of the regime and in gathering international attention. In 1973, the Greek-American scholar William V. Spanos dedicated a special issue of his new journal *boundary 2* to Greece and to those writers who were then grappling with the dictatorship. In 'Greek Writing and the Boundary,' a short foreword to the volume, Spanos[18] made this concept of the boundary explicit, framing Greece as "a boundary country not only in a geographic but also in a cultural sense" (Spanos and Kroetsch 1973, 261), a condition begun with the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and corresponding with the loss of political, religious, and social points of reference. Even after the constitution of the Greek state, though, the country's position at the crossroad of West and East influenced its cultural development, "torn between the 'neo-classic' humanism of the Philhellenic West and its 'oriental' roots in Byzantium and the Greek of the Turkokratia" (Spanos and Kroetsch 1973, 262). Spanos here described the state of in-betweenness that characterises Greek metamodernism, and delineated a genealogy of this feature that harks back to the national trauma of the end of the Byzantine Empire and continues to the present time. This peculiar structure of feeling determined, according to Spanos, the emergence of a characteristically Greek cultural language, characterised by the anxieties and uncertainties typical of this 'boundary condition.' The Colonels' dictatorship had exacerbated this particular language, further pushing the writers towards the margins and "demand[ing] the courage

[17] For a more detailed analysis of Greek literature during the military dictatorship, see Van Dyck 1998; Papanikolaou 2010; Kornetis 2013; Van Steen 2014.

[18] The introduction is actually signed by William V. Spanos and Robert Kroetsch. Dimitris Papanikolaou, however, argues that it is "identifiably written mainly by Spanos (who had the necessary knowledge, and also repeated similar claims in later single-authored texts)" (Papanikolaou 2005, 133).

to be, the courage to risk oneself in one way or another for the sake of the human community" (Spanos and Kroetsch 1973, 262).

As Dimitris Papanikolaou (2005) explicates in his analysis of *boundary 2*'s special issue on Greece, Spanos was in Athens in the early 1970s and was experiencing first-hand the tough reality of the Greek dictatorship, a fact that pushed him eventually to put together the special issue and to think of Greek culture from a boundary perspective. For this reason, although "the [journal] issue does not seem to have had any impact [in Greece] whatsoever, either as a theoretical/poetic statement, or as a piece of intellectual history" (Papanikolaou 2005, 130), Spanos's contribution has in fact deep roots in the cultural context of the Greek 1960s, providing a solid basis for the present construction of a theory of Greek metamodernism. Spanos himself recognised that "[o]n the surface, a great deal of the literature of contemporary Greece recalls earlier models of modernism" (Spanos and Kroetsch 1973, 261), a surface statement which his acute reading of Greece 'affected' by a boundary condition eventually aimed at problematising. As delineated in the introduction, the Greek-American critic suggested that the country be seen as a *postmodern* example, a concept that was emerging in the Anglophone sphere in those very years also thanks to his journal. William V. Spanos's suggestion would then be picked up by Perry Anderson (1998), who also locates Athens as one of the places in which postmodernity originated. Seen from the perspective of the Greek intellectual developments of the long 1960s, however, Dimitris Papanikolaou questions this argument, claiming that "Greece makes sense as a postmodern example […] only in the context of *Boundary 2*, that is, within the circles of the American postmodernists of the early 1970s" (Papanikolaou 2005, 141).

My conceptualisation of the Greek 1960s expands on Papanikolaou's critique – despite Spanos's own involvement with the emerging theorisation of the postmodern, I

would take the notion of the boundary, especially as it is construed in *boundary 2*'s special issue on Greece, as a key feature of what I identify as Greek *metamodernism*. Spanos spoke of Greek writers under the dictatorship who "dwell in a world fraught with threat," perceiving "the dreadful sense of being on the boundary, in the zero zone" (Spanos and Kroetsch 1973, 262), addressing, that is, that 'in-betweenness' that represents one of the main tenets of Greek metamodernism. This is why, I think, postmodernism, especially in its more radical aspects and those that reject or parody modernism's main tenets, does not find a fertile ground in Greece of that period. Metamodernism, in the way I define here, comes to do the cultural work of both a later and much needed wave of modernism and of a topically specific version of postmodernism.

The texts I presented here, from Leondaris and Lorentzatos to the debates in *Εποχές* and by Spanos in *boundary 2*, are nothing but different manifestations of this boundary, first identified by Spanos in 1973 but that in hindsight had pervaded Greek culture since the end of the Civil War. The different forms that the 'boundary condition' takes could be categorised according to two main interpretations, one spatial and one 'affective.'

The concrete connotation of the boundary refers first to the geographical location of Greece, as William Spanos pointed out. Placed between East and West, Greece is inevitably caught in between, oscillating between these two poles and acting as a bridge between them. At the same time, Greece-at-the-boundary also involved a dialectic between a centre and a periphery. Zissimos Lorentzatos's essay, as well as the debates in *Εποχές*, present exactly this aspect of the boundary, bringing to the surface the issue of the lost centre (be it metaphysical or referential) and the consequent marginality of Greece in the 1960s present. The dialectics between East and West and between centre and periphery translates also in a dialectics between tradition and modernity, which underlies all the debates I have discussed until now, and that many anthropologists of the

time engaged with in their studies on Greece and the Mediterranean region.[19] The long 1960s represented indeed a sort of historical boundary, a transitional and transformative moment for the nation. The 1960s were in effect the culmination of the postwar deep transformations that brought the country from the rubbles of the German Occupation and the Civil War to being a well-connected European nation.

How do these concrete boundaries translate on an intellectual level? By reading together the essays and the cultural texts I mentioned above, it is possible to distinguish how the boundary condition constituted such a diffuse modality of being that, in one way or another, deeply *affected* the consciousness of Greek people, underlying the cultural life of this period. Ever since the murder of Grigoris Lambrakis in May 1963, the political field in Greece was characterised by this feeling of times changing – the boundary, in other words, became almost 'tangible,' affecting especially the Greek youth, who took active part in the waves of protests and riots against the governing instability, spiking in the Ιουλιανά events of July 1965 and, later on, in the student revolts at the Polytechnic against the military dictatorship in November 1973.[20] In this perspective, I suggest to read the boundary as an affect.

While the idea of 'affect' is very fluid and difficult to define, I will adopt Massumi's interpretation; he argues that, contrary to emotions and feelings, affect is "a prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act" (Massumi 1987, xvi). Separate from human consciousness and body, affect is however in a constant

[19] See, among others, Campbell (1964) and Peristiany (1965).

[20] Kostis Kornetis (2013) differentiates the youth between the 'Generation Z' and the 'Polytechnic Generation,' the former comprising people born between 1944 and 1949 and the latter people born between 1945 and 1954. As he explains, "[t]hese two groups, although part of the same biological generation, reacted to various political stimuli in distinct ways and tend to represent themselves differently in current accounts" (Kornetis 2013, 20)

relation with the body, pushing the individual to act. Affect is like a context, preceding a person's will and consciousness, that the body "infolds," using Massumi's (2021, 32) terminology. In other words, it is embedded in the bodily experience of the individual, associated to varying levels of intensity of such experience. Therefore, there is a close relation between (external) affect and the individual body (and mind), determining clearly how the individual relates to their environment and operates within it.

Thinking the boundary as an affect, then, helps us understand the impact of the socio-historical context on the cultural production and on the literary criticism of the time. The affect has a strong bodily connotation, since it prompts the individual to act or not act; with this in mind, I suggest that the interaction between the Greeks and their socio-political environment or, in other words, their experience of the Greek 1960s was shaped by the boundary-affect, as well as by the concrete boundaries, as the case of the vibrant Greek youth exemplifies. The transformations in the socio-economical fabric of the country, alongside the political instability, were so rapid and intense that they exacerbated the perception of an ongoing crisis, in front of which the individual appeared helpless as if at a dead-end, employing the critical vocabulary of the time. While traditional points of reference were being disintegrated by the new advancing modernity, people were uprooted physically, psychologically, and even culturally: the stable centre made of traditions could not hold *vis-à-vis* migrations, new technologies, and deepening ideological divide. The metamodernist aesthetics, therefore, appears to deal with this modernity that was pushing the individual towards limits, boundaries indeed, acknowledging this new cultural condition in the attempt to offer new models and reconstruct new centres.

The boundary condition constitutes one of the most prominent features of the 1960s structure of feeling, traceable transversally as it is on many levels: historically, politically,

socially, and culturally. Due to this variability, the boundary appears to be so large a concept, which however results as a productive analytical platform for a review of this period in the history of Greece, better understandable through the prism of *metamodernism*.

1.4 Metamodernism: Theory and (Greek) Practice

Speaking of metamodernism in the Greek 1960s is an attempt to create a framework that allows a comprehensive analysis of the complex and multilayered cultural system of the time. This framework throws into relief the modernist patterns that persisted, while also taking into consideration the radical differences in usage and signification of said patterns. Before expanding on the notion of metamodernism and its different declination in Greece, it is important here to underline that I do not claim it as a categorising term of a 'new' cultural movement with a clear manifesto and set features. On the contrary, as it shall become clear, with the notion of 'Greek metamodernism' I refer to a general cultural moment of reconfigurations and of transformations, whose temporal borders I loosely identify in the long 1960s (ca. 1956 – 1974).

The concept of metamodernism has been the object of increasing interest in current debates on cultural and literary studies in the Anglophone sphere. A case in point is the 2018 special issue on metamodernism of the journal *English Studies* (vol. 99, issue 7), edited by the Dutch scholars Dennis Kersten and Usha Wilbers. The editors' introductory essay clarifies two main points: firstly, the concept of metamodernism is still a highly fluid term theorised and used in numerous different ways; secondly, the concept refers mostly to the 21st century, be it to contemporary (Anglophone) literature or to the more generic cultural landscape of the present century. In this debate, the special issue is rather

focused on the first point, aiming to be "a first step towards charting and identifying how Modernism manifests itself in contemporary fiction in English" (Kersten and Wilbers 2018, 720). Therefore, metamodernism appears to indicate the re-emergence of "Modernist narratological strategies and themes" (Kersten and Wilbers 2018, 720) in 21st-century English fiction.

A similar position had previously been discussed by Andre Furlani (2002) in his reading of American writer Guy Davenport. In discussing his works, Furlani finds the label of postmodernism to be limiting, preferring to view him as a metamodernist: "[w]here *post-* suggests severance or repudiation, μετα [*sic*] denotes the continuity apparent in the metamodernists' efforts to succeed the modernists" (Furlani 2002, 713). In other words, Furlani suggests that between modernism and postmodernism, a different, middle-ground aesthetic needs to be acknowledged. By adopting the term 'metamodernism,' the emphasis is on the prefix 'meta-' and its primary meanings of *after* and *by means of* modernism. It is not only about succeeding the modernists, but also about working with them in a relation of direct contact and close proximity. The metamodernists' relationship to modernism "goes far beyond homage, toward a reengagement with modernist method in order to address subject matter well outside the range or interest of the modernists themselves" (Furlani 2002, 714). For my conceptualisation of Greek metamodernism, this last point is particularly relevant: modernism, in the hands of metamodernists, becomes an important toolbox, a source of techniques and styles that are reappropriated and applied to more contemporary contexts and issues.

One of the main referents of the special issue of *English Studies* is an essay by David James and Urmila Seshagiri (2014), in which the two scholars also engage with 21st-century Anglophone fiction and its conscious engagement with modernism. They define

this literary practice as metamodernism. In their view, metamodernism involves both an appropriation of modernist aesthetics, such as non-linearity and interiority, and a proliferation of fictions narrativising the creation and the reception of modern art and literature. Thus, metamodernist contemporary writers perceive modernism as "a historical antecedent, a cultural trope, and an archive of stylistic and technical possibilities" (James and Seshagiri 2014, 93). James and Seshagiri's essay is also a response to the contemporary trend in Modernist Studies to expand the geographical horizon of the movement – while this move is fruitful for a better understanding of the literary phenomenon, it also risks to stretch the temporal boundaries of modernism as a period; however, "[w]ithout a temporally bounded and formally precise understanding of what modernism does and means in any cultural moment, the ability to make other aesthetic and historical claims about its contemporary reactivation suffers" (James and Seshagiri 2014, 88). A diffuse definition of modernism, spanning in space and necessarily in time, would not be beneficial to make sense of the 21st-century reprisal of modernist aesthetics, hence their introduction of metamodernism.

This argument resonates with my own critique of Tziovas's claim about the 1960s as the pinnacle of Greek modernism. Introducing the notion of a Greek metamodernism in the 1960s requires the understanding that the modernist pushes of the Generation of the 1930s and of the School of Thessaloniki are bound to the historical and cultural climate of the interwar years, whereas the postwar period (and the long 1960s) represented a different moment, with different dynamics and different aesthetics, despite *and* due to the ongoing presence of the modernists on the literary scene.

So far, I have shown how the notion of metamodernism has been employed in recent literary theory; however, even more interestingly, metamodernism has been theorised as a wider cultural issue of the 2000s. The most influential and in-depth study in this regard

has been carried out by Robin van den Akker and Timotheus Vermeulen, who introduced the concept of metamodernism in a now-canonical essay in 2010 and expanded it more systematically in 2017. While Furlani and James and Seshagiri suggested important elements for the construction of a theory of Greek metamodernism, van den Akker and Vermeulen's theorisation provided the real foundation because they break the relation between metamodernism and literature, expanding it so to explain and encompass the wider *Zeitgeist* of the present time, mapping related artistic and cultural texts.

Calquing and referencing Fredric Jameson's famous study *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), van den Akker and Vermeulen observe the waning of the postmodern impulses of the second half of the 20th century and register, in the 2000s, the emergence of something new, some (still) indefinite historical moment in which postmodern conventions seem to be incorporated but also surpassed. In this context of contradictions, simmering tensions, and different ideological formations, they identify metamodernism as "a structure of feeling that emerged in the 2000s and has become the dominant cultural logic of Western capitalist society" (van den Akker and Vermeulen 2017, 4). Adopting Raymond Williams's concept of 'structure of feeling,' the Dutch scholars set to describe a pervasive, diffuse sentiment, hard to pin down, and yet structural. Metamodernism, that is, emerges "through a systematic reading of dominant tendencies in contemporary artistic and cultural production rather than isolated or dated phenomena" (van den Akker and Vermeulen 2017, 6).

To explore such "dominant tendencies," van den Akker and Vermeulen recur once again to the semantic variations of the prefix 'meta-.' Firstly, they situate metamodernism *with* or *among* different structures of feeling, emerging however in dominant position. As the ruptures of postmodernism are surpassed, metamodernism is translated into the resurgence of modernist cultural forms, as already observed by previous scholars:

> Whereas the postmoderns 'recycled' popular culture, canonised works and dead Masters by means of parody and pastiche, metamodern artists […] increasingly pick out from the scrapheap of history those elements that allow them to resignify the present and reimagine a future. (van den Akker and Vermeulen 2017, 10)

Rather than 'recycling,' metamodernism is about *upcycling* past styles, adding value to them and redirecting them towards present and future concerns.

From this first aspect of tension with postmodernism, it becomes clear that metamodernism is characterised by "an oscillating in-betweenness or, rather, a dialectical movement that identifies with and negates – and hence, overcomes and undermines – conflicting positions" (van den Akker and Vermeulen 2017, 10). It is not a moment of synthesis and harmony, but rather an 'oscillation' between postmodern and (pre-)modern preoccupations. The two scholars explain this as a 'both-neither' dynamic, drawing on Eric Voegelin's (1989) Platonic notion of *metaxy* (from Greek μεταξύ 'between'): "To speak of metaxy, thus, is to speak of a movement between (opposite) poles: not a binary so much as a continuum that stretches from one to the other, not a balance but a pendulum swinging between various extremes" (van den Akker and Vermeulen 2017, 11). Metamodernism, therefore, encompasses the different cultural pulls of the present time, operating on a middle field where the tensions are not harmonised, but they are a structural feature.

Van den Akker and Vermeulen close their study pointing out that "[h]istorically, metamodernism is tied to a moment after postmodernism in the sense that it has developed from and displaces postmodernism as the dominant cultural logic of Western capitalist societies" (van den Akker and Vermeulen 2017, 11). While Jameson identified the 1960s as the years of the postmodern shift, they situate in the 2000s the shift towards metamodernism, finally defined as "a new dominant cultural logic corresponding to a

fourth reconfiguration of Western capitalist societies (van den Akker and Vermeulen 2017, 18).[21]

Furlani (2002), James and Seshagiri (2014), and van den Akker and Vermeulen (2010; 2017) are at the basis of my own conceptualisation of Greek metamodernism, despite reversing the temporal succession they have suggested. Although these critics conceptualised metamodernism as a post-postmodernist theory to discuss the present 21st century, I suggest reversing the order exploiting the fluidity of the term and the diverse uses of it, claiming it for an earlier historical moment of Greek history, a moment fluid in itself, that was taking modernism into a new last phase, in which rapid changes and systemic transformations resulted in often contradictory positions. Moreover, the present study focuses on the literary side of Greek culture of the 1960s; however, I recognise the potentiality for this concept to be applied more widely in other cultural fields of that time. That is because I side with van den Akker and Vermeulen in conceptualising metamodernism more as a structure of feeling, a diffuse modality of perceiving the critical reality of the 1960s that intellectuals and cultural producers elaborated in their works. It is therefore not a literary or cultural movement, but it is nevertheless useful to read and indeed understand the rich and fascinating moment that the Greek 1960s represented. As outlined before, this was a rich moment of cultural production and yet the intellectual debates of the time recorded a moment of stagnation;

[21] Van den Akker and Vermeulen follow here Fredric Jameson's periodisation, who, via Ernest Mandel (1975), identifies three shifts in the productive powers of capitalism, coinciding with technological developments. The first one is linked to the invention of steam engines after the 1840s; the second is connected to the introduction of electricity and internal combustion engines in the 1890s, and finally the third one introduced what Mandel called 'late capitalism' due to the introduction of computers and nuclear energy. With the spread of social networks and digital labour, van den Akker and Vermeulen suggest metamodernism in the 2000s as the fourth and latest technological leap in capitalist production.

the new generations of literati claimed a space of their own and yet they canonised the older modernist Generation of the 1930s, reaching out to them and interacting with their poetics. Metamodernism results particularly promising as a theoretical lens through which the Greek 1960s can be read, since 'by definition' it encompasses the tensions and the different cultural poles, without attempting to synthetise them. Because the Greek 1960s were just that: a long decade of contradictions and tensions, of liberal expansion and dictatorial oppression, of modernist excellence and twisting at the same time.

In line with previous studies on metamodernism, I also employ the different meanings of the prefix 'meta-': 'after,' 'with,' and 'between.' First, a small clarification is needed regarding the use of the prefix. In the Greek language, the term 'metamodernism' might indeed create confusion because of the semantic correspondence between the Greek 'meta-' and the Latin 'post-.' For one, the term μεταμοντερνισμός translates the English 'postmodernism.' Leaving the translational issues aside, it is important to acknowledge the wider signification of the Greek prefix, which is not limited to the idea of posteriority, and exactly because of this, it appears to be a more fruitful hermeneutical instrument to analyse what happens in Greek culture in those crucial years. [22]

Surely, the prefix 'meta-' hints at a cultural moment that came *after* the modernism of the 1930s, recovering those models and 'upcycling' them, using van den Akker and Vermeulen's vocabulary. As the case studies in the following chapters will demonstrate, these previous modernist models, devices, and strategies, are reconfigured and reassembled to speak more vividly of the new Greece that was emerging in the 1960s.

[22] More often, in the English language, the preposition 'meta-' is also used to denote a discipline that reflects on itself, as in *meta*narrative or *meta*philosophy. The constant interest demonstrated throughout the 'long 1960s' by the younger generation to engage with texts and issues of the previous modernist generation shows that this fourth definition could produce interesting results; however, I limit my scope to the three meanings discussed here, as they prove particularly relevant to the construction of the metamodernist argument.

This process of renovation for a 'modernism of the 1960s' was also possible thanks to the fruitful interaction and open dialogue of the the younger generation of intellectuals *with* the elder modernists. The dialectical tension between different generations of intellectuals and writers, between modernist models and innovating pushes, created a cultural forcefield made of numerous poles. The notion of metamodernism intends to account for the variability and the richness of the cultural landscape of the Greek 1960s, which seems to include often unrelated and very different cultural events. Metamodernism is about this variability and richness, and about the oscillations between these numerous poles: East and West, classical tradition and economic developments, Greece and the growing Greek diaspora, Generation of the 1930s and 'Postwar generations,' music and literature, cinema and novels, etc.

Therefore, the prefix 'meta-,' just like in the Greek word *μεταίχμιο*, hints also at the *in-betweenness* exemplified best by the concept of the boundary, accounting for both the physical and the affective connotations. The history of the Greek 1960s, as outlined in the introduction of this thesis, is a history of crossed borders (domestic migrations and diasporic movements), a history of rapid economic transformations, a history of a changing society, and eventually a history of forced silencing and physical confinement under the military dictatorship. All these elements point to the transitional nature of the Greek 1960s that my conceptualisation of metamodernism addresses. I suggest, in fact, that the boundary affect underlies the cultural debates of the time and infiltrated poems, novels, and other genres of cultural production of the 1960s.

1.5 CONCLUSIONS

Starting from the difference between the Greek culture of the 1930s and that of the 1960s, I introduce the concept of metamodernism as a productive lens that allows for a new reading of the intellectual landscape of the latter decade. I draw from contemporary literary and cultural debates in the Anglophone sphere in order to appropriate this emerging concept and explore its affordances in the Greek context. Indeed, the conceptualisation of metamodernism resonates strongly with the historical and cultural context of the Greek 'long 1960s,' identifiable, as van den Akker and Vermeulen (2010; 2017) suggest for the 2000s, as a structure of feeling that characterised this period of great transformations and mobilisations for the nation.

In my conceptualisation of a Greek metamodernism of the 1960s, I aim to account for a number of cultural events that, despite being seemingly disparate and disconnected, actually respond to the many forces at play. In other words, metamodernism emerges as a useful instrument to better read the vibrant cultural landscape of the time and to highlight its roots in the critical and complex moment in Greek history, as well as the dense intellectual network that connected all cultural sectors, from literature to cinema, to music and theatre. Focusing on the three main semantic variations of the prefix 'meta,' I suggest to employ this new hermeneutical term to account for the continued presence of modernist aesthetics *after* the 1930s, for the anxiety of the younger 'postwar generation' of literati to measure up to and collaborate *with* the then established representatives of Greek modernism, i.e., the Generation of the 1930s and the School of Thessaloniki, and, last, to account for the contrasts and tensions constitutive of a reality at an ontological and intellectual 'boundary', in transition and transformation.

In the chapters that follow, I aim to delve into the specificities of this Greek metamodern aesthetics, following as a leading thread the reception of Greek mythology in the works of Yannis Ritsos, Stelios Xefloudas, and Margarita Liberaki. Exploring metamodernism from the perspective of classical reception serves two purposes: on the one hand, due to the limits of a doctoral thesis, it helps in better circumscribing the field of research around a tool of cultural analysis that would otherwise risk to be too broad; on the other hand, the classical heritage represents, especially in Greece, a contested site, embraced, rejected, or restructured according to variations of the cultural landscape. Therefore, the modalities in which classical reception operates in the 1960s facilitate the exploration of Greek metamodernism.

In the specific case of this thesis, mythology connects the three case studies of this thesis to modernists discourses and also constitutes an entry point into the metamodern structure of feeling within which those works were created. The modalities whereby Ritsos, Xefloudas, and Liberaki engaged with the classical repertoire of myth and used it in their works allow me to explore specific issues connected to the 1960s metamodernist moment in more depth, such as disrupted temporality, the mythical method, the cyclical structures of History, Greekness, and diasporic subjectivities. Some of them already central tenets of Greek modernism, these issues are particularly relevant in my discussion as they throw into sharper relief the innovative perspective of the metamodernist theory on Greek culture of the long 1960s, contesting modernism itself and offering a more inclusive analysis that would bring under the spotlight overlooked works and silenced voices of that crucial period of Greek culture.

CHAPTER 2

Ω, ΑΥΤΗ Η ΞΕΝΙΤΕΙΑ ΜΑΣ

YANNIS RITSOS'S *ΤΕΤΑΡΤΗ ΔΙΑΣΤΑΣΗ* AND THE BERGSONIAN TEMPORALITY

Immediately after the Colonels' coup on 27th April 1967, the poet Yannis Ritsos was arrested because of his overt support of Communism and his vocal political activism. As it had already happened almost twenty years earlier, during the Greek Civil War, he was sent to the camps in the prison islands, first to Yaros and after a few months to Leros. Despite the new experience of the political exile, Ritsos did not stop writing – by that time, he had already composed a great number of long poems, formally dramatic monologues, that at different stages the poet included in the project he titled *Τέταρτη διάσταση* 'Fourth Dimension.'

In the first weeks of his imprisonment, he started writing a new monologue, giving voice to a lesser-known character of Greek mythology, Chrysothemis, daughter of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon.[23] "Πώς έγινε και με θυμήθηκαν; Εμένα κανένας ποτέ δε με θυμάται. Κανένας ποτέ δε με πρόσεξε" (Ritsos 1978, 161): after long years (if not centuries) lived on the side of history, in the shadow of her family palace and of the bigger names of her siblings Electra and Orestes, it was finally time for Chrysothemis to speak and be the protagonist. As she starts her monologue, she expresses her surprise – why

[23] As for other monologues, one of the most relevant sources for Yannis Ritsos was Sophocles' tragedies. While Homer (*Il.* 9.142) only mentions Chrysothemis as a bargaining chip that Agamemnon offers Achilles to convince him to return to the battlefield, Sophocles gives her more space, but never the protagonist status. In his tragedy *Electra*, in fact, she is employed as a foil to her sister, resigning herself to her killer-mother's power and thus reinforcing the figure of Electra. See Lloyd (2005).

now, after such a long time; and why her, who has always been left to the margins of the myth?

There are no short answers to Chrysothemis's initial questions, and the present chapter aims to address exactly these two questions. The central claim is that Yannis Ritsos's *Fourth Dimension* constitutes the epitome of a metamodernist aesthetics, encapsulating the social and cultural anxieties of the critical Greek 1960s, when, after a violent and mostly unresolved civil war, the country was still undergoing radical transformations both in its social fabric and on the political level. In the cultural sphere, the general uncertainty and instability gives rise to a poetics specific for this period, a poetics of the 'boundary,' as I explored in the previous chapter. Drawing from the intellectual debates of the time, I associated the poetics of the boundary to the generic ontological condition of being in-between, of experiencing a transitional phase; at the same time, the poetics of the boundary also expresses the feeling of being pushed towards cultural, political, social margins after the loss of a symbolic multifaceted centre.

Fourth Dimension is a complex collection that engaged the poet for almost twenty years, composed of around forty long poems ascribable to this phase. The volume of the same title that Ritsos published in 1972 is the result of a careful selection and reworking of the poems, with a number of excluded poems that were published at a different time scattered in other volumes. It is therefore important to differentiate between the 'cycle' of the *Fourth Dimension* and the 'volume' published under the same title. However, *Fourth Dimension* was surely not the only relevant collection of poetry Yannis Ritsos wrote in this period. After 1956, the year in which he began composing long monologues for the cycle, the poet also started writing a number of much shorter poems – the three series of

Μαρτυρίες (Testimonies,)[24] as well as the collections *Πέτρες, επαναλήψεις, κιγκλίδωμα* (Stones, Repetitions, Railing) and *Χειρονομίες* (Gestures),[25] they all belong to this period and, alongside *Fourth Dimension*, respond to the cultural climate of the Greek 1960s. The titles of these collections already play with Ritsos's metamodernist poetics, further expanded with the harsh experience of the imprisonment and exile. These short poems are also populated by mythological characters, who bear 'testimony' of an ever-present past, a past that 'repeats' itself and brings no solace among the 'stones' and the 'railings' of the prison camps. The poetics of the boundary and the original take on classical mythology were therefore central in Ritsos's overall poetic output after 1956; yet, this chapter's main focus is the volume of *Fourth Dimension* as it is exemplary of the metamodernist poetics of the boundary, that the different monologists fully represent and, as I will discuss, embody. The metamodernist framework is beneficial in deepening our understanding of this period and of Ritsos's own poetic developments in postwar Greece, thus refreshing the critical approach to the monologues.

Taking into account the work of critics who have focused on the *Fourth Dimension*'s importance for Ritsos's overall politics (Sangiglio 1978, Prevelakis 1981), poetic development (Prokopaki 1981, Beaton 1999), and poetics of classical reception (Bien 1980, Tziovas 2014, Pieris 2008), I will join Michael Jeffreys (1994) and to an extent Kapsomenos (2008) and Alexiou (2008) in reassessing the dialogue of *Fourth Dimension* with modernism. The monological form, the much-discussed question of time, and the

[24] The first series of *Μαρτυρίες* was written between 1957 and 1963, and was published in 1963. The second series was written between 1964 and 1965, and published in 1966. Lastly, the third series comprises poems written between 1961 and 1967, and published only in 1989 in the ninth volume of his collected poems, *Ποιήματα Θ'*.

[25] Firstly appeared in a bilingual edition in France in 1971, *Πέτρες, επαναλήψεις, κιγκλίδωμα* includes poems written in the prison camp of Leros and during his house arrest in Samos, between 1968 and 1969. It finally appeared in Greece in 1972, alongside *Χειρονομίες*, which contains poems written between 1969 and 1970 in Samos.

same idea of the fourth dimension can still reveal much of Ritsos's own engagement with the interwar cultural movements and they become fruitful points of access into new interpretations of the poems. Reading this collection in a dialogic relation with modernism, therefore, responds to previous studies that sensed and hinted at Ritsos's European modernist poetics. Moreover, this chapter intends to read *Fourth Dimension* as a whole cohesive project, which engaged Ritsos during a critical era and inevitably absorbed the changing climate.

My study aims to historicise Ritsos's work in the framework of the Greek long 1960s and thus avoids analysing the monologues as self-contained units or as biographical fragments – granted that *Fourth Dimension* is inextricably and deeply connected not just with Ritsos's personal life, but also with the wider historical context, the basic argument of this chapter is that it offers a privileged insight in the social and cultural changes of the period. *Fourth Dimension* is, in other words, the epitome of the metamodernist practice: Yannis Ritsos records in his monologues a critical era of considerable uncertainties; and he does so by recurring to a modernist language, namely turning to the individual's consciousness and to the archetype of mythology, while also testing its limits and revealing this language as somehow belonging to an obsolete cultural sensibility.

This chapter consists of two sections, in which I will attempt to answer Chrysothemis's initial questions, starting from the "why now" and ending with the "why me." The first section, therefore, explores how the metamodernist condition of the boundary applies to Yannis Ritsos and how it determined the composition of *Fourth Dimension*. Supported by archival findings and his private correspondence, I will trace the editorial development from the very first monologues in 1956 to the final publication of the volume in 1972. A close look on how the collection came together reveals how Ritsos's 'lost centres' and experiences of many different boundaries actually shaped the

composition of the dramatic monologues and the final selection for the publication. Through the identification of three key dates along this editorial route –1956, 1963, and 1967– I will explore what these lost centres and boundaries were, as well as how Yannis Ritsos engaged with European modernist models and how that influenced the development of his metamodernist poetics.

The last part of this chapter focuses on the collection itself and its poetics, tracing the boundary condition in the mythological characters, by returning to the much-discussed issue of time in *Fourth Dimension*. Answering the need to address the critical present of the nation and to escape the stifling political persecution he was a victim of, I claim that Ritsos adopts in his monologues the model of temporality theorised by the French philosopher Henri Bergson at the beginning of the 20th century. Therefore, I will argue that Ritsos 'summons' the myths of the past to superimpose them onto the 1960s' present and to make a point about the need to reconstruct cultural models in order to address more adequately the instability of the present moment, suggesting in the conclusions that with *Fourth Dimension* Yannis Ritsos creates a new, imaginary archive of the boundary condition, which 'troubles' the inherited tradition and opens up the possibility for such reconstruction.

2.1 BUILDING THE FOURTH DIMENSION

When *Fourth Dimension* was published at the end of 1972, it contained sixteen long poems in the form of dramatic monologues, the majority of which was of mythical content. This collection would then be expanded into its final form in the sixth edition in June 1978 with the further addition of one monologue, *Φαίδρα.* As we are about to see in the following pages, this collection was actually the fruit of a long creative process, during

which Yannis Ritsos produced a much larger number of poems and gave much thought to the content and structure of this project he titled *Fourth Dimension*. The analysis of the process that the poet went through in the construction of what is considered to be his poetic masterpiece is actually very relevant in order to understand how Ritsos was in constant dialogue with a specific cultural context and, in fact, responded to the 1960s structure of feeling I have identified as metamodernism. Ritsos's case study is particularly interesting because *Fourth Dimension* operates on the affective realm of the 'boundary,' intersecting with specific modernist models. Through this analysis I will argue that this long process of development and complex articulation made of Ritsos's collection the epitome of the metamodernist Greek 1960s.

It is therefore fundamental to distinguish between the poems ascribed to the cycle of *Fourth Dimension* during its long process of becoming, and the fewer poems that were eventually included in the volume published under the same title. Following the seminal text by Michael Jeffreys (1994), I will refer to the first ones by the full title *Fourth Dimension* and to the published volume by the abbreviation Τδ. It is important to keep an overall perspective over the full project not just in order to be as comprehensive as possible in the analysis of the mythical poems, but also because it provides a better understanding of the creative process that led Ritsos to develop this new poetics. Contextualising the mythical poems within the *Fourth Dimension* cycle *as a whole* is instrumental in order to identify the metamodernist character of these most famous monologues, whose main features include, as already mentioned, the poetics of the boundary expressed through a modernist language.

In exploring the collection's place inside the metamodernist framework of the Greek 1960s, unpublished material from the Ritsos archive, held in Athens in the Historical Archives of the Benaki Museum (henceforth, HABM), will enrich the picture, illuminating

previously unknown or disregarded data and information. Letters from his correspondence, personal handwritten notes found in a number of notebooks, as well as unpublished poems of the same period, cast light into Ritsos's mental workshop during one of the most prolific periods in his career.

Starting from compiling a list of the poems that can be ascribed to the *Fourth Dimension* cycle and looking at the dates in which Ritsos began composing them, I will move on to chart the compositional trends, with a specific focus on the mythical theme and on their final inclusion in Tδ. What emerges from this analysis is a three-phase process leading Yannis Ritsos from the original experimentations with the new monological form to the final focus on the mythological voices of the published volume. The three phases are marked by three key dates, each corresponding to a moment of change or to an active engagement with modernism, liminal moments that could be regarded as 'boundary' moments: while the input for the project coincided with ideological shifts within the socialist field in 1956, Ritsos seemed to take a 'mythological turn' around 1963 when he worked closely on Constantine Cavafy's personality and on the translation of Vladimir Mayakovsky's poetry. Finally, the establishment of the Junta in April 1967 and his immediate arrest and political confinement seemed to have determined the definitive structure of the Tδ volume, which would be eventually published at the end of 1972.

2.1.1 THE HISTORY OF *FOURTH DIMENSION*

Yannis Ritsos worked on the *Fourth Dimension* project from 1956 until 1975, dedicating twenty years to the composition and construction of this important collection. Considering formal characteristics and authorial intention, it is safe to say that, during

this time span, Ritsos wrote forty poems for the series. In terms of formal features, all works are long poems that either take the form of a dramatic monologue or of a choral work. Except for three early poems ('Χειμερινή διαύγεια,' 'Η εορτή των ανθέων,' and "Οταν έρχεται ο Ξένος'), they are all introduced and closed by 'stage directions', as Jeffreys (1994, 71) defines them. These are short texts in prose that define each monologue's (or chorus's) setting in terms of time and space, as well as mood and atmosphere, thus providing the context in which the speaking act takes place. Beyond these characteristics, another determining factor is the inclusion of the poems in at least one of the many lists Ritsos created for the collection, found either in different publications or in his private notebooks.

What follows (Table 1) is a comprehensive list of poems of the *Fourth Dimension* cycle in chronological order, indicating the full composition dates and the volumes in which the poems were published (ΠΓ' = *Ποιήματα Γ'*, ΠΔ' = *Ποιήματα Δ'*, ΠΕ' = *Ποιήματα Ε'/Τα επικαιρικά*, Τδ = *Τέταρτη διάσταση*, ΠΘ' = *Ποιήματα Θ'*, archive = Ritsos Archive in the HABM).[26] This list incorporates Jeffreys's list (1994, 65-7), which included only twenty-seven poems, and completes it with the unpublished poems found in the archive, as well as with those published poems that Ritsos himself had considered as part of the project.

[26] The references of the unpublished poems in the Ritsos archive are the following: *Έκτη αί*σθηση, HABM 687, folder 4, item 3; *Απολογία*, HABM 687, folder 4, item 4; *Βραδινός μονόλογος*, HABM 687, folder 4, item 9; *Απόμακρη άνοιξη*, HABM 687, folder 4, item 17; *Άρνηση*, HABM 687, folder 4, item 30; *Παρεκβάσεις*, HABM 687, folder 4, notebook 32; *Τα κλειδιά*, HABM 687, folder 4, notebook 32; *Ο ταπεινός*, HABM 687, folder 10, notebook 118; *Νυχτερινό γυ*μνό, HABM 687, folder 5, item 51.

Table 1 - Complete list of Fourth Dimension *poems.*

Η σονάτα του σεληνόφωτος	Jun 1956	ΤΔ
[Έκτη αίσθηση][27]	Jun 1956	Archive (HABM 687/3)
[Απολογία (Ποτέ δεν είναι αργά)]	Nov 1956	Archive (HABM 687/4)
Χρονικό	Jan 1957	ΤΔ
Χειμερινή διαύγεια	Jan 1957	ΤΔ
Αποχαιρετισμός	Mar 1957	ΠΓ’
Η εορτή των ανθέων	May 1957	ΠΓ’
[Βραδινός μονόλογος]	Jun 1957	Archive (HABM 687/9)
Όταν έρχεται ο Ξένος	Feb 1958	ΤΔ
[Απόμακρη άνοιξη]	Mar 1958	Archive (HABM 687/17)
Ο οδηγός του ασανσέρ	Mar 1958	ΠΔ’
Οι γερόντισσες κ’ η θάλασσα[28]	Sep 1958	ΠΘ’
Ο φαροφύλακας	Dec 1958	ΠΔ’
Το παράθυρο	Apr 1959	ΤΔ
[Άρνηση]	Apr 1959	Archive (HABM 687/30)
Η γέφυρα	Jun 1959	ΠΓ’
Το νεκρό σπίτι	Sep 1959	ΤΔ
[Παρεκβάσεις][8]	Sep 1959	Archive (HABM 687/32)
[Τα κλειδιά][29]	Sep 1959	Archive (HABM 687/32)
Ο τελευταίος κι ο πρώτος του Λίντιτσε	Mar 1960	ΠΓ’
Κάτω απ’ τον ίσκιο του βουνού	May 1960	ΤΔ
Το χορικό των σφουγγαράδων	Sep 1960	ΠΔ’
[Ο ταπεινός]	Jan 1961	Archive (HABM 687/118)
[Νυχτερινό γυμνό]	May 1961	Archive (HABM 687/51)
Δελφοί	May 1961 – Apr 1962	ΠΔ’
Η ώρα των ποιμένων	1962-1971	ΠΔ’
Ορέστης	Jun 1962 – Jul 1966	ΤΔ
Το δέντρο της φυλακής και οι γυναίκες	Sep 1962	ΠΘ’
Φιλοκτήτης	May 1963 – Oct 1965	ΤΔ
Τειρεσίας	May 1964-1971	ΠΔ’
Περσεφόνη	Dec 1965 – Dec 1970	ΤΔ
Ισμήνη	Sep 1966 – Dec 1966	ΤΔ
Αγαμέμνων	Dec 1966 – Oct 1970	ΤΔ

[27] The titles in [square brackets] indicate unpublished poems.

[28] The titles in italics indicate choral poems.

[29] In the same notebook, together with *Παρεκβάσεις* and *Τα κλειδιά*, Ritsos had written another poem titled *Ο τελευταίος παραθεριστής*, also dated September 1959. Despite formally belonging to the poems of Fourth Dimension, Ritsos never listed it among those poems and, instead, published it in the collection *Προσχέδια* within Ποιήματα Γ’ in 1964.

Μαντατοφόρες	May 1967 – Dec 1969	ΠΕ’
Χρυσόθεμις	May 1967 – Jul 1970	Τδ
Αίας	Aug 1967 – Jan 1969	Τδ
Ο αφανισμός της Μήλος	Sep 1969 – Nov 1969	ΠΔ’
Η Ελένη	May 1970 – Aug 1970	Τδ
Η επιστροφή της Ιφιγένειας	Nov 1971 – Aug 1972	Τδ
Φαίδρα	Apr 1974 – Jul 1975	Τδ

Out of the total forty, only seventeen poems (highlighted in grey) were included in the final volume. Fourteen poems were included in four different volumes of *Ποιήματα* (4 in Γ', 7 in Δ', 1 in Ε’, and 2 in Θ'), and finally nine were left unpublished, three of which were clearly rejected by the poet, even though Ritsos includes them in several personal lists of *Fourth Dimension* throughout the years.[30] These numbers and the different places of publication, other than Τδ, suggest that Ritsos went through a complicated creative process of reconsidering and rearranging the whole series.

Michael Jeffreys has already described the development of the poetic series, drawing his data from Ritsos’s published material (translations and pamphlets) and from critical articles of his work, especially by Chrysa Prokopaki (Lambrinou 1964; Papandreou 1968) and Yorgos Veloudis (1977). Research at the Ritsos archive, however, returned even more lists of poems, found in different notebooks where he was working on drafts of *Fourth Dimension*. These lists are all handwritten by Ritsos himself and show the real extent of the project as a whole, as well as the intensity with which Ritsos worked on it. These archival findings expand our current knowledge substantially: these notebooks not only contain many unpublished poems that Ritsos had at some point included in the lists for the project, but they also reveal that this series of poems was conceived in different subgroups (the choral poems, the mythical monologues, and the non-mythical ones).

[30] *Έκτη αίσθηση*, *Απολογία*, and *Βραδινός μονόλογος* are marked on the notebook cover “για πέταμα.”

Therefore, expanding Jeffreys's table to include these handwritten lists found in the archive, it is possible to draw a much clearer picture of what Ritsos intended for *Fourth Dimension* and of how this idea developed and changed during the years. As we shall see, the handwritten lists also provide new data to re-read the most famous poem of the collection, 'Η σονάτα του σεληνόφωτος,' within the mythological framework.

In Table 2, all handwritten lists are put together (indicated by the archival number of the notebook they were found in) in the most likely chronological order;[31] since most lists are not dated, I reconstructed the possible year of creation by crosschecking the content of the lists with the composition and publication data of each poem, as well as by taking into consideration the date of other content inside each notebook. The way in which the poet organised the content of the lists varied a lot, as he conceived at different stages subdivisions or an organisation of the monologues in two separate collections, one titled *Τέταρτη διάσταση* and one *Γενική δοκιμή*. After 1967, Ritsos adopted a different approach, keeping the single title of *Τέταρτη διάσταση* and, at the same time, dividing the poems in three untitled groups. As mentioned, these three groups tended to distinguish the non-mythical poems, the mythical poems, and the choral ones (also indexed in some lists as "Χορικά").

[31] The references for the lists are the following: Ritsos Archive, HABM 687, folder 18, notebook 213, back cover; HABM 687, folder 4, notebook 34, 61α; HABM 687, folder 5, notebook 44, back cover; HABM 687, folder 5, notebook 61, back cover; HABM 687, folder 7, notebook 1, 64r; HABM 687, folder 10, notebook 120; HABM 687, folder 6, notebook 112, 17r; HABM 687, folder 18, item 208, 639/ΛΦ2.

Table 2 - Handwritten lists found in the Ritsos Archive at HABM.

	687/ 213	**687/ 34**	**687/ 44**	**687/ 61**	**687/ 1**	**687/ 120**	**687/ 112**	**687/ 208**
	1958-64	1959-60	1961	1962	1967	1971	1971-72	1972
Η σονάτα…	√	√		√	II	√	II	√
[Έκτη αίσθηση]	√			ΓΔ			√ ?	
[Απολογία]	√			ΓΔ				
Χρονικό	√	√		√	I	√	II	√
Χειμερινή διαύγεια	√	√		√	I	ΓΔ	I	√
Αποχαιρετισμός		√		√				
Η εορτή των ανθέων	√	√		√				
[Βραδινός μονόλογος]	√			ΓΔ			√ ?	
Όταν έρχεται ο Ξένος	√	√		√	I	ΓΔ	I	√
[Απόμακρη άνοιξη]	√			√				
Ο οδηγός του ασανσέρ		√		√	I	ΓΔ	I	~~√~~
Οι γερόντισσες κι'…		√		√	III	X	III	X
Ο φαροφύλακας				√	I	ΓΔ	I	~~√~~
Το παράθυρο		√		√	I	ΓΔ	I	√
[Άρνηση]				ΓΔ				
Η γέφυρα		√		√				
Το νεκρό σπίτι		√		√	II	√	II	√
[Παρεκβάσεις]				ΓΔ				
[Τα κλειδιά]				ΓΔ				
Ο τελευταίος … Λίντιτσε				√				
Κάτω … του βουνού				√	II	√	II	√
Χορικό σφουγγαράδων				√	III	X	III	X
[Ο ταπεινός]						ΓΔ		
[Νυχτερινό γυμνό]				√	√ ?	ΓΔ	√ ?	~~√~~
Δελφοί					I	ΓΔ	II	~~√~~
Η ώρα των ποιμένων				√	I	ΓΔ	I	~~√~~
Ορέστης					II	√	II	√
Δέντρο της φυλακής…						X		X
Φιλοκτήτης					II	√	III	√
Τειρεσίας					III	X	III	X
Περσεφόνη					II	√	III	√
Ισμήνη					II	√	III	√

Αγαμέμνων					II	√		√
Μαντατοφόρες						X		X
Χρυσόθεμις						√		√
Αίας						√		√
Ο αφανισμός της Μήλος						X		X
Η Ελένη						√		√
Η επιστροφή της Ιφιγένειας								√

√ = listed *in Fourth Dimension* (√ ? = listed with question mark; ~~√~~ = listed and then crossed out)

I; II; III = intended subsections of *Fourth Dimension*

ΓΔ = *Γενική δοκιμή*

X = Χορικά, intended subsection of *Fourth Dimension*

After writing nine long monological poems in just one year, between June 1956 and June 1957, the idea of a collection titled *Fourth Dimension* takes form throughout 1958, when for the first time in France the editor Pierre Seghers published a translation of four poems by Ritsos ('Η σονάτα του σεληνόφωτος,' 'Η εορτή των ανθέων,' 'Χειμερινή διαύγεια,' and 'Χρονικό') under the title *Quatrième dimension*. As the table shows, while Ritsos continues to compose more and more monologues and choral poems, this collection initially seemed to be the ground of formal experimentation: the lists up to 1962 contain poems of all types, from the mythological to the political and the choral ones. In the early 1960s, however, Ritsos begins to plan and publish the first volumes of his collected work, *Ποιήματα* (Poems), with the first and the second volumes appearing in 1961. The list in HABM 687/44 shows Ritsos's plans for the second, third, and fourth volumes of his collected work. Specifically, for his third volume, he only noted 'Τέταρτη διάσταση,' without listing the poems he intended to include, as he had done for the other volumes. Despite the list being fundamentally blank, this document reveals the poet's clear intention, in the early 1960s, to publish a volume under this title, finally in Greek. Around

the same time, he started to distinguish the poems of the series and to separate them between a *Τέταρτη διάσταση* proper and another collection, *Γενική δοκιμή*. This is shown in HABM 687/61, in which the former group always included most of the monologues and choral pieces written until then, while ΓΔ interestingly included, among other works, the poems he would later reject and leave unpublished.

The publication of the third volume of *Ποιήματα* in 1964 represented a turning point in the development of the collection. Indeed, with this volume, Ritsos started to take decisions and included there some of the earliest monologues, i.e., poems like 'Αποχαιρετισμός' and 'Η γέφυρα,' which are more politically explicit and non-mythological. He also included the collection *Γενική δοκιμή* with a completely different content from the list in HABM 687/61, but incorporating 'Η εορτή των ανθέων,' which since the 1958 French translation had always been listed under *Fourth Dimension*.

The lists that followed can all be dated around or after the crucial year 1967. In this final stage, the mythological direction of the collection becomes evident as Ritsos started to categorise the poems in three groups. HABM 687/1 is particularly illuminating regarding this new development; the list is indeed tripartite according to the poems' thematic content: group I contains non-mythological poems, such as 'Το παράθυρο' and 'Όταν έρχεται ο Ξένος;' group II is the mythological one, containing monologues like 'Ορέστης' and 'Αγαμέμνων;' and finally group III has the choral poems 'Τειρεσίας, 'Οι γερόντισσες κ'η θάλασσα,' and 'Το χορικό των σφουγγαράδων.' A similar division is also found in subsequent lists in 1971-72 (HABM 687/120 and 112), and the final list right before the publication of *Τδ* (HABM 687/208) in 1972 shows the final selection of the poems, with the clear exclusion of the non-mythological ones ('Ο οδηγός του ασανσέρ,' 'Ο φαροφύλακας,' 'Νυχτερινό γυμνό,' 'Η ώρα των ποιμένων' and 'Δελφοί' are crossed off the list) and the separation of the choral poems into a separate group. The excluded

poems would eventually be published in the fourth (1975), fifth (1975), and ninth (1989) volumes of *Ποιήματα*, with the exception of 'Νυχτερινό γυμνό' which remained unpublished.

Two final observations emerge from the handwritten lists. The nucleus of *Fourth Dimension* consisted, since the beginning, in 'Η σονάτα του σεληνόφωτος,' 'Χρονικό,' 'Χειμερινή διαύγεια,' and "Όταν έρχεται ο Ξένος,' whereas the very first mythological poems appeared in 1962, 'Το νεκρό σπίτι' and 'Κάτω απ' τον ίσκιο του βουνού,' written in 1959 and 1960 respectively. We have already mentioned that it is exactly in the early 1960s that Yannis Ritsos begins to think of the mythological monologues as a separate group within the *Fourth Dimension* series; but what the HABM lists reveal is the place of the most famous monologue, 'Η σονάτα του σεληνόφωτος,' within the mythological group, despite the fact that the protagonist is not explicitly a character of classical mythology. A first indication of the mythological character of 'Σονάτα' appears in December 1962, in the first separate edition of 'Κάτω απ' τον ίσκιο του βουνού,' where in the very last page Ritsos added a note: "*Η σονάτα του σεληνόφωτος*, *Το νεκρό σπίτι* και το *Κάτω απ' τον ίσκιο του βουνού*, αποτελούν, κατά κάποιο τρόπο, ένα είδος τριλογίας" (Ritsos 1962a, 38).[32] At this stage, the poet was still brewing his ideas, experimenting with the form of the dramatic monologue, and exploring the possibilities of the mythological voices. After the mythological turn in 1963, the ideas became clearer, and the idea of a tetralogy centred around Agamemnon and his family started to take shape. There is evidence of this in the first page of notebook HABM 687/1, which contains the second draft of 'Αγαμέμνων' (January 1967). The first page contains a list for a tetralogy

[32] The same note appeared also in the first separate edition of *Το νεκρό σπίτι* (Ritsos 1962b), which was published at the same time as *Κάτω απ' τον ίσκιο του βουνού* in December 1962, see Makrynikola (1993, 58).

that contains in order 'Αγαμέμνων,' 'Ορέστης,' 'Το νεκρό σπίτι,' and 'Κάτω απ' τον ίσκιο του βουνού.' Ritsos revised this list on the eve of the publication of Τδ in 1971 or 1972 – in HABM 687/112, he identified a "«Μυκήνες» Τετραλογία" composed of 'Σονάτα,' 'Ορέστης,' 'Το νεκρό σπίτι,' and 'Κάτω απ' τον ίσκιο του βουνού.' In other words, he is considering substituting 'Αγαμέμνων' with 'Σονάτα,' leaving space to possibly rethink the Woman in Black in 'Σονάτα' as Clytemnestra. In the published volume of Τδ, Ritsos maintained the House of Atreus bloc together, including all poems and adding two more ('Χρυσόθεμις' and 'Η επιστροφή της Ιφιγένειας'). As for 'Σονάτα,' it was eventually placed right before 'Αγαμέμνων,' as an introduction to the mythological section of the volume.

The tight connection between the mythological content and the final volume of Τδ is evident in Fig. 1 below, which shows the cumulative number of all poems year after year,

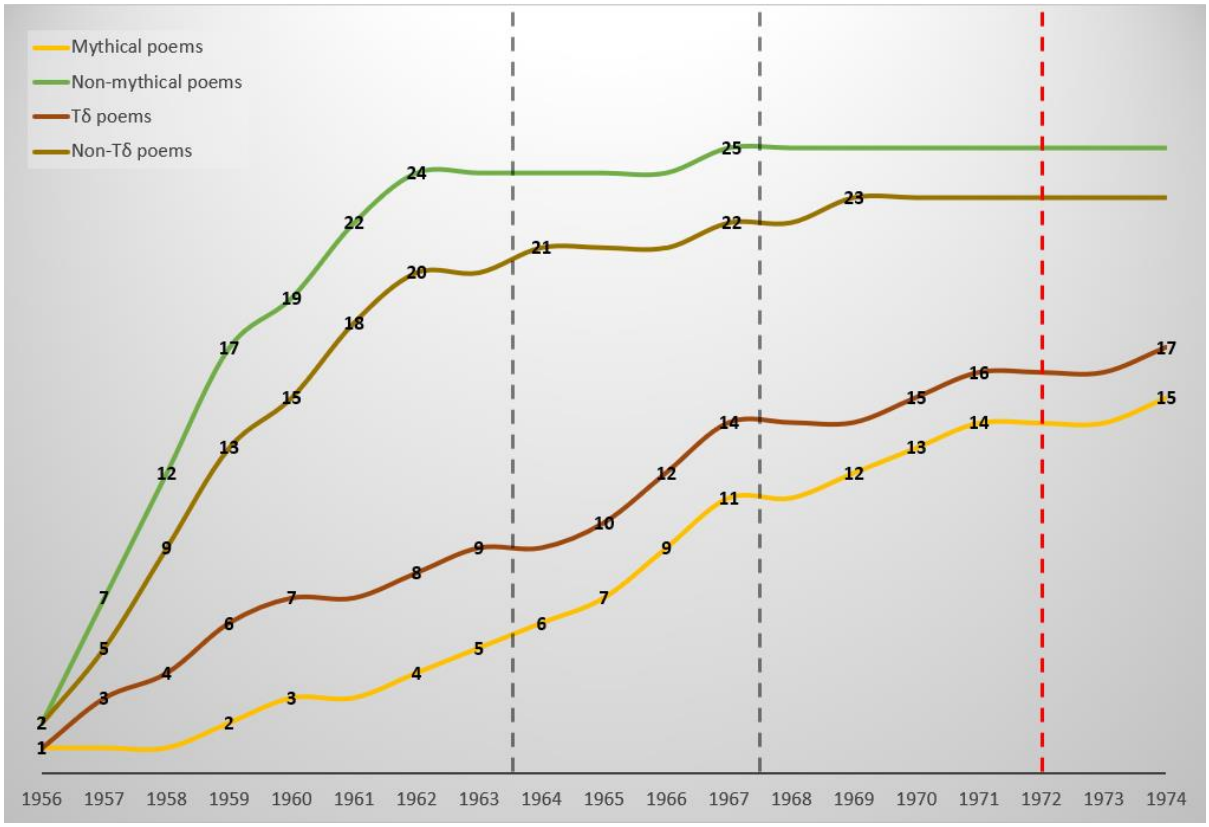


Figure 1- The development of Yannis Ritsos's Fourth Dimension *project, year after year, divided in mythical and non-mythical poems, and poems published in* Fourth Dimension *and published elsewhere.*

dividing them in four categories: the mythical and non-mythical poems,[33] and Τδ poems and poems eventually published in other volumes. The analysis of each line and of their interrelations then brings to the fore three watershed moments in the development of the collection, three moments deeply connected to the critical cultural context of the Greek 1960s and, in particular, to the ongoing influence of modernism and of a metamodernist awareness of being in a 'boundary' condition, be it an ideological crisis within the Communist movement or a physical experience of confinement and isolation.

The first observation to emerge from this chart is that the mythical line and the Τδ line follow a parallel increasing trajectory, while the non-mythical line and that of the non-Τδ poems are also parallel, but their curve flattens after the crucial year 1963. In fact, the number of mythological poems written after 1963 rises quite sharply, whereas Ritsos stopped to write non-mythological poems after that year, apart from the politically charged choral 'Μαντατοφόρες,' conceived in the prison camp of Yaros immediately after his arrest in April 1967. Observing the correlation between the mythical content and the place of publication of the poems, it emerges clearly that all mythological poems were included in the 1972 edition of Τδ, except for two poems, 'Τειρεσίας' and 'Ο αφανισμός της Μήλος,'[34] written in 1964 and in 1969 respectively. This is explicable in terms of formal features, since they are the only choral poems written after 1963 (alongside the already mentioned 'Μαντατοφόρες') and therefore excluded from Τδ (see HABM 687/120 and 208). It is safe to argue, then, that Yannis Ritsos intended Τδ to contain only formal monologues.

[33] For the reasons above, 'Η σονάτα του σεληνόφωτος' is counted here as a mythological poem.

[34] Although it is not purely of mythological content, 'Ο αφανισμός της Μήλος' is still of classical content, being set in antiquity, during the Peloponnesian War (431 – 403 BCE), after the destructive Athenian siege of the neutral island of Milos in 416 BCE. It is therefore included among the 'mythological' poems.

From the analysis of the graph, it is possible to distinguish three main periods in the construction of *Fourth Dimension*: 1956-62; 1963-67; 1968-72. The first period, beginning in 1956, is characterised by experimentation with the form of the dramatic monologue, with Ritsos producing in this timespan most of the long poems (28, of which only four contain mythological characters). The year 1963 constitutes a watershed moment, as Ritsos clearly dedicated himself to the mythical poems and decided to publish some of the non-mythical ones in other volumes. Finally, it is in the years following 1967 that the collection took its definitive form, with the exclusion of the choral poems and of the remaining poems set in the contemporary moment.

But what happens in 1956, 1963, and 1967 to determine these pivotal changes in the development of the collection? In the next sections, I explore these three moments in Ritsos's poetic life in relation to the historical context, bringing to the surface the deep connections between the poet, his *Fourth Dimension*, and the metamodernist condition of the boundary.

2.1.2 AT THE ORIGINS OF THE *FOURTH DIMENSION* (1956-1963)

Yannis Ritsos's project is deeply rooted in the years immediately following the Greek Civil War and in his first-hand experience of those traumatic years as a political exile in the prison islands, Yaros, Leros, Makronissos, and Ai-Stratis. After four years of imprisonment, Ritsos was finally released from the Ai-Stratis camp in August 1952 and returned to Athens. Despite the imprisonment and the ongoing illegality of the KKE, the poet did not abandon his political activism, beginning a collaboration with the newly founded left-wing party Ενιαία Δημοκρατική Αριστερά (ΕΔΑ), and contributing to its newspaper *Η αυγή* (The Dawn).

The death of the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin in March 1953 deeply shook the staunchly Communist Yannis Ritsos, which stirred in the poet a strong feeling of loss at an ideological, if not personal, level. In the days immediately following Stalin's death, Ritsos wrote a series of poems under the title *Μαυσωλείο* (Mausoleum), one of which published in *Η αυγή* on 5 March 1953. His passionate verses express utter disbelief, a loss impossible to accept:

> Όχι. Δεν είναι αλήθεια.
> Δεν είναι αλήθεια.
>
> Σταματήστε λοιπόν τις καμπάνες
> Σταματήστε τις.
>
> Ο Ιωσήφ Βησαριόνοβιτς Στάλιν
> είναι παρών
> στο παγκόσμιο πόστο του.
> […]
>
> ('ΙΙΙ. Στην εξέδρα του ήλιου,' *Μαυσωλείο*)[35]

As Stalin was perceived as the major point of reference, his death came as a shock for the poet, who continues his lament:

> […]
> Τώρα
> Στο Μέγαρο των Συνδικάτων
> ο Στάλιν έγειρε να κοιμηθεί.
> Δε μας ακούει πια.
> Δε μας ακούει.
>
> Μόνο η φωνή του
> στον τηλεβόα του ήλιου.
>
> Πού θα μιλήσουμε τώρα;
> Ποιος θα μας ακούσει;
> Ποιος θα μας ακούσει;

[35] The collection of poems *Μαυσωλείο* was written on 4-15 March 1953 and remained unpublished. It is preserved in the Ritsos Archive, HABM 687, folder 3, item 39. See item B127, in Makrynikola 1993, 259.

Μόνα τα λόγια μας θα βόσκουν
στις ερημιές των άστρων.
[…]

('IV. Ορφάνεια,' *Μαυσωλείο*)

The deep sense of "ορφάνεια" that Ritsos felt at the news of Stalin's death led the poet to explore new, less directly engaged, creative pathways. The years between 1953 and 1956 are characterised by a creative crisis, even though his personal life was marked by two happy events: in December 1954, Ritsos married Samiot doctor Falitsa Georgiadou, who would give birth to their only daughter Eri in August of the following year. Despite these joyful moments and his return to publishing after the Civil War with the collection *Αγρύπνια* (Insomnia) in 1954, the poet was deeply dissatisfied with his work and found himself almost at a standstill.

In a handwritten note on the cover of an unpublished collection of poems written in 1955, titled *Μικρά μαθήματα ευτυχίας* (Small Lessons of Happiness),[36] Ritsos wrote: "Περίεργο: Το 1955 είναι η χειρότερη χρονιά της ποίησής μου. Δε βρίσκω τίποτα της προκοπής. Φλυαρία και προχειρότητα. Πού και πού κανένας στίχος κάτι πάει να πει και πνίγεται." The political impetus that had fired Ritsos's poetry in the previous decade was fading and his verses did not seem to be expressive enough anymore. It is clear that he is going through a transitional phase in his career, in search of a new poetic voice after the traumatic experience of the prison camps and the political uncertainties following Stalin's death. While some parts of *Μαυσωλείο* suggest that Ritsos initially attempted to continue his previous political poetry, in private the poet felt at his lowest, at a standstill.

1956 represents a real turning point in Ritsos's career with the standalone publication of *Η σονάτα του σεληνόφωτος*, which won him the 1956 Greek National

[36] Ritsos Archive, HABM 687, folder 3, item 59.

Poetry Prize. As Table 1 above shows, 'Σονάτα' is in reality only the first of the many monologues that Ritsos began to write since that year – the form of the monologue, indeed, offered the poet a way out from the creative standstill he found himself in in the first half of the 1950s. But what was it that led Ritsos to experiment with the dramatic monologue, a more intimate poetic form compared to the politically charged verses of the 1940s?

To a certain extent, the answer to this question has already been given by previous scholars. Chrysa Prokopaki, Ritsos's close friend, has argued that the new phase of his poetry that *Fourth Dimension* opened

> δεν είναι άσχετη με τις ανακατατάξεις που συντελούνται στο σοσιαλιστικό στρατόπεδο. […] Η σχετική διεύρυνση των πλαισίων στο σοσιαλιστικό στρατόπεδο μετά το 1956 (είδωλα που γκρεμίστηκαν, κάποια πληροφόρηση, αναφορά σε οικεία κακά από επίσημα χείλη) ανοίγει δειλά κάποιες προοπτικές. Πέρα από το περιεχόμενο και τους στόχους των έργων, η ίδια η γραφή αποκτά ως ένα βαθμό τη δυνατότητα ν' αναζητήσει τους δρόμους της έξω από τους διάφορους ρεαλισμούς, χωρίς το φάντασμα του εστετισμού, του ερμητισμού ή της παρακμής. (Prokopaki 1981, 306)

In mentioning the 'rearrangements in the socialist field,' Prokopaki refers to two main events within the Communist movement that indeed marked a radical change in attitudes and perspectives, and that had an inevitable influence on Ritsos himself. In February 1956, during the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the new leader of the party, Nikita Khrushchev gave the famous 'Secret Speech' in which he condemned the cult of personality developed around the figure of Stalin. This speech signalled a radical change in the internal politics of the Soviet Union, a process that aimed at 'de-Stalinising' the nation and thus initiating a series of reform that would take the

USSR to overcome the economic, social, and cultural crisis of the late Stalinist years.[37] While the content of this pivotal speech was made public only in early June 1956 by the U.S. Department of State, "[i]nformation concerning this speech soon became the subject of rumours in Moscow, and different versions of the speech were reported by foreign journalists from about March 10 on" (Russian Institute 1956, 2). In the same days in early March 1956, also the Communist Party of Greece experienced a radical change. During the 6th Plenum of the Central Committee of the party, under the influence of the Soviet Communist Party, the general secretary Nikos Zachariadis, who had led the KKE from 1931 through the Civil War, was removed from office, accused of irregularities in the leadership of the party and of collaborating with the Greek ruling class.[38] Zachariadis would eventually be expelled from the KKE during the 7th Plenum the following year and sent into exile in Siberia, where he committed suicide in 1973.

Considering the strong ideological connections that Yannis Ritsos had with both leaders – Stalin and Zachariadis – whom he had idealised and exalted both in previous poems, such as in 'Ο σύντροφός μας Νίκος Ζαχαριάδης' (Our Comrade Nikos Zachariadis, 1945) and in 'Οι γειτονιές του κόσμου' (The Neighbourhoods of the World, 1949-51), Veloudis's (1977, 17-8) and Prokopaki's (1981) argument that these two events had a pivotal role in shaping a new phase in Ritsos's poetry is valid. Ritsos's deeply rooted belief in Communism had always been an unshakable point of reference. The blind trust in the Soviet model had supported him and his political activism during the harsh years of the German Occupation during the Second World War and the Greek Civil War that followed it. Nevertheless, despite his idealized view of the Soviet Union, 1956 constituted the pinnacle of the ideological crisis which had begun three years earlier – the de-

[37] See Jones 2006
[38] See Giannikopoulos 2001

Stalinization process in the USSR and the expulsion of the historical Communist Greek leader Zachariadis represented the shattering of the centre for Ritsos, who found himself struggling through the ensuing uncertainties and transitions.

Situated in this cultural boundary and transitional space, Ritsos began to turn inwards, towards aesthetic experimentation, in the attempt to address the crumbling centre that Stalinism represented for him in the external world. In June 1956, immediately after the publication of Khrushchev's Secret Speech by the American government, Ritsos wrote the first two monologues of the cycle ('Η σονάτα του σεληνόφωτος' and 'Έκτη αίσθηση'), and an intense period of creativity and experimentation for the poet began. I have shown how, in those first years, Ritsos composed over twenty monologues and choral poems, more than half of the total number of poems. However, beyond the common formal features and the general title of the collection, the poems of this period show a great variety of styles, themes, and protagonists. For example, some poems do not have stage directions ('Χειμερινή διαύγεια,' 'Η εορτή των ανθέων,' 'Όταν έρχεται ο Ξένος'), while the choral pieces feature a plurality of voices instead of the usual monologizing self. Finally, Ritsos experimented with the characters as if he were searching for the most appropriate voice to inhabit. His experiences in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe, where he travelled extensively between 1956 and 1962, are reflected in the typology of the speakers, alongside his persistent political message: from the Cypriot fighter Grigoris Afxentiou in 'Αποχαιρετισμός' to the old Czech survivor of a Nazi slaughter in 'Ο τελευταίος κ' ο πρώτος του Λίντιτσε,' Ritsos began to explore the nature of the boundary moment, through the voices of those who experienced it. The fight against colonialism, or the difficult post-traumatic negotiation between the act of forgetting as a survival strategy

and that of memorialising for future generations, are boundary moments when individuals had to fight from within, in the most critical conditions.

Among these many characters, Ritsos began to approach classical mythology, inspired especially by Sophocles,[39] and the other ancient tragedians. Excluding the special case of 'Σονάτα,' his first two overtly mythological monologues are 'Το νεκρό σπίτι' and 'Κάτω απ' τον ίσκιο του βουνού,' written in 1959 and 1960 respectively. In both poems, the speaker is an aged Electra, daughter of Agamemnon, whose family would eventually be the heart of *Fourth Dimension*. From these first poems, it is already possible to distinguish the main traits of Ritsos's classical reception: de-mythologisation and recontextualisation of the characters, portrayed in their old age or in private and intimate moments. I would suggest that this unusual and unexpected shift of perspective echoes the fall of Stalinism, with the open challenge to the idealisation of Stalin and the de-Stalinisation of the Soviet ideological model. However, it is after 1963 that the interest in the mythological characters really became central for the project. The radical influence of these events on Ritsos's life and poetry should be recontextualised by taking into account also his close ties to modernism: from a 'generational' perspective, traditional scholars such as Mario Vitti (1979) have placed Ritsos within the Generation of the 1930s, as he had indeed appeared on the Greek literary scene in that crucial decade and he had contributed to the Greek modernist push clashing with the previous tradition in order to establish a fruitful conversation with the rest of Europe. However, in the framework of the Greek metamodernist 1960s, Ritsos's engagement with the modernist models of C.P. Cavafy and Vladimir Mayakovsky represented a turning point for his project.

[39] During the 1960s, Yannis Ritsos worked first hand on the classical texts. An important example is his poetical rendition of Sophocles's *Antigone*, originally translated by Tassos Lignadis and performed for the first time at the Lycabettus Theatre in Athens on 12 July 1965, during the heyday of the political turmoil of *Iouliana*. See Ritsos 2020.

2.1.3 THE MYTHOLOGICAL TURN AND THE ENCOUNTER WITH MODERNISM (1963-1966)

Around 1963, the experimentation of the first phase came to an end: *Fourth Dimension* acquired a 'mythological dimension,' crystallised in the dramatic monologues of classical material, all eventually included in Τδ, except for the choral poems 'Τειρεσίας' and 'Ο αφανισμός της Μήλος.' It can therefore be argued that this moment constituted a proper mythological turn for Ritsos and his project.

While acknowledging the new mythological path undertaken by Ritsos, previous scholarship does not seem to identify the roots that determined this development of *Fourth Dimension*. Jeffreys (1994) reports a financial change in 1960 and the unsuccessful elections of 16 February 1964, in which Ritsos was a candidate with ΕΔΑ; however, he simply observes that "Τέταρτη διάσταση was redefined by 1964 to exclude the political and the direct" (Jeffreys 1994, 76) and that "[i]t was probably the increasing numbers of [...] poems with mythical subjects and stage directions which led to a change of plan" (Jeffreys 1994, 72). Similarly, Prokopaki identifies the period 1963-66 as the peak of Ritsos's poetic investigations, signalling that this is "the period when the intense participation of the poet in the political life and the processes taking place in the Greek movement stimulate him particularly" (Prokopaki 1981, 318-9. My translation). Again, reference is made to Ritsos's direct participation in the political life of the country with his candidacy for the 1964 elections; however, Prokopaki does not delve into the connections between the historical context and Ritsos's rich production in those years. In fact, she lists a number of works, among which attention should be drawn to the *12 ποιήματα για τον Καβάφη* and the essay *Περί Μαγιακόβσκη*. While Prokopaki refers to these two texts for the insight they offer into Ritsos's poetics, I suggest returning to them

from a wider perspective to underline their key role in determining the post-1963 mythological turn of the project.

It was not the first time that Ritsos had engaged with Cavafy's and Mayakovsky's works. In fact, already in August 1945 the weekly cultural periodical *Ελεύθερα γράμματα* (Free Letters) announced that, among Ritsos's works destroyed during the war, there was a "περίεργη μισοτελειωμένη μελέτη για τον Καβάφη" (Anonymous 1945, 15), which he never rewrote in the following years. As for Mayakovsky, Ritsos had collaborated with Aris Alexandrou on the translation of some of the Russian poems, which were published in December 1947 in *Ελεύθερα γράμματα* (Mayakovsky 1947). However, it is in 1963 that Ritsos returns to both poets in a more systematic way: on the one hand, he wrote and published the collection *12 ποιήματα για τον Καβάφη* on the occasion of the national celebrations for the centenary of Cavafy's birth, published in November 1963. Similarly, Ritsos returned to his co-translations of Vladimir Mayakovsky's poems, some of which appeared in *Επιθεώρηση τέχνης* (Ritsos 1963b) and are introduced by the seminal essay *Περί Μαγιακόβσκη*. The full volume of translations is eventually printed a year later, in April 1964. In the context of *Fourth Dimension*, it is interesting to explore the relation between these texts, starting from the fact that their intersection coincides timewise with the mythological turn. Ritsos's work on Cavafy's and Mayakovsky's modernist models, then, contributed to his change in perspective, pushing him more and more towards the mythic dimension and its "magic of distance" (Ritsos, in Jeffreys 1994, 75).

Yannis Ritsos began to re-evaluate Cavafy in the postwar period, in line with the general reception of his work in Greece, and he actually contributed to Cavafy's canonisation, for which 1963 is a crucial year. Ritsos's poems appeared in the context of George Savvidis's works on Cavafy's archive and his edition of Cavafy's poems, including

the 'Hidden' ones. Ritsos does not offer a canonical critical approach to Cavafy's work, nor does he cite him as a direct influence in his own poetry. My point, however, is to connect Ritsos's mythological turn of *Fourth Dimension* with his encounter with the modernist model of Cavafy and with the latter's approach to history and memory. Cavafy's poetics, in Ritsos's first poem of the collection, represented "ένα μέτρο υπέροχο | να μετρηθούμε" ('Αξιοποίηση,' *12 ποιήματα για τον Καβάφη*, in Ritsos 1963a, 20) and, in a sense, Ritsos drew from him crucial tools to address his existential and historical preoccupations. The 're-discovery' of Cavafy "functioned as a *place of refuge* for Ritsos" (Paleou 2005, 58), who at a turning point of his career identified in Cavafy a reference point that echoed his own aesthetic research and preoccupations of the time. This shows how Ritsos was still moving within the field of modernism, testing at the same time its boundaries. Three aspects are particularly relevant for Ritsos's poetics of *Fourth Dimension*: Cavafy as a poet of the boundary; the separation between poet and poetic voice; and the dialogic nature of Ritsos's Cavafian poems.

The first half of the collection focuses on the figure of Cavafy, portraying his presence inside his room, described in great detail. "Κάθεται, αόρατος σχεδόν, στην πολυθρόνα, | έχοντας πάντα το παράθυρο στη ράχη του" ('Ο χώρος του ποιητή,' *12 ποιήματα για τον Καβάφη*, in Ritsos 1963a, 9), Cavafy is introduced backlit, as an almost invisible shape that dissolves inside the room, while he is turning his back to the window and, metaphorically, to the outside world. Ritsos, therefore, represents Cavafy as a recluse, and yet observing the world from his marginal perspective, from behind his eyeglasses, "γυάλινο φρούριο απρόσωπο, φράγμα και παρατηρητήριο" ('Τα γυαλιά του,' *12 ποιήματα για τον Καβάφη*, in Ritsos 1963a, 13). For Ritsos, Cavafy and his poetry symbolise the boundary, both as a physical reality and as a filter through which to read

reality. According to this reading, the poem 'Καταφύγια,' at the centre of the collection, is pivotal:

> «Έκφραση – λέει – δε σημαίνει να πεις κάτι,
> αλλά απλώς να μιλήσεις· και το να μιλήσεις
> σημαίνει ν' αποκαλυφθείς· – πώς να μιλήσεις;»
> Κι έγινε τότε τόσο διάφανη η σιωπή του
> που κρύφτηκε όλος πίσω απ' την κουρτίνα
> κάνοντας πως κοιτάζει απ' το παράθυρο.
> Μα, ως νά 'νιωσε το βλέμμα μας στη ράχη του,
> έστρεψε βγάζοντας το πρόσωπό του απ' την κουρτίνα
> σα να φορούσε ένα λευκό, μακρύ χιτώνα,
> κάπως αστείον, κάπως παράταιρον στην εποχή μας,
> και τό 'θελε (ή το προτιμούσε) ίσως νομίζοντας
> πως έτσι, κατά κάποιο τρόπο, θα παραπλανούσε
> την υποψία μας, την εχθρότητά μας ή τη λύπη μας
> ή πως μας χορηγούσε κάποιο πρόσχημα
> για τον μελλοντικό (που 'χε μαντέψει) θαυμασμό μας.
>
> ('Καταφύγια,' *12 ποιήματα για τον Καβάφη*, in Ritsos 1963a, 14)

In his poignant silence, Cavafy hides behind a curtain pretending to look outside the window, while keeping his attention on the inside of the room. This oscillation between the inside and the outside, the margin and the centre, the private and the public, would be picked up by Ritsos and would become a central theme in the mythical monologues. This poem also plays with the overlap of present (curtain) and past (chiton, "κάπως παράταιρον στην εποχή μας"), suggesting this technique as a shield to face the "suspicion" and the "hostility" of the present. The poet, that is, chooses to hide behind the poetic mask of historical and mythological characters, through which to transform the initial silence into "έκφραση." Veloudis (1981) focuses on this feature as one of the ways in which Ritsos embraces Cavafy's poetics:

> Η *προσφυγή στην ιστορία* – και τη μυθολογία – για την εξασφάλιση μιας αφηγηματικής μάσκας, ενός ποιητικού άλλοθι, που καθορίζει αποφασιστικά τα περισσότερα από τα ποιήματα της *Τέταρτης διάστασης* του Ρίτσου […] είναι ένα κοινά αναγνωρισμένο

> ουσιαστικό χαρακτηριστικό και της καβαφικής έμπνευσης κι εκτέλεσης. (Veloudis 1981, 181-2, original emphasis)

Speaking of Cavafy as a poet of the boundary also assumes this temporal dimension. In his historical poems, Cavafy wears the mask of characters both from the geographical borders of the Hellenistic or Roman Empires, and from the transitional periods of ancient history that Hellenism and the late Roman Empire represent. Similarly, Ritsos turns towards the Greek mythological past in an imaginative way, as the many anachronisms demonstrate. Just like Cavafy, Ritsos decides to decentre the references to the ancient world, a move made even more powerful as it is effected mainly through 'central' mythological figures, such as Agamemnon and Helen.

The last aspect of *12 ποιήματα* that left its trace in Ritsos's subsequent monologues is the 'dialogic' structure of the poems. The monologising historical character is already a frequent trope in Cavafy's poems, but what strikes in this Cavafian collection by Ritsos is the imagined direct interaction between the senior and the junior, as if Ritsos were hinting at a direct influence. Indeed, in these poems, Cavafy is observed by the subjectivity of the collective "we," physically present in the room with the poet, whom they listen to and question, like students in the presence of their intellectual guide.[40] In other words, the *12 ποιήματα* constitute an open conversation between Cavafy and Ritsos, in which the former gradually reveals himself to the latter, leaving him a poetical testament, a "μέτρο υπέροχο," "το ξίφος του Αρχαγγέλου" ('Αξιοποίηση,' *12 ποιήματα για τον Καβάφη*, in Ritsos 1963a, 20) that will symbolically lead him onto the new creative phase of the *Fourth Dimension*.

[40] This setting seems to be later replicated in the dramatic monologue *Φιλοκτήτης*, in which the generational exchange between Neoptolemus and Philoctetes is a central theme. See Tziovas 2014.

Almost contemporary to the composition of the *12 ποιήματα για τον Καβάφη*, Yannis Ritsos presented in the pages of the periodical *Επιθεώρηση τέχνης* his translation of some poems of the modernist Soviet poet Vladimir Mayakovsky (Ritsos 1963b), accompanied by a critical essay written a few months earlier, in May 1963. While his reading of Mayakovsky's poetry is heavily influenced by his ideological stance, this essay has often been quoted in relation to Ritsos's poetics and his use of the dramatic monologue in his collection. Critics have considered this 1963 essay to be an almost programmatic text, which exposes the poetics of *Fourth Dimension* and «τη σύνδεση που κάνει [ο Γιάννης Ρίτσος] της ιστορικής στιγμής και της ιδεολογίας με την ποίηση και την ποιητική» (Prokopaki 1981, 319). Without disputing Prokopaki's reading, it must be noted, however, that she overlooks the figure of the Soviet poet, who is the real subject of the essay, thus shifting the focus onto Ritsos's personal poetics, rather than on his actual comment on contemporary poetry in general. In fact, re-reading this essay closely, I would claim that it is not a coincidence that Ritsos expressed his ideas on contemporary poetic trends in relation to Mayakovsky's modernist model. *Περί Μαγιακόβσκη* constitutes a proper metamodernist moment, and it is one that plays a crucial role in the construction of Ritsos's *Fourth Dimension*.

Ritsos structured the essay in three parts: the first pages are devoted to the critique of literary criticism itself and of the role of the critic; then, he presents Mayakovsky's poetics, and it is only in the concluding pages that he addresses the features of contemporary poetry in relation to the Soviet poet.

The first section on criticism brings to the fore the concept of historical time and literature, which is key throughout the whole essay. According to Ritsos, the literary critic presents themself as a "επόπτη[ς], ελεγκτή[ς], [...] διδάσκαλο[ς] απέναντι του ποιητή, όταν μάλιστα ένα μεγάλο μέρος των κριτηρίων του έχει διαμορφωθεί κάτω απ' την

επίδραση του κρινόμενου έργου" (Ritsos 1974, 9). There is, Ritsos alludes, a temporal inversion where the position of the critic comes before that of the criticised author, whose work gets dissected into its different parts:

> Η κριτική, συχνά αποσυνθέτει τη συνθετική εικόνα-υπόσταση της ποίησης, χωρίζοντας τα διάφορα στοιχεία της, (ιδέες, αισθήματα, συγκινήσεις, λόγο, ρυθμό, εικόνα, τεχνική στίχου κ.τ.λ.) [... Μ'] αυτό τον τρόπο, η κριτική θέτει μια προϋπόθεση του έργου (αρκετά αυθαίρετα, αφού η κριτική αρχίζει μετά το έργο, κι απ' το έργο) [...] και το κατατάσσει και το αξιολογεί, έξω απ' το δικό του χρόνο και χώρο, έξω απ' τη δική του αναγκαιότητα. (Ritsos 1974, 10-11)

According to Ritsos, then, literary criticism risks to produce a partial reading of the work, which lacks the *syn*-thetic perspective that maintains the unity of the object under analysis, including its wider historical context in which it was produced. This latter element is particularly important to him, so much so that he returns to it both in his reading of Mayakovsky and in his famous comments on contemporary Greek poetry.

Ritsos centres his analysis of Mayakovsky's work around two main concepts, closely intertwined with the revolutionary moment that led to the establishment of the Soviet Union in 1917. On the one hand, Mayakovsky's poetry is characterised by what Ritsos calls "θάμβος," a dazzle that blinds its readers and that stems from the poet's excitement and unshakeable faith in the revolution and in progress. His poetry is deeply rooted in the present moment and faces the future with hope. Mayakovsky's "dazzle," Ritsos comments, is expressed by the tendency to hyperbole, "συνεχής προσπάθεια [...] να καταπολεμήσει τις κάθε είδους εναντιότητες, δυσκολίες, στερήσεις, κούραση, αγρύπνια, [...] μεταθέτοντας τη λύση δύσκολων και περίπλοκων προβλημάτων του παρόντος, σ' ένα άμεσο μέλλον" (Ritsos 1974, 17). Hence, the second characteristic of Mayakovsky's poetry, that of the 'bridge', of the bridging function of the dazzle, "ένα *γεφύρωμα* ανάμεσα

στο παρόν και στο μέλλον, ανάμεσα στο πραγματικό και το φανταστικό, ανάμεσα στο άτομο και στην ομάδα, ανάμεσα στον άνθρωπο και στον κόσμο, ανάμεσα στη ζωή και στ' όνειρο, πάνω από κάθε δυσκολία και κάθε προσωπικό δράμα" (Ritsos 1974, 20, original emphasis). Mayakovsky constructs such a bridge through the use of concrete objects in his poetry, as well as by including the small details of everyday life, which "πετυχαίνουν συχνά να τιθασεύσουν την υπεροπτική και τραγική μοναχικότητα, να εξανθρωπίσουν το απάνθρωπο της οντολογικής αγωνίας του ατόμου" (Ritsos 1974, 21). In this sense, Ritsos takes Mayakovsky's poetry as a perfect example of social poetry that responds to political, ideological, social, and party needs, showing that poetry plays an important role in the historical context of its production and from which it cannot be abstracted. Indeed, Ritsos concludes that "[τ]ο ιδεολογικό υπόβαθρο της τέχνης, το κοινωνικό και ηθικό, αν δεν είναι ο πρώτος λόγος της αξίας της, είναι ωστόσο ο τελικός" (Ritsos 1974, 25), as poetry by expressing the needs of the individual, finally becomes expression of the whole of humanity.

Ritsos then turns towards contemporary poetry, highlighting the important differences with Mayakovsky's model: "στα μέτρα της εποχής μας, δεν εφαρμόζεται το μέγεθος της ενθουσιαστικής του πίστης, ο μελλοντισμός του, κι ο βροντερός του λόγος" (Ritsos 1974, 28). Mayakovsky constitutes a counterbalance to what contemporary poetry is for Ritsos; if Mayakovsky coincides with a modernist/futurist revolutionary poetry that addresses the hopes and the belief in the future, contemporary poetry is indeed metamodernist for the reasons that Ritsos himself outlines:

> Απ' το 1930 ως τώρα, μεσολάβησαν πολλά γεγονότα [...] Μεγάλες και τρομερές εμπειρίες – ηρωισμοί κ' εγκλήματα, θυσίες, αίματα, άθλοι και στάχτη και λάσπη. Επιστημονικά θαύματα, ανάπτυξη του τεχνικού πολιτισμού, η εξάπλωση του σοσιαλιστικού στρατοπέδου, αλλά κι αντιδράσεις και δυσκολίες και κίνδυνοι. Οι πρώτες κραυγές του ενθουσιασμού και του θαυμασμού,

> παραχωρούν τη θέση τους σε μια πιο σιωπηλή περίσκεψη. (Ritsos 1974, 28-29)

The harsh experiences of the wars of the 1940s have created a gap, a sort of radical discontinuity between Mayakovsky's poetics and contemporary poetry, moving from a hopeful message of futurity to the silent discretion of 1950s and 1960s poetry. Ritsos observes that contemporary artists address the deep gap opening between postwar historical developments (technological progress, national reconstruction) and the inner consciousness of the individuals: "Οδυνηρή υπήρξε η διαπίστωση πως οι συντελούμενες αλλαγές στον οικονομικοκοινωνικό τομέα, δεν πετυχαίνουν το ίδιο γρήγορα και σταθερά την αλλαγή του ανθρώπου" (Ritsos 1974, 31). Artists and poets express the discrepancy between the socio-economical sector and the human development of the individual in the attempt to attain again the unity "του παγκόσμιου πνευματικού πολιτισμού," of which Mayakovsky's revolutionary message was a leading voice. Contrary to all other literary critics who were branding contemporary poetry as "σκοτεινή," "δυσνόητη," "μη λαϊκή," "παρακμιακή," Ritsos defends it as a "*διαυγής* εικόνα της αγονίας και του αγώνα του ανθρώπου, για μεγαλύτερη ανθρωπιά και ουσιαστικότερη ελευθερία" (Ritsos 1974, 31, original emphasis). This process of re-centring is reflected in the formal features of contemporary poetry; where Mayakovsky would use the first person to represent the collective 'we' of the whole of humanity (just like in Ritsos's previous politically engaged poetry), now poets shift towards a "μετριοπαθέστερο [...] πιο αντικειμενικό" second or third person. Furthermore, as the often-quoted passage points out:

> Το ρήμα, απ' τον ενεστώτα και τον μέλλοντα και την προσταχτική, μεταφέρεται στον παρατατικό, στον αόριστο, στον υπερσυντέλικο και στη μετοχή, - χαρακτηριστικό της σύγχρονης ποίησης να περιλάβει και τον παρελθόντα χρόνο. (Ritsos 1974, 29)

Should poets feel the need to use a first person and the present tense, Ritsos concludes, they recur to a third person mask or, as Ritsos says, they "wear" (ντύνεται) a third person mask, thus transforming the subject into the object, while also giving subject-status to the object.

Reading Ritsos's essay in its full dimension shows more clearly how, for him, the poetic self nests on a 'γεφύρωμα,' a liminal position that resonates with Greek culture of the 1960s, of which his *Fourth Dimension* is emblematic. Ritsos makes an important reference to the downfall of myths in the essay: "Πολλοί μύθοι παλαιότεροι και νεότεροι γκρεμίστηκαν ή έπαθαν ανεπανόρθωτα ρήγματα, με σοβαρές επιπτώσεις στην ψυχολογία και στη σκέψη του ανθρώπου" (Ritsos 1974, 29). This, in turn, is contrasted with the dazzle of Mayakovsky's message, and it echoes Ritsos's personal disillusionment of 1956, when he began his *Fourth Dimension* project. But it is in May 1963, when he wrote the essay on Mayakovsky, that the mythological turn began to take shape with the composition of 'Φιλοκτήτης;' Ritsos turned to the foundational myths of ancient Greek culture to respond to the metamodernist needs of the boundary position, which he outlines in the essay. He recontextualised Greek mythology for a new transitional epoch, assuming mythological personae and returning to the farthest Greek past. By reverting to the first person of the dramatic monologue and the direct memories of the protagonists, Ritsos laid bare the metamodernist shift and gave subject status to the foundational myth-objects of Greek and Western culture.

The essay on Mayakovsky is not just a 'programmatic' text, as Prokopaki and other critics have read it. In fact, it needs to be stressed that by 1963, Ritsos had already written many dramatic monologues, albeit not of mythological content, and therefore the *Fourth Dimension* project was already well underway. The essay, however, does indeed appear at a decisive moment in the development of the collection when the poet defined the

project and gave it the mythological cut. Realising this makes us rethink Ritsos's assessment of Mayakovsky's modernism, and his view on where contemporary poetry stands *after* modernism. Seen in this light, Ritsos's turn to myth at this specific juncture seems to be an effort to underline the metamodernist standing of his major work, of which the boundary condition represents a central feature.

2.1.4 THE EXPERIENCE OF EXILE AS THE ULTIMATE BOUNDARY (1967-1972)

The third and last turning point in the construction and composition of *Fourth Dimension* coincides with a deeply traumatic moment for Yannis Ritsos: the military coup of 1967 and his immediate arrest and deportation to the prison camps in Yaros and Leros. After a decade of writing and rearranging the poems, the sudden loss of freedom coincides with the collection's finalisation; if 1956 represented the onset of the project and 1963 determined the turn towards the mythical past, the first years of the Junta and of Ritsos's imprisonment focused the project around the single voices of the monologists, excluding the choral pieces and finalising the list of poems for publication. Here, I make an assumption about the motives behind this final stage of the poems' production, supported by his personal correspondence held at the Ritsos Archive in HABM.

Immediately after the establishment of the Junta on 21 April 1967, Ritsos was arrested and soon transferred to the prison camp on the island of Yaros. Despite the international appeals for his liberation, at the beginning of July 1967 the poet was transferred to a bigger camp in Leros, where he stayed more than a year, until the end of October 1968 when he was granted home arrest in Samos due to his declining health. To this picture, one needs to add that in February of the same year, the KKE split when some

members of the central Politburo left the party to create the ΚΚΕ Εσωτερικού,[41] claiming their ideological and political independence from the Soviet Union:

> Διαφορετικές πρακτικές και απόψεις, διαφορετικοί τρόποι προσέγγισης της κοσμοθεωρίας, που επιφέρουν ανακατατάξεις στο παγκόσμιο κομμουνιστικό κίνημα, έχουν εκφρασθεί στην Ελλάδα με τη διάσπαση αυτή. Εμπειρία δραματική και τραυματική, καθώς συμβαίνει σε δύσκολες ώρες για την ίδια την πατρίδα. Οι χτεσινοί φίλοι και σύντροφοι γίνονται ιδεολογικοί εχθροί, παύει η επικοινωνία ανάμεσά τους. (Kotti 2009, 151)

The ideological fights within the party and, most importantly, the complete isolation during his house arrest on Samos seem to coincide with a new period of creative crisis and re-centring, as had happened in 1955-6, immediately before the beginning of the project. With his physical displacement and limitation, the boundary affect became a proper embodied experience for Ritsos, and, as his correspondence testifies, it impacted his work.

A particularly important testimony is Ritsos's letter of 2 April 1969 to his close friend and publisher, Nana (Athina) Kallianesi.[42] The relevance of this letter lies in the description Ritsos provides of his total isolation due to the house arrest. For an intellectual deeply involved in public life and in the cultural circles not just of Greece but also abroad, the complete detachment from his contacts proved incredibly challenging. The poet describes this condition in very physical terms:

> Έχουν μαζευτεί τόσα και τόσα μέσα μου που μόλις κάνω ν' ανοίξω το στόμα μου ξεμπουκάρουν όλα μαζί και μου κλείνουν το στόμα και χάνουν το στόχο τους [...] θάθελα να υπήρχε ένας αυτόματος τρόπος καταγραφής αυτών των εσωτερικών συμπιεσμένων

[41] For a historical overview of the split within the Greek Communist Party and the political development of the KKE Interior during the Colonels' dictatorship and in the first years of the democratic restoration, see Benas (2011). For a detailed study on the archives of the KKE Interior and their imbrication with the international communist movements, see Dangas and Leontidis (2009).

[42] Ritsos's letters to Nana Kallianesi are held in the Ritsos Archive, HABM 687, folder 37.

> δονήσεων [...] χωρίς τη μεσολάβηση του χεριού μου, του μυαλού μου, της λέξης. Το μόνο που μούρχεται στο στόμα είναι: ασφυξία, ασφυξία, ασφυξία, ασφυξία. Και πάλι: ασφυξία, ασφυξία. [...] Δε βλέπω κανέναν, δε μιλώ με κανέναν. Κανένας δεν τολμά νάρθει να με δει. [...] Νανάκι μου, πνίγομαι. (Ritsos, letter to Kallianesi, 2 April 1969)

If in his essay on Vladimir Mayakovsky's poetry Ritsos observed that silence was a main trend in contemporary poetry, now under the dictatorship's censorship silence is literal. The complete social isolation, which forbids him to have any intellectual exchange with his peers and results in a hoard of feelings and verses that suffocate him and blocks his own writing.

> Δεν αντέχω να παραδεχτώ πως τούτη η ασφυκτική σκλαβιά είναι η *πραγματικότητα*. Γι' αυτό και δεν μπορώ να γράψω τούτο το τελευταίο καιρό. Φοβάμαι μήπως, γράφοντας, πάρω πιο σκληρή συνείδηση τούτης της τρομερής πραγματικότητας, μήπως καταστήσω πιο πραγματική την πραγματικότητα. Γιατί η ποίηση δεν ξέρει ημίμετρα – <u>φτάνει ως την άκρη</u>. Κάποτε λέγαμε πως η ποίηση μπορεί νάναι μια διέξοδος ή μια έξοδος απ' τη δυσάρεστη πραγματικότητα. [...] Τώρα ξέρω ξανά πως η ποίηση ζει και πράττει την πραγματικότητα, κάνοντας πιο απλές τις συνταραχτικές αντανακλάσεις της πραγματικότητας στην ψυχή και στη συνείδηση του ανθρώπου. Γι' αυτό δεν μπορώ να γράψω. Μου χρειάζεται και μένα λίγη παρηγοριά και ξεκούραση. Κι αφού δεν μπορώ τούτη την ώρα να δώσω στους ανθρώπους λίγη παρηγοριά (που τόσο τη χρειάζομαι κι ο ίδιος) γιατί να γράψω; (Ritsos, letter to Kallianesi, 2 April 1969, my underlining)

The social function of poetry according to Yannis Ritsos emerges clearly through these lines and explains the writer's block, which stems from the close relation that Ritsos identifies between poetry and reality. In Ritsos's words, poetry *produces* reality and eases its harsh reflection on the human psyche, as if it were a medicine against the extremely critical historical moment. And exactly because he found himself in a position of suffocating isolation, Ritsos found it impossible to produce poetry that could benefit and bring solace to his wide audience.

The poet highlights this concept comparing his condition in house arrest to the prison camps in Yaros and Leros, in which he was particularly creative. Despite the terrible torture and sufferings, the fact that he was with other "ομοιοπαθείς" was actually a great relief and support, as they could share ideas and discuss literature. Indeed, as he mentions in other letters, he wrote and started planning plenty of new poetry in the prison camps, especially a new series of *Μαρτυρίες* and a new series of short poems that draw on ancient history and mythology, titled *Επαναλήψεις*. Moreover, on the prison islands he also started working on three works of *Fourth Dimension*: 'Χρυσόθεμις,' 'Αίας,' and 'Μαντατοφόρες.' However, once transferred to Samos under house arrest, he was deprived of this social aspect and, consequently, his writing stopped:

> Στη Λέρο δούλεψα αρκετά, κ' ίσως καλά. Έγραψα ένα μεγάλο ποίημα «Η Χρυσόθεμις και οι Ευμενίδες», μια μεγάλη σειρά «Μαρτυρίες», μιαν άλλη σειρά «Πέτρες», μιαν άλλη σειρά 53 ποιημάτων με θέματα απ' την αρχαία ελληνική μυθολογία και ιστορία με τον τίτλο «Επαναλήψεις». Κ' εδώ, σαν πρωτόρθα, βίασα τον εαυτό μου να δουλέψω. Επεξεργάστηκα τρεις – τέσσερις φορές τις «Πέτρες» και τις «Επαναλήψεις». Έγραψα κ' ένα πολύστιχο ποίημα, τον «Αίαντα» - τρομερή αποτυχία. Τον ξανάγραψα δεύτερη, τρίτη φορά. Πάλι αποτυχία. (Ritsos, letter to Kallianesi, 2 April 1969)

In terms of Ritsos's productivity, it is interesting to highlight the radical difference between his experience in the prison camp on Leros and the isolation on Samos under house arrest; in those critical months and years, the poet was pushed again to the limits, to the margins of society. However, while the experience of the prison camp shared with other "ομοιοπαθείς" represented a creative bridge between Ritsos and his readership, between the inside of the camp and an always imagined outside, the isolation of the house arrest shattered that bridge, cutting the social function of poetry that Ritsos discussed in the essay on Mayakovsky. The marginalization became stifling, Ritsos finally 'touched' the

extreme limit. I would argue that it is then – when the boundary becomes palpable and (seemingly) inescapable – that the poet found his way out through the 'fourth dimension' of the demythologized ancient myths and, more importantly, through the μονοπροοπτικότητα, the 'single perspective' of the dramatic monologue form, as Katerina Karatasou (2014, 26) puts it.

When Ritsos finally managed to establish his contacts with his circles in Athens again in autumn 1969, the situation indeed changed and he immediately found again the impulse to write, produce, and rework his drafts.

> Μεγάλο καλό μούκανε τούτος ο ερχομός σου. Έσπασε ο πάγος, που λένε. Δε νιώθω πια κείνο τον ασφυκτικό κλοιό να με σφίγγει όπως άλλοτε. Είμαι πάλι γαλήνιος, και, κάποτε, μπορώ να πω, και κεφάτος. Ζωγραφίζω πέτρες, κρατώ σημειώσεις για ένα μεγάλο ποίημα, επεξεργάζομαι ορισμένες σειρές παλαιότερων ποιημάτων, ξαναδούλεψα και ξανάγραψα 106 ποιήματα. [...] Καλά έκανες που επέμενες να σου στείλω ένα μέρος απ' την ανέκδοτη δουλειά μου. Αυτό μούδωσε την αίσθηση ότι ένα ζωντανό κομμάτι της ύπαρξής μου είναι ελεύθερο, μπορεί να δει το φως, να επικοινωνήσει με τον κόσμο, να ζήσει πλατιά, να με ζήσει. Είχες δίκιο. (Ritsos, letter to Kallianesi, 1 October 1969)

This new sense of freedom and the following creative impulse coincided with the lift of preventive censorship in November 1969, which finally enabled intellectuals to publish again. This is when the final lists for the publication of *Fourth Dimension* were finalised and, as discussed above, Ritsos built the collection around the mythological monologues. The fact that, during his exile in the prison islands, the poet continued to explore the classical material by composing *Επαναλήψεις*, suggests that the physical experience of imprisonment impacted Ritsos's final decisions towards the classical myths and the monological form. The choice to mainly focus on the mythical voices and, above all, to pivot the collection around the monologues seems to be Ritsos's creative response to this embodied liminal positionality: the single voice of the monologist, with which Ritsos

started to experiment since 1956, provides the necessary intimacy to resist the intellectual constraints of the house arrest, but it is resorting to the figures of the myths that seem to allow the poet the necessary distance, transferring the traumatic experience of the present onto the detached (fourth) dimension of mythology.

In this section, I placed the collection of *Fourth Dimension* within a broader context, namely the larger project that includes many other long poems, for a total of forty poems. Drawing from unpublished material from the archives, I showed how the very composition and construction of *Fourth Dimension* was influenced by a metamodernist sensibility of the 1960s, especially characterised by the boundary affect and its different manifestations, from Ritsos's personal intellectual block in the mid-1950s to his critical engagement with Cavafy and Mayakovsky in 1963 to the social isolation of the house arrest in the aftermath of the Colonels' coup in 1967. This revealed three key moments that determined the final structure of *Fourth Dimension*: from the creative urge that took Ritsos to experiment with the form of the dramatic monologue (1956) to the focus on the mythological content (1963) and the definitive choice of the monologues (1967).

In the following section, I will turn to the actual content of the collection, exploring the modalities in which the boundary affect infiltrated into Ritsos's collection. While it is in dialogue with a modernist way of disrupting temporality, Ritsos's peculiar appropriation of mythology in *Fourth Dimension* exposes the cultural complexity of the metamodernist 1960s.

2.2 BERGSONIAN TEMPORALITY IN THE FOURTH DIMENSION

After exploring the history of Ritsos's *Fourth Dimension* and how its development is connected to the metamodernist structure of feeling of the Greek 1960s, my research moves inside the very fabric of the poems, suggesting to re-read the monologues as expression of the cultural context that produced them. My claim here is that, again, the boundary condition proves to be an important hermeneutical tool, affecting pervasively the monologues and Ritsos's reception of the classical myths.

The title of the collection, *Τέταρτη διάσταση*, and its possible interpretations constitute a necessary starting point. Based on the important role of memory and time in the poems, criticism has generally accepted that Ritsos's idea of a fourth dimension follows the Einsteinian theory, arguing that the poet refers to the dimension of time which expands the human perception of reality. While acknowledging this argument, I suggest that the fourth dimension is in fact a much more complex framework – in her study on the fourth dimension in modern art, Henderson (2013) reveals that during the late 1950s and the 1960s a number of Western cultural works (movies, television series, science fiction) were engaging with a parallel interpretation of the fourth dimension that privileged its spatial aspect, rather than the Einsteinian temporal aspect. Moreover, she also explores how the spatial fourth dimension, challenging the traditional three-dimensional Euclidean geometry, had a role in the development of cubist theories at the beginning of the 20th century (Henderson 2013, 145).

Zeng Hong (2010) traces the philosophy of the fourth dimension in High Modernist literary practice. Just as cubism transcended the three-dimensionality of traditional perspective, modernist literary works, like Ezra Pound's, T.S. Eliot's, Virginia Woolf's, and

William Faulkner's, experimented with "multiple voices and temporal layers" and "[d]islocation of chronology and plot, split personality of characters, and multiple unstable narrative perspectives" (Zeng 2010, 131). Taking Marcel Proust's monumental work *À la recherche du temps perdu,* Zeng brings the concept of the fourth dimension back to its temporal connotation through the theory of time of the French philosopher Henri Bergson:

> Proust describes acutely man's feeling of exile in time, which robs man of his memory. Only through involuntary memory and artistic creation can man recapture time and find a cosmic bliss that redeems his feeling of exile in time. One basic method of Proust in capturing the effect of involuntary memory is superimposition [...] of two realities that have the effect of vanquishing the contingency of material reality and producing a new transcendent vision, which is an emblem of the Bergsonian fusion of past and present moments that transcends both. (Zeng 2010, 137)

According to Zeng, Proust's protagonist experiences a detachment from his present, recovering such 'lost time' through memory, which operates by breaking the canonical temporal line and collapsing the past and the present moments. Zeng's analysis of Proust is carried out within a wider discussion about exile and the diverse literary representation of the phenomenon, intended not just as "geographical dislocation but also [as a] cultural and psychological uprootedness" (Zeng 2010, 1). The French modernist novel is then an example of the latter signification of exile, i.e., a psychological dislocation from the present time, an 'exile in time.'

Henderson and Zeng expand the concept of fourth dimension well beyond time, conceptualising it also from a spatial and a psychological perspective. The concept thus conceived results particularly fruitful in the present reading of Ritsos's collection in the context of Greek metamodernism of the 1960s, of which it is emblematic. The connection of Ritsos's idea of the fourth dimension with metamodernism and the 'boundary

condition' lies exactly in Zeng's association with Bergsonism and modernism. Indeed, Ritsos makes use of a characteristic feature of modernism, namely Bergson's innovative temporality, and recontextualises it in the contemporary moment of the 1960s. Through this reading of Ritsos's collection, the fourth dimension appears to be a liminal space of utterance for the monologues where the mythical past and the critical present come in contact, laying bare the fatal cracks of traditional mythology. Ritsos, in other words, employs modernist tropes (Bergsonian temporality, monologising selves, memory) as a springboard to address the very decline of modernism and the transformations of the postwar years, as he discussed in the 1963 essay on Mayakovsky's poetry.

After sketching Henri Bergson's reception in Greece and his main theories on time and memory, which were largely influential on the modernist intellectual debate in the early 20th century, I read Ritsos's mythological monologues in dialogue with the theories of the French philosopher, associating the fourth dimension with the Bergsonian *durée*, responding to the boundary affect through a 'troubling'[43] use of the classical material.

When Yannis Ritsos was conceiving and writing the poems of *Fourth Dimension*, the philosophical thought of Henri Bergson had already taken root in Greece and stirred the intellectual circles, especially during the 1920s and 1930s. His theories were introduced in the country by Nikos Kazantzakis with a seminal essay and a lecture in Athens in

[43] This is an adaptation of Dimitris Papanikolaou's (2017) notion of 'archive trouble' – drawing from Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever* and Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*, Papanikolaou refers to the 'cultural modality' of the Greek 21st century, characterised by a return to the archive of the past in order to re-read it under the contemporary context, thus " 'unearth[ing]' hidden voices or lost patterns" (Papanikolaou 2017, 47). As the archive trouble closely relates to the Greek crisis of the 2010s, I argue that this notion can also be applied to previous moments of crisis in Greek history, such as the second half of the 1960s, when Ritsos focuses particularly on the mythological poems.

1913,[44] after he had returned from Paris, where he had personally attended Bergson's lectures at the Collège de France between 1907 and 1909. In the following years, a great number of translations and articles about Bergson's philosophy began to appear, sparking the interest of the Greeks as well as fierce debates in Greek journals.[45]

As Servanne Jollivet (2018) highlights, the reception of Bergson in Greece was peculiar for two reasons: firstly, his theories did not find currency amidst the academic circles, but rather at the margins of the institutions, among writers and journalists; secondly, it took the form of a "Bergsonism of the Left," as it appealed mainly to socialist and Marxist intellectuals, who "found in Bergson the arguments that would support their own criticism of idealist philosophy and of the liberal, conservative ideology, that dominated Greek universities at the time" (Jollivet 2018, 353, my translation). In line with the general European reception of Bergson, the interest towards his thought dwindled after the Second World War, however without disappearing completely. Especially in the 1960s, the Greek philosopher Yorgos Mourelos (1965) contributed articles about Bergson in the pages of the journal *Epoches*, including a lengthy introduction and selection of texts in October 1965.[46] Therefore, Henri Bergson's theories of time, memory, and creative evolution were quite widespread in the Greek intellectuals' debates, not just in the 1930s, when Yannis Ritsos appeared on the literary scene, but also in the postwar

[44] See Kazantzakis 1912. Kazantzakis's lecture on Bergson took place on 22 January 1913; however, because of delays caused by to the ongoing Great War, the issue of the bulletin in which the lecture was published is dated October 1912, despite being printed and distributed in February 1913.

[45] For a list of Greek translations of Bergson's works and essays about his work written in Greece, see Jollivet 2018.

[46] In vol. 9 (January 1964), Mourelos reviewed Henri Gouhier's book *Bergson et le Christ des Évangiles* (1961), under the title "Η αναβίωση των μπερξονικών μελετών," recording the shift of interest from the cosmologic field of Bergson's *Creative Evolution* to the ethical-religious one of his later works. In vol. 30 (October 1965), besides the mentioned overview of Bergson's philosophy, he also provided a portrait of the philosopher's daughter, the sculptress Jeanne Bergson. Two months later, in vol. 32 (December 1965), Elli Lambridi responded with a letter to his presentation of Bergson, commenting and adding further readings of the philosopher's theories. Lastly, in vol. 35 (March 1966), Avgoustos Bayonas reviews Mourelos's book on Bergson, *Bergson et les niveaux de realité* (1964).

period, during the *Fourth Dimension* years. Reading Ritsos's monologues alongside Bergson's philosophy throws into relief Ritsos's cultural debt towards the modernist model and, at the same time, it problematises said model within the context of the Greek 1960s and the central role *Fourth Dimension* played in this literary ecology.

The aspects of Bergson's philosophy that are particularly relevant for my reading of Ritsos's collection are drawn from his first two books, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (1889, titled in English *Time and Free Will*) and *Matière et mémoire* (1896, *Matter and Memory*). As the titles suggest, consciousness, time, and memory are key notions in Bergsonism, which shaped the modernist literature (and arts in general) of the 1920s and 1930s, especially in France and Britain.[47]

Positioning himself between the positivist 'measurability' of reality and the idealist negation of external reality, Henri Bergson created an epistemological system where the individual's consciousness is placed at the centre, between an external 'spatialised' dimension and an inner 'temporalised' one. For the French philosopher, then, the issue of the relation between space and time is central and needs to be problematised. According to Bergson, "when we speak of *time*, we generally think of a homogenous medium in which our conscious states are ranged alongside one another as in space, so as to form a discrete multiplicity" (Bergson 2013, 90). Time is usually intended as a line, a spatial unit, that can be measured and divided into discrete units (second, minutes, hours, etc.). In other words, Bergson criticises the 'spatialisation' of time, which reduced it to a mere quantifiable *étendue*, extension. However, the philosopher reclaims the separation between time and space as two distinct principles and transposes the former within the

[47] For an overview of the ways Bergson played a crucial role in the development of European modernism, see Ardoin, Gontarski, and Mattison (2013), Gillies (1996), and Guerlac (1997).

domain of consciousness – from quantifiably homogenous, Bergson argues that time is qualitatively heterogeneous, or it is better to say that our consciousness immediately and unmediatedly perceives time as pure *durée*, duration. Bergson defines *durée* as "the form which the succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself *live*, when it refrains from separating the present state from its former states" (Bergson 2013, 100). It follows that time-as-duration removes the separation between the before, the now, and the after, suggesting a synchronic perception of the different temporal planes. The philosopher famously employs the metaphor of a melody to explain the notion of *durée*:

> [Duration] forms both the past and the present states into an organic whole, as happens when we recall the notes of a tune, melting, so to speak, into one another. Might it not be said that, even if these notes succeed one another, yet we perceive them in one another, and that their totality may be compared to a living being whose parts, although distinct, permeate one another just because they are so closely connected? (Bergson 2013, 100)

The idea of time as a *durée* where past and present "permeate one another" is central in Bergsonism and, as I am about to show, it becomes particularly relevant when reading Yannis Ritsos's *Fourth Dimension*. Henri Bergson brings to the foreground the subjectivity of the individual and the role of their consciousness in reading and responding to the external reality. However, the philosopher also accounts for the reality external to the human consciousness – life experience is basically the interaction of *étendue* (external measurable reality) and *durée* (inner indivisible time).

In his second book *Matter and Memory*, Henri Bergson expands on this latter point, scrutinising the interaction between external world (object) and inner consciousness (subject) and introducing into his system the fundamental role of memory in mediating between the two realities. Moving against the philosophical debates that preceded him, Bergson argues that what the individual perceives, i.e., the external world, is an

agglomerate of 'images,' which inter-acts with the body, calling it, that is, into action. Memory, for Bergson, is pivotal exactly for the interaction of the system brain-body with the external reality, as it influences the perception of the outside images by directing the brain into taking the right action. In the moment that the perception of the external image comes in contact with the individual's consciousness, Bergson argues that the memory of past moments or images is projected onto the external image and determines the action that follows. Therefore, "perception ends by being merely an occasion for remembering" (Bergson 2004, 74), while memories of analogous situations inspire the reaction to the perception.

With this system of undifferentiated temporal *durée* and of past memories constantly determining present actions, Bergson offers a radical reinterpretation of the issue of time, problematising the very idea of the present:

> Your perception, however instantaneous, consists then in an incalculable multitude of remembered elements; in truth, every perception is already memory. *Practically, we perceive only the past*, the pure present being the invisible progress of the past gnawing into the future. (Bergson 2004, 175, original emphasis)

The notion of present seems to disappear, granting the past and past memories a dominant position. Henri Bergson supplants the traditional image of linear time with the representation of an inverted cone SAB moving on a plane P (fig. 2), in which the fixed base AB of the cone represents the totality of the past experiences accumulated in the memory of each individual. The past constantly converges on the mobile summit S, thus representing the present instant where body

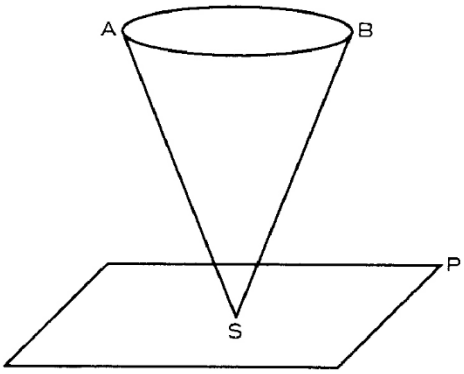


Figure 2 - Henri Bergson's representation of time as an inverted cone SAB moving on a plane P.

and perceptions interact "in the shifting plane [P] of existence" (Bergson 2004, 178).

The notion of *durée* as a qualitatively heterogeneous and undivided temporal dimension, the role of the past and of memory as a source of action in the present, and also the perception of external reality through images and perception, they are all ideas that had large echo in the intellectual circles at the beginning of the 20th century, shaping a new way of conceiving art and literature. It is no coincidence that western modernism in the interwar period engaged actively with Henri Bergson's philosophy and quite openly incorporated it into their works, as in Marcel Proust's *Recherche* and in T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* (1943).

As a philosophy that addressed the anxieties of a transitional period between two centuries, when the socioeconomical structures in Europe were radically transforming, Henri Bergson addressed similar issues to what Greece was experiencing in the 1960s, issues related to a boundary condition, focusing on the point of interaction between two poles (present and past, *étendue* and *durée*, external images and inner consciousness). Indeed, the interest in his ideas experienced a surge during the 1960s, also thanks to Gilles Deleuze's book *Le Bergsonisme* (1966), showing how Henri Bergson's influence extended beyond 'modernism proper:'

> Instead of bracketing Bergson and modernism between years on a timeline, [...] the (Bergsonian) duration of modernism's moment is bound neither by clock nor calendar, but by qualitative multiplicities, by time experienced. Perhaps the return to Bergson emphasizes what Bergson and, later, Deleuze, understood as the virtuality of time, the way in which the past can be potentialized and can also, in turn, be creatively experienced (or actualized) in the present, in a moment which unfolds toward a future not yet determined and certainly not closed. (Ardoin, Gontarski, and Mattison 2013, 6)

I contend that Yannis Ritsos's collection of monologues constitutes one of such "qualitative multiplicities" in the Bergsonian theorisation, resonating with his ideas of time and memory. At the same time, however, Ritsos goes beyond mere appropriation of Bergson's theories - as it is the case in metamodernism, Bergsonism is only the springboard for a deeper reflection on the present of the Greek 1960s and it is then shifted by the new historical contingencies. To put it differently, Yannis Ritsos, firm believer in the present and future of revolution, does indeed project the past on the present stage, but only to show the contemporary criticalities, through his representation of the traditional mythological figures as elderly women at the verge of death (the Woman in Black in *Σονάτα*, Electra, Chrysothemis, Ismene, Helen) or as about to commit radical acts that will remove them from centre stage forever (Agamemnon, Orestes, Iphigenia, Ajax, Philoctetes, Phaedra).

Identifying Bergson's theories throughout Ritsos's mythical poems would fill a gap in Ritsos criticism, as the Bergsonian influence has been largely overlooked. In particular, I identify what Ritsos calls 'fourth dimension' as Bergson's temporal dimension of *durée.* As outlined, in Bergsonian thought, *durée* transcends the differentiation between successive temporal planes, "form[ing] both the past and the present states into an organic whole" (Bergson 2013, 100). When it comes to Ritsos's collection, the co-presence of the mythical past with the present is one of the most important features of the monologues, particularly visible in the many 'anachronisms' that populate the poetic landscape. For example, Orestes returns to his native Mycenae to avenge his father's death, but the place is that of the modern archaeological site where '[τ]α ιδιωτικά αυτοκίνητα και τα μεγάλα εκδρομικά λεωφορεία έχουν φύγει (Ritsos 1978, 73) and the guardian of the site is performing his last round to close the main entrance with his key. Ismene even refers to her sister Antigone as a "πρόδρομος εκείνης της μελλοντικής

θρησκείας | που χώρισε τον κόσμο στα δυο" (Ritsos 1978, 210), thus bringing classical mythology within the realm of later (present) Christianity. The cultural and material objects of the present, therefore, rather than just being oddities within the mythological context, work as markers of the *durée*, exposing the ongoing and ceaseless interaction between past and present.

This aspect is especially appreciated in the opening and closing stage directions, the pieces of prose writing placed in brackets at the beginning and at the end of each monologue. They generally provide information on the mood and on the setting of the scene (time and place) and they narrate the facts that lead to the monologue and that follow the end of the speaking act. From a formal perspective, the stage directions clearly differ from the monologues, framing the verses with the long prose lines, as if the poems were a single moment of a larger narrative. These texts contain a narrator's third-person voice, they are in italics, and they are placed within parentheses.

Through a Bergsonian reading, the stage directions act as tools to 'spatialise' time and consequently to frame and isolate specific moments in the duration of time. As Mary Ann Gillies explains, "though real living goes on in the indivisible realm of *durée*, this world is broken into segments so we can explain, analyse, and even understand the nature of experiences" (Gillies 1996, 12). Ritsos's monologues appear to be just segments in this unstoppable flow of time, mythological bubbles that inflate in the midst of *durée* and burst at the end, reabsorbed in time. Stage directions not only provide a spatial and temporal context to the monologue, then, but they also contain a great number of images that underline the compresence of temporal planes. Time, history, myths, reality, present, past, and future: they all mingle incessantly in this fourth dimension, in the *durée* of Greek history.

The stage directions of 'Η σονάτα του σεληνόφωτος,' the earliest poem of the collection, already presents such features. The speaker, the Woman in Black, is in a dark room of an old house and "μιλάει σ' έναν νέο" (Ritsos 1978, 45), indicating that the monologue that follows is just a piece of an ongoing conversation, of which the reader is allowed to witness the end. Indeed, the monologue seems to begin *in medias res* with the passionate plea of the woman to the young man: "Άφησέ με νάρθω μαζί σου" (Ritsos 1978, 45). In the stage direction at the end of the poem, the young man leaves the Woman in Black behind:

> ([…] Σε λίγο ο Νέος θα σωπάσει, θα σοβαρευτεί και θα πει: «Η παρακμή μιας εποχής». Έτσι, ολότελα ήσυχος πια, θα ξεκουμπώσει πάλι το πουκάμισό του και θα τραβήξει το δρόμο του. Όσο για τη γυναίκα με τα μαύρα, δεν ξέρω αν βγήκε τελικά απ' το σπίτι. Το φεγγαρόφωτο λάμπει ξανά. Και στις γωνιές του δωματίου οι σκιές σφίγγονται από μιαν αβάσταχτη μετάνοια, σχεδόν οργή, όχι τόσο για τη ζωή, όσο για την άχρηστη εξομολόγηση. Ακούτε; Το ραδιόφωνο συνεχίζει) (Ritsos 1978, 53)

These concluding sentences are particularly poignant from a Bergsonian and a metamodernist perspective. On the one hand, the elderly Woman in Black chooses to remain in the old house, where the shadows grow and reveal a deep sense of regret and powerlessness. On the other hand, the young man openly articulates the metamodernist boundary-affect, acknowledging publicly "The decline of an era." In this context where the past (the woman) and the present (the man) face each other and coexist, the radio continues its music. Ritsos even includes in coda Beethoven's score of his 'Moonlight Sonata,' recalling Bergson's metaphor of *durée* as a melody where the notes mingle in a constant change of quality. The music constitutes a hum on the background of the whole

monologue[48] and, in my reading, transports us into this other realm of undifferentiated temporalities, paving the way to the mythical core of the collection.

The stage directions of the mythical poems are also a good case in point when it comes to the Bergsonian *durée*, as they always suggest a continuation towards a future after the mnemonic utterances of the monologues. The way in which stage directions and monologues are presented hints at a sort of indifference of history towards these acts of speaking. Life, history, time, they are ongoing when then characters emerge and speak, and they will continue when the speaking is over. This is indicated in particular by the lively city life outside the closed spaces where the monologists are, a buzzing life with the voices of the sellers and the sounds of cars and ships. It is in the midst of this unceasing life that the mythical monologist emerges, speaks, and then disappears. For instance, in 'Αίας,' the great hero of Troy appears in the opening text in a dark confused room full of scattered objects and slaughtered animals, completely abandoned to his insanity, while the city is buzzing outside:

> ([…] Έχει ξημερώσει απ' ώρα. Έξω θα πρέπει νάχει δυνατό φως. Εδώ, μια άρρωστη ανταύγεια σέρνεται στους τοίχους απ' τις κλεισμένες γρίλιες. Ακούγονται στο δρόμο φωνές απ' τους οπωροπώλες, τους τροχιστάδες, τους ιχθυοπώλες, και λίγο πιο κάτω στ' ακρογιάλι φωνές ναυτών που πλένουν και συγυρίζουν τ' αραγμένα καράβια. Ο άντρας ασάλευτος καταγής. […]) (Ritsos 1978, 231)

The voices of the sailors, the fruit vendors, the fishmongers, the whole city outside is indifferent to the individual tragedy of Ajax. Through the soundscape of the city outside and the references to the different moments of the day (dawn, day, sunset, night), Ritsos shows the incessant flow of time; whatever the characters reminisce and say, however

[48] "Και τότε κατάλαβα πως όλη τούτη τη σκηνή τη συνόδευε χαμηλόφωνα η «Σονάτα του Σεληνόφωτος», μόνο το πρώτο μέρος" (Ritsos 1978, 52).

their story ends, they are only moments, segments, "qualities" (using Bergson's terminology) of the *durée*. After Ajax ends his speech and goes out to eventually commit suicide on the beach, everything goes back to its usual flow:

> ([…] Ακούγεται βουερό καμπάνισμα, σαν κάποιο σφυρί να χτύπησε έναν μετάλλινο δίσκο κρεμασμένον σε μια άλλη κάμαρα. Ίσως ένα αόρατο πόδι να χτύπησε την πεσμένη ασπίδα με τις εφτά αδιασπέραστες δίπλες. Ο ήχος συνεχίζεται. Μπαίνουν οι υπηρέτες. […] Το δωμάτιο άδειασε. Φάνηκε μονομιάς πολύ μεγάλο. Ο ήχος του μετάλλινου δίσκου σώπασε. Τώρα ακούγονται πολύ καθαρά έξω οι φωνές του δρόμου, η κίνηση του λιμανιού - γερανοί, τροχαλίες, αλυσίδες. […]) (Ritsos 1978, 242-3)

Ritsos again returns to the soundscape of the city, with the bell ringing, the busy harbour, and the voices coming from the street. Immediately afterwards, one of the servants comes in to announce Ajax's suicide, and yet his tragedy appears as an irrelevant moment in the larger scheme of life's *durée*.

Even when the stage directions are mainly focused on the immediate actions surrounding the monologues, the poet does not shy away from making references to the broader context, especially through the use of the natural elements. This is the case in 'Φαίδρα,' the last poem Ritsos wrote for the collection. Before introducing the two main characters – the monologising Phaedra and the silent Hippolytus – Ritsos describes the peaceful setting in which the tragedy is about to unfold:

> (Ανοιξιάτικο απόγευμα, πολύ ήσυχο. Μια συνηθισμένη ησυχία, κι όμως κάπως υπερβολικά φωτισμένη, υπερβολικά τονισμένη πότε απ' τη φωνή ενός πουλιού, πότε απ' το χτύπο ενός καρφιού που μπήγεται στο ξύλο ή απ' το χτύπο μιας σμίλης πάνω στο μάρμαρο - αυτή η αόριστη πυκνή ησυχία σα να πρόκειται σε λίγο νάναι ολότελα έτοιμο ένα θαυμάσιο, γυμνό, λυπημένο άγαλμα, σα να κρέμεται άσκοπα κάποιο σκοινί στο κλαδί ενός δέντρου, ενώ στο εξώφυλλο ενός βιβλίου, ξεχασμένου απ' το μεσημέρι στο παγκάκι του κήπου, καμπουριασμένου απ' τον ήλιο, σεργιανάει αδιανόητα κάποιο στρογγυλό έντομο με τα φτερά του μαζεμένα κάτω απ' το στιλπνό, μαύρο, σκληρό κέλυφός του. […]) (Ritsos 1978, 295)

Again, the scene is set within an indefinite, indifferent soundscape, here made of a peaceful evening where one can hear a bird or a worker hammering a nail and chiselling a piece of marble. Even the similes refer to the untouched flow of nature, with the round insect crawling on an abandoned book. At this point, Phaedra enters the room, and the poet describes in detail her movements and the sounds of Hippolytus returning from hunting. The 'bubble' has fully inflated in the quietness of the summer afternoon, submerging the reader into the monologue and the tragic end of the two characters. In the closing stage directions, Ritsos is again focused in telling the events that unfurl: Phaedra hangs herself, while Hippolytus takes a bath, until Theseus returns and falls into his wife's scheme, condemning his son to exile. However, even in this quick succession of the events, the *durée* of life creeps in: "([…] Σε λίγο ακούγονται, σαν μέσα στην ίδια κάμαρα, τα παράφορα κοάσματα των βατράχων - κάτι ελαστικό, γλοιώδες, αισθησιακό, οδυνηρό κι αηδιαστικό ταυτόχρονα. Πάλι σιωπή. Μονάχα ο ήχος απ' την πτώση του νερού, εκτονωμένος κάπως. […])" (Ritsos 1978, 314).

Ritsos interestingly employs sounds to create a distinction between the monologue act and the broader context at the outside of the specific scene, similarly to Bergson's use of music to describe the dimension of *durée*. The soundscape of the undefined external world, therefore, operates on two levels: on the one hand, it separates by contrast the two spaces, the space of utterance and the space of *durée*, while also reabsorbing in the closing stage directions the 'bubble' of the mythical event at the centre of the monologue.

A Bergsonian analysis of Ritsos's *Fourth Dimension* necessarily involves the inextricable relation between time and space, not only traceable in the stage directions, separating the monologues from the *durée* and thus turning them into intelligible

segments of time, but also in the monologues, which are characterised by Bergsonian chronotopes.

In *Time and Free Will*, Henri Bergson begins his reassessment of time criticising precisely the relation of space and time, or rather the imposition of the former onto the latter. The moment human consciousness conceives time as the succession of homogenous units, time is spatialised:

> [T]ime, conceived under the form of a homogenous medium, is some spurious concept, due to the trespassing of the idea of space upon the field of pure consciousness. At any rate we cannot finally admit two forms of the homogenous, time and space without first seeking whether one of them cannot be reduced to the other. (Bergson 2013, 98-9)

Given that the states of consciousness cannot be spatially differentiated, Bergson draws a difference between the measurable time of the clocks (*étendue*) and the inner time of pure consciousness (*durée*). Space and external spatialised time, then, constitute for Bergson the starting point of his philosophical enquiry into the concept of pure duration. Similarly, I suggest that a closer look to the space that the characters occupy in Ritsos's poems is instrumental to gain access to, and understand, Ritsos's concept of fourth dimension. The monologising characters are often represented in liminal, enclosed spaces, at the periphery of society. Put it differently, they experience first-hand what I have identified as the 'boundary' in metamodernism.

The whole collection opens with the poem 'Το παράθυρο,' itself a symbol of a liminal space connecting the inside of the house to the buzzing city outside, between the consciousness of the individual and the external reality:

> Τι παράπονο λοιπόν μπορώ νάχω απ' αυτό το παράθυρο;
> Αν θες το μισανοίγεις και, δίχως διόλου να κοιτάζεις έξω,
> μπορείς μες απ' τα τζάμια να παρακολουθείς αθέατος

αυθεντικές σκηνές του δρόμου, σ' ένα χώρο πιο βαθύ και διαρκέστερο,
με τον πράο φωτισμό μιας μεγάλης απόστασης,
ενώ όλα αυτά διαδραματίζονται κάτω απ' τα μάτια σου, ένα μέτρο πιο πέρα.
Αν θέλεις πάλι μπορείς να το ανοίξεις ολότελα και να κοιτιέσαι στο τζάμι, σαν μέσα
σε μακρινό καθρέφτη μαγικό, και να χτενίσεις τα μαλλιά σου που αραιώνουν
ή να διορθώσεις κάπως το χαμόγελό σου. Μες απ' αυτά τα τζάμια
όλα φαίνονται ευκρινέστερα - πιο σιωπηλά, πιο ακίνητα,
επομένως κι απαραίτητα κι αγέραστα.
(Ritsos 1978, 18)

The speaker of this monologue, alongside the other mythical speakers that follow in the collection, is physically standing between two worlds, two spaces, two dimensions. This privileged position allows the monologist to observe the outside world from "a long distance" and to look at themself, gaining a new perspective on reality, "indispensable and ageless." Through the widespread use of images like the window, the transparency, or the glass, the liminal positionality of the speakers is marked by barriers that seem to separate them from the present, while also allowing them to observe it and to resort to memory to connect their past with the present time. They are suspended in the timeless reality of the fourth dimension, allowing them to reach a heightened awareness of the *durée*. Agamemnon, for example, in the moments immediately preceding his violent death, is conscious of his impermanence, already realising he is dead speaking in the present: "Ώρες-ώρες, μου φαίνεται πως είμαι ένας ήσυχος νεκρός που κοιτάζει | εμένα τον ίδιο να υπάρχω" (Ritsos 1978, 61). Alive and yet already dead, he looks at himself from the outside, precisely from the *durée* of the fourth dimension. At the end of his monologue, the different temporal dimensions collapse, as the glass that separated him from reality breaks in countless fragments:

[…] Πριν λίγο ακόμη,
όλα είταν γυάλινα – πρόσωπα, σώματα, αντικείμενα, τοπία, εσύ, εγώ, τα παιδιά μας –

γυάλινα, ακάλυπτα, στιλπνά – από σκληρό, διαυγές γυαλί. Παρατηρούσα
μέσα τους μ' ενδιαφέρον,
[…] Κ' έτσι, αιφνίδια,
σα νάχει μαλακώσει το γυαλί – δεν παίρνει σχήμα, δεν έχει διαφάνεια,
σα να μην είχε σχήμα και διαφάνεια ποτέ · – σωριάστηκε χάμου
μαζί μ' εκείνα που περιείχε – […]

(Ritsos 1978, 68)

All of a sudden, Agamemnon's bubble bursts, the distance between himself and his myth disappears. As all the components of the myth are confused in a pile, the king returns into his mythic vest and disappears, killed by his wife, as his myth dictates.

Ritsos introduces here the timeless dimension of his monologues, that challenges the *étendue* of clock time. The characters are often situated in old dark houses, which look abandoned and stuck in an ageless present. Time is suspended. If in 'Σονάτα,' the Woman in Black states that the house, haunted by its ghosts, "δε λέει να πεθάνει. | Επιμένει να ζει με τους νεκρούς τους" (Ritsos 1978, 49), in later monologues the passing of time is simply stopped. See, for example, Ismene's opening lines, in which she describes the "φθορά" that pervades her house:

Τα μεγάλα ρολόγια στους τοίχους σταμάτησαν - κανείς δεν τα κουρντίζει ·
Κι αν κάποτε στέκομαι μπροστά τους, δεν είναι για να δω την ώρα,
Μα το ίδιο μου το πρόσωπο, καθρεφτισμένο στο γυαλί τους,
Περίεργα άσπρο, γύψινο, απαθές, σαν έξω απ' το χρόνο

(Ritsos 1978, 207)

The physical symbol of spatialised time, the clock, defies its function; in fact, it is repurposed as a mirror, like the window in the first poem of the collection. In its glass, the old character sees her reflection, "σαν έξω απ' το χρόνο." Temporal succession is therefore completely infringed, stretching time to seemingly absurd levels: "[έ]νας ολόκληρος μήνας θα χρειαστεί | να περάσεις απ' τόνα δωμάτιο στ' άλλο" (Ritsos 1978, 208).

Similarly, the two Atreid sisters, Chrysothemis and Electra speak about the suspended chronotope of their fourth-dimensional experience. Chrysothemis, the almost unknown daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, describes her life at the margins of her family and of her own myth, her life overshadowed by her despotic mother and by the heroism of her siblings, Orestes and Electra; however, this liminal position is again turned into a vantage point, a privilege:

> Λοιπόν, μες από την αφάνειά μου, χαιρόμουν να βλέπω και ν' ακούω. Μπορούσα
> να ονειρεύομαι ελεύθερα. Είταν όμορφα, αλήθεια - σα νάζησα
> έξω απ' την ιστορία, σ' έναν δικό μου ανέγγιχτο, απόλυτο χώρο,
> προφυλαγμένη, και παρούσα ωστόσο.
>
> (Ritsos 1978, 161)

This position "outside of history" provides Chrysothemis with a safe space, released from responsibilities and duties, and yet she is there, present, silent witness to her family's demise. In this dimension, she also loses track of time, wondering – now in her old age – about the 'lost time:'

> Έτσι πέρασαν τα χρόνια, (πώς πέρασαν; – δεν τόνιωσα), κ' εγώ
> πάντα στο περιθώριο των συμβάντων, – είμαι τάχατε εγώ που έχω ζήσει, μη ζώντας,
> τόσες και τόσες ζωές, και την ίδια τη ζωή μου;
>
> (Ritsos 1978, 183)

The same question returns in 'Κάτω απ' τον ίσκιο του βουνού,' where Electra, locked in the dark family house, still grieves the destiny of her family. Time for her is completely undefined at this stage: "Ποιος τάζησε ολ' αυτά; Πώς έγιναν; Πώς έληξαν; | Είμαστε τάχα εμείς που τα ζήσαμε; Πριν πόσους αιώνες;" (Ritsos 1978, 145) She has lost all temporal references, as if they did not matter anymore, questioning the very reality of her own history: "Τίποτα δε θυμάμαι πια, δικά μου ή ξένα. | Σα νάχουν γίνει σ' έναν άλλο χώρο,

έξω απ' το χρόνο. Σα να μην έγιναν - δεν έγιναν" (Ritsos 1978, 147). Electra returns to the concept of this dimension outside of time and space, where the events 'bubble up,' appearing and disappearing in the constant flux of duration. In adopting the voice of mythological characters, Yannis Ritsos goes beyond the Bergsonian *étendue*, portraying them in the *durée* of time, which appears to be suspended and unquantifiable; at the same time, though, the characters are present in the modern world, observing and even communicating with it through the windows, the doors, and the silent listeners that exit at the end of the monologues.

The image of the inverted cone (fig. 2) that Bergson employs to describe the relation between human consciousness and external reality in *Matter and Memory* is a valuable metaphor to represent each of Ritsos's mythical monologists. Situated in an indefinite plane of existence –separate from reality and yet present within it– their history, their myth, and their past are funnelled into the present moment of utterance. Similarly to Virginia Woolf's 'tunnelling process',[49] the present and the past become indistinguishable as they enter in an osmotic relation. The metaphor of the bubble I employ to describe Ritsos's monologues, as they emerge in the *durée* as qualitative changes within Greek history, could also apply to the narrative fabric of the monologues to describe how the characters' past memories appear and disappear organically, muddling with the contingencies of the present moment and the direct interaction with the silent listener and the external world.

The fusion of the time planes eventually puts into question the very truthfulness of their memories and of myth itself. This is already traceable in the first mythological poem that Ritsos wrote, 'Το νεκρό σπίτι,' aptly subtitled "Φανταστική κι αυθεντική ιστορία μιας

[49] 'It took me a year's groping to discover what I call my tunnelling process, by which I tell the past by instalments, as I have need of it.' (Woolf 1978, 272)

πανάρχαιης ελληνικής οικογένειας" (Ritsos 1978, 93). The doubt is instilled from the first adjectives: is myth a fruit of fantasy or is it authentic? The whole monologue plays with these questions, never really confirming any possible answer. In the opening stage directions, the narrator mentions two anonymous sisters, one of whom went mad: "Φαντάστηκε πως το σπίτι τους είχε μεταφερθεί κάπου στην αρχαία Θήβα, ή, μάλλον, στο Άργος – σύγχυζε τη μυθολογία, την ιστορία και την ιδιαίτερη ζωή της, το παρελθόν και το παρόν, όχι το μέλλον" (Ritsos 1978, 93). In this first monologue, Ritsos employs the madness of one of the sisters (identifiable with an aged Electra) to explain the questioning of the past and the Bergsonian temporal fusion.

Later, Ritsos abandons the trope of madness, which would rationally explain the peculiarity of time in this collection. Indeed, in his more mature mythical monologues, the characters speak directly from the *durée*, without logical explanations for the constant anachronisms and temporal confusions. In 'Η επιστροφή της Ιφιγένειας,' Ritsos stages the return of Orestes and Iphigenia after many years away from their family home. The story of the myth has already taken place and the two siblings "[μ]οιάζουν σαν νάχουν αδειάσει από λόγια, αισθήματα, αναμνήσεις" (Ritsos 1978, 115). The past they represent then returns in the present time, reflecting the relation between the two:

> [Κινδυνεύει] το κάθε «θυμάμαι»
> στην ήσυχη διακοπή του να σημαίνει «δεν είμαι».
>
> «Δεν είμαι», λέμε, «δεν είμαστε» · – δεν το πολυπιστεύουμε. Μες απ' αυτή την απουσία
> εξακριβώνουμε πιθανόν την ύπαρξή μας μες στο βουβό συνωστισμό εκείνων που λείπουν,
> εκείνων που μας λείπουν, που λείπουμε · […]
> (Ritsos 1978, 118)

In her monologue, Iphigenia suggests in a rather Bergsonian way that past memories are constitutive of human existence, ensured by the interaction with presences from the past and future, as the idea of "συνωστισμός" hints at.

If our interaction with others and our memories shapes the individual and the existence of the monologues' speakers, the Bergsonian temporality comes to problematise the myths in Ritsos's poems. By positioning the mythical characters into the *durée*, where events melt away the one into the other and past and present are on the same level, the mythical stories lose their outline and become almost irrelevant, simple accidents of history. 'Η Ελένη' is exemplary in showing the dissolution of myths into the Bergsonian temporality. The young man, who is the silent listener of Helen's monologue, cannot recognise her at first: "Κ' εκείνη; Όχι, όχι, – δεν είναι δυνατόν. Γριά – γριά – εκατό, διακόσω χρονώ. Πριν από πέντε ακόμη χρόνια – Όχι, όχι." (Ritsos 1978, 269). The most beautiful woman of antiquity is now an extraordinarily old woman, "hundred, two hundred years old," unsurprisingly (in the fourth dimension/*durée*) defying canonical human temporality. From her peculiar perspective, at the end of her life, all the names and the events of that mythical past are mixed in her memories and lose specificity:

> Τώρα ξεχνώ τα πιο γνωστά μου ονόματα ή τα συγχέω μεταξύ τους –
> Πάρις, Μενέλαος, Αχιλλέας, Πρωτέας, Θεοκλύμενος, Τέυκρος,
> Κάστωρ και Πολυδεύκης – οι αδελφοί μου, ηθικολόγοι · – Θησέας, Πειρίθους,
> Ανδρομάχη, Κασσάνδρα, Αγαμέμνων, – ήχοι, μόνον ήχοι
> (Ritsos 1978, 272)
>
> […] αυτά που λέμε συνήθως μεγάλα, διαλύονται, σβήνουν –
> ο φόνος του Αγαμέμνονα, η σφαγή της Κλυταιμνήστρας. […]
> Ξεχνιούνται ·
> κάτι άλλα μένουν, επουσιώδη, ασήμαντα · […]
> (Ritsos 1978, 278)
>
> Τα άλλα, σαν να μην είταν τίποτα – χάθηκαν. Άργος, Αθήνα, Σπάρτη,
> Κόρινθος, Θήβα, Σικυών, – σκιές ονομάτων · τα μιλάω · ηχούν σαν βουλιαγμένα

μες στο ασυντέλεστο. […]

(Ritsos 1978, 279)

In Helen's monologue, the past turns into sounds and shadows that "melt, go out" in the "ασυντέλεστο" of the Bergsonian temporality, having her to question the real significance of those moments and people. Ritsos's Helen seems to question the whole foundations of Greek culture as the names of mythological protagonists are only "sounds" and the big events and famous places are nothing but "shadows," "insignificant." Her memories, in fact, accentuate the gap between who she was in the mythical history and who she is in the present of the monologue, taking her to reconsider the whole myth:

> […] Πώς είταν δίχως νόημα όλα,
> δίχως σκοπό και διάρκεια και ουσία – πλούτη, πόλεμοι, δόξες και φθόνοι,
> κοσμήματα και η ίδια η ομορφιά μου.
> Τι ανόητοι θρύλοι,
> κύκνοι και Τροίες και έρωτες κι ανδραγαθίες.
> (Ritsos 1978, 275)

Assuming Ritsos's fourth dimension as a Bergsonian *durée*, the past and the foundational myths of Greece become a contested site. Since memories, as Helen explains, "δεν είναι πια συγκινημένες, – δε μας συγκινούν – απρόσωπες, γαλήνιες, / καθαρές ως τις πιο ματωμένες γωνιές τους" (Ritsos 1978, 282), it is possible to revisit what came before without being biased by emotions, so as to read it and re-evaluate it for the present. This, I argue, constitutes a proper metamodernist move. Explored in more depth in chapter 3 on Stelios Xefloudas's novel *Οδυσσέας*, the myth is only seemingly used as an 'ordering structure' for the present. In fact, in the specific case of Ritsos's *Fourth Dimension*, the modernist Bergsonian temporality that characterises the collection provides the opportunity for the poet to question the foundation of the contemporary moment, and to

address the transformations and critical experiences he was witnessing during the long 1960s.

The mythical figures in Ritsos become the embodiment of the transitional epoch that the Greek 1960s were, putting on stage the old myths as they are subsiding. In this sense, they embody the metamodernist 'boundary.' While being part of the present time, they are removed from it, or relegated to the fringes – the mythical past appears, then, to haunt the present. It is true that the dead and ghost-like presences are constantly mentioned in the whole collection of *Fourth Dimension*, either as friendly companions of lonely resigned speakers or as a difficult inheritance that the monologist desires to be freed from.[50] When it comes to the mythical figures, however, it is important to point out that they do not simply 'haunt' the present space, but they are full living bodies inserted within the present and interacting directly with it. The dead, in contrast, are impalpable as they populate their memories, while other invisible presences are often perceived only through the sounds. Again, employing a Bergsonian image, Ritsos presents different 'intensities', or 'qualities', of the past that emerge the one from the other in a continuous flux.

Ritsos's protagonists are, simply put, immersed in the present and yet still oriented towards the past. The two time zones converge on the figures of the monologists, who find themselves to be situated in an in-between zone of interaction, where the *durée* of Ritsos's temporality appears in full. In Ritsos's collection, one of the best examples of this aspect is Orestes's monologue, uttered in front of the contemporary archaeological site of Mycenae at closing time, after all the tourists have left:

[50] For an overview on spectrality, see Blanco and Peeren (2013). The term 'hauntology' originates from Jacques Derrida's seminal series of lectures, *Spectres of Marx* (1994). For the Modern Greek context, see Maria Boletsi's studies on the spectres of Cavafy (2024) and her inaugural lecture *The Futurity of Things Past* (2018).

> Δυο νέοι, ως 20 χρονώ, σταμάτησαν στα προπύλαια με μιαν έκφραση σα να προσπαθούσαν κάτι να θυμηθούν, κάτι ν' αναγνωρίσουν, ενώ τους είταν όλα αφάνταστα γνωστά και συγκινητικά, μόνο που κάπως μικρότερα – πολύ μικρότερα – απ' όσο τα σκέφτονταν στην ξενητειά, από άλλο χώρο κι από άλλο χρόνο. (Ritsos 1978, 73)

The two characters (Orestes and his silent companion Pylades) appear somewhat lost, as if just woken up in an unknown yet familiar place. The poet describes them as coming from a different place and time: they are immersed in the present of a Greek summer night, but at the same time there is a gap that separates them from it. They stand in front of the gateway "σα να προσπαθούσαν κάτι να θυμηθούν": memory, here, plays the Bergsonian role of connecting the outer reality of *étendue* – the gateway, the cars and coaches, the archaeological ruins – with the inner reality of *durée*, the unmeasurable time of the myth, from which the wailing voice of an unseen woman, identifiable with Electra, emerges. The opposition of Orestes's monologue and Electra's wailing plays on the different temporalities, putting the focus exactly on the persistence of the past in the present:

> […] Πώς μπορεί να μένει
> κλεισμένη ασφυχτικά σε μια στιγμή παρωχημένου χρόνου,
> παρωχημένων αισθημάτων; Πώς μπορεί, και με τι,
> ν' ανανεώνει αυτό το πάθος της εκδίκησης και τη φωνή του πάθους
> όταν όλοι οι αντίλαλοι τη διαψεύδουν, τη χλευάζουν μάλιστα · […]
> (Ritsos 1978, 76)

The mythical hero accuses Electra of being hermetically stuck in the past without listening to the "αντίλαλοι" that emerge in the *durée* of time. Orestes, who on the other hand speaks from the fourth dimension, is fully aware of the osmosis between the temporal dimensions and therefore questions his sister's unflinching and obsessive need for revenge, as well as his own destiny. As he looks at reality from this privileged

perspective, Orestes does not understand Electra's antagonism towards their mother anymore: "Έχω κ' εγώ μια δική μου ζωή και πρέπει να τη ζήσω. Όχι εκδίκηση · – | […] Πέρασαν τα χρόνια. | Δε νιώθω μίσος πια · – ξέχασα μήπως; κουράστηκα; Δεν ξέρω." (Ritsos 1978, 81). Time has passed, transforming affects and attitudes; however, Orestes cannot escape his mythological character, eventually taking himself to fulfil his duty, "όχι / για την εκδίκηση, όχι για το μίσος – διόλου μίσος – / […] / μα ίσως για την συμπλήρωση ορισμένου χρόνου, για να μείνει ελεύθερος ο χρόνος" (Ritsos 1978, 89). With his final act, Orestes embodies the *durée* in full, where the past of Electra's revenge and the murder of Clytemnestra mix with Orestes's present consciousness and location. It is an act of the mythical past committed in present Mycenae that ensures time's freedom, the free flux of duration.

With the monologues of the mythical figures in *Fourth Dimension*, Yannis Ritsos brings the boundary condition of the Greek 1960s within his poetics and translates it into a fourth dimension, intended both spatially and temporally. While the characters are positioned in liminal spaces – at the margins of society or between the inside of a ruined house and the outside of the buzzing city – Yannis Ritsos delves into the psychological reverberations of the boundary, laying bare the acute feelings of estrangement and disjointedness from the present moment. The fourth dimension-*durée* creates a timeless space,

> σαν μια έξοδος απ' το χρόνο, σαν καθήλωση του χρόνου, σαν κατάργησή του
> απ' την ταχύτητα της σκέψης και της μνήμης και του ονείρου
> κι απ' την υπομονή της ανθρώπινης πράξης
>
> (Ritsos 1978, 331)

as the anonymous Stranger in the closing monologue says to those willing to listen to him. The myths of the past, in the 'exodus' from time that Ritsos stages, appear to be inevitably

inadequate to survive the present. Like bubbles in the *durée* of time, they dissolve, revealing their fundamental inadequacy for the metamodernist present.

2.3 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter opened with Chrysothemis's questions at the very beginning of her monologue: why now and why her? In this chapter, I attempted to answer these questions, by recontextualising Ritsos's collection and its development in the historical and cultural context of the Greek 1960s, and by suggesting a Bergsonian reading of the poems.

The case of Ritsos's *Fourth Dimension* is particularly central in the conceptualisation of Greek metamodernism for two reasons: on the one hand, the author himself belonged to the older generation of intellectuals that had emerged in Greece during the 1930s and that became important cultural referents in the postwar period. Despite his place within the Generation of the 1930s could be disputed, due to the strong ideological connotations of his early work, his poetics up to the mid-1950s could be associated to 'socialist modernism.' In the postwar years, Ritsos is a modernist grappling with a rapidly changing Greece and global landscape. Therefore, in this chapter I suggested to read Ritsos's most famous collection as a work deeply affected by what I identified in the previous chapter as 'boundary condition.' The boundary is intended not just as a liminal space of encounter between East and West and younger and older generations, but also as an in-between time of transformation when established norms and models began to reveal their weaknesses, prompting a clear need for new directions. Hence, I proposed the adoption of the 'boundary' as an affect that dominated the public and the private sphere, one to which cultural producers, such as Yannis Ritsos, reacted.

In order to explore the metamodernist intersection of modernism and boundary, I delved into the development of Ritsos's *Fourth Dimension*, eliciting how the boundary-affect influenced Ritsos in composing the cycle of monologues. Drawing from archival material, I argued that the idea of the cycle and its development coincided with 'boundary' moments in Ritsos's personal and creative life, marking a transition from his earlier politically engaged poems of the previous decades to a more intimate and personal poetic language. A closer examination at the full list of monologues and their content revealed three phases of composition, marked by three key dates: 1956, 1963, and 1967.

In 1956, the onset of the de-Stalinisation of the Soviet model shook Ritsos's ideological beliefs, leading to a creative crisis resolved with the conception of *Fourth Dimension* that opened a new phase in Ritsos's poetics. During 1963, Ritsos engaged with the modernist models of C.P. Cavafy and Vladimir Mayakovsky, coinciding with what I called the 'mythological turn' of the collection. Finally, it was in 1967, when the boundary-affect became tangible in his experience of arrest and exile, that Ritsos finalised the list of poems around the monological form, eventually publishing *Fourth Dimension* in 1972.

From the 'external' factors that had an influence in the development of the collection, my analysis moved to the inside of the monologues themselves, in order to understand how useful the category of the boundary can be for a new reading of the poems and the implications this had in the metamodernist context of the 1960s. To this end, I suggested that Yannis Ritsos's 'fourth dimension' be associated to the ideas on time, consciousness, and memory of the French philosopher Henri Bergson, which had a considerable influence on the development of European modernism in the 1920s and 1930s. In particular, the Bergsonian concept of *durée* provided a coherent framework to understand Ritsos's distinct reception of classical mythology, characterised by the boundary position of the speakers, intended in its spatial and, above all, in its temporal

connotation. The modernist Bergsonian framework allows for a recontextualisation of the myth in modernity, resulting in a decentring of the myths themselves.

The overlap of the mythological plane with contemporaneity means challenging the models inherited from the national tradition. Ritsos seems to suggest that Greek history is in fact a Bergsonian *durée*, thus critiquing in a sense the nationalist idea of historical continuity that dominated the pre-modernist cultural debates in the country. While acknowledging the cultural heritage of his country, Ritsos hints at a peculiar dimension where the whole of Greek history is constantly permeating the present. William Spanos (1973) already identified this feature in one of Yannis Ritsos's earlier poems, *Ρωμιοσύνη* (*Romiosyni*, 1945-47), stating that "Ritsos' poem presents Greek time, no matter how externally shattered, as an eternal now, to suggest that it is a *living* presence in the contemporary "people's" consciousness." Such historical perception becomes even more relevant in his *Fourth Dimension*, complicated by the metamodern condition of the boundary. Indeed, the monologues of the mythical characters reveal the cracks that Yannis Ritsos had already mentioned in his essay on Mayakovsky's poetry, exposing the boundary condition affecting Greek culture of the 1960s.

The Greek 1960s, as the present reading of Ritsos's poems suggests, are a transitional moment from the old myths of tradition to an unknown future, while the critical present is still unresolved. "Δεν ξέρω, απόψε νιώθω την ανάγκη να μιλήσω, – τώρα | που τίποτα πια δε σημαίνει να μιλήσω ή όχι" (Ritsos 1978, 139), says Electra in 'Κάτω απ' τον ίσκιο του βουνού.' She acknowledges her need to voice her thoughts, and yet she is fully aware that whatever she has to say would not benefit the listener. Her words are presented as empty and useless: the myth has lost its archetypic function and it cannot provide answers and models anymore. Ritsos, in other words, employs the modernist language

and structures to address a new set of cultural preoccupations and the transition towards a new cultural future.

As a conclusion, I would like to suggest an alternative reading of Yannis Ritsos's *Fourth Dimension* that sheds light on a more positive aspect of the collection. In exposing the empty cultural centre left by the inadequacy of classical mythology in the metamodernist present, Ritsos is suggesting at the same time a way out, a hope for reconstruction, which is particularly visible in some choral monologues that the poet left out of the collection. I have argued in this chapter that the monologists embody the condition of the boundary of the metamodernist Greek 1960s. Therefore, *Fourth Dimension* can be read as a collection of testimonies, as an imaginary archive of this specific metamodern ontology. In placing the mythological characters within the *durée* of the fourth dimension, and in portraying them as common people grappling with their critical present, Ritsos challenges the tradition and invites the readers to question it. This operation does not intend to substitute traditional myths, but conversely to 'modernise' them, or better to read them again as *meta*modern tales. In other words, *Fourth Dimension* should be intended as a 'new' archive that brings together the 'cracked' ancient myths to re-arrange them for the critical present.

This operation can be understood as a case of what Dimitris Papanikolaou called 'archive trouble.' Papanikolaou's cultural approach facilitates the metamodern reading of Ritsos's collection as an exemplary product of a cultural and historical practice that is characterised by a strong sense of crisis. As he argues, in a critical context there is a need to return to the past cultural archive and reconfigure it for the present. In line with this, the reader of *Fourth Dimension* feels somewhat estranged, not accustomed to have such a direct and honest contact with the mythological characters. Aware of the traditional representation of each character, the poet shakes it, *troubles* it, and gives us a more

contemporary, realistic portrait. Part of the troubling process is the recovery of the silenced voices, which are not given much space in the traditional sources. This is the case of Chrysothemis, Helen, Neoptolemus, and even Ismene and Iphigenia. Surely, the Sophoclean sources are clear, but the poet places them under the limelight, exploring the depths of their consciousness and allowing them to tell their side of the myth.

The creation of a liminal fourth dimension facilitates the open conversation between the mythological speaker and the contemporary listener-reader. Embodiments of the boundary condition of the Greek 1960s, the characters in Ritsos's poems are thus liberated from the heavy chains of classical reception. Ritsos displaces them from the cultural centre, i.e., the Greek mythological tradition, a stifling centre they had occupied since the Homeric poems. In this act of 'troubling', Ritsos aims to remove the crust of traditional classical reception, revealing the fundamental need for new cultural models.

In the next chapter, the issue of the obsolescence of the old myths and the need for new questioning is central in the Benjaminian reading of Stelios Xefloudas's novel *Οδυσσέας*. The modernist technique of the mythical method, intended originally to provide an order to the chaotic structure of the 1920s present, is reverted in the 1960s – instead of ordering, the myths expose the chaos, the tensions, and the instability of the new postwar world order.

CHAPTER 3

Η ΑΡΧΗ ΜΙΑΣ ΚΑΙΝΟΥΡΙΑΣ ΟΔΥΣΣΕΙΑΣ

STELIOS XEFLOUDAS'S *ΟΔΥΣΣΕΑΣ* AND BENJAMINIAN MODERNISM

Homer puts it clearly: Odysseus cannot be contained under a single label. Odysseus is πολύτροπος, and it shows in his ingeniousness in overcoming all sorts of impasses he encounters, as well as in his long journey which takes him around the whole Mediterranean Sea before finally landing in his native Ithaca. Odysseus's 'polytropy' further expands throughout the centuries in the great number of receptions and adaptations of his myth. Exactly because of his malleability, the Greek hero has constantly acquired new meanings and values and continues to fascinate writers, readers, and audiences.[51] In the case of Greece, Odysseus became particularly prominent in the 20th century, when several Greek writers engaged again with the Odyssey material in their original work, enriching the figure of Odysseus (but also other characters, like Elpenor and Penelope) with new interpretative layers.[52]

In this chapter, I would like to focus on a specific Greek appropriation of Odysseus: Stelios Xefloudas's novel *Οδυσσέας*. Published in 1974, the novel was written between 1965 and 1967 at a time of political turmoil in Greece and of great tensions due to the ongoing Cold War. Both the title of the novel and the very myth of Odysseus already allude

[51] For a comprehensive overview of the different appropriation of the Ulysses theme from antiquity to the early 20th century, see Stanford (1968). For a more recent exploration of the reception of the Odyssey in European modernist literature and cinema, see Oikonomou (2016).

[52] See Kastrinaki (2003) for an overview of the reception of the figure of Ulysses in Modern Greek literature of the 20th century.

directly to Western high modernism and, in particular, to its masterpiece novel *Ulysses* (1922) by James Joyce. Indeed, Stelios Xefloudas, who began his literary career in the 1930s, was educated in Paris in 1928-9 and imbibed the modernist spirit of the time.[53] Despite being largely overlooked by criticism, after his return to Greece, Xefloudas became an active member of the modernist intellectual circles, especially in Thessaloniki, where he co-founded in 1932 the journal *Μακεδονικές ημέρες* (Macedonian Days). Both his formative years in Paris and his collaboration in the Thessaloniki journal put him in direct contact with the literary and cultural developments that were taking place in western Europe, drawing from them the new modernist techniques of narration, especially the focus given to the subjective perspective and introspection.[54]

Already his very first novels, *Τα τετράδια του Παύλου Φωτεινού* (Pavlos Foteinos's Notebooks, 1930) and *Εσωτερική συμφωνία* (Inner Symphony, 1932), represented a first attempt to introduce in the Greek literary landscape a new way of writing prose, heavily influenced by the high modernist models of interior monologue and stream of consciousness. As the titles suggest, both novels are fundamentally plotless, written in the form of a journal, in which the narrator explores questions and difficulties of art-making and its relation to life. With the outbreak of the Second World War and the Greek Civil War, Xefloudas's modernist experimentation records a shift, not on the formal level, but rather on the thematic one: the reflections about artistic creativity started to leave the way to the traumas of history that the wars had imposed. A turning point in his writing career, the novel *Άνθρωποι του μύθου* (People of the Myth, 1944) explores the repercussions of the Second World War on the consciousness of the fighters, allowing for

[53] See Palaktsoglou (2003) for the interesting correspondence between Xefloudas and Theotokas, discussing the ideas and the publication of the essay-manifesto *Ελεύθερο πνεύμα* (1929).

[54] See Vourtsaki (2014) and Voyiatzaki (2007).

the author's pessimist considerations on the current state of the world. This novel also marks the introduction of the myth in Xefloudas's practice, continued in the novel *Οδυσσέας χωρίς Ιθάκη* (Odysseus without Ithaca, 1957), in which the monologising narrator is called Odysseus and recalls his experience at the front in a very anti-heroic manner. Xefloudas employs the voice of the soldier Odysseus to express his pacifist position and to condemn the brutal violence that seems to dominate in the contemporary postwar world.

Xefloudas's following novel *Οδυσσέας*, focus of the present chapter, appears then at the end of a creative process that was deeply rooted in European high modernist models and that responded to the tensions and the social transformations of the postwar years; responding, in other words, to the metamodernist structure of feeling that emerged in the long 1960s. Contrary to the previous novel, *Οδυσσέας* revolves around a modern journey that the Homeric Odysseus undertakes together with Calypso in the Eastern Mediterranean. Narrated from the first-person perspective of the two characters, Xefloudas employs again the modernist technique of the interior monologue, in which the characters alternate their observations on what surrounds them with long digressions either on past events (Odysseus) or on dreamy visions (Calypso). The plot in itself is very simple: over a period of four nights and three days, the two characters first go from Alexandria to Cairo and into the desert. Then, back to Alexandria, they embark on a ship, sailing along the Cretan coast and finally docking in a little harbour of an unnamed island. The novel ends in an anonymous big city. In a highly modernist fashion, what complicates the plot is the interior journey of the characters into their memories and long digressions, prompted by their external experiences. The city of Alexandria induces long reflections on Antony and Cleopatra, Cairo triggers a series of considerations about the barrenness of modern existence and the alienation of the city, the sight of Crete evokes the figures of

Minos, Ariadne, and Theseus, as well as reflections about the constraints of life in Ithaca, while the last unnamed big city is the final occasion for Odysseus and Calypso to express their uneasiness towards modernity and towards the violence inherent in the modern world.

The modernist elements of this novel, such as the long interior monologue and the constant shifts between past and present, are already visible in this short summary; however, modernity becomes here the object of strong criticism, marking Xefloudas's distance from the modernist sensibility of the interwar period.

In order to understand better and appreciate the breadth of the metamodernist move that Xefloudas operates in his handling of Odysseus's myth, I suggest putting the novel in dialogue first with the Joycean model of the mythical method and finally with the thought of Walter Benjamin.[55] While I acknowledge the distance that separates James Joyce's literary practice and Walter Benjamin's thought, together they can provide an unexpected insight into Xefloudas's *oeuvre*, unveiling the cosmopolitanism found in this specific novel. Putting Xefloudas's novel in open conversation with both Joyce and Benjamin highlights, I would argue, important features of what I identify as Greek metamodernism: the recovery of silenced voices; the challenge to the the very myths that shaped contemporary Greekness; the negotiation of the locality of Greece in the rapidly expanding world.

Beyond placing Xefloudas's *Οδυσσέας* at the centre of the 1960s metamodernist questioning, this Joycean and Benjaminian approach also aims to refresh the scholarship

[55] I acknowledge that Walter Benjamin's thought was heavily influenced by his ideological position as a Marxist thinker and his embodied experience of oppression as a Jewish subject during the years of Nazism. However, in my reading of Xefloudas's novel through Benjamin's philosophy, I do not delve in the ideological implications of this move for lack of space. Nevertheless, Benjamin's theorisation of history resonates considerably with the metamodernist reading of Xefloudas I am proposing in this chapter.

on Xefloudas's work. Some form of stagnation seems to mark the critical reception of Xefloudas over the years, with only little exceptions. The interest in his work became considerable in the second half of the 20th century and focused mainly on his early novels of the interwar years. Kostas Stergiopoulos, in a 1966 short essay on Xefloudas's style, identified two phases in his writing career: the interwar novels and the postwar novels, characterised respectively by the "individualisation of the objective" (εξατομίκευση του αντικειμενικού) and by the "objectification of the individual" (αντικειμενικοποίηση του ατομικού), showing a particular preference for the former, given the more essayist tone of the latter (Stergiopoulos 1966b, 429). Moreover, Stergiopoulos put his attention on the extensive use of the interior monologue, which, to his eyes, made Xefloudas's prose anthropocentric and repetitive. Stergiopoulos's essay was particularly influential for the subsequent reception of Xefloudas's work, which pivoted around his role in introducing the Western model of the interior monologue and on the repetitiveness of his intimist prose. This criticism led to a mostly negative view of his novels and tended to overlook his postwar production.[56] When the book was published in 1974, the literary critic Yannis Chatzinis (1975) wrote a short review of the novel in the journal *Νέα Εστία*, in which he criticised the lack of lyricism in what he would not even call a novel, but rather an essay. For Chatzinis, Xefloudas's Odysseus is just a springboard for the writer to express his ideas about the contemporary world, and the myth an expressive tool in the author's hands in order to convey his personal preoccupations, giving a metaphysical dimension

[56] Dimitris Tsakonas described his characters as lacking "ζωική αντίσταση, δεν είναι ηρωικά ή τολμηρά στην χιμαιρικότητά τους" (Tsakonas 1990, 62) and his writing as possessing "τη μονοτονία χιονισμένων πεδιάδων" (68). Tolis Kazantzis also criticised the characters as "μορφές απρόσιτες, μετέωρες" and added that "η μόνη θετική πλευρά [...] είναι εντελώς αρνητική˙ είναι η αμφισβήτηση – δια της αποσιώπησης– του έξω κόσμου" (Kazantzis 1991, 180). An even more categoric criticism is given by Aris Berlis, who claimed that "[τ]α έργα που απαρτίζουν [...] τη δεύτερη φάση της παραγωγής του δεν έχουν ιδιαίτερη σημασία για την νεοελληνική λογοτεχνία" (Berlis 1993, 286). A more neutral tone is adopted in Palaktsoglou's (2005) study of Xefloudas's theory of fiction writing and the role played by women characters in his interwar novels.

to the myth itself. Finally, he admits that it is not a novel for everybody, but for patient readers, able to grasp the different shades of the monotonous tone of the novel. Diverging from the diffuse negative criticism on Xefloudas's work, Foivos Delfis (1978) situated *Οδυσσέας* within the philosophical and literary development of the author from his first novels in the 1930s until his last works of the late 1970s, and he highlighted positively the existential reflections of the protagonist, which reveal "[την] ποιότητα και [την] καθαρότητα της σκέψεις του Ξεφλούδα" (Delfis 1978, 98).

Excluding Delfis's exceptionally positive analysis of the novel, it is then not surprising that Xefloudas's *Οδυσσέας* has attracted (sporadic) academic interest only more recently, with specific attention given to the importance of the body in language and narrative with particular focus on the figure of Calypso (Voyiatzaki 2002), to the introspective nature of his 'modernism' (Voyiatzaki 2007), and to the use of Odysseus in the context of 20th-century Greek literature, in Xefloudas's case representative of the postwar disillusioned man (Kastrinaki 2003, 234-6).[57]

In this chapter, I set out to move forward in Xefloudas's criticism and to re-evaluate his postwar novels through the case study of *Οδυσσέας*. The comparison with James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Walter Benjamin's late modernist thought reveals the acute eye Xefloudas had on his contemporaneity and underlines his outward-looking perspective, eager to participate in various international debates that we have not yet fully acknowledged. This novel is an exemplary fruit of the 1960s, a period when not only previous literary sensibilities permeated the new cultural production and changed shape under new circumstances, but also when the global infiltrated the local in a two-way

[57] It is worth noting that, except for a limited number of scholars, Stelios Xefloudas's novels are still largely overlooked, as the absence of his name in Oikonomou's (2016) study of the Odyssey theme in European modernism and in the wide-ranging overview of the 1960s Greek prose writing by Natsina et al. (2015) testifies.

exchange of ideas and preoccupations, as the juxtaposition of Stelios Xefloudas and Walter Benjamin can demonstrate.

The chapter sets off by inserting the novel into the post-Homeric tradition of Odysseus's last voyage and by tracing points of contact (or distance) with James Joyce's modernist masterpiece *Ulysses*. Special focus is put on the mythical method, which in Xefloudas's hands is challenged and in fact reverted. In what I will refer to as a 'metamodernist mythical method,' myth is emptied and exposes the violent transformations of the contemporary world. This reversal of the mythical method introduces ideas akin to Benjamin's view of alternative history, intended as a repetitive process of oppression.

The analysis will then move to the chronotope of the novel, i.e., to the particular interaction of time and space in Odysseus's consciousness. The peculiar locality of Odysseus within the chronotope of the novel enters in dialogue with Benjamin's concept of *Jetztzeit*. As my analysis will show, the special position suggests Xefloudas's Odysseus to be an almost revolutionary hero, who poses questions about the contemporary world, introduces the viewpoint of the defeated and the unredeemed, and offers his voice as a chamber of echoes from myth to history.

In the last section, all threads (myth, circular history, *Jetztzeit*) weave together the figure of the Xefloudian Odysseus as similar to a Benjaminian Angel of History, who can only witness the ruination of modernity while being pushed forward into the future. This image is important, indeed radical, especially if thought in the context of the local metamodernist context from which it comes. Instead of offering a confident mythical hero/leader, and unlike many of his Greek modernist predecessors, Xefloudas presents us with a precarious Odysseus, one who knows both his mythical and modernist

background and is persistently looking at them, while also being pushed away, into the future left open at the end of the book.

3.1 A METAMODERNIST ODYSSEUS

Reading Xefloudas through the Benjaminian lens requires an insight into the ways the author appropriates the mythical material; indeed, this novel cannot be discussed separately from the genealogy of the Odysseus theme that preceded it. Specifically, Xefloudas's characterisation of Odysseus shares common features with a literary tradition that harks back to the Italian poet Dante Alighieri in the early 14th century. At the same time, the choice of the title *Οδυσσέας* for the novel also creates an immediate connection to the high modernist tradition of James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

Homer's *Odyssey* is the inescapable starting point as it contains the seeds of the subsequent reception of the myth and its different adaptations. It is in Book 11 that Homer narrates Odysseus's descent into the world of the dead and his conversation with the souls. At the centre of this episode, the hero asks the prophet Tiresias about what lies ahead in his journey: Odysseus, Tiresias prophesises, will manage to return to his island and to regain control over it, but he will leave again towards barbarous lands, among people who know nothing about the sea, and his death will come in his old age. The question on how Odysseus dies has been the object of many debates throughout the centuries, stemming from a double meaning of *Odyssey* 11.134. According to Tiresias, death shall come "ἐξ ἁλός," where the preposition ἐξ could mean either 'away from (the sea)' or 'from (the sea).' Some ancient traditions, such as the now lost epic poem *Telegony*, follow the first meaning, narrating how Odysseus was killed by Telegonus, the son he had

from his affair with Circe.[58] At the same time, there developed a parallel tradition according to which Odysseus died at sea, and it is this second one that would exert considerable influence on Xefloudas's novel.

Particularly relevant in this study are Dante Alighieri's *Inferno* XXVI, Lord Alfred Tennyson's *Ulysses* (1842), and, in the Greek context, C.P. Cavafy's *Δευτέρα Οδύσσεια* (Second Odyssey, 1894) and Nikos Kazantzakis's *Οδύσεια* (Odyssey, 1938). All of these works certainly reflect the cultural environment of their time and, therefore, present several differences on the symbolic/allegorical level; however, the general narrative lines are the same. According to this tradition, Odysseus feels the urge to continue his journey, either never returning to Ithaca for an insatiable "desire | [...] to be experienced of the world, | and of vice and virtue of mankind" (Dante, *Inf*. XXVI.97-99) or for the unbearable tedium of life on the island, as Tennyson and Cavafy describe, which forces him to leave again. The direction of this 'second Odyssey' is a matter of discrepancy among the authors – according to Dante, Odysseus navigates westwards, beyond the Pillars of Hercules, finding his death at sea in a God-sent whirlwind that sinks the hero's ship. Tennyson and Cavafy clearly reference the Dantean source and have their hero set sail towards the West, without narrating his death, which is rather taken as a given, as an organic part of Odysseus's hubristic act. The 20th century and the new modernist aesthetic bring an innovation to this tradition: Kazantzakis, in fact, reverses Odysseus's new journey, since the hero travels towards the East, to Egypt, and then towards the South Pole, where after having traversed the African continent Odysseus finds his death again at sea in a Dantean whirlwind.

[58] Once again, Stanford (1968) is a precious source of the different post-Homeric traditions on Ulysses's death. For a more detailed overview of the *Telegony*, see chapter 4.

Stelios Xefloudas's *Οδυσσέας* goes one step further in this tradition: not only the hero, like the Dantean one, consciously decides not to return to Ithaca in order to continue his journey, but he also gains immortality, so that his personal odyssey may never end. Xefloudas's Odysseus willingly defies the urge to return to his native island, which is almost perceived as a prison:

> Επιμένω πως δεν είναι αλήθεια, ότι ήθελα να γυρίσω στην Ιθάκη. […] Όσο είμουνα βασιλιάς, είχα χάσει τον εαυτό μου. Στην Ωγυγία ξαναβρήκα έναν εαυτό μου που πρώτη φορά τον γνώριζα. […] Αν γύριζα στην Ιθάκη θα κλεινόμουνα πάλι σε τέσσερις τοίχους, εκτελεστικό όργανο της εθιμοτυπίας και του πρωτόκολλου. Πάντα οι τέσσερις τοίχοι με απομονώνουν, μου κλείνουν το θέαμα του κόσμου, γιατί ο κόσμος είναι θέαμα. Νεκρώνουνται οι αισθήσεις και παραδίνουμαι στη φαντασία μου. Καταποντίζουμαι μέσα μου χωρίς σωτηρία. Ό,τι με τριγυρίζει, γίνεται αδιάφορο, ακόμα με απωθεί. Οι τοίχοι όλο με πλησιάζουν και πιο πολύ, στενέβουν γύρω μου, συγκλίνουν απάνου μου. Είμουνα ο ήρωας κάθε φανταστικής περιπέτειας, όσο δε γύριζα στην Ιθάκη. (*Od.*, 178-179)

Ithaca and the responsibilities as a king suffocated Odysseus, who felt hindered in pursuing and developing his own identity and desires. Here lies the motivation that prompted this new journey: in order to be true to himself, he needed to stay away from his native island, relinquish his position as king, and continue his journey of self-discovery.[59] The hero mentions Ogygia as the place where he got to know himself for the first time, where freed from any external constraints he could explore and live his truth. Hence, the presence of Calypso, the nymph who kept the hero hostage for years on the island; while the tradition has Odysseus usually travelling alone or in the company of his old companions, Xefloudas decides to break with it and places the nymph by the

[59] "Εγκατέλειψα το θρόνο μου κι' άρχισα να πλανιέμαι από πόλη σε πόλη, να επικοινωνώ με τους ανθρώπους, όχι για να πλουτίσω τις γνώσεις μου, αλλά για να είμαι αυτό που ήθελα να είμαι: ο αρνητής της ίδιας του της εξουσίας" (*Od.*, 24).

protagonist's side as a constant reminder and connection to the spontaneity the hero seeks in himself and in the world. Xefloudas gives a very human representation of Odysseus, in which heroism is actually disavowed and the man behind the hero has to come to terms with his own consciousness.

The influence of modernism in this novel begins to come to the surface; indeed, placing Xefloudas's novel next to James Joyce's modernist masterpiece *Ulysses* is necessary to fully understand the modality whereby the Greek author tweaks the modernist model, so as to adapt it to the new unstable and fluid reality of the 1960s. As Voyiatzaki (2007, 1001) points out, by drawing upon a vast European literary tradition, [Xefloudas's novel] advertises its Anglo-Saxon influences through many allusions to Shakespeare, Joyce and Eliot […] attempt[ing] to locate *Odysseus* in Joyce's modernist tradition." Indeed, Xefloudas, as many of his colleagues in Thessaloniki, always looked at the broader European literary landscape, as his critical work throughout the years demonstrate. For him, the contemporary French and English, but also German and Italian, writers were examples to follow in the Greek literary practice.[60]

This is reflected in his experimental (for Greece) use of the interior monologue, which he continued to develop and employ well into the 1960s. Xefloudas's characters delve into their consciousnesses, recording their experiences and jumping among their memories and considerations in a continuous flow.[61] Therefore, it is not just the title of

[60] See for example Xefloudas 1935a; Xefloudas 1935b; Xefloudas 1937; and Xefloudas 1955.

[61] In her account of the use of interior monologue by Greek modernists, Maria Kakavoulia presents Stelios Xefloudas among the first Greek writers to use this narrative technique, arguing however that his first novels of the interwar period "can be evaluated historically as among the first texts that *thematized* [interior monologue] in prewar Greek literary production, but they cannot be classified as actual [interior monologue] texts" (Kakavoulia 1997, 140. Original emphasis). This analysis does not include Xefloudas's postwar novels, like *Οδυσσέας*, which I would argue constitute actual instances of interior monologue, similarly to Melpo Axioti's novel *Δύσκολες νύχτες* (Difficult Nights, 1938), used by Kakavoulia as a prime example of this narrative style in Greece.

the novel that engages with the Western model, but also the narratological technique and structure.

Joyce appropriates Homer's *Odyssey* and uses it as a palimpsest on top of which he constructs the modern stories of his characters and of Dublin. There is no actual Ulysses in his novel, but rather the hero's mythical wanderings are used as a map that could reveal the underlying structures of modernity. In a sense, Joyce mythologises his modernity, choosing to focus on a single day of 1904 in the Irish capital and drawing parallels between the Homeric myth and the everyday life in the present. In his famous review of the novel 'Ulysses, Order, and Myth' (1923), T.S. Eliot defines such technique as a *mythical method*. In his words, "[i]t is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history" (Eliot 1923, 483). The mythical method, by now a staple element of modernist aesthetics with a particular potent influence in Greece, is then conceived as a fierce reaction to the uncertainties of a rapidly changing world, dominated by "futility and anarchy" in need of some ordering. Myth, then, provides a structure that could shape contemporaneity.

In postwar Greece, a period of difficult healing from the scars of the German Occupation and the Civil War, Stelios Xefloudas takes the modernist mythical method and takes it one step further: Odysseus is not just the title of the novel that sets the mythical structure to the contemporary chaos and the mythical reference for the modern man, but he is alive and present in modernity, a physical presence in the 1960s world. Unlike the mythical monologists in Ritsos's *Τέταρτη διάσταση*, Xefloudas breaks the bubble that separated the monologist from taking part in the present world. Odysseus is, in Xefloudas's novel, fully immersed in the present, thus mingling myth and contemporaneity. As a consequence, the very myth is historicised and it is questioned by

one of its very protagonists. It is mainly the myth of the Trojan War to be used as a reference for the state of the world in the 1960s, caught up in the Cold War and in an ongoing conflict in Vietnam. Xefloudas's Odysseus is hypercritical of the conflict and of war in general, thus introducing a different perspective on this founding myth of Western culture: "δεν υπήρχε κανένας λόγος να χαθούν τόσοι άνθρωποι για μια μοιχαλίδα βασίλισσα. Υστερνή μου γνώση να σε είχα πρώτα, τότε δε θάπαιρνα μέρος σ' αυτή την πολυχρόνια εκστρατεία" (*Od.*, 202). Odysseus returns to the memories of the Trojan War to underline its barbarism, rather than the heroic feats of the Greeks; to reveal the pointlessness of such violence, rather than the courage of the heroes:

> Σκεπτόμουνα τον πόλεμο. Τον μελετούσα όπως ένα πρόβλημα, που έπρεπε να βρω τη λύση του, να φτάσω στο τέλος του. Μοναδική ηρωική μου πράξη, το επαναλαμβάνω χωρίς μ' αυτό να θέλω να επαναπαύσω τη συνείδησή μου, ήταν η φοβερή καταστροφή της Τροίας. Αγανακτούσα κάθε στιγμή γιατί τόσοι στρατιώτες αναγκαστήκαν να πεθάνουν. Ήταν ένας θάνατος που τους επιβάλαμε για ν' αποκαταστήσουμε την τιμή του Μενέλαου που τον κεράτωνε η γυναίκα του. (*Od.*, 166)

Under his new human form, Odysseus feels responsible and, consequently, deeply ashamed of his role in the war: "Κυκλοφορούσα ακόμα στους δρόμους της Τροίας, θέλοντας να φύγω όσο μπορούσα πιο μακριά, για να μη βλέπω το φρικαλέο έγκλημά μου. […] Άρχισα να μετανιώνω για την πράξη μου. Με κυρίεψε ο πανικός της συνείδησης" (*Od.*, 183-184). Through the voice of Odysseus placed in the modern world, Xefloudas makes the mythical method overt, so that it would be impossible for the reader to misinterpret the author's view: "[σ]ε αναγκάζουν στην Τροία, την Καρχηδόνα, την Γκουερνίκα, τη Χιροσίμα, το Βιετνάμ να μείνεις ο αιώνιος βάρβαρος" (*Od.*, 188). The world is in the middle of a catastrophe, the horrors of Troy keep on repeating and humanity is not learning from the past.

Read in conversation with Joyce, then, Xefloudas's *Οδυσσέας* becomes a *meta*-novel of Joyce's *Ulysses*: the connection is clear both from the title and the style of the work, but the Greek author takes one step further and transposes the mythical structure into the narration. The myth is not an abstract palimpsest inherent in modernity anymore, but it is made visible and tangible, an actual part of the contemporary world. At the same time, Xefloudas's *Οδυσσέας* becomes a *meta*-myth: the very protagonist of a myth reflects back on his own myth and other myths, revealing new aspects. The myth is then humanised, so that the contemporary individual could become a mythical character, and vice versa.

In order to accommodate such an important shift, the Greek author has to hark back to the other tradition of the Odysseus myth, the 'Dantean' one, "άνευ Ομήρου, άνευ εξαμέτρων" as Constantine Cavafy put it in his poem *Δευτέρα Οδύσσεια*. Repositioning Odysseus in the present as a proper historical character introduces a variation of the Joycean mythical method, a take on it in line with the metamodernist aesthetics of the Greek 1960s. This 'metamodernist mythical method,' as I would call it, works in two opposite directions: just like the 'modernist' version, the myth is used as a palimpsest to read the present. In Xefloudas's case, the immortal Odysseus, who has lived through much, is in the position to detect the repetitions inherent in the historical progress and to criticise modernity for such repetitions. The metamodernist mythical method, however, also involves a backward glance onto the mythical past through the lens of the present: the figure of Odysseus is questioned as he thinks of himself as a 'war criminal,' echoing the famous Eichmann trial that took place in 1962.[62] While contemporary humanity hails him as a name to celebrate and admire, praised as the hero of Troy,

[62] For a study of the Eichmann trial, see among others Arendt (1965), Lipstadt (2011), and Golsan and Misemer (2017).

Odysseus sees the Trojan War as a source of personal shame and regret.[63] On this occasion, it is not myth that has helped to read the historical; it is history that radically revises myth.

The metamodernist mythical method, therefore, is used to highlight a reversal of present values, on the one hand, and of the founding myths of modernity, on the other. The present world, in Odysseus's eyes, is founded on violence, which is pervasive in the public discourse. At the same time, the hegemony of the machines, while generally perceived as a symptom of modernisation and progress, is also criticised by Odysseus as a process that extinguishes the human instincts and passions, since humanity is portrayed as numbed and more similar to a crowd of automata. The Trojan War is then re-read from the present standpoint as the original event that initiated such reversal of the present – from the heroic feat of Odysseus, and of the Greeks more widely, it turns into a horrific and shameful act of violence, in which innocent people were murdered for no real reason.

The Xefloudian use of the mythical method becomes particularly interesting in the relation between myth and the representation of the city. The element of the city is indeed central in the construction of both Joyce's and Xefloudas's novels, and it plays an important part in the construction of the metamodernist mythical method. In Joyce's works, the city of Dublin is inevitably the big protagonist, both in the collection of short stories *Dubliners* (1914) and in *Ulysses*, where the city is the inescapable setting in which the characters move and meet. The city becomes the world, collapsing Ulysses's journey around the Mediterranean Sea in just one single place, equally full of adventures, twists, and turns. Compared to *Dubliners*, Joyce's *Ulysses* is an even more in-depth portrayal of

[63] "Δεν υπήρξα ποτέ ήρωας. Τέτοιος χαρακτηρισμός είναι για μένα απαράδεκτος. Πολέμησα για να σωθώ απ' τον εχθρό κι' όχι να το νικήσω" (*Od.*, 25).

the city and of its spirit, explored from the subtler standpoint of the characters' inner experiences.[64]

This element can be traced also in Xefloudas's novel, inserted in a cyclical structure – the novel opens in a city, and it soon becomes clear that the city symbolises everything that Odysseus is escaping from. He is compelled to abandon his native Ithaca to reconnect with his real self and to avoid further crimes,[65] he is urged to escape Troy after the barbaric massacre he committed,[66] and he eventually feels the necessity to leave also contemporary Alexandria, where – as Calypso reveals in one of her monologues – he had hoped to find salvation, an earthly paradise which clearly does not exist.[67] Nevertheless, Odysseus returns to the city at the end of the novel, in a city purposefully left anonymous so that it could stand for any place on the contemporary world: " Οι δρόμοι αυτής της μεγάλης πολιτείας όπου φτάσαμε απόψε, της κάθε σύγχρονης πολιτείας, (*γι' αυτό μπορώ να της δώσω όποιο όνομα θέλω και να την τοποθετήσω σ' όποιον παράλληλο της γης μ' αρέσει*) την ώρα αυτή είναι πλημμυρισμένοι από μηχανές, […]" (*Od.*, 205, my emphasis). Odysseus cannot escape from the urban environment and, indeed, eventually he and Calypso let themselves be absorbed by the city and become part of it: "Η Καλυψώ διαλύεται μέσα στην ανθρώπινη μάζα, όπως και μέσα μου, μέσα σ' όλους τους θόρυβους που άρχισαν να σωρεύουνται στους δρόμους. [...] Σκέπτουμαι ότι πια δεν μπορώ να πάω

[64] For a study of the city in James Joyce's works, see the volume edited by Michael Begnal (2002). For a closer analysis of the city in *Ulysses*, see Alter (2005, 121-140).

[65] "Για να βρω το δρόμο μου να συναρμολογήσω το θρυμματισμένο άτομο μου, που δεν είτανε δικό μου, αλλά του καθενός, εγκατέλειψα, επαναλαμβάνω, το βασίλειο μου. Κι' ούτε ξαναγύρισα στην Ιθάκη. […] Μόλις θάφτανα έπρεπε ν' αρχίσω έναν άλλο πόλεμο, σα να μη φτάναν τόσα χρόνια, που πολεμούσα. Είμουνα αναγκασμένος να σκοτώσω τους μνηστήρες ή να με σκοτώσουν. […] Γιατί λοιπόν να γυρίσω στην Ιθάκη για να διαπράξω και άλλα εγκλήματα;" (*Od.*, 84; 175).

[66] "Κυκλοφορούσα ακόμα στους δρόμους της Τροίας, θέλοντας να φύγω όσο μπορούσα πιο μακριά, για να μη βλέπω το φρικαλέο έγκλημά μου" (*Od.*, 183).

[67] While Ulysses wonders "γιατί βρίσκουμαι στην Αλεξάντρεια, αφού δεν έχω τίποτα να βρω, να γνωρίσω, να πάρω απ' το ένδοξο παρελθόν της" (*Od.*, 17), before sailing away Calypso notices: "Η Αλεξάντρεια είναι σαν μια ουτοπία. […] Η Αλεξάντρεια δε μας έδωσε καμιά λύση, καμιά καινούρια αίσθηση" (*Od.*, 69; 75).

πουθενά, να μ' απομακρύνουν τα βήματά μου από τον εαυτό μου και τους άλλους" (*Od.*, 253).

Xefloudas's Odysseus is inevitably drawn to the city, a potent representation of the contemporary world and its contradictions. In the shift of the mythical method from Joyce's underlying narrative structure to Xefloudas's tangible hermeneutical practice, myth and city become even more closely interwoven – in *Οδυσσέας*, the protagonist wanders and meanwhile uncovers the mythical landscape of each place he encounters. Egypt, and Alexandria especially, is haunted by the tragic story of Antony and Cleopatra, who were persecuted by Augustus and saw suicide as the only way out. Later in the novel, the shores of Crete call to Odysseus's mind the story of Minos and Ariadne, as well as of Theseus's arrival on the island, his fight against the Minotaur and his escape with Ariadne. While the inclusion of Antony and Cleopatra in the mythical space of Alexandria might appear as incoherent given their historicity, they are fully integrated in Xefloudas's metamodernist use of the mythical method – the placing of an immortal Odysseus in the contemporary world transforms him into a historical character who can not only vouch for the historicity of myths, but also witness the historical developments of the world. Therefore, Cleopatra and Clytemnestra, Caesar and Agamemnon, Troy and Hiroshima can all be placed on the same level, as the distinction between history and myth loses relevance in Odysseus's consciousness.

Contrary to what T.S. Eliot says of Joyce, the mythical underlay of the Xefloudian novel seems to provide a negative palimpsest of the world – while modernists sought in the ancient myth a powerful tool to make sense of their chaotic modernity, Xefloudas recurs to the myth to highlight its inability to provide any solution to the contemporary state of the world. The constant resurfacing of Antony and Cleopatra in Odysseus's monologue is exemplary of that. What Xefloudas's Odysseus narrates about them is not

really the historical relevance of their deeds and acts; he rather focuses on the human passions that mobilised their actions on the historical scene.[68] Cleopatra is told to be cunning and egoist,[69] while Antony is depicted as a fiercely passionate man ready to relinquish any political ambition in order to preserve his loyalty to Cleopatra.[70] On the one hand, the intensely human depiction of Antony and Cleopatra's passions contrasts sharply with the population of the contemporary city, be it Alexandria, Cairo, or the last 'big city.' Odysseus and Calypso move among a crowd of de-humanised people, often represented as impersonal automata or detached (even lost) in their own individual fantasies. On the other hand, Odysseus keeps wondering why his mind leads him to remember dead queens and heroes: "Γιατί με απασχολούν οι πεθαμμένοι, όταν ο θάνατος είναι η φυσική συνέπεια της ζωής; Ας τους αφήσουμε να κοιμούνται ήσυχοι στους τάφους των" (*Od.*, 26). There seems to be no use to replay their stories, they have nothing to teach us if not that we are all the same and it all ends with death. Therefore, myth is futile for the contemporary world. Although Odysseus seems to suggest that retelling these myths helps us understand human nature,[71] the 'mythistorical' spectres that haunt Alexandria have nothing to teach him:

[68] "Ο Αντώνιος κ' η Κλεοπάτρα άφησαν στην αιωνιότητα την ερωτική τους ιστορία κι' όχι τα κατορθώματά τους." (*Od.*, 31).

[69] "Μπορεί η Κλεοπάτρα ν' αυτοκτόνησε από εγωϊσμό κι' όχι γιατί έχασε ό,τι αγαπούσε. […] Ίσως, όταν δεν τις απόμεινε τίποτα, δρόμοι για τις ακόρεστες φιλοδοξίες της, χέρια να χαϊδέβουν το διψασμένο κορμί της, που θα το καταράστηκε πολλές φορές, κατάλαβε, πως ήταν οριστικά νικημένη, έρημο πουλί στην καταιγίδα, κι' αποφάσισε να εκτελέσει, τόσο αντιηρωικά, την πιο ηρωική πράξη της ζωής της" (*Od.*, 41-42). And again, "[ά]μετρα φιλόδοξη δεν ήθελε να υποταχτεί σε άλλον από τον εαυτό της, που τον αγαπούσε εγωιστικά, και με κάθε τρόπο επιζητούσε να πραγματοποιήσει τα αλαζονικά της σχέδια" (*Od.*, 59).

[70] "[Στο Άκτιο ο] Αντώνιος πέταξε στο νερό τα όπλα του και την παληκαριά του κι' άνοιξε τα πανιά του καραβιού του να την προφτάσει. Δεν είχε το θάρρος ν' αυτοκτονήσει. Ήθελε να κάνει φτερά, να γίνει αέρας, για να βρεθεί κοντά της" (*Od.*, 77). Moreover, "αρνήθηκε την υστεροφημία, όπως κι' εγώ, για μια γυναίκα. […] Πνιγμένος στην πίκρα του δεν καταλάβαινε ποιος ήταν ούτε τι έκανε. Κυνηγούσε, τυφλωμένος απ' το πάθος του, τον έρωτα και το θάνατο" (*Od.*, 84).

[71] "Καταλαβαίνω πόσο αυτή η τυμβωρυχία είναι απαραίτητη για να γνωρίσουμε τους ανθρώπους ακόμα και τους πιο ένδοξους" (*Od.*, 26).

> Όπως προχωρούμε σωπαίνοντας, αναρωτιέμαι γιατί βρίσκουμαι στην Αλεξάντρεια, αφού δεν έχω τίποτα να βρω, να γνωρίσω, να πάρω απ' το ένδοξο παρελθόν της. Οι Φαραώ μένουν νεκροί κάτου απ' την πέτρινη αιωνιότητα των πυραμίδων στην άκρη της ερήμου, ή στη σκιά κάποιου μουσείου, ο Αντώνιος κ' η Κλεοπάτρα είναι κλεισμένοι στους θαμμένους απ' τη σκόνη τάφους των, οι Πτολεμαίοι όλο και ξεθωριάζουν στην μνήμη των ανθρώπων. (*Οδ.* 17)

Even though these spectres do not contribute positively to his quest of self-identity, Odysseus acknowledges the fact that they will haunt him anywhere he goes, together with Alexandria and all the painful memories of Troy.[72] There is no need to stay in Alexandria, then, since it cannot provide any solution to his existential restlessness; echoing the other important ghost haunting the Egyptian city, Constantine Cavafy, Odysseus feels compelled to leave Alexandria, a city whose ghosts make him escape, but from which he will never really escape: "Απόψε θ' αποχαιρετήσω την Αλέξαντρεια που φεύγει. Ό,τι είδα και γνώρισα, μπορεί νάταν ένα φανταστικό ταξίδι. […] Απόψε θ' αποχαιρετήσω την Αλεξάντρεια που δεν έφυγε, όπως άλλοτε η Ωγυγία που μας ακολουθεί…" (*Od.*, 62; 76).[73]

Leaving the Egyptian shores, Odysseus and Calypso sail towards Crete and the sight of its shores evokes in the Greek hero's mind the myth of Minos, Ariadne, and Theseus, whose retelling covers the central and biggest section of the novel and presents, in a more extended and more coherent manner, the futility and the negative palimpsest that the myth represents. The narration of the Cretan myth alternates with considerations on the contemporary state of the city and of civilisation, thus establishing clear analogies

[72] "[Μ'] ακολουθεί, χωρίς να μπορώ να το εξηγήσω, η θύμηση της Κλεοπάτρας, των Φαραώ, της Κλυταιμνήστρας, η μνήμη του εαυτού μου, του πολέμου της Τροίας που ήταν η πιο μεγάλη δόξα μου κ' η πιο θλιβερή ταπείνωσή μου. Ήρθε η στιγμή να εγκαταλείψω την Αλεξάντρεια ή να μ' εγκαταλείψει" (Od., 62).

[73] Xefloudas here indirectly references Cavafy's poem 'Απολείπειν ο θεός Αντώνιον' ("Σαν έτοιμος από καιρό, σα θαρραλέος | αποχαιρέτα την, την Αλεξάνδρεια που φεύγει", v. 7-8). I can also trace the neat influence of the poem "Η πόλις", see for example lines 9-11 "Καινούριους τόπους δεν θα βρεις, δεν θα βρεις άλλες θάλασσες. | Η πόλις θα σε ακολουθεί. Στους δρόμους θα γυρνάς | τους ίδιους."

between the two. At the same time, however, Odysseus's metanarrative poses questions about the actual usefulness of this process: "Φοβάμαι ότι γράφω για πρόσωπα και γεγονότα που δεν ενδιαφέρουν σήμερα, όταν η απειλή μιας παγκόσμιας καταστροφής βαραίνει κάθε ζωή" (*Od.*, 103). His doubts do not stop him from continuing his narration: if there is something that the contemporary audience can draw from the story of Minos, Ariadne, and Theseus, this is the realisation of the dire conditions of the world on the brink of a catastrophic nuclear war.

The three characters of this digression seem to work as an allegory for the structure of the contemporary world. King Minos's imposing and capricious manners stand for the dictatorial power that seems dominating, disguised as it is as either physical dictators (Odysseus mentions Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco) or as the general dominance of violence and technology. Ariadne, lost in her fantasies and unfulfilled desires of freedom, comes to represent the anonymous and numbed crowds that Odysseus encounters in his urban wanderings. Imprisoned in a cage of reversed values, contemporary humans are in need to be liberated without being aware of this. So, Theseus with his heroic attitude of the saviour becomes Odysseus's alter ego, the one who denounces the false appearances and the violent system of the world, the one wishing to condemn the system and set humanity onto a new path.

As it appears clear from the general tone of the novel, however, this salvation is denied as the world is bound to repeat cycles of violence and dictatorial domination. Odysseus is then caught up in a frustrated desire, which makes him perceive humanity at a dead end and death as the only way out. The palimpsest provided by the Cretan myth creates a stark discrepancy with Odysseus's contemporary awareness. Xefloudas's mythical method reveals again its 'un-methodicity:' the contemporary world is in a chaotic state and the myth can only bring to the surface the negative palimpsest of the

present. If Ariadne manages to find the strength to escape from the oppressor through Theseus's intervention, contemporary humanity is bound to stay imprisoned in a vicious cycle of self-destruction, highlighted by the final association of Theseus with the figure of Don Quixote.[74]

The last element to take into consideration in the exploration of the metamodernist use of the mythical method in the novel is the figure of Calypso, whose role as companion in Odysseus's wanderings puts her in a special position. Despite the fact that she never engages in a dialogue with Odysseus, she is the only other character whose voice the reader hears directly, always in the form of Xefloudas's signature interior monologue. Evi Voyiatzaki (2002) has already provided an insightful analysis of the multifaceted role of Calypso in Xefloudas's novel, arguing that the nymph is the female projection of Odysseus, she is the Freudian Other that confirms the hero's individuality and existence. In other words, Calypso is the driving force that "activat[es] the world of the senses as a necessary precondition for recovering [Odysseus's] humanity, as the only way out from the mechanization of modern man's life" (Voyiatzaki 2002, 87). Reading Calypso's story through the metamodernist mythical method, she appears to be a negative mirror for humanity, or rather she portrays traits such as spontaneity and instinctiveness, that seem to be completely lacking in the humanity Odysseus encounters.

In order to understand better this point, it is necessary to focus briefly on the setting of Ogygia, where the two protagonists of the novel meet. The island is in fact described in the novel as a *locus amoenus*, pristine and paradisiac, which allows both Calypso and Ulysses to break free from outside impositions and yield to their desires. Ogygia is the

[74] "[Ο Θησέας] είναι για μένα ο ηρωικός πρόδρομος του Δον Κιχώτη που έταξε σκοπό της ζωής του να τιμωρήσει τους κακούς. Ήρθε στην Κρήτη για ν' απαλλάξει τους ανθρώπους από την τιμωρία του βασιλιά εξοντώνοντας στα σκοτεινά βάθη της γης το τέρας της δύναμης και της βίας." (*Od.*, 107).

place that activates the inner movements of Calypso's and Odysseus's consciousness – through meeting Odysseus, Calypso discovers her voice against the gods,[75] while Odysseus comes into contact with his real nature and desires.[76] Their encounter, therefore, pushes them to leave the island and begin this new journey of self-discovery. The contrast between the contemporary world and Ogygia is stark and Xefloudas seems to draw from the primitivist strands of modernism when Odysseus towards the end contrasts Calypso's primitive island with the artificiality of the modern world.[77]

It is now clear how, through the Xefloudian mythical method, the presence of Calypso next to Odysseus in the middle of the violence and pollution of modernity maintains the connection to the ideal of a spontaneous and instinctual life in pristine Ogygia and, at the same time, frustrates such an idealised vision as, in the end, Calypso – allegory of such spontaneity and instinctiveness – fades away in the imposing sterile environment of the modern city. The metamodernist mythical method, finally, reveals Ogygia to be an unachievable fantasy and futile myth.

3.2 OPPRESSION AND REPETITIONS

As a first step into the reading of Xefloudas's *Οδυσσέας*, it was important to explore how the mythical method inherited from the modernist practice is transformed after the traumatic events of the 1940s wars. The Joycean model is adapted to the new modernity,

[75] Before Ulysses's arrival, she felt "απούσα [...] Είμουνα σα μια πέτρα, σαν ένα δέντρο που δε βλάσταινε, αντικείμενο για την αποκλειστική χρήση των άλλων" (*Od.*, 156-157), whereas the encounter with the hero gave her strength: "Ξαναζούσα τα οράματα των ταξιδιών σου, που μούδιναν τη δύναμη να επαναστατήσω, να σ' ακολουθήσω σε κάθε δρόμο της γης, να χαράξω πλάι στα δικά σου τα βήματα της μοίρας μου, χωρίς να φοβάμαι τους θεούς" (*Od.*, 32).

[76] "'Οσο είμουνα βασιλιάς, είχα χάσει τον εαυτό μου. Στην Ωγυγία ξαναβρήκα έναν εαυτό μου που πρώτη φορά τον γνώριζα" (*Od.*, 178)

[77] For a study on the relation between primitivism and modernism, see Bell (2010). For an innovative reconsideration of literary primitivism that is not limited to the West, see Etherington (2018).

to the new technological advancements: the world is rapidly transforming, threatened by the constant risk of a nuclear war. Myth with its heroes and grand battles certainly constitutes a palimpsest, but for Xefloudas myth actually exposes the violence inherent in unchecked progress. In order to better understand Odysseus's metamodern consciousness and Xefloudas condemnation of historical progress, I suggest reading the novel through the filter of Walter Benjamin's historiosophy, which further complicates the relation between myth and history, between present and past.

By resorting to the 'original' Homeric hero, making him immortal, and positioning him in the 1960s, Xefloudas makes him a historical character. In the flow of his consciousness, the historicised Odysseus goes back to past events in a fragmentated manner; the Greek hero tells the stories of Antony and Cleopatra, Calypso, and Ariadne and Theseus, through scenes of different lengths, interspersed with his impressions of the contemporary world that surrounds him. Through this constant alternation of past 'mythistories' and present observations, Odysseus maintains an open channel between the two temporal planes, revealing and perpetuating the particular 'negative' mythical method discussed in the previous pages.

This approach recalls the Bergsonian philosophy of time discussed for Yannis Ritsos's poetry. Considering Xefloudas's tight engagement with the modernist ideas, a Bergsonian influence on his prose writing would hardly be surprising. By making Odysseus immortal and thus creating the possibility to position him in the contemporary world, Xefloudas puts Bergson's ideas in practice: the past is *physically* in the present and both temporal dimensions influence each other. While Odysseus struggles to find his place in the modern world – so violent and distant from his inner reality – the external world challenges Odysseus's interpretation of himself, thus offering a novel unexpected perspective of the hero's identity. This exemplifies Bergson's idea of the inverted cone,

theorised in *Matter and Memory*,[78] which explains how subjective memory influences one's choices in the present and manipulates the past. In Xefloudas's novel, Odysseus employs his memory as a constant repository of histories, examples, and past impressions, from which he can draw to give meaning to the world that surrounds him. In his consciousness the temporal planes are undistinguishable, as he jumps from memory to present and vice versa in a continuous flow. Just like Joyce's characters in his *Ulysses*,[79] Xefloudas's Odysseus lives through the Bergsonian *durée*. Myth and history, and different places and epochs can thus belong to the same dimension.

What sets Xefloudas apart, however, is that the temporal structure of the novel is circular: "Το παρελθόν, το παρόν, το μέλλον, όλη η κλίμακα των αριθμών καταντάν μια κατάλευκη στιγμή, που διαχέεται σε κύκλο τεράστιο" (*Od.*, 172). For Odysseus, time is condensed, all time planes are synchronous, contained in a circle-shaped moment. He continues: "Η χρονική διάρκεια είναι συνέχεια αδιάσπαστη, δεν τεμαχίζεται στην απειρότητά της, το ίδιο κ' ένας κύκλος συνεχίζεται χωρίς αρχή και τέλος στον εαυτό του" (*Od.,* 180). As Bergson argued, then, also Odysseus feels that the flux of time cannot be interpreted as a series of standardised segments; it is rather a διάρκεια, *durée*, αδιάσπαστη and infinite, represented by a circle which has no end.

Certainly, this interpretation of history is coherent with Odysseus's reflection on the repetition of the Trojan model and of the dictatorship of violence. Consistently with modernist aesthetics, Odysseus's consciousness is represented as an endless exchange between past and present, with the difference that it is associated to a circular movement;

[78] See figure 2, in section 2.2 of this thesis.

[79] "[James Joyce's *Ulysses*] engenders a sense of universal time by ranging through many different eras and places, times belonging specifically to the characters themselves - it is the totality of their experiences - and universal and historical times belonging to them by virtue of the fact that they are alive on this day in history and are able to share in a cultural heritage. This time is the characters' *durée.* The past, present, and future of each of the characters exist in the one day" (Gillies 1996, 146).

themes constantly return and the characters that populate his memory resurface even after he has finished to tell that specific story. Towards the end of the novel, Odysseus states that "[τ]ο παρόν περιπλέκεται με το παρελθόν και το παρελθόν με το παρόν και συνεχίζουν τη διάρκεια τους στο μέλλον" (*Od.,* 255). He seems to underline the fact that, despite his powerlessness in the contemporary world, his Odyssey will be propelled by the constant dialectic exchange between present and past. It is a cycle bound to never be broken.

The cyclical occurrence of catastrophes renders Bergson's theories insufficient to analyse the Xefloudian chronotope, which in turn profits from the dialogue with Walter Benjamin's thought, especially with his interpretation of history and the critique of progress, expressed in his unfinished *magnum opus The Arcades Project* and in his famous *Theses on the Concept of History*. According to the German philosopher, the idea that the past is finished and that the present is a necessarily better version of such a past must be rejected. Benjamin was in fact particularly critical of the positivist vision of history as an inevitable linear progression towards an ever-brighter future. On the contrary, he argued that past and present engage in a dialectical relation, creating "constellations" in which the two elements illuminate each other according to the configuration they create.

> It is not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words: image is dialectics at a standstill. (Benjamin 1999, 463).

This sort of configuration takes the name of *Denkbild*, 'dialectical image', and it is a flash, a fleeting vision that needs to be grasped and maintained. Therefore, history can be said to have a fragmented and unstable nature. Even though the past is generally assumed as unchangeable, history for Benjamin is a fluid concept, open to changes via new

interpretations and revelations. These changes depend on how past and present intersect and interact, on their ever-changing 'constellation.' The past, in summary, is (part of) an open and unfinished matter.

The narrative technique Xefloudas employs in his novel is particularly close to Benjamin's constellatory approach, since his Odysseus digs in the 'mythistorical' past of the places he visits, a past that emerges in images or scenes whenever Odysseus's consciousness comes in contact with his contemporary reality. This is especially true for the first part of the novel, when the two protagonists roam the roads of Egypt. Antony and Cleopatra, but also the companions in the Trojan War and Clytemnestra, come forward in Odysseus's mind, revealing aspects of their stories which have been so far left in the shadows, now illuminated in their new configuration with the 1960s world. The conflicts of the present seem to shed new light onto the past, so that the most private sphere of the characters is allowed to come to light. "Η ιστορία," Odysseus claims, "δεν είπε ποτέ γυμνή την αλήθεια, αφού δε μίλησε με φρίκη ούτε με καταδίκασε για την καταστροφή της Τροίας, έγκλημα αποκλειστικά δικό μου" (*Od.*, 25). It is only now, however, in this present stained by further wars and tragedies, that the historical truth can emerge, and Odysseus confess his terrible crimes.

Alternating his considerations on the present with constant flashbacks into the past, Xefloudas gives us a Benjaminian perspective on the past, made up of fragments, small snippets, stories often forgotten or repressed. Embedded as they are in the fabric of contemporaneity, it is up to the historian to free these fragments and illuminate them with the present's light. In her study on Virginia Woolf's notion of history in relation to Walter Benjamin's, Angeliki Spiropoulou argues that this operation "allow[s] for the historical objects to be placed in new arrangements, to be brought into constellation with the present and thus highlight history/historiography's implication in oppression and

exclusion" (Spiropoulou 2010, 57). The Xefloudian Odysseus carries out a similar task: he talks of ghosts that populate the city of Alexandria (not only Antony and Cleopatra, but also the Pharaohs, the Ptolemies, and in a very subtly way even C.P. Cavafy), he wonders why they haunt him and what the point of remembering them is. But it is exactly through his self-questioning that Odysseus shows the sense of the dialectics with the past: the hero establishes a tension between present and past and, in this process, he uncovers the failings of a defeated humanity.

The role of the oppressed and the excluded is central in the alternative vision of history Benjamin proposes, due especially to his Marxist background and the concept of historical materialism. This reverberates in the contemporary interest the modernists had in the 'minor' characters or 'alternative' histories. Both these elements merge in Xefloudas's novel in a rather unexpected manner. In his *Theses*, Benjamin describes the historical process as discontinuous, made of interruptions and revolutions. Traditional historiography, the German thinker continues, tells the history of the winners, thus casting into the shadows the defeated, the minor figures. What he proposes is a vision of history 'from below:' "Against the evolutionary view of history as an accumulation of 'gains', as 'progress' towards ever more freedom, rationality or civilization, [Benjamin] sees it 'from below', from the standpoint of the defeated, as a series of victories of the ruling class" (Löwy 2016, 39). Thanks to the dialectical relation between past and present, it is possible to redeem the oppressed and the forgotten. In fact, it becomes a necessary act in order to preserve a past that risks being forgotten forever and to reinterpret the present as one of the possible developments of the past that was just saved from disappearing.[80]

[80] "[I]t is an irretrievable image of the past which threatens to disappear in any present that does not recognize itself as intended in that image." ('Thesis V,' Benjamin 2003, 390).

Using Benjamin's vision of history as a modality to approach Xefloudas's novel, Odysseus seems to be taking on the role of the Benjaminian historian. Certainly, there is not a complete conformity – in the novel, the oppressed and the excluded from traditional historiography do not take centre stage. The characters that come into being in Odysseus's consciousness are protagonists of their myths or of their time. Odysseus himself is a king, a mythical hero, and he thus belongs to the category of the aristocracy and the winners. Nevertheless, Benjamin's historiosophy reveals an unusual side of the Xefloudian characters: the standpoint of the defeated. Odysseus is undoubtedly the winner in Troy according to the myth that has been transmitted to us, he is an enlightened king in his island; Xefloudas, however, wants us to see the other side of the coin, the dark side of history. Hence, the mythical method is reversed: Odysseus makes a harsh self-criticism, he pictures himself as a non-hero, himself a victim of the mythical system.[81] His feats in Troy are not presented as heroic anymore, but on the contrary, they portray Odysseus to be a defeated man, ferociously conscious of the pain he inflicted. This constellation with a present dominated by dictators and violence, the awareness of being a violent oppressor makes Odysseus a defeated man, reversing the inherited mythical tradition.

A similar analysis involves the other 'mythistorical' figures of the novel. For example, Antony and Cleopatra are members of the aristocracy too, but what emerges is their decadence. Cleopatra is the queen of a kingdom in an acute crisis and on the brink of assimilation to the Roman Empire. Antony, despite being part of the colonising forces, is portrayed almost as a waste of the system, defeated in the battle of Actium by Augustus

[81] "Ταπείνωσα τον εαυτό μου ανεπανόρθωτα κι' αντί να μ' αποφεύγουν και να με περιφρονούν οι άνθρωποι με θαυμάζουν, παντού σε κάθε βήμα με συνοδέβει η δόξα μου. Είμαι ο καταστροφέας της Τροίας. Ένας εγκληματίας πολέμου. Γιατί τότε με θαυμάζουν;" (*Od.*, 231).

and persecuted. Calypso and Ariadne, as I have mentioned above, are victims of the patriarchy; the former is the object of the gods' desires, while the latter is oppressed by her father Minos. Locked in the prison of their own unfulfilled desires and their impossible dreams, they do dream their liberation, which is embodied again in a male figure, in Odysseus and Theseus respectively. In the novel, Xefloudas often refers to the vicious circles of history, then it becomes automatic to question whether Calypso and Ariadne are constant victims of the patriarchal system into which they were born.

Both Benjamin and Xefloudas live through historical moments which are extremely tense. Benjamin's *Theses* reflect the stifling atmosphere of the late 1930s, when Nazi-Fascism was spreading throughout Europe. The German thinker came from a Jewish family and lived persecution in his own skin. Therefore, it is inevitable for dictatorships and violence to be criticised in these theses, which call for the redemption, through dialectical images, of the victims and of the forgotten bodies. As for Xefloudas, he writes his novel in the mid-1960s, when the tensions of the Cold War are very high, when the wounds of the Second World War and of the Greek Civil War are still quite open, and when dictatorships are still haunting the present. The portrayal of Minos as a violent dictator is not casual, as it is not casual that Odysseus and Calypso meet in the final 'big city' an unknown scientist who shows them weapons of mass destruction and who praises the scientific advancements. Odysseus, however, is appalled: "Και οι δικτάτορες, ο Χίτλερ, ο Στάλιν, ο Μουσολίνι με τον ίδιο τρόπο μιλούσαν για τη βία, γιατί καταργούσε διαδικασίες και αρχές της κοινωνίας κι' άνοιγε το δρόμο σ' εκείνους που τη χρησιμοποιούσαν και στηριζόνταν σ' αυτή" (*Od*., 219-220). The figure of the dictator returns again in the last pages of the novel under the guise of a lonely man on the riverbank, screaming empty promises of an earthly paradise to those who would follow him. The only response he

receives is from a barking dog.[82] Finally, permeating the whole novel, there is the 'dictatorship of technology,' which gives false hopes of progress to humanity, when according to Odysseus progress is only a weapon of self-destruction. The biggest defeated of the novel, then, appears to be humanity, self-annihilated and thrown into a catatonic state. Uncannily, Xefloudas finished to write the novel in 1967, the year of the Colonels' coup in Greece, as if anticipating the years of oppression that followed.

According to Benjamin, the interpretation of history as oppression, effacement, and fragmentation reveals how it offers a constant repetition of the always-the-same. "[I]n that which is the newest," Benjamin claims, "the face of the world never alters, [...] this newest remains, in every respect, the same. – This constitutes the eternity of hell" (Benjamin 1999, 544). Modernity takes on a hellish characterisation: if the modern is generally associated to novelty, to the break with the past, Benjamin shows that what is new is actually nothing other than the old under a different fashion. The oppressor simply changes his mask, but the core remains unchanged.

In this context, the messianic message promoted in his *Theses* becomes central: looking at history from the standpoint of the defeated, one can observe that there is no progress, but rather an infinite succession of tragedies, which could be interrupted when one acknowledges this system of oppression through the dialectical images. Those are moments of redemption and revolution, in which the flux of time stops. Then, Benjaminian history is not just a series of catastrophes, but also of interruptions, breaks. It is a discontinuous and fragmented history.

[82] "Πρέπει αυτός που μιλάει νάναι ένας τρελός ή κάποιος υποθετικός δικτάτορας [...] Κανείς δεν υπάρχει γύρω του. Ούτε οι νεκροί θα θέλαν να παραδεχτούν, όσα υπόσχεται. [...] Ένα σκυλί από κάποιο ανοιχτό παράθυρο αρχίζει να γαυγίζει, σα να νιώθει, ότι έξω υπάρχει ένας κίνδυνος" (*Od.*, 245)

The ideas of an eternal return of catastrophe and of being stuck in a vicious cycle resonate throughout Xefloudas's whole novel, in which Odysseus keeps repeating that humanity is at a dead end (αδιέξοδο) or engulfed in an inescapable vicious cycle (φαύλο κύκλο).

> Επαναλαμβάνω γνωστά σ' όλους πράγματα. Γίνουμε κουραστικός, μονότονα φλύαρος, κι' ο λόγος μου είναι συχνά αφηρημένος. Πιστέβω [*sic*] ότι όλα είναι μια επανάληψη, ακόμα και η πιο εντυπωσιακή πρωτοτυπία. Το ίδιο αντικείμενο, πρόσωπο, σκέψη μπορούμε να το παρουσιάζουμε κάθε φορά με άλλα λόγια ζητώντας να τ' ανανεώσουμε, να εξαντλήσουμε τις εναλλαγές και τις ποικιλίες του. (*Od.*, 83)

The Benjaminian interpretation of history as an always-the-same is here apparent. People, objects, thoughts, everything is just a different guise of what already was, there is no original as everything is repetition. What happened in Troy was repeated again in Guernica, in Hiroshima, and it was ongoing in Vietnam. As previously mentioned, the dictators are different masks of the same archetype, from Minos to Hitler (to Papadopoulos soon after).

Reading this novel through Benjamin's theories also allows for a re-evaluation of Xefloudas's narrative style, not just as a simple repetitive style (and boring at times, as several critics might have observed),[83] but as an expressive tool for the Benjaminian always-the-same. As the previous passage shows, the use of repetitions in the text is a conscious decision of the narrator, who is aware he could come across as boring or he could be saying always the same things. This, however, does not prevent him from

[83] Kostas Stergiopoulos, one of his most influential commentators, states: "Η πεζογραφία του [Ξεφλούδα] προχωρεί γράφοντας *κύκλους ομόκεντρους*. Έτσι, αν αλλάζει η περιφέρεια, το κέντρο μένει σταθερά το ίδιο. Για τούτο, κι' όταν ακόμα πρόκειται για διαφορετικό θέμα, έχουμε την εντύπωση της επανάληψης, καθώς ο συγγραφέας αφήνεται στη ροή του μονολόγου, αδιαφορώντας όχι μόνο για την επανάληψη όμοιων μοτίβων, μα και για τη χρησιμοποίηση των ίδιων λέξεων" (Stergiopoulos 1966b, 430).

repeating, highlighting then the fact that humanity is stuck in a chain of violence and destruction. This chain is even projected onto the future with the menace of a nuclear war, which disquiets the two characters. And it could not be any different: the metanarrative and the metamythical structures of the novel make Odysseus appear as the only person aware of the repetitive configuration of history since he is the only one who has lived first-hand historical events from the mythical time to the present. He is aware that "[ο]ι ίδιοι μύθοι επαναλαμβάνουνται. Οι ήρωές του μόνο αλλάζουν ενδυμασίες, όνομα, κάνουν τεράστια άλματα μέσα στο χρόνο, καταργούν το διάστημα" (*Od.*, 201). As Odysseus continues his wanderings in today's world, another side of the hero comes out, namely the Benjaminian Messiah, revisited through the metamodernist mythical method.

Looking at Odysseus as a Messiah, the places he visits put him in front of several dialectical images and reveal the necessity for a break in the historical chain of oppression. However, it is through the negative of his criticism of contemporaneity that his wish to redeem the world emerges. Behind his observations of the current state of things, one can distinguish Odysseus's cry to wake up humanity's consciousnesses from the current torpor. Odysseus occupies a privileged position inside society – as explained in the following pages, Odysseus is present in the contemporary reality, but at the same time he is separated from it, seemingly speaking from the *Jetztzeit*, the Now-time, intended as a form of the past imbued with present-ness.

3.3 ODYSSEUS IN THE *JETZTZEIT*

Stelios Xefloudas's novel begins by clearly stating Odysseus's chronotope: "Βρίσκουμαι στην Αλεξάντρεια. Ποια μέρα, ποια ώρα, ποιος χρόνος είναι δεν ενδιαφέρει" (*Od.*, 7). He

is in Alexandria, but since he escaped from Hades, time has lost any relevance. As the readers proceed into the hero's monologue, they find out that even space has no importance: "Μπορεί να μην πάω πουθενά, να πάω παντού, η Οδύσσεια θα συνεχίζεται" (*Od.*, 7). The reader is then presented with a seemingly contradictory chronotope.

In order to make sense of this, it is necessary to distinguish two separate levels of the space-time: on the one hand, a reading of the novel that transcends the narrator's subjectivity shows that the time and space are quite defined, as his movements are signposted on the map, while specific events mentioned refer to a specific historical moment and the passing of time is expressed through the position of the sun, the moon, and the stars in the sky. It needs to be pointed out that these coordinates become hazier and hazier; consequently, towards the end of the novel Odysseus is located in an unspecified city one morning that the sun (symbol of time par excellence) is hidden by pollution fumes.

On the other hand, Odysseus's subjective perception of the space-time complicates the matter considerably. The initial claim that space and time are not important results, throughout the narration, into a series of contradictions, so that the chronotope appears confusing. While Odysseus's physical travels are somewhat limited, his consciousness embarks in a much more vibrant and extended journey, which includes the places of his memory: Troy, Ithaca, Ogygia, the Hades, they all mix with the space outside his mind. Xefloudas displaces the unstoppable Odyssey: from the Homeric travels around the Mediterranean Sea to the inner journey inside every corner of Odysseus's consciousness.

Such displacement has two main effects: first of all, Odysseus cannot settle down and feels the urge to move incessantly hither and thither because, as he often repeats, there is no place that can contain him, that could provide answers to his existential concerns. Secondly, the fact that he lives inside his mind creates an almost unbridgeable distance

with the outside world, as if Odysseus were located in a separate but parallel dimension, similarly to Ritsos's monologists. However, this privileged position allows him to be aware of the historical mechanisms of oppression in the world and to carry out his criticism that invokes a radical break of the contemporary system. Again, going against the linear and progressive vision of history, Benjamin argues that history is the return of the always-the-same and invokes for the redemption of the silenced voices, of the oppressed, so far forgotten by traditional historiography.

As he states in his *Theses*, this cycle can and should be broken through the power of revolution, intended as "the interruption of the eternal return and the coming of the most profound change" (Löwy 2016, 87). 'Thesis XIV' is especially important to understand Odysseus's position in the novel – in this thesis, Benjamin argues that revolution happens when the silenced voice of the oppressed is recovered from the past in order to inspire the change in the present. This is the moment of the *Jetztzeit*, the 'Now-time,' in which the past is 'detonated' to break the vicious circle of history. In Benjamin's words: "History is the subject of a construction whose site is not homogenous, empty time, but time filled full by now-time [*Jetztzeit*]" (Benjamin 2003, 395). The *Jetztzeit*, then, becomes for the German thinker the 'base unit' of his new conception of history, in contrast to the "homogenous, empty time" of the clock. It is the moment of emergence of the dialectical image, when a past moment comes to be perceived in all its contemporaneity, thus reversing the historicist and progressive conception of history.

In 'Thesis XIV,' Benjamin mentions the example of the French revolution: "to Robespierre ancient Rome was a past charged with now-time, a past which he blasted out of the continuum of history. The French Revolution viewed itself as Rome reincarnate" (Benjamin 2003, 395). Again, the present aligns dialectically with a moment of the past, which in turn acquires present-ness and sparks the fuse that 'blasts' history. As Benjamin

further adds in 'Thesis XV,' living in the *Jetztzeit* also entails awareness of the revolutionary range of this 'explosive' act of resistance against historicism: "What characterizes revolutionary classes at their moment of action is the awareness that they are about to make the continuum of history explode" (Benjamin 2003, 395).

Odysseus's position and his perception of time in Xefloudas's novel is illuminated by Benjamin's conceptualisation of *Jetztzeit*. As mentioned, Odysseus is inevitably drawn to the urban space, starting the novel in Alexandria and completing his journey in another anonymous one. The city is the locus of modernity, which he fiercely criticises; at the same time, Odysseus is driven there by the inescapable need to be among humanity in order to finally be himself fully:

> Όλοι οι δρόμοι τελειώνουν μαζί μου στο ίδιο σημείο. Αν βρεθώ εκεί που δεν υπάρχουν άνθρωποι να αλληλοεξοντώνουνται μεταξύ τους, σε πολέμους χωρίς τέλος, καπηλευόμενοι την ειρήνη με ευτελείς υποσχέσεις, απάτες και ψεύδη, θα με κατασπαράξουν τ' αγρίμια, τα όρνια, τα ερπετά. Δεν επιτρέπεται, ούτε μπορώ να καταφύγω στην έρημο. Είμαι άνθρωπος και θα μείνω με τους ανθρώπους για να ολοκληρωθώ. Δεν έχει σημασία αν η επανάσταση κατάντησε αυνανισμός για την εκσπερμάτωση της εκδίκησή μας. (*Od.*, 66)

No matter where his journey takes him, Odysseus is bound to stay among human beings, despite the corruption and violence of modernity. It is the position among other people that resolves his identity quest, begun when he left Ogygia with Calypso. Even if humans are killing each other and the world is fraught with falsities and illusions, Odysseus cannot but stay among them in order to realise his revolution.

What starkly differentiates Odysseus from his fellow humans is an acute awareness of the real state of the world and of the need for a radical change – in this sense he is driven by a revolutionary spirit intended to reveal the oppressive nature of historical

(and technological) progress and thus redeem a humanity that seems to have turned "σε τέρατα μηχανικά, σ' αυτόματα νευρόσπαστα" (*Od.*, 65).

Odysseus is engaged in a two-faced relationship with the rest of the human beings; on the one hand, he feels inextricably connected with them, since they validate his own existence and give him the chance to finally be himself. On the other, the different degree of awareness creates an unbridgeable distance which hinders any communication between the two parts: "Οι άνθρωποι που βαδίζουν πλάι μου, τους μοιάζω και μου μοιάζουν. Όμως κανείς δε με προσέχει. Γίναμε όλοι ξένοι, άμορφη μάζα που κινείται κάτου από μιαν επιταγή" (*Od.*, 11-12). Reading the story from inside Odysseus's consciousness enhances the substantial differentiation between the protagonist's critical eye on the world and the 'amorphous mass' of the human beings. Odysseus, therefore, is in a privileged position, which allows him to bring about a possible revolution and redeem his fellow humans. This is the Benjaminian position of the *Jetztzeit*, which originated with the biggest revolution imaginable: Odysseus's win over death through his escape from Hades. In Odysseus's recollection, "Δεν υπήρχαν [στον Άδη] ούτε μέρες ούτε ώρες, ούτε λεπτά, παρά μόνο η νύχτα κι' ο χρόνος καταντούσε φαύλος κύκλος" (*Od.*, 230); Hades is associated here with the eternal recurrence of oppression, as linear temporality is suspended, and time is a vicious circle. In this already very Benjaminian setting, Odysseus's defiance of the system and his subsequent rebellious escape from the underworld "explodes," using Benjamin's words, the temporal continuum: as Odysseus states at the very beginning of the novel, time has lost all relevance since he broke out of Hades.[84]

[84] "Από τότε που εγκατέλειψα με την Καλυψώ για πάντα την Ωγυγία και δραπέτευσα μαζί της απ' τον Άδη ο χρόνος για μένα μένει στο μηδέν" (*Od.*, 7).

His escape from Hades is the moment of the *Jetztzeit*, breaking and subverting the temporal system. This is when Xefloudas departs from the traditional modernist interpretation of the myth as an underlying ordering structure of the world and, instead, reveals the revolutionary act of subversion and critique hidden within those myths. In practical terms, the figure of Odysseus in Xefloudas's novel at the same time performs and embodies the Benjaminian *Jetztzeit*. Fleeing the world of the dead in order to return among the living humanity means that the myth – inevitably associated to the founding past of the modern world – assumes a state of present-ness that breaks the traditional historical and temporal frame. Odysseus, the mythical hero of the past, walks the contemporary streets and presents himself as a war criminal, eaten alive by remorse, condemning the current state of the world on the brink of self-destruction. It follows that past and present merge in the same dimension, granting the possibility for Odysseus to condense mythical and historical narratives in the same present.

As already explored, the juxtaposition of the mythistorical past with the present inevitably highlights the inconsistencies of the modern world. At a closer reading, the revolutionary tension in Odysseus is reinforced by the other characters that populate his consciousness. As the Greek hero 'digs' them out from the contemporary reality in which they are embedded, those protagonists of past myths and histories constitute examples of rebellion and revolution against oppressive systems. Cleopatra is presented as a strong woman who refused to submit to the men in her life[85] and who decided to take her own life in a revolutionary act of self-determination.[86] Ariadne, who saw in Theseus the only

[85] "Άμετρα φιλόδοξη δεν ήθελε να υποταχτεί σε άλλον από την εαυτό της, που τον αγαπούσε εγωιστικά, και με κάθε τρόπο επιζητούσε να πραγματοποιήσει τα αλαζονικά της σχέδια" (*Od.*, 59).

[86] "Μπορεί η Κλεοπάτρα ν' αυτοκτόνησε από εγωισμό κι' όχι γιατί έχασε, ό,τι αγαπούσε. […] Ίσως, όταν δεν τις απόμεινε τίποτα, δρόμοι για τις ακόρεστες φιλοδοξίες της, χέρια να χαϊδέβουν το διψασμένο κορμί της, που θα το καταράστηκε πολλές φορές, κατάλαβε, πως ήταν οριστικά νικημένη, έρημο

way to escape from her father's oppression, resolved to help him out of the labyrinth, showing great determination with her active involvement[87] – she powerfully revolted against the system embodied by king Minos and the Minotaur. While leaving Crete together with Theseus, after he killed the Minotaur, Ariadne reached a great moment of awareness that stunned her: there is no coming back now, her life has just changed forever, breaking the course of time. Similarly to Odysseus and Calypso, for them there is just the here and now.[88] Also the story of Calypso portrays a revolutionary act of resistance against the 'establishment,' very similarly to Ariadne's story. Feeling trapped by the gods in her island, she saw in Odysseus her chance to break free. She describes her life in Ogygia as a "μονότονη επανάληψη" (*Od.*, 21) and herself as oppressed even by her own dreams, until the encounter with Odysseus gave her the strength to achieve her personal revolution.[89] While these figures from the past re-emerge thanks to the 'archaeological' activity of Odysseus's consciousness, thus creating a dialectical image with contemporaneity, the mythical and the historical pasts acquire intense present-ness. It is through this Benjaminian reading that the position of Odysseus in the novel can be fully appreciated, accounting for his detachment from his fellow humans.

In short, Walter Benjamin's concept of *Jetztzeit* helps to understand both the inconsistences in the novel's chronotopes and the peculiar relationship between

---

πουλί στην καταιγίδα, κι' αποφάσισε να εκτελέσει, τόσο αντιηρωικά, την πιο ηρωική πράξη της ζωής της" (*Od.*, 41).

[87] "Αν δεν τον βοηθούσε αδύνατο [ο Θησέας] να βγει απ' το Λαβύρινθο. Η αγωνία την έπνιγε, της ερχόταν να φωνάξει, να κλάψει, να επαναστατήσει. [...] Με κανένα τρόπο δε θ' άφηνε να χαθεί ο Θησέας. Αδύνατο να υποχωρήσει στην εσωτερική της προσταγή. [...] Πήρε λοιπόν την απόφαση έτοιμη ν' αντιμετωπίσει ακόμα και το θάνατο αν αποτύχαινε το σχέδιό της. [...] Η Αριάδνη είχε χαράξει το δρόμο της με τα ίδια της τα χέρια" (*Od.*, 109).

[88] "[Ο Θησέας και η Αριάδνη] μοιάζαν όντα φανταστικά έξω από τόπο και χρόνο σα να ερχόνταν από ένα άγνωστο παρελθόν και βάδιζαν σ' ένα πιο άγνωστο μέλλον κρατώντας στα χέρια τους τις αποσκευές τους: τη ζωή και το θάνατο τους" (*Od.*, 147).

[89] "Σ' ακολούθησα. Αρνήθηκα να είμαι θεά κ' επαναστάτησα. Ο κόσμος θα βρει το δρόμο του μόνο όταν ο καθένας κάνει τη δική του επανάσταση" (*Od.*, 19).

Odysseus and contemporary humanity. Although it is generally easy to identify where and when Xefloudas's new 'Odyssey' takes place, Odysseus feels that spatial and temporal references have lost all importance to him ever since his escape from the underworld. I have argued that this inconsistency can be explained through the identification of the hero with Benjamin's *Jetztzeit*; as an immortal hero immersed in the contemporary world, Odysseus becomes the embodiment of such "time filled full by now-time," which accounts also for the revolutionary change he wishes to see around him, further empowered the revolutionary myth-histories his consciousness digs out of the contemporaneity. As Benjamin expressed in 'Thesis XV,' being (in) the *Jetztzeit* involves a higher level of awareness of the 'explosion' of the eternal recurrence of the same patterns – this awareness is what separates Odysseus from the lost humanity he is immersed in. He notices how modernity with its scientific and technological advancements has numbed people, deprived them of their instinctual nature, and transformed them into machines.[90] His position "outside space and time" then allows him to be aware of the dire state of the world and to invoke for humanity's awakening. His invocation, however, is destined to remain unheard, as the novel ends with Odysseus's disenchantment and resignation towards the destiny of the contemporary world and humanity. What appeared to be a Benjaminian Messiah is destined to remain frustrated, as the Messiah gives way to the Angel of History.

[90] Cf. Benjamin's own interpretation of 19th-century modernity as a *Zeit-traum* "in which the individual consciousness more and more secures itself in reflection, while the collective consciousness sinks into ever deeper sleep" (K1,4, in Benjamin 1999, 389). Awakening from such sleep corresponds to becoming aware of the historical return of the always-the-same (see Gilloch 1996, 103-116).

3.4 ODYSSEUS AND THE ANGEL OF HISTORY

In the previous sections, we have seen how Stelios Xefloudas reverses the Joycean mythical method and, in doing so, exposes the reversed values that underlie the contemporary world. On the other hand, putting the novel in dialogue with Walter Benjamin's historiosophical theories threw into relief the repetitive and oppressive structure of history, in which Odysseus takes on the role of the 'awakened' who strives to redeem an unconsciously oppressed humanity and to break the vicious cycle of history. Odysseus's role as a messianic redeemer, however, is destined to be frustrated, as a closer reading of Benjamin's *Thesis* reveals.

In the *Theses*, the act of remembrance takes a central position – memory plays a fundamental role in his historical theorisation, since it is the dialectical tool that allows the present to recover the silenced moments of the past and save them from disappearing. Therefore, it appears that the historian is invested with a messianic mission of redeeming the oppressed and the defeated. Memory becomes the necessary instrument for the historian to piece together the fragments of history and unleash the revolutionary power of the *Jetztzeit*.

Taking into consideration the fact that Walter Benjamin develops his historiosophical ideas during the 1930s, his take on the issue of memory enters in an inevitable conversation with the modernists and Henri Bergson's studies on the topic. In fact, the German thinker engages in a debate about memory while drafting *The Arcades Project* and, more specifically, in his critical work on Charles Baudelaire's poetry. In his essay "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" (1939), Benjamin explores the nature of experience, critiquing Bergson's *Matter and Memory* and using Marcel Proust's *mémoire involontaire* as a starting point to comment on the nature of memory in modernity. While

Bergson argues that the whole experience lies in *durée*, Benjamin claims that modernity and the urban space call for a reconsideration of what experience is. As Gilloch (1996) clearly explains, the city and the crowds are for Benjamin disruptive in their nature, as the individual is overwhelmed by the countless stimuli they receive. The new urban configuration of modernity, therefore, creates a new kind of experience:

> Experience is no longer a continuous development, but is reduced instead to a seemingly random series of half-impressions, of images and thoughts only partially registered, still less understood. [...] Benjamin articulates this process in terms of the transformation of *Erfahrung* into *Erlebnis*. Both these terms mean 'experience', but of very different sorts. (Gilloch 1996, 143)

The difference between the two types of experience lies exactly in the 'shocking' and fragmented nature of the modern (urban) cityscape: Benjamin refers to *Erfahrung* as the accumulation of knowledge, coherent and communicable, whereas *Erlebnis* is closely related to the inner life and the chaotic content of the psychic life, as it is "concerned with the unprocessed, disordered particles of experience, the haphazard and accidental" (Gilloch 1996, 144).[91] *Erlebnis*, Benjamin continues, constitutes a game of forgetfulness, as the fragmentary experience cannot be retained in voluntary memory: *Erlebnis*, therefore, is closely linked to Proust's *mémoire involontaire*, i.e, to that kind of unexpected memory that brings into the present an event or a feeling of the past that could not be voluntarily recalled. In Benjaminian terms, that is the *Denkbild*, the dialectical image, the configuration of the present moment with a fleeting moment of the past, as it is discussed in the previous section of this chapter. In his preparatory work for the *Theses*, Benjamin

[91] The concept of *Erlebnis* resonates with the Virginia Woolf's own interpretation of experience. In her 1919 essay 'Modern Fiction,' she calls writers to avoid a coherent plot and to record what she calls the 'atoms:' "Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness" (Woolf 1948, 190).

clearly states that "[t]he dialectical image can be defined as the involuntary memory of redeemed humanity" ('New Theses B,' Benjamin 2003, 403).

The urban space, the shocking experience of modernity, the fragmented perception of reality and of the past: all these elements come together in Xefloudas's novel, even though in a somewhat different configuration. As already mentioned, the cityscape occupies a dominant position in the novel as it is the starting and the end point of Odysseus's wanderings, as well as the object of his ferocious critique. For Odysseus too, the city is the 'essence' of modernity, with the lights, the mechanisation of daily life. In the protagonist's eyes, the city is absurd and oppressive:

> Όλες οι πολιτείες, είναι σα μια πολιτεία, γι' αυτό δε χρειάζεται νάχουν διαφορετικό όνομα. Ίδιες ακόμα και στις λεπτομέρειες. Μας απορροφούν τα πλάτη των δρόμων, το χάος κάθε πλατείας, οι υπόγειες σήραγγες, οι αμέτρητοι όροφοι, οι προθήκες που μαγνητίζουν, τα εκατομμύρια φώτα, που καρφώνουν απάνω μας το φωτεινό βλέμμα τους. Αναδιπλωνόμαστε, εξαφανιζόμαστε στην απεριόριστη έκτασή τους. (*Od.*, 211)

Similarly to Benjamin and to the modernist poetics, the modern city is also depicted in Xefloudas's novel as an infinite source of stimuli, that shatter experience and identity. Individuality is undone in the city, inhabited by the undifferentiated crowd. The individual is lost in the human mass of the city, as they hide behind a mask, the same for every other person.

> Απ' την πρώτη στιγμή που έφτασα σ' αυτή την πολιτεία, σ' οποιαδήποτε πολιτεία, τα φώτα, οι διαφημίσεις ώρμησαν να με θαμπώσουν, να μ' εξαπατήσουν, να με τυφλώσουν. Από παντού ξεχύνουνται φωνές, θόρυβοι, κρότοι, ανακατώνουνται, περιπλέκουνται, στροβιλίζουνται μαζί μου, πέφτουν απάνου μου, προσπαθούν να μ' εξουδετερώσουν, να με παραμερίσουν, να θρυμματίσουν τα τύμπανα των αυτιών μου. Οι δρόμοι μακραίνουν χείμαρροι από μηχανές. […] Οι άνθρωποι κλεισμένοι σε ελάχιστα τετράγωνα, ζουν και πεθαίνουν, χωρίς γνωρίσουν ο ένας τον άλλο, σα να μην υπήρξαν, όσο ζούσαν. Τα βήματά μου αρχίζουν να

> περιπλέκουνται μ' όλα τα βήματα. Το βλέμμα μου απορροφιέται από αμέτρητα μάτια που δεν κοιτάζουν. Το σώμα αφομοιώνεται με τ' άλλα σώματα, δεν το ξεχωρίζω, μου φαίνεται δίχως αυθυπαρξία και αυτοτέλεια. (*Od.*, 212)

This extract summarises Odysseus's attitude towards the modern city and modern humanity – he finds himself in a chaotic environment made of blinding lights and deafening sounds, the city is so intense that it becomes numbing. The modern individual, again, is represented as completely unaware of his surroundings and of the other people around them. Odysseus himself starts to feel his own 'dismemberment', as if the city were absorbing him into the urban mass. However, he resists that. Contrary to modern people, he is tragically aware of this process: the city lights do not seem to blind him, as he sees through modernity's illusions. The city for him is a "φλεγόμενη έρημο" (*Od.*, 79), populated by people who, behind their masks, hide an inner schism, a fragmented identity in need of reconstruction:

> Ζουν [οι άνθρωποι] και πεθαίνουν χωρίς να ολοκληρώνουν τον εαυτό τους. Η τραγωδία τους δεν είναι μόνο η σύγκρουση με τη μοίρα τους, τον άγγελο και τον δαίμονα που παλέβουν μέσα τους, αλλά η αδυναμία τους ν' ακολουθήσουν το δρόμο που χάραξε ο Θεός για τα βήματά τους, ώστε να γίνουν η εικόνα και η ομοίωση αυτού, να συναρμολογίσουν το θρυμματισμένο εαυτό τους που συνεχώς παραλογίζεται. (*Od.*, 84)

Odysseus does not pull out of the modern fragmented identity; on the contrary, his quest to understand his own real identity and his attempts to reconcile his fragmented consciousness are central in the novel, as Odysseus constantly acknowledges them as the reason why he evaded Ithaca and Hades. In line with the reversed mythical method that characterises metamodernism, Odysseus's traditional myth results insufficient to put an order to modernity and, if anything, it is modernity that reorders myth.

Reading the novel through the lens of Benjamin's ideas shows that the protagonist's awareness of his surroundings and of his contemporaneity intrinsically tend towards the redemption of the world and of humanity. He calls out the dictators and the repetitive structure of violence that has been returning ever since antiquity. As Odysseus points out the absurdity of modern technologies, of the modern cities, of the modern fractured identities, indirectly he is also attempting to shake the numbed consciousnesses that surround him, hoping for a reaction. The constant presence of Calypso by his side serves him as a beacon of light that shows the direction: for their redemption, humanity needs to re-appropriate the lost spontaneity, they need to return to a more natural and instinctual way of living, free from machines and numbers. Ogygia, in Odysseus's mind, turns into the lost Paradise, the *locus amoenus* that humanity should tend to.

Odysseus's redeeming vision, however, is not meant to be realised. In the last anonymous "big city," Odysseus and Calypso struggle to maintain their individuality, while the city absorbs and suffocates them in the human crowd that inhabits it:

> Στον ουρανό παρουσιάζεται ένας ήλιος άχρωμος πίσω από καπνούς και αναθυμιάσεις, που ανεβαίνουν από το τεράστιο στόμα της πολιτείας κι' αφομοιώνουνται με τα σώματα μας για να τρέφουν χωρίς διάκριση τις αρετές και τις κακίες μας. Εκατομμύρια αναπνοές ενώνουνται η μια με την άλλη και τις εισπνέουμε. Μια πολιτεία αποπνέει τις κακοσμίες της, μέρα και νύχτα, όπως ένας ζωντανός οργανισμός. Τενεκέδες σκουπιδιών, εξαεριστήρες αποχωρητήριων, αναθυμιάσεις υπονόμων, καυσαέρια, καπνοί των εργοστασίων, διαφυγές αερίων, ιδρώτες από τις μασχάλες, χνώτα που βρωμάν, σώματα άπλυτα, εμετικά αρώματα, ενώνουνται με την αναπνοή μας, τα εισπνέουμε, κοιμόμαστε και ξυπνάμε μαζί τους. Η Καλυψώ νιώθει κουρασμένη, βαδίζει δύσκολα, βρίσκεται πάντα έξω από τόπο και χρόνο. Είναι σαν να χάνει το σώμα της. Οι κινήσεις της γίνουνται αδέξιες σα να μην υπάρχουν αρθρώσεις στα μέλη της, που τεντώνουνται χωρίς κάμψη. Τα πεζοδρόμια γεμίζουν ανθρώπους. Δεν ξεχωρίζει ο ένας από τον άλλο ούτε κ' εγώ απ' αυτούς, αφού έχω ξεφορτωθεί τον τίτλο του βασιλιά της Ιθάκης. Αν φορούσα τη μεγάλη στολή μου δε θα βρισκόμουνα ανάμεσα στο ανώνυμο πλήθος σα μια μονάδα του. Η Καλυψώ διαλύεται μέσα στην ανθρώπινη μάζα, όπως και

> μέσα μου, μέσα σ' όλους τους θόρυβους που άρχισαν να σωρεύουνται στους δρόμους. Σκέπτουμαι ότι πια δεν μπορώ να πάω πουθενά, να μ' απομακρύνουν τα βήματά μου από τον εαυτό μου και τους άλλους. Θα μείνω αυτό που είμαι στον κόσμο μου είναι ο κόσμος μου, με τους θεούς και τους δαίμονες που επινοήσαμε, τα τέρατα που δημιουργήσαμε, με τα επιτεύγματα της μεγαλοφυίας, της τρέλλας και του παραλογισμού μας, με τη μοναξιά, το άγχος, το χάος, την αγωνία, το αδιέξοδο. (*Od.*, 252-3)

While Calypso fades away in the crowd, Ogygia disappears too in this artificial world, relegated to the dimension of fantasy. There is no way out, neither for Odysseus nor for humanity – the world is at a "αδιέξοδο" and there is only anxiety, chaos, and finally death. Odysseus cannot, after all, be the redeeming Messiah of modernity; on the contrary, he finds himself to be just another man in need of salvation.

From the moment it is clear that Odysseus's 'messianic' desire to awaken humanity is destined to be frustrated, the Greek hero starts to take the form of the Angel of History, one of the most important theorisations of Walter Benjamin. Inspired by Paul Klee's painting *Angelus Novus*, Benjamin imagines in 'Thesis IX' that history could be represented by a similar angelic figure:

> This is how the angel of history must look. His face is turned toward the past. Where a chain of events appears before *us*, *he* sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it at his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise and has got caught in his wings; it is so strong that the angel can no longer close them. This storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows toward the sky. What we call progress is *this* storm. (Benjamin 2003, 392)

Benjamin adapts Klee's angel to his anti-historicist theory of history; the Benjaminian angel is able to see the tragedy of the return of the always-the-same, as the model of catastrophes repeats itself in time. If humans are numbed and limited in their historical

vision, the angel is conversely aware of the rubble of history that keeps on accumulating in front of him. This is a frightening vision, which invites him to take action and try to stop this destructive process. However, the storm of progress halts his efforts. While he witnesses the ruination of history, he is pushed towards the future, unable to put the fragments together and redeem humanity.

Stelios Xefloudas weaves Benjamin's Angel of History within Odysseus's monologue, so that the two figures finally overlap. Every thread analysed so far ties up in this final identification, bringing to the surface Xefloudas's revolutionary metamodernism. I suggest here to read Benjamin's 'Thesis IX' closely, point by point, so as to highlight the constant open dialogue with Xefloudas's *Οδυσσέας*.

"His face is turned toward the past," Benjamin says about the Angel of History and, similarly, Odysseus, in his travels through contemporaneity, constantly employs his memory to return not only to his personal past (the Trojan war, his stay in Ogygia, his escape from Hades), but also to the collective past, recalling the other mysthistorical histories, from Minos and Ariadne to the Vietnam war, through Antony and Cleopatra and the Second World War. The 'archaeological' gaze of Odysseus uncovers past moments which immediately constitute a dialectical image with the present. Antony and Cleopatra, for example, are inextricably connected to the city of Alexandria and return in Odysseus's consciousness as a Proustian *mémoire involontaire.* In Odysseus's monologue, the past becomes a hermeneutical tool for the present, finally concluding that everything is bound to return in the vicious cycle of violence and catastrophes; present humanity cannot escape from it, if not through death.

For the Angel of History, "[w]here a chain of events appears before *us*, *he* sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it at his feet." The Trojan war, for Odysseus, is in fact the mould for the "one single catastrophe,"

prototype of all subsequent wars and violence, while the people around him simply regard these events with pride as if they were a token of humanity's progress:

> Ο κόσμος είναι σκοτεινός και θλιβερός κι' αυτοί που τον κατοικούν αναζητάν έναν άλλο πλανήτη να κατοικήσουν, έναν άλλο παράδεισο, θέλουν να τον καταστρέψουν, διηγούνται την ιστορία τους περήφανοι, γραμμένη από το αίμα τους: Τροία, Καρχηδόνα, Γκουερνίκα, Χιροσίμα, Νταχάου, Άουσβιτς, Βιετνάμ, που αν η συνέχειά τους επαναλαμβάνεται, τίποτα δε θα μείνει πάνου στη γη όρθιο. (*Od.*, 207)

Troy, Carthage, Guernica, Hiroshima, the concentration camps, and the war in Vietnam, they are all a "chain of events" and a pile of wreckage in the historical process that will take humanity onto new planets; Odysseus's awareness is striking though, as he realises the catastrophic effects of an increasing violence, stemming from the Trojan war: "Ο πόλεμος της Τροίας που βάσταξε τόσα χρόνια, συνεχίζεται. Άλλαξε μορφή, μέσα και τρόπους καταστροφής, έγινε πιο άγριος, και εξοντωτικός" (*Od.*, 187). Such recurring war is creating ruins all around, not just physical "wreckage" but also a moral ruination, which has led to the creation of a new religion centred around 'cathartic' violence.[92]

Benjamin continues 'Thesis IX' stating that "[t]he angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed" and, in Xefloudas's novel, Odysseus indeed refuses to let go. He escapes from Hades and returns to the world "για να ξαναβρώ ό,τι είμαι" (*Od.*, 31) and "[γ]ια να βρω το δρόμο μου να συναρμολογήσω το θρυμματισμένο άτομό μου, που δεν είτανε δικό μου, αλλά του καθενός" (*Od.*, 84). What emerges from his long interior monologue is the chasm created by the Trojan War in his consciousness – the contact with the contemporary world reveals him how people praise

[92] "Μια νέα θρησκεία κατακτά τον κόσμο που έχει έμβλημα τη βία. Προσπαθούν να τη δικαιολογήσουν οι οπαδοί της ισχυριζόμενοι ότι πρόκειται για καθαρή δύναμη που απελευθερώνει το άτομο απ' το σύμπλεγμα κατωτερότητας, απ' την απελπισία και την αδράνεια και κάνει τον άνθρωπο να μη φοβάται και να σέβεται τον εαυτό του. Η βία μόνο αυτή επιτρέπει στις μάζες να κατανοούν τις κοινωνικές αλήθειες" (*Od.*, 219).

him as a hero and as an example to be followed.[93] Odysseus is completely appalled as he is profoundly ashamed of what he did in Troy, calling himself a "πολεμικός εγκληματίας." His self is torn, fractured, as he does not recognise himself anymore. The figure of the old wise king of Ithaca has left the place to that of a war criminal. Hence his escape from Hades and his return to the world: his journey cannot end until the fragments of his self are put together again. In my reading, however, this is not just an individual effort, but it should also be transferred to the broader community of contemporary people – as Odysseus is considered to be a "πρόδρομος" and as he identifies himself with the other people, his identity quest subtly transfers to the whole of humanity. His warnings against the catastrophic trajectory of history hide a powerful cry for help and demonstrate his willingness to expose such tragic historical structure and shake the world awake: reading these warnings on reverse, it becomes apparent that the hero wishes for the return of humanity to an earthly paradise, from which humanity has been gradually cast away or, rather, has cast themselves out through the modernisation process.[94] Filtered through Odysseus's consciousness, such paradise takes the shape of Ogygia, where a full communion with oneself and the surrounding world is possible.

For Benjamin's Angel of History, however, the return to Paradise is not allowed: "But a storm is blowing from Paradise and has got caught in his wings; it is so strong that the angel can no longer close them. This storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows toward the sky." He finally

[93] The scientist who is creating the atomic bomb in the final "big city" exemplifies the modern attitude towards the figure of Ulysses as he tells him: "Είσαστε ένας ένδοξος βασιλιάς. Διάβασα τα πολεμικά σας κατορθώματα και εκτιμώ τις μεγάλες ηγετικές σας ικανότητες στην εκστρατεία της Τροίας. Ακόμα σας θεωρώ τον πρόδρομό μας που με το Δούρειο Ίππο, κέρδισε τον πιο σκληρό και μακροχρόνιο πόλεμο της εποχής σας, όπως έγινε, με την ατομική βόμβα στη Χιροσίμα" (*Od.*, 219).

[94] "Τώρα που ξαναγύρισα ανάμεσα στους ανθρώπους, βλέπω ότι ο άνθρωπος, όσο παραμερίζεται απ' τα δημιουργήματά του τόσο κατρακυλάει χαμηλότερα σα να συνεχίζεται η πτώση από τον παράδεισο, μένει μόνο σαρκίο, μεταμορφώνεται σ' ένα από τα μηχανικά κατασκευάσματα της εφευρετικότητάς του, γίνεται ένα ξόανο, μοιάζει σα να μην είναι πια δημιούργημα του Θεού" (*Od.*, 245-6).

concludes that the storm is what it is called 'progress.' Stelios Xefloudas's *Οδυσσέας* seems to come to a very similar conclusion – humanity is caught up in the illusion of moving forward towards a brighter future while Odysseus is fully aware that this 'moving forward' is in fact a progressive 'fall from Paradise.' Odysseus feels powerless and disappointed as he realises that the contemporary world cannot give him the answers to his existential quest:

> Κ' έκανα μια τόσο μεγάλη πορεία, μιαν απροσμέτρητη διαδρομή από τότε που μετέτρεψα σ' ερείπια την Τροία για να φτάσω ως αυτούς τους δρόμους, όπου οι μηχανές και τα φώτα διαφημίζουν τα θαύματα του πολιτισμού, τα προϊόντα της καταστροφικής μεγαλοφυίας. Η πιο τέλεια σκηνογραφία της απάτης. Δεν υπάρχει κανένας λόγος να δραπετεύσω από τον Άδη για ν' αντικρύσω αυτό το θέαμα. (*Od.*, 208)

The machines and the lights, emblems of modernity, become "the most perfect scenography of deception" in Odysseus's mind, who feels he should have never left Hades, and Calypso should have stayed in her palace in Ogygia.[95] Odysseus gives in to the chaos of modernity: "εκμηδενίζουμαι, γιατί δεν κατορθώνω να προσαρμοστώ, να συνθηκολογήσω" (*Od.*, 243). In the end, just like Benjamin's Angel of History, Xefloudas's Odysseus can only keep his eyes open towards the inevitable catastrophe of history and being blindly dragged towards the future. He can only become part of the urban crowd, just "ένας άνθρωπος όπως όλοι οι άνθρωποι" (*Od.*, 254).

[95] "Δεν είμαστε πια ο εαυτός μας. Η πολιτεία, όπου κυκλοφορούμε μας έκανε να ξεχάσουμε, ποιοι είμαστε, τι είμαστε. […] Δεν έπρεπε να σε πάρω μαζί μου. Όσο κι' αν σ' αγαπούσα έπρεπε να σ' αφήσω στο παλάτι σου" (*Od.*, 249-50).

3.5 CONCLUSIONS

Xefloudas novel *Οδυσσέας* is paradigmatic of how modernist models and approaches were still relevant in the Greek 1960s, responding and adapting however to the changed and still changing cultural landscape. From this perspective, this novel is fundamentally *meta*modernist.

The modernist mould of the novel is evident, and it is not surprising since the role and presence of Xefloudas in the establishment of a modernist culture in the country is well acknowledged – in fact, he was one of the main contributors to Thessaloniki's journal *Μακεδονικές ημέρες*, as well as a close contact of the (mostly) Athenian Generation of the 1930s. His postwar novel *Οδυσσέας*, however, is exemplary of a different cultural moment, in which the modernist models needed to be restructured.

Xefloudas is a modernist at heart, but *Οδυσσέας* incorporates a number of tensions characterising the new historical moment that followed the Second World War. The Joycean model provided the key to unlock such tensions: the key is the myth of Odysseus and its 'polytropic' capacity to provide a palimpsest for modernity. Xefloudas appropriates the mythical method from the modernist model and reverses it, thus questioning several elements of the Greek tradition. Instead of providing an ordering structure to the chaos of modernity, as T. S. Eliot famously put it, the Xefloudian use of the myth seems to give a negative palimpsest of the modern world: the myth itself proves to be chaotic to the reader, who faces an unrecognisable Odysseus that rejects his heroism, chooses Calypso as companion, escapes Hades, and finds himself in the contemporary world. Moreover, the mythical sub-structure dramatically highlights in the novel the reversed values that underlie modernity: violence, oppression, dictatorship of science over nature, etc. Everything appears to be the negative of what we as readers

believe it is: the hero is not a hero, but a "war criminal;" men and women are not humans anymore as they act more like machines; Odysseus's famous wanderings turn out to be an eternal return to the same place; in fact, Odysseus's movement becomes a non-movement, in which the spatial extension gives way to the inner flow of consciousness.

Inevitably, Stelios Xefloudas is often accused to be a pessimist who drags the same themes from one novel to the other. Nonetheless, the novel *Οδυσσέας* carries clear undertones of a call to action:

> Δεν είμαι απαισιόδοξος. Σημειώνω, ό,τι βλέπω, ακούω, αντιλαμβάνουμαι, σε κάθε βήμα. Δεν έχασα ποτέ την ελπίδα, ότι ο κόσμος, αργά ή γρήγορα, ο χρόνος δεν έχει καμιά σημασία για ένα τέτοιο γεγονός, θ' αλλάξει. Αντίθετα είμαι βέβαιος, χωρίς να δογματίζω, ότι σήμερα προχωρεί πολύ πιο γρήγορα σ' αυτή την αλλαγή… (*Od*., 105)

The world needs to change, and it will change, Odysseus maintains. It is a direct condemnation of the contemporary state of things and of the consequences that unchecked progress has had on the world, now suffocated in violence and pollution.

It is in this context that the novel resonates with Walter Benjamin's theories, which helped unlock new layers of meaning. The metamodernist mythical method employed in *Οδυσσέας* works as a Benjaminian 'dialectical image' in which present and past recognise and read each other. If the Joycean mythical method allows the past to read the present and give it a meaning, the Xefloudian reversed model allows also the present to read the past and consequently the mythical underlay on which modernity has been built. What the contemporary reader witnesses here is a reshaping of the mythical framework, bringing to the fore a number of inconsistencies in the historical progress as we came to know it. While the world of the 1960s comes to terms with the great tragedies of Hiroshima and of the Vietnam War, Odysseus thinks back to another war, the Trojan War,

which he realises has become a founding myth of (Greek) modernity. Through his consciousness, Troy becomes nothing but a merciless and senseless massacre, the mould for all subsequent violence in the world. Through the catastrophic standpoint of modernity, Odysseus questions the mythical past: what good have those myths given to modernity? How can a massacre like Troy be the foundation stone of contemporary society? Through Benjamin's thought, then, the modernist mythical method turns into an 'unmythical method.'

The Benjaminian reading places Stelios Xefloudas's *Οδυσσέας* at the centre of the metamodernist moment of Greece in the 1960s. With this novel, in fact, Xefloudas is positioned at the intersection of several questions and of the tensions that arise from them. First of all, the myth itself is questioned on the background of a contemporary crisis of values – myths are not Seferian 'empty cisterns,' but on the contrary they are overloaded and unbalanced, themselves now part of the ruins they were set up to help recreate as a whole. Secondly, the locality of Greece is put at stake – where interwar modernism favoured a national perspective, this novel makes a metamodernist gesture by showing it as shaken, striving instead to adopt a broader perspective. The novel consciously defies clear geographical references, and when it does, they are places Odysseus escapes from. Third, he questions the role of the leader – with the myth so obsessively turned on its negative sides, the position of Odysseus as a leader is emptied from its content; it remains an empty shell who roams the land of myth and finds it a waste. What makes Xefloudas's novel an iconic moment of Greek metamodernism is that its protagonist is neither a hero nor an antihero. Exactly like Benjamin's Angel of History, he is propelled by the need to be a radical commentary on both.

This chapter showed that the case of Stelios Xefloudas and of this particular novel, discarded by the critics and generally overlooked in the context of the Greek 1960s, is actually an important step in re-thinking the Greek literature of this period from the metamodernist perspective. While resorting to one of the most well-known mythical characters of the Greek tradition, Xefloudas's work is well rooted in the contemporary moment, recording the tensions that characterised it and denouncing the moral decay of society. From the distant mythical past, Xefloudas has Odysseus return to desperately try to awaken the numbed consciousness of the individuals, blinded by the economic and technological advancements.

Xefloudas's appropriation of the myth bears similarities with Yannis Ritsos's contemporary poetic project, since the question of temporality is central for both authors. Ritsos, however, in his Bergsonian position, speaks of the boundary-affect, employing the myths to comment on the transitional nature of the Greek 1960s, for which traditional mythology needs to be re-contextualised. On the other hand, Xefloudas's Benjaminian reading highlights a different aspect of the metamodernist moment, i.e., the tensions dominating the cultural field. Myth, for Xefloudas and for Ritsos, appears to be emptied, unable to provide a strong structure on which to rebuild a national culture after the wounds of the wars and during radical transformations on all levels.

Lastly, Xefloudas's novel is interesting as it calls for an international perspective over the moral questioning that Odysseus engages in. Odysseus transcends the Greek geographical borders, speaking from the outside, from a much broader point of view. It is not just the fights on the Albanian front or the inner strife of the Greek Civil War – Xefloudas brings in the novel the Cold War, the nuclear massacre of Hiroshima, and the ongoing war in Vietnam. Greek metamodernism, in other words, is not just about being

in a boundary, but also about crossing and speaking from outside the boundaries. This is the case of Margarita Liberaki, whose work will be analysed in the next chapter from the perspective of the diasporic subjectivity and the consequent call for a reconfiguration of Greekness, issue central in Greek modernism.

CHAPTER 4

ΔΕΝ ΣΕ ΔΙΩΧΝΕΙ Η ΙΘΑΚΗ

GREEKNESS, NOSTOS, AND THE MOTHER/LAND IN MARGARITA LIBERAKI'S MYTHICAL STAGE

In drawing the picture of the Greek metamodernist 1960s, the case of Margarita Liberaki offers to my analysis one last important insight into this creative moment of Greek culture and literature. Her positionality as a Greek émigré, as well as her gendered perspective, were central elements in her cultural production and determined her choices in the adoption and adaptation of classical myths. Indeed, as I will proceed to analyse in the following pages, Liberaki's handling of the mythological material contributes to delineate the metamodernist framework of the Greek 1960s, illuminating, specifically, the 'in-between' meaning of the prefix *meta-*, i.e., the aspect of transition, be it historical, political, or related to national identity.

I have touched upon this aspect of Greek metamodernism through the reading of Yannis Ritsos's *Τέταρτη διάσταση* as an expression of the poetics of the boundary, which stemmed from the poet's personal experience of confinement. Ritsos's work, then, highlighted an ontological and epistemological condition of being pushed to liminal spaces from which to observe a missing centre. Liberaki's works depart from the static location of the boundary and record instead the changes that were taking place during the Greek long 1960s. In other words, I would argue that she produces a record of the social and political changes of the time as they were happening, capturing Greece amid

the transformations of the period. She does this from the privileged perspective of an intellectual living between two countries and the two respective cultures.

Margarita Liberaki appeared on the literary scenes during the difficult years of the Second World War, first publishing the novel *Τα δέντρα* (The Trees, 1945), immediately followed by *Τα ψάθινα καπέλα* (The Straw Hats, translated in English under the tile 'Three Summers,' 1946), a novel that brought her great success. Recently divorced from her husband Yorgos Karapanos and with Greece being on the verge of civil war, Liberaki moved to Paris in 1946 – from that moment on, her personal and literary life would be split between Greece and France and between two languages (Greek and French), both of which Liberaki would use to write her work, often translating them from one language to the other. With the resettling in Paris, Liberaki's literary career witnessed a considerable transformation; after the publication of her third novel *Ο άλλος Αλέξανδρος* (The Other Alexander) in 1950, she stopped writing fiction and dedicated herself to theatre and cinema. She would write most of her plays in French and, only at a later stage, translate them into Greek. Even more interestingly, her move to Paris coincided with an important shift in her literary career: not only did she stop writing novels, turning towards theatre and cinema, but she also seemingly stopped writing about contemporary themes in order to focus her attention on the Greek past, drawing from classical mythology and history (*Η γυναίκα του Κανδαύλη* [Candaules' Wife], 1954; *Οι Δαναΐδες* [The Danaids], 1963; *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι ή Τηλέγονος* [The Secret Bed or Telegonus], 1967-1972), as well as from pre-classical Greece (*Σπαραγμός* [Lament], 1970) and late antiquity/Byzantine time (*Άγιος Πρίγκηψ* [Saint Prince], 1964).

This chapter focuses on two works of this second creative period of Liberaki, exploring how the mythological framework could provide an insight into the present and into the social transformations of the Greek 1960s. These works are the screenplay for

Jules Dassin's film *Phaedra* (1962, written in 1960) and the last play of her "mythical theatre," *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι ή Τηλέγονος*, originally written in French in 1967-8 and translated into Greek in 1971-2. Previous scholarship on *Phaedra* and *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι* is rather scanty and limited. *Phaedra* is generally only discussed briefly, always associated with the director Jules Dassin and completely overlooking Margarita Liberaki's authorial role (Karalis 2012, 93; Michelakis 2013, 217) and focusing mainly on the classical sources and on the superimposition of the classical past onto the "degraded present" of modern Greece (Scioli 2018). Similarly, also *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι* is mainly placed in conjunction with the other mythical works of the author, focusing on their intertextuality with the classical sources (Chasapi-Christodoulou 2002; Kambouri-Masaouti 2017) and on the conflicting interaction between the sexes (Puchner 2003).

By recovering and shedding light onto these two minor works of Margarita Liberaki, I aim to focus on how the classical subtext relates to issues of the Greek 1960s, instead of focusing exclusively on the similarities and divergences from the classical sources. In the framework of my approach to the Greek literature of this period, these texts become relevant in their representation of new social aspects that were dominating in the postwar period. The economic developments of the 1960s gained international recognition with the rise and international fame of the rich and famous families of shipowners, such as the Niarchos and the Onassis, that Liberaki brought to the big screen with *Phaedra*; on the other hand, since the end of the Second World War, Greece had also experienced a renewed intense wave of (e)migration, which resulted in a generation of people living between their homeland and their host countries, trying to navigate the cultural consequences of this move. Margarita Liberaki, living in France, writing in French, self-translating into Greek, and publishing in both France and Greece, is a case in point. What makes her case particularly relevant in this study is that she then transfers

her experience as a Greek diasporic/exilic individual onto the mythological material for her play *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι*.

These new social aspects, i.e., the economic advancements and the diaspora, necessarily brought about a reconsideration and a restructuring of the identitarian relationship that the individual had with their homeland, of what the modernists of the 1930s discussed as 'Greekness.' At the same time, kinship structures were also deconstructed and rearranged, with the woman assuming more relevance and central stage under the influence of emerging feminist movements. Indeed, the characters of Phaedra and Penelope and their non-normative reactions to the male members of their family and their relations with them invite us to rethink the social transformations that took place throughout the 1960s. In other words, I suggest that Margarita Liberaki's screenplay *Phaedra* and her play *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι* dramatize these social and cultural developments of the Greek 1960s, signalling a challenge to previous modernist discourses on Greekness and kinship.

The first part of this chapter will focus on the screenplay of *Phaedra*, in which, after presenting the myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus and the modalities whereby Liberaki diverges from it and adapts it in the 1960s for her screenplay, I discuss the archetypal function of antiquity that characterised much of the Greek branch of modernism, especially in the poetry of George Seferis. In dialogue with Margarita Liberaki's own incorporation of antiquity in *Phaedra*, this highlights what I define as 'hyphenated *nost*-algia', a phrase that through the etymological reference indicates the multi-layered relationship of the émigré with their homeland(s), oscillating between the elements of a split identity and thus problematising the idea of *nostos*. This concept becomes a tool to explore how Liberaki stages this complex relationship through the character of Alexis and

through his relationship with Phaedra, revealing how Greekness shifts from being a modernist archetypal articulation to being mere performance.

I will then move on to the play *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι* and, after exploring the sources of the *Telegony* and Liberaki's own reconstruction, I focus first on the male characters of the play and on the reversed directions of their personal *nostoi*, which foreground the experience of exile and of diaspora, concluding with the figure of Penelope and her central role in the movements of the male members of her family, thus concluding the troubling process initiated with *Phaedra*: what if the *nostos* is not a desire of the émigré, but rather of the homeland itself?

4.1 A PHAEDRA FOR THE 1960S

Immediately after starring in *Never on Sunday* (1960), written and directed by Jules Dassin, the Greek star Melina Mercouri approached Margarita Liberaki in the hope she would write a screenplay for her next film. Liberaki was not new to the cinema industry, having already authored the screenplay for Nikos Koundouros's first film *Μαγική πόλη* (Magic City, 1954), a neorealist portrait of the poor neighbourhoods where the refugees from Asia Minor had settled after their expulsion from Turkey. At the same time, Melina Mercouri had already established herself during the 1950s as an internationally acclaimed actress, following her unforgettable roles first as a *rebetiko* singer in Michael Cacoyannis's *Στέλλα* (Stella, 1955) and then as the lively and cheeky sex worker Ilya in Jules Dassin's *Never on Sunday*. Although the industry was pushing Mercouri to capitalise on the great success of the latter film, the Greek star wanted her role to go in the opposite direction:

> Μου λέει μια μέρα η Μελίνα [Μερκούρη]: «Φτιάξε μου ένα ρόλο εντελώς διαφορετικό από την Ίλια του *Ποτέ την Κυριακή* ή από τη *Στέλλα*, ένα ρόλο κυρίας, καλοντυμένης και αρωματισμένης». Τις ίδιες εκείνες μέρες ναυάγησε ένα πλοίο του Νιάρχου. (Liberaki 1994, 99)

Mercouri wanted to go beyond the light-hearted characters that had brought much success in her career, with the desire to show a new side of her acting personality. In her autobiography, Mercouri reported: "We had made our Greek comedy; now we'd make a Greek tragedy." (Mercouri 1971, 128). This is how Margarita Liberaki came up with the idea to adapt one of the most well-known myths of Greek tragedy, that of the illicit love of Phaedra for her stepson Hippolytus, into a story for the 1960s.

Margarita Liberaki wrote the screenplay for *Phaedra* in the summer of 1960 and immediately presented it to Melina Mercouri and Jules Dassin. Despite some initial resistance from Dassin, Mercouri's enthusiasm convinced the director to start filming. Directed by Jules Dassin, *Phaedra* thus premiered at the Colisée cinema in Paris on 25 May 1962, starring Melina Mercouri in the role of Phaedra, the beguiling wife of a rich Greek ship owner, and Anthony Perkins in the role of Alexis, Phaedra's stepson and lover.

Drawing from Euripides' tragedy *Hippolytus (Stephanephoros)* and its subsequent receptions, such as Seneca's *Phaedra* and Racine's *Phèdre*, Liberaki transforms the myth into a contemporary tale, staging "το μύθο των βασιλιάδων της εποχής του '60, που ήταν οι εφοπλιστές, με τις δυναστείες και την παντοδυναμία τους" (Liberaki 1994, 99). If, on the one hand, Liberaki's adaptation and transformation of Phaedra's mythical model is in dialogue with a modernist approach to mythology that would reclaim an unmediated relationship with it and its use as an archetype for the modern condition, I also contend that, in a metamodernist framework, *Phaedra* problematises such archetype, destabilising the myth and, thus, foregrounding two important themes not just within

Liberaki's poetics, but also in the Greek society of the 1960s: the diasporic experience and subjectivity, and the central role of the woman and of her desires.

4.1.1 SOURCES AND VARIATIONS

In order to understand how Margarita Liberaki's take on the myth of Phaedra is particularly relevant for the social and cultural context in which it appeared, it is necessary to explore how it differs and diverges from its sources. Liberaki herself reveals that she was acquainted with both Euripides' tragedy *Hippolytus* and with Racine's neoclassical rewriting *Phèdre*,[96] but it is immediately evident how she did not let these previous models limit her own creative process, as the screenplay of her *Phaedra* demonstrates.

As it is the case for most classical myths, the story of Phaedra and Hippolytus varies between different sources, many of which are now lost. Euripides' tragedy *Hippolytus* is the only full theatrical piece of antiquity to have been preserved related to this mytheme. It was first performed in Athens in 428 BCE, during the Peloponnesian War, and, as the title suggests, the focus is on Hippolytus, son of an Amazon warrior and of the king of Athens, Theseus, while Phaedra, wife of Theseus, is the daughter of the Cretan king Minos and sister of Ariadne. In Euripides' version, at the root of the tragedy there is a feud between the two goddesses Aphrodite and Artemis. After being refused by Hippolytus, who prefers to be a chaste worshipper of Artemis, Aphrodite seeks vengeance and makes Phaedra fall in love with her stepson. While Phaedra strives to fight her illicit feelings, her nurse reveals Phaedra's feeling to Hippolytus, who in turn rejects them vehemently in a deeply misogynistic rant, threatening to inform Theseus. In order to maintain her honour

[96] "Γνώριζα φυσικά τον *Ιππόλυτο* του Ευριπίδη και τη *Φαίδρα* του Ρακίνα" (Liberaki 1994, 99).

intact, Phaedra then decides to take her life: after leaving a written note that accuses Hippolytus of rape, she hangs herself. When Theseus returns home, he finds his wife dead and the handwritten note; furious with his son, he sends him into exile and curses him, so that, while riding his chariot, Hippolytus is killed by a divine bull emerging from the sea. It is only after this tragic end that Theseus is informed of his son's innocence and of Aphrodite's responsibility in the death of his son and his wife.

In subsequent retellings of the myth, while the central element of the illicit love of Phaedra for Hippolytus remains, other elements of the story change, contributing to the diverse reception of this particular myth. Another influential work of antiquity was Seneca's own tragedy *Phaedra*, in which more relevance is given to the 'human factors' that contribute to the tragic plot, rather than the divine elements. Indeed, drawing from another tragedy of Euripides' – the *Hippolytus Kalyptomenos*, now lost and preceding the other Hippolytus– as the goddesses are removed from the stage, Phaedra takes central stage and full responsibility of the events: it is her who declares her passion to Hippolytus and to falsely accuse him of attempted rape to Theseus, who then banishes him and curses him. It is only after Hippolytus' death that Phaedra confesses her responsibility and kills herself. As Boyle (1987) explains, Seneca's version of the Phaedra myth foregrounds the relationship between nature and the human world, and the issue of man's desire to assert control over the universe he inhabits.

At the court of king Louis XIV, Jean-Baptiste Racine produced one of the greatest examples of neoclassical French theatre, staging in Paris his *Phèdre* (1677). Indebted to Seneca and responding to the pre-Enlightenment culture, Racine as well eliminates the gods and gives full agency to the two protagonists, who find themselves entrapped in a web of lies and revelations. The motor of the action, differently from the classical sources, is the alleged death of Theseus and the consequent issue of the succession that involves

Hippolytus and Phaedra's infant children. Moreover, Racine introduces the figure of Aricie, a young girl whom Hippolytus is in love with and who determines Phaedra's jealousy and the tragic developments of the plot. On the one hand, then, there is the illicit love of Phaedra for her stepson and, on the other, the political contrasts between the two sides. While it is Phaedra who confesses her love to Hippolytus, the responsibility of vengeance is transferred to her maid, once the news that Theseus is alive and on his way back to the palace arrives. In a convoluted game of lies and accusations, Phaedra is convinced by her maid to tell Theseus that his son attempted to rape her, inducing him to condemn him and curse him. While Aricie tries to convince Theseus of Hippolytus' innocence, Phaedra's maid commits suicide and Hippolytus himself dies in an accident by the sea. As Theseus finally understands Phaedra's cunning plot, she confesses her fault and poisons herself. In his tragedy, Racine seems to echo the enclosed atmosphere of the French court of his time, presenting his characters as '*coupables innocents*', meaning that they feel guilty when they are not, or that their responsibility for their actions is open to question (Racine 1994).

What Margarita Liberaki does for the screenplay of *Phaedra* is particularly innovative in its depiction of the characters and on the plot developments, maintaining of course the backbone of the mythical story, i.e., the semi-incestuous love of Phaedra for Hippolytus. As anticipated, Liberaki transposes the myth into a contemporary tale, setting the story in the Greece of the late 1950s and early 1960s, and turning the protagonists into the 'kings and queens of the 1960s', members of a rich family of ship owners. Daughter of a retiring shipping tycoon, Phaedra is married to Thanos, who is at the head of one of the most powerful shipping companies of Greece. Immediately after the inauguration of the 'Phaedra', the latest ship of Thanos's company, he asks Phaedra

to go to London to meet for the first time Alexis, in order to facilitate her husband's reconciliation with the estranged Greco-English son, and to convince him to spend the summer in Greece together. However, when Phaedra and Alexis meet, they passionately fall in love with each other. In the attempt to keep the situation at bay, Alexis and Phaedra agree that he should not come to Greece, but Thanos, unaware of the affair between his wife and his son, insists to have Alexis come. In Hydra, Alexis seems to finally reconnect with his father, while the two lovers try to control and hide their passion. However, Alexis's engagement with Phaedra's young niece, Herse, provokes Phaedra's jealousy. In a rapid turn of events, while the breaking news of the shipwreck of 'Phaedra' and of the dead crew members creates havoc in the business offices and in the community, Phaedra confesses her affair with Alexis to her husband, who furiously banishes his son out of the country. In the closing scenes, while Alexis speeds in his new beloved car and dies in an accident, Phaedra decides to take her life with an overdose of sleeping pills, as the list of names of the dead crew of the 'Phaedra' are announced to their grieving mothers.

From the title of the film to Phaedra's uncontrollable passion towards her stepson, the mythical palimpsest appears evident; nevertheless, a closer look at the plot reveals Liberaki's loose adaptation of the myth. The author bends and manipulates the mythical material, and it is exactly through these shifts of the myth that the metamodern aspect of her work emerges.

First, it is interesting to point out that Liberaki's operation begins from the names of her characters, deciding to maintain recognisable the names of the female characters, while changing the names of the men. Indeed, Phaedra and her sister Ariadne respect the mythical palimpsest, while her husband Theseus changes into Thanos and, more surprisingly, Hippolytus is now Alexis. This operation of partial renaming seems to have

occurred in a second moment, as one of the original manuscripts reveals. Held at the Archives of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (ASCSA),[97] the different copies of the original screenplays show variations: while the original Greek copies reflect the film, the French manuscript, titled *S/S Phaedra* (therefore clearly referring to the ship rather than the female protagonist), presents the original names of the classical myth: Thésée, Phaedra, Hippolyte, and Ariane. Regardless of when the change happened, it is interesting to highlight the gender aspect of it. On the one hand, Liberaki exposes the mythical palimpsest by maintaining the female names recognisable, which suggests that women are more archetypal. On the other, the author 'troubles' the characterisation of the men – expression of new capital and of the power of capitalist patriarchy, the radical transformation and modernisation of their names signifies the epochal change taking place throughout the 1960s.

The biggest shifts of the myth do, indeed, involve Thanos/Theseus and, mostly, Alexis/Hippolytus. Moving away from previous models, Phaedra's husband is present throughout the plot, and he plays a fundamental role in bringing Phaedra and Alexis together, albeit unwittingly. In fact, the biggest variation in Margarita Liberaki's reception of the myth is not only that Phaedra's love for Alexis is reciprocated, but also that Alexis is the one to actually make the first move and entice Phaedra. She gives in to her passion for the young stepson and, echoing Racine's tragedy, her strong will and desires emerge as dominant, managing her relationships and the inevitable tragic ending, by confessing everything to her husband herself and owning up to her desires.

One last variation that plays a central role in Liberaki's *Phaedra* is the border crossings of the characters. In the classical sources, the myth takes place always in the

[97] *Margarita Lymberaki Papers*, GR ASCSA GL ML 117, series III, box 15, items 2 and 3.

same place, broadly identifying with Greece: in Euripides and in Racine, the scene is set in Troezen, a city in Peloponnesus, whereas in Seneca it takes place in Athens. Margarita Liberaki, once again, unsettles the mythical sources, also considering the different artistic medium of cinema that allows her more freedom; while Greece – and the island of Hydra,[98] in particular – constitutes the main setting for the action, it also needs to be seen as a locality of movement, from and to which the characters move. Again, the focus here is on Alexis and only consequently on Phaedra. Alexis is a so-called 'hyphenated Greek,' having been born from a Greek man and an English woman, and at the beginning of the story he is located outside of Greece, in London, where he is supposed to study at the London School of Economics, in preparation for inheriting his father's business. London, therefore, becomes the location where the love story between Phaedra and her stepson begins, alongside the 'neutral space' of Paris where the two lovers meet with the ever-travelling Thanos. The characters, therefore, cross physical boundaries, keeping Greece always at the centre of their movements. Phaedra and Thanos always depart from there and return there, while Alexis moves on an opposite direction, i.e., Greece becomes first the destination of his *nostos*, his homecoming, and then the place to run away from, even though this is unrealised with his tragic death. In his hyphenated identity, Alexis is the foreign character of the story, born and raised in London and fully detached from his father and his country, Greece. This, again, marks a shift from the original source, where it is Phaedra who is the foreign queen. Alexis, therefore, subsumes in his character the complicated relationship of the diasporic Greek with their homeland. Phaedra, now closely associated with Greece, is also responsible for mediating Alexis' complicated relationship with the homeland. As such, Liberaki presents the female protagonist, and

[98] On the island of Hydra at the period of Greek cinema and the internationalisation of that image, see Plantzos 2022.

by extension the woman, as a reference point and as a signifier for the motherland herself, whose desires towards the diasporic/exilic individuals Phaedra metaphorically embodies.

The ways in which Margarita Liberaki adapts the myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus in the contemporary setting of the Greek 1960s, making it a story of the upper class and staging both the international landscape in which they operate, as well as the complex dynamics that underlie their relationships, represent the society of the 1960s in its radical transformations and bring to the fore the actual experience of the Greek abroad, focusing on the imaginary boundary that separates them from their country and on the complicated relationship that ensues. At the same time, Liberaki empowers Phaedra through the mythical undertext, kept visible via her name, and through her desires that determine the developments of the plot. Therefore, my analysis of Liberaki's manipulation of the classical material coagulates around two main themes: the role of the classical myth and past in relation to the present of the Greek 1960s, and the émigré's complicated *nostos* and relationship to their country. [99]

4.1.2 ARCHETYPE AND NOSTALGIA

Margarita Liberaki's appropriation of the classical heritage, both in its mythological dimension and in material form, is illuminated when put in constellation with modernist discourses of classical reception. At a closer reading, however, *Phaedra* appears to be in closer dialogue with the cultural climate of the Greek 1960s, challenging thus previous modernist models and contributing to a metamodernist literary practice.

[99] It is important to acknowledge here that class plays a central role within the film, screening experiences and a lifestyle that pertained to the rich Greek élite. However, my discussion moves beyond class issues, aiming to explore a wider conceptualisation of Greekness in the Greek diaspora.

From the comparison of Liberaki's innovative appropriation of the Phaedra myth with the classical and neoclassical sources, there emerges a clear sense of innovation, which resonates with Ezra Pound's motto "make it new," as well as with T.S. Eliot's mythical method, which has already been discussed and problematised in the previous chapter on Stelios Xefloudas. Indeed, in modernist poetics, classical mythology was approached in order to reinscribe it within the modern context, which involved a direct engagement with the sources through translations, direct quotes, and adaptations. A special case in point here is H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) and her 1927 play *Hippolytus Temporizes*, a translation-adaptation of Euripides' *Hippolytus*. Intended not for a live performance, but to be read, H.D.'s play is also taking a distance from the classical source, removing, for instance, the figure of Theseus altogether and portraying Hippolytus' incestuous passion for his absent mother, proxy of Artemis. In her illuminating study of modernist theatrical representations of the Phaedra myth in relation to issues of gender, Maria Stadter Fox (2001) clarifies that, for H.D., Euripides was already a modern author and that her goal in "making [him] new" was about

> rewrit[ing] the play to convey the play itself, rather than aiming primarily at either a faithful or an embellished translation, [which] is a difference between anglophone modernism, at least, and what modernists perceived as a Victorian attitude to the classics. (Fox 2001, 38)

Margarita Liberaki's *Phaedra* finds its place next to H.D.'s play in her portrayal of a contemporary Phaedra, which does not aim to be "faithful" to the classical tradition, but rather to employ the backbone of the play (the passion, the clash between one's emotions and outer social structures, etc.) to address contemporary problems. In other words, it appears to follow the most classical mythical method that T.S. Eliot had suggested in 1923

about James Joyce's *Ulysses*, since Liberaki's scenario does in a sense employ the myth as a structure on top of which to construct a story of her time.

Following these modernist approaches, Margarita Liberaki's *Phaedra* should also be put in conversation with the more local strand of Greek modernism, especially with George Seferis's poetry. Surely influenced by Eliot, for Seferis the classical heritage with its myths and remaining material culture represented an 'archetype' for the Greek present, a model inherent in Greek culture that the poet was invited to unearth. This perspective is inserted into a wider discourse that characterised the theoretical debates of Greek modernism, especially the 'Generation of the 1930s,' and that intersected with discussions on the relationship between Greek intellectuals and European culture, and on the meaning of ελληνικότητα in critical years of national reconstruction after the heavy defeat in the Greco-Turkish War (1919-22) and the definitive crush of the irredentist ideology of the Μεγάλη Ιδέα.

The poet George Seferis emerged in all these debates as a prominent innovator that suggested a reconsideration of the past-present relation. Particularly relevant in this analysis is the famous debate that George Seferis had in 1938 with Konstantinos Tsatsos, then professor of philosophy at the University of Athens, in which the Greek poet problematises the influence of European culture on the Greek letters, claiming that the models of Hellenism imported from the continent "έχουν μόνο σαν εξωτερική αφορμή και επιφάνεια τον ελληνισμό" (Seferis and Tsatsos 1975, 29). Seferis, therefore, argues that it is time for Greek intellectuals to reclaim Hellenism for themselves and bring forth what he calls "ελληνικό ελληνισμό" as opposed to the then dominating "ευρωπαϊκός ελληνισμός" (Seferis and Tsatsos 1975, 29). This approach could appear contradictory if one takes into consideration Yorgos Theotokas' seminal essay *Ελεύθερο πνεύμα* (1929), where the critic denounced the cultural 'backwardness' of his country and called for an

equal conversation with the European counterparts; Seferis's ελληνικό ελληνισμό, however, moves exactly on that direction: in order to have an equal status to other European cultures, Greek intellectuals needed to rediscover the native, authentic, cultural tradition, which inevitably bears traces of the long Greek past. This is the ελληνικότητα that, according to Seferis, posits Greek culture in the position to actually contribute to European culture at large, "bring[ing] together, for example, the European modernism and Makriyannis's simplicity" (Tziovas 2011, 313. My translation).

As mentioned, the co-presence of the past in the present constitutes a particular trait of modernist aesthetics, both in Europe and in Greece. Indeed, according to Tziovas, this configuration of the past-present relation supersedes the previous Illuminist and Romantic ones: from being an ideal to be revived in the present (Enlightenment) or a living element to rediscover in the present (Romanticism), the past was previously intended as a model to replicate;[100] however, Greek modernists, and especially the Generation of the 1930s, proposed the past rather as an aesthetic referent, as an archetype for the present: similarly to the Romantic model, the past is indeed traceable in the present, "not much in the sense of a historical, but of an aesthetic or a stylistic continuity, or even of a metaphorical correspondence" (Tziovas 2011, 295. My translation). This modernist approach goes in two directions: on the one hand, it mirrors the European modernist – and Bergsonian – conceptualisation of temporality, according to which time planes coexist in the present moment, as I have explored in the second chapter on Yannis Ritsos's poetry. At the same time, George Seferis in his essays reclaims for Greece a direct relationship with its past, unmediated by European culture and, thus,

[100] For a more detailed discussion of Greece's standing *vis-à-vis* the Illuminist and Romanticist discourses coming from western Europe, especially Germany, see Güthenke (2008).

shedding the cryptocolonial influence of the continent that assigned a moral superiority to Greek antiquity that needed to be recovered.

In Seferis's modernist poetics, the classical heritage is indeed an intrinsic part of the Greek present, be it in its materiality or in its tradition (including its literary and linguistic tradition), playing an archetypal function that the poet uncovers through correlations with present conditions and feelings. Two poems that exemplify Seferis's attitude towards the Greek past are 'Πάνω σ' έναν ξένο στίχο' (from the collection *Τετράδιο γυμνασμάτων*, 1932) and 'Ο βασιλιάς της Ασίνης' (from *Ημερολόγιο καταστρώματος Α'*, 1940).

Born in (recently lost) Asia Minor and employed in the Greek diplomatic service, George Seferis experienced displacement throughout his life, experience that made him often identify with the figure of Odysseus. In 'Πάνω σ' έναν ξένο στίχο' (On a Foreign Verse), the mythical referent emerges as a phantom or, even better, as a model that returns under different shapes but always recognisable:

> Και παρουσιάζεται μπροστά μου, πάλι και πάλι, το φάντασμα του Οδυσσέα, με μάτια κοκκινισμένα από του κυμάτου την αρμύρα
> κι' από το μεστωμένο πόθο να ξαναδεί τον καπνό που βγαίνει από τη ζεστασιά του σπιτιού του και το σκυλί του που γέρασε προσμένοντας στη θύρα.
>
> Στέκεται μεγάλος, ψιθυρίζοντας ανάμεσα στ' ασπρισμένα του γένεια, λόγια της γλώσσας μας, όπως τη μιλούσαν πριν τρείς χιλιάδες χρόνια.
>
> […] είταν κι αυτός ένας άνθρωπος που πάλεψε μέσα στον κόσμο, με την ψυχή και με το σώμα.
>
> Είναι ο μεγάλος Οδυσσέας · εκείνος που είπε να γίνει το ξύλινο άλογο και οι Αχαιοί κερδίσανε την Τροία.
> Φαντάζομαι πως έρχεται να μ' ορμηνέψει πως να φτιάξω κι' εγώ ένα ξύλινο άλογο για να κερδίσω τη δική μου Τροία.
>
> (Seferis 2014, 87-8)

The travelling Odysseus, who has sailed on many seas and desires to finally return home, mirrors the struggles and the desires of the poet himself. Odysseus is traceable in the very language they share, spoken just "like it was spoken three thousand years ago," which allows the poet to tap directly into that tradition, so that he could learn how to overcome his present struggles. The classical tradition, symbolised here through Odysseus, imbues Greek culture at all levels, distinguishable, as Seferis adds, in "κάτι γέρους θαλασσινούς, που […] | μου λέγανε, στα παιδικά μου χρόνια, το τραγούδι του Ερωτόκριτου με τα δάκρυα στα μάτια" (Seferis 2014, 88). Referencing the romance of the Cretan Renaissance still sung by the old seamen, Seferis traces the metamorphoses of the Odysseus model throughout the long Greek history. In other words, he reveals how the Greek past is always coexistent with the present and the poet is there to help uncover these correlations and, in essence, the archetype of the classical past.

Moving from a different perspective, the poetic voice in 'Ο βασιλιάς της Ασίνης' (The King of Asine) seeks the traces of the Greek past into the physical landscape of Greece and in the archaeological sites that dot it. In this specific poem, Seferis explores the acropolis of Asine, tracing the presence of an unknown king, whose existence is only vouched by a passing reference in Homer's catalogue of ships ("Ἀσίνην τε," *Iliad* 2.560):

> Ο βασιλιάς της Ασίνης ένα κενό κάτω απ' την προσωπίδα
> παντού μαζί μας παντού μαζί μας, κάτω από ένα όνομα:
> «Ασίνην τε… Ασίνην τε…»
> […]
> Ασπιδοφόρος ο ήλιος ανέβαινε πολεμώντας
> κι' από το βάθος της σπηλιάς μια νυχτερίδα τρομαγμένη
> χτύπησε πάνω στο φως σαν τη σαΐτα πάνω στο σκουτάρι:
> «Ασίνην τε… Ασίνην τε…». Να 'ταν αυτή ο βασιλιάς της Ασίνης
> που τον γυρεύουμε τόσο προσεχτικά σε τούτη την ακρόπολη
> αγγίζοντας κάποτε με τα δάχτυλά μας την αφή του πάνω στις πέτρες.
> (Seferis 2014, 185-7)

The poet wanders in the archaeological landscape and strives to conjure the figure of the king in the shapes of the panorama, in the excavated objects (like the gold burial mask), and in the very stones scattered in the acropolis. Through the sense of touch, Seferis activates the correlation between the poet's present and the mythological past of the king of Asine – even when the past is elusive ("Ο βασιλιάς της Ασίνης ένα κενό κάτω απ' την προσωπίδα"), the poet is able to tap into it and, maybe, even to reconstruct aesthetically the voids through his verses. Compared to the previous example, then, Seferis seems to proceed backwards: while Odysseus presents himself as a clear archetype that can be identified under different shapes in modern Greece, in this latter poem Seferis scours the present for the traces of a past that, albeit fluid and indefinable, is constantly there, imbuing the peculiar Greek landscape.

Although the two poems present different perspectives, George Seferis represents in both cases the "aesthetic or modernist" configuration of past and present, as Tziovas (2011, 295) defines it. The past is a living heritage that does not need to be revived or imposed on a 'corrupted' present, since it is already an organic part of the modern Greek present and culture, present as an archetype that the poet can recognise and that gives the authentic character (the ελληνικότητα feature) to the Greek cultural product.

In summary, I have discussed the role of the classical tradition as an archetype in Seferis's modernism and I have mentioned the myth of Odysseus as an important referent for Seferis; indeed, the Odysseus theme returns repeatedly in Seferis's poems, acting as the archetype of *nostos*. In my reading of Seferis's poetry, the archetypal function of the past could also be read as a form of *nostos* that is constantly oriented towards a cultural and geographical centre, which is Greece and Greek antiquity. Propelled by the contingencies of his historical present (the 'Asia Minor catastrophe' first and the forced exile under German occupation then, as well as his diplomatic missions), Seferis speaks

of a continuous journeying or of a dissatisfactory return, as his poem 'Ο γυρισμός του ξενιτεμένου' (The Return of the Exile) exemplifies (Spentzou 2014, 249-51). And I would claim that it is exactly because of this disattended homecoming that Seferis's longing tends to be centred on Greece.

The archetypal function of the past and the disattended nostos of Seferis's poetic voice enter in conversation with Margarita Liberaki's scenario for *Phaedra*, which seems to contribute to the modernist approach to the classical past, also enriched by Jules Dassin's directorial vision. On the one hand, the mythical palimpsest is employed to tell and critique a story of utter contemporaneity, that of the rich Greek shipowners that were connected, in the international public sphere, with the image of Greece in the 1960s. On the other, Greek antiquity becomes visible in its materiality within the film. On the one hand, Dimitris Plantzos questions the purpose of including archaeological material in the film, if not only for "Greek intellectuals and their friends [to construct] an image for the country and its people […] rely[ing] on the exceptionality that was Greece" (Plantzos 2022, 85). On the other hand, Emma Scioli (2018) discusses the use of classical references in *Phaedra* through the lens of the 'golden age,' arguing that Jules Dassin's use of ancient Greek artifacts in the movie reinforces the alienation of the characters with the past, from which they cannot however escape. Scioli also traces this feeling of alienation in the 'foreignness' of the director himself through the character of Alexis. While Scioli's study initiates an interesting discussion on the representation in the film of the tension between the classical past and the 1960s present, it fails to recognise the authority and the role of Margarita Liberaki as *Phaedra*'s screenwriter, which, I contend, constitutes an important factor in drawing connections of this work with the Greek cultural landscape of its time. It is however important to acknowledge the imbrication of Liberaki's script

with Dassin's *mise-en-scène*, as they are inextricably connected and illuminate each other's aesthetics.

The materiality of antiquity returns throughout the movie, already featuring prominently in the opening sequences; especially the marbles of the Parthenon connect with the story, as they resonate with the mythical structure of the film and, thus, foreground the archetypal nature of antiquity in the contemporary story; at the same time, they also appeal to an international audience, drawing from the (mainly Western) stereotypical association of Greece with its classical history and art.



Figure 3 - Opening titles of Phaedra *with the Parthenon frieze on the background*

Exemplary of this double function is, as mentioned, the opening sequence with the titles rolling over various scenes depicted on the Parthenon frieze, largely representing a series of horses and chariots (fig. 3). Dassin's choice to have this kind of background for the opening titles complements Liberaki's choice of subject, placing *Phaedra* in connection with its classical context, as well as quoting the Euripidean source, where Hippolytus meets his tragic end while riding on his chariot. At the same time, however, this choice reflects Dassin's own foreignness and Western philhellenism (cfr. his role as Homer in *Never on Sunday*), projecting a form of idealisation of Greece symbolised by the white marbles of the Parthenon.

The presence of the marbles is even more powerful in the scene of Phaedra and Alexis' first meeting in the British Museum in London. Indeed, the scene is fraught with references both to the original play and to the contemporaneity of the film; it is an intertextual game that goes beyond the fictional story, anticipating cultural and political

debates about the very marbles. In this scene, both the character of Alexis and that of Phaedra are visually framed alongside specific sculptures of the Parthenon tympanum that connect with their mythical referents – when Phaedra enters the museum room, she finds Alexis drawing the marbles, standing right in front of the horse head. As pointed out about the opening titles, the horse is indeed connected to Hippolytus, as a hunter and as a charioteer, further suggested by Alexis' posture, captured as he is drawing, in front of a horse head with his hands stretched forward, like the famous statue of The Charioteer in Delphi (fig. 4). After the initial tense presentations, the camera frames the sculptures of three headless women; it is Alexis' off-screen voice to explain who the statues represent: "Aphrodite, headless, reclining on the lap of her mother" (*Ph.*, 20:12-20:18). In the meantime, we see Phaedra walking in the frame to stand in front of Aphrodite's statue (fig. 5). In this monochromatic frame of the film, the patterned headscarf captures the focus and foregrounds Phaedra's head. She is not simply observing the statue, but she seems to offer what is missing, hinting at a deep connection of Phaedra with Aphrodite and what she stands for: love. This identification provokes a sense of anticipatory uneasiness and discomfort that Phaedra feels both in Liberaki's screenplay and in Dassin's filmic production. While the background to the opening titles seems to be Jules Dassin's contribution, the juxtaposition of Phaedra with Aphrodite's sculpture comes directly from Margarita Liberaki's original scenario:

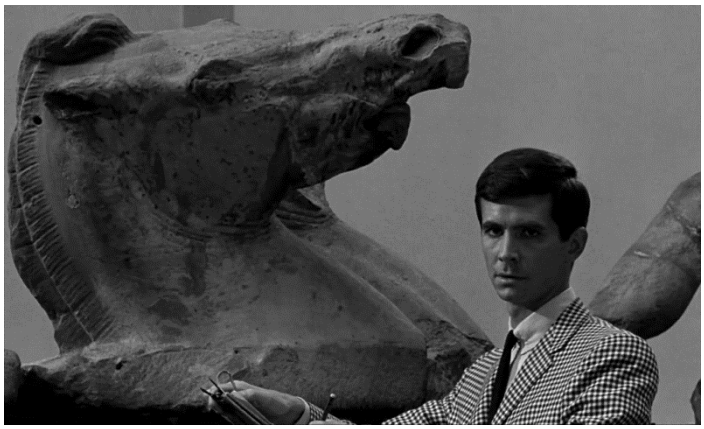


Figure 4 – Alexis (Antony Perkins) standing in front of the Parthenon Marbles

> Τη στιγμή που είναι πια πολύ κοντά [στον Αλέξη], [η Φαίδρα] αισθάνεται άσχημα. Κάτι σαν λιποθυμία. Το χέρι που του άπλωσε

> πέφτει μόνο του, ζαλίζεται. Τη στηρίζει στον ώμο του για να μην πέσει και τη βοηθά να καθίσει κοντά του σ' έναν πάγκο. Δίπλα τους ένα άγαλμα της Αφροδίτης. (Liberaki 1994, 21)

Immediately after these directions, Liberaki places the recognition between the two characters and their first in-person conversation. Similarly, in the film, as soon as Alexis finishes to describe the sculptural group, Phaedra appears stifled. "Aphrodite… (*Phaedra turns towards Alexis*) I need some air. Please, let's go" (*Ph.*, 20:19-20:24), she says to him, who takes her immediately out of the museum as the camera zooms in on the goddess' reclining statue.



Figure 5 – Phaedra (Melina Mercouri) in front of the statue of Aphrodite

This whole scene is again in direct conversation with Euripides' tragedy, in which Aphrodite is directly responsible for Phaedra's tragic love, transforming the statue into a tangible signifier of the passion between the two characters and its tragic consequences. This shows in clear terms how the classical past acts as a Seferian archetype of the present – the story that Liberaki tells through Dassin's production is extremely contemporary, set in the rich world of Greek shipowners; and yet, the past, symbolised by the marbles of the Parthenon, is there, influencing, if not structuring, the present. Indeed, the modern Phaedra has a physical reaction of discomfort (fainting or lack of breath) when confronting such an imposing past, as if the statue channelled the mythical Phaedra and prefigured the tragedy inherent in her story.

Beyond Margarita Liberaki's and Jules Dassin's use of the materiality of Greek antiquity, this network of intertextual references is further expanded with the very

participation of Melina Mercouri in the production of the film. Indeed, as a rising star of international cinematography, Mercouri's 'star text'[101] grew over the years to include her staunch and active support in favour of the return of the Parthenon marbles to Greece, which was one of her main fights as Greek Minister for Culture between 1981 and 1989. This interestingly creates a parallelism between her role as Phaedra in the film and her governmental role in the restitution of the marbles: just like Phaedra is sent to London to bring the foreign stepson Alexis back to Greece, later Melina Mercouri as herself would go to London to bring the Parthenon marbles back to Greece, becoming a symbol of the campaign for their return.[102] The marbles, therefore, acquire in Liberaki's *Phaedra* a multi-layered dimension – they first act as visible referents for the mythical archetype that underlies the storyline of the film; they also speak to the internationalisation of Greek cultural products, harking to the Greek classical past to appeal to the foreign audience as well. Finally, analysed from the present perspective, this film contributes to Melina Mercouri's own star text, multiplying and extending the film's intertextuality to the future. As Liberaki (1994, 100) herself recounts, the future further haunts the story of *Phaedra*, anticipating somehow the tragic destinies of Eugenia Livanou Niarchou, wife of Stavros Niarchos, and of Alexandros Onassis, her nephew and son of Aristotle Onassis. While the former committed suicide in 1970 with sleeping pills, as Phaedra does in the film, Onassis died in an airplane crash in 1973, similarly to Alexis in his car.

[101] The concept of 'star text' was first introduced by Richard Dyer in 1979 in order to create a framework that would bring together the actor/performer and their public image as a star. Star text, therefore, does not only take into account their performances in films, but also the image they construct through interviews and media presence. See Dyer (1998), Butler (1991), and Lindemann (2020).

[102] Cf. Alexis Bistikas's short film *The Marbles* (1989), dedicated to Melina Mercouri, in which a young Greek man living in London is deeply affected by Mercouri's campaign for the restitutions of the Parthenon Marbles.

With her adaptation of the myth in *Phaedra*, Margarita Liberaki operates what I would identify as a modernist move – the modality in which she approaches the myth is much indebted to a Western form of mythical method that traces classical structures in the present. This approach, however, also intersects with Liberaki's, as well as Dassin's and Mercouri's, status as émigré figures, who in the 1960s experience first-hand a life crossing national borders. In constant conversation with other European cultural contexts, I suggest that Liberaki's use of classical antiquity and of the myth responds to a certain extent to Seferis's – and therefore to a Greek modernist – renewed vision of the Greek past, which strives to re-domesticate it and trace it within the very fabric of Greek culture.

The diasporic life of Margarita Liberaki, however, challenges the archetypal perspective on Greek mythology. I have already examined how Liberaki unsettles the mythical material of Phaedra and Hippolytus, moving beyond the modernist classical reception into a 1960s metamodernist one. Indeed, as it will become clear in the following section, Liberaki's reception of the myth brings to the fore the peculiar experience of diaspora and boundary crossing, as well as offering a different version of Greekness, one which is troubled by the hyphenated identities of screenwriter, film director, and leading actress, converging on the figure of Alexis.

4.1.3 Performative Greekness and *nostos* denied

In order to appreciate how Margarita Liberaki converses with and yet moves beyond the archetypal modernist structure of past-present relation, a special focus should be dedicated to the character of Alexis, exemplary of the metamodernist move of classical reception in Liberaki's scenario. In fact, through his Anglo-Greek identity, Alexis

dramatises a peculiar condition of the new Greece that was emerging in the Postwar period, problematising aforementioned questions on Greekness and *nostos*.

In this analysis, Liberaki employs Phaedra's stepson in quite an innovative way, if compared to previous representations of Hippolytus, where his main trait is his vehement rejection of Phaedra (in Euripides also associated to a misogynist stance). Not only does Liberaki reverse this model, but she also brings to the surface a new aspect that does not appear this prominently in previous adaptations of the myth, i.e., the tension in Alexis's identity between his belonging to Greece and his mother's foreign origins. Indeed, in the specific case of *Phaedra*, Alexis's hyphenated identity is stressed throughout the whole film, so that we are constantly reminded that he is Greek *and* foreign at the same time.

From the beginning, Alexis is presented as foreign, an Englishman completely detached from his father and from his father's country. His Greek identity is presented in a fragmentary way and is constructed progressively through little performative acts, as if for a need of self-affirmation both towards Greeks and non-Greeks. While Emma Scioli sees Alexis' "hybridity" (Scioli 2018, 131) in relation to Jules Dassin's own experience as an expatriate and to the film's representation of the duality between ancient and modern Greece, I suggest contextualising it in the Greek 1960s and in the metamodernist climate that this thesis investigates. As it happened during the interwar years, political crises and the confrontation with Europe and the rest of the world brought about reflections on what it meant to be Greek. Moreover, the global standing of Greece was in the middle of radical developments and transformations – Margarita Liberaki depicts in *Phaedra* this 'new' Greece, and the character of Alexis provides the right springboard for the author to present a version of Greekness different from the Seferian one discussed above, which I would describe as *performative Greekness*. Surely, my claim is not that this kind of

Greekness that Alexis embodies is a widespread, generalised attitude in Greece during the 1960s; it is, however, an approach to national belonging that is peculiar to this specific historical moment, and specific to a certain category of people.

With the economic developments of the late 1950s and 1960s, Greece began a process of 'rebranding', which allowed the country to open to the world. Through her collaboration with Jules Dassin and Melina Mercouri, Margarita Liberaki represented with *Phaedra* these transformations: on the one hand, by focusing the scenario on the rich families of shipowners, Liberaki portrays the economic advancements of her country, symbolised by the economic power and international standing of these families. On the other, *Phaedra* is mainly set in one of the Greek islands,[103] feeding into the imaginary of Greece as a summer holiday destination, which was on the rise at the time. The development of tourism placed Greece on the world map, but at the same time a stereotypical image of the country began to be constructed, based not just on the archaeological sites and classical heritage, but also on the whitewashed Cycladic landscape, as well as on elements of Greek popular culture, exemplified in Zorba's traditional dance on Mikis Theodorakis's famous *syrtaki* in Michael Cacoyannis's film *Zorba the Greek* (1964).[104] In sum, with the increased international visibility of Greece and of the Greeks, the very concept of Greekness gained a multi-layered dimension, as it became a commodified good with cultural capital, especially when in contact with non-Greeks. This was particularly true for the Greeks residing abroad and, of course, for the

[103] Liberaki does not mention a specific island in the screenplay, nor is any island mentioned in the film. The shooting however took place in Hydra, where Margarita Liberaki had a house and would spend her summers. Moreover, Hydra was a very popular destination of international tourism during the 1960s, particularly appreciated by VIPs.

[104] On the contribution of filmmaking to the development of international tourism in Greece during the 1960s, see Papadimitriou 2022.

rich members of the Greek jet set. In referring to this social category in her autobiography, Melina Mercouri explains:

> Of course you visit Greece from time to time, especially in the summer. […] On the occasions you go all out in your Greekness. You keep the Bordeaux and the Bourgogne for shipboard and drink *rezina* [sic] everywhere else. When you're listening to *bouzouki* music you snap your fingers louder than anyone can. You take off your jacket whenever you can. It looks democratic as hell. (Mercouri 1971, 129)

The performativity of Greekness that (some) Greeks adopt when in the presence of foreigners, an attitude that Michael Herzfeld (2016) refers to as *cultural intimacy*, emerges neatly in Mercouri's words, and it is embodied in Margarita Liberaki's scenario in the figure of Alexis. Indeed, his hyphenated Anglo-Greek identity is constantly challenged throughout the film, and he finds himself in a position where he has to defend his hybridity. While he does not feel Greek enough against his English peers, he is also not Greek enough for the Greeks; therefore, Alexis discovers and recovers his Greekness through performative acts.

In *Phaedra*, the construction of Greekness is intertwined with the use of the Greek language, through which Alexis attempts to reconnect with that side of his identity, also as an attempt to get closer to Phaedra. Indeed, it is the meeting with his stepmother that sets in motion his performative Greekness, evolving from a childish game of word guessing between the two protagonists to a 'secret language' that bonds their love affair. Greekness is employed, therefore, as self-affirmation in a foreign context that does



Figure 6 – Alexis (Antony Perkins) speaking Greek to the lemonade stall vendor

not recognise his hybridity, so much so that Alexis is forced to exaggerate it, often with a humorous result. For example, during a walk with Phaedra in a park, Alexis tests his Greekness with a lemonade stall vendor, thanking him in Greek and later translating to him in a heavy Greek accent (fig. 6):

> ALEXIS: Ευχαρίστω. (*sic*)
> VENDOR: I beg your pardon?
> ALEXIS (*in a Greek accent*): That means 'Thank you' in Greek.
> VENDOR: You're welcome, Sir.
> [Alexis approaches Phaedra]
> PHAEDRA: Ευχαριστώ! Didn't your father teach you any Greek?
> ALEXIS: No, mother wouldn't let him. She thinks all Greeks are savages.
>
> (*Ph.*, 21:52-22:14)

In this scene, the contradictions of Alexis' Greekness emerge – although he is (half) Greek, he needs to 'pretend' to be one, faking the accent. However, his Greek is not correct, so Phaedra corrects him and uncovers that Alexis' disconnection with Greekness comes from his English mother and her association of Greeks to savages. Through the liaison with Phaedra, Alexis rediscovers his Greekness, going through these performances in front of other English people. In a following scene, after Alexis passionately shows Phaedra the car of his dreams (the very car in which he will die eventually) mimicking some sort of intercourse (fig. 7), Phaedra explains to a shocked onlooker that "he's half Greek, very impulsive" (*Ph.*, 24:45-24:49). Phaedra's comment uses Greekness as a justification for some socially inappropriate behaviour, justification that could be comparable to the association to 'savages' of Alexis' mother. In both instances, therefore,



Figure 7 – Alexis (Antony Perkins) with the car of his dreams

Liberaki shifts the perspective on Greekness from the domestic and national to the external and foreign, thus feeding into the cryptocolonial stereotype according to which contemporary Greeks appear as a 'degradation' of their classical counterparts.

The dichotomy between domestic and foreign Greekness appears fully fledged in a later scene of the film, in which Alexis' hybridity troubles the Seferian model. Alexis is in Greece and his father, in an attempt to "refashion him as Greek" (Scioli 2018, 131), encourages him to hang out with his peers, together with Phaedra's young niece, whom Alexis is supposed to marry. During a party, Eleni, one of Herse's girlfriends, approaches Alexis and comments: "An Englishman is what he wears – in those clothes you could be Greek" (*Ph.*, 1:26:25-1:26:30). Grabbing a dinner plate as if it were a discus, Alexis replies: "I am Greek" and assumes the pose of Myron's famous classical sculpture *Discobolus* (fig. 8). According to Scioli (2018, 132), in this scene Alexis embodies Greekness, "claim[ing] entitlement to Greek cultural heritage, recalling his earlier linguistic attempts to perform Greekness." The performative aspect of Alexis' Greekness is reinforced here by the embodiment of the classical archetype, immediately creating a connection with the Greek modernist model. At the same time, however, this archetype is unsettled through the substitution of the discus with a dinner plate, recalling the popular (and typified, intensified, and popularised by the tourist industry) Greek custom of smashing crockery during celebrations. This substitution suggests a parody of Greek antiquity and, consequently, the degeneracy of modern Greece. At the same time, however, the use of the plate instead of the classical discus situates Alexis well within the contemporary



Figure 8 – Alexis (Antony Perkins) mimicking the statue of the Discobolus

Greek context, assimilating him into the modern Greek culture. While his meeting with Phaedra in London reconnected Alexis to his Greekness and to his own hybridity – portrayed through his naïve attempts at replicating elementary Greek words– his return to Greece seems to complete this process, which Thanos facilitates by introducing him into the family shipping company and by arranging his engagement to Herse. In this specific scene, Liberaki presents Alexis now fully confident in his Greekness, stating firmly that he is Greek and performing the throwing of the discus.

Seen from this perspective, Margarita Liberaki's *Phaedra* is also a story of *nostos*, of a homecoming for the hyphenated-Greek and alienated Alexis. In other words, Liberaki brings on stage the complicated relationship between the diasporic subject and their homeland. In contrast to Seferis, whose Odyssean *nostos* has a determined centre, in Liberaki's *Phaedra* this homecoming is complicated by Alexis being on the boundary between his two homelands, England and Greece, so much so that the focus is not on the destination of his homecoming but rather on the complexity of the homecoming process. On the one hand, the party during which the discus-throwing takes place could indeed suggest the final accomplishment of Alexis's *nostos*, as he embodies Myron's *Discobolus*, signifier of Greece's historical heritage, to reclaim his position amidst the Greek people. On the other hand, Liberaki seems to suggest that *nostos* is a troubled and troubling process, especially for hybrid or hyphenated identities. In fact, beyond finalising Alexis's homecoming, the act of discus-throwing also presents elements that disrupt it and somehow anticipate the tragic unravelling that would follow. In this regard, the continuation of the scene is revealing: after striving to replicate the right movements and throwing the discus into the sea, Alexis is demeaned by another Greek man who shows off by throwing another plate farther out. While everyone laughs at Alexis's loss, he grabs another plate and, exclaiming "Let's try it in English," he throws it even farther. At that

point, everyone at the party starts throwing plates in the sea, and after a final long throw, Alexis declares himself the winner of the competition. In the moment of full self-identification with Greece, Alexis is immediately challenged by the Greeks themselves, who push him eventually to resort to his Englishness in order to overcome the challenge.

In Liberaki's work of the 1960s, especially in those under analysis here, Greece appears like an appealing yet rejecting homeland that cannot quite incorporate the hyphenated and diasporic subject. In *Phaedra*, this comes to the fore with Alexis' tragic destiny, which corresponds to a denied *nostos*. In this framework, Thanos, father and husband of the two lovers, comes to stand for the homeland Greece, represented in its rapid economic developments while coming to terms with internationalisation and with the consequences of this socio-economical process that produced the diasporic/hyphenated identity, which Alexis personifies. I have already explored how, with the figure of Alexis, Liberaki brings on stage the complicated relationship that connects the diasporic subject to their country and their troubled *nostos*. Alexis' last scene encapsulates such complexity: after Phaedra confesses their affair to her husband, Thanos physically attacks his son Alexis, wounding his face with his ring and banishing him from the country. I suggest that the visible marks on Alexis' face testify the conflicting and often painful feelings of the Greeks abroad navigating their own stance towards the homeland they had to leave behind. The return, however, is also fraught with difficulties – George Seferis already speaks of a dissatisfactory *nostos*, such as in 'The Return of the Exile,' where the exile is however invited to readjust to the changes of his homeland. In *Phaedra,* the opposite happens: the foreign, diasporic Alexis is first challenged and contested, and eventually rejected and banished. Speeding up in a frenzy in the car employed by his father to attract him to Greece, Alexis screams to the Cycladic landscape (fig. 9): "Goodbye, Greek light! It's true what they say about you – I hardly got to know

you. Goodbye, sea! […] She [Phaedra] loved me! She loved me like they did in the good old days" (*Ph.*, 1:51:08-1:51:29). In bidding goodbye to Greece, Alexis's words are coated in what I identify as an (hyphenated) '*nost*-algia', harking back to the etymological elements of the word. With this term, I refer to the often-painful desire for a *nostos* that is in fact an unachievable one. As Alexis bears the marks of this violent pain on his face, he leaves Greece addressing its stereotypical natural elements (the light, the sea, the beaches) and lamenting the fact that he was not given the time to get acquainted with them, as Liberaki has him say in the original script, but later changed for the film: "Πατρίδα μου, σ' αποχαιρετώ! Φεύγω προτού σε γνωρίσω. Αμμουδιές, θάλασσες, αντίο!" (Liberaki 1994, 91). The only definitive homecoming that Alexis experiences is his tragic death in the car crash – recovered from the sea, Alexis's dead body is eventually returned to his father, in an emotionally charged scene in which the images of the recovery of the son's corpse overlaps with the voice of Thanos himself announcing to the grieving mothers the long list of names of the Greek crew lost at sea in the sinking of the S/S Phaedra. Not only the *nostos* of the diasporic/hyphenated subject is complicated (if not denied altogether), but Liberaki also shows how the ties that link this category of Greeks to their homeland cannot be severed fully.



Figure 9 – Alexis (Antony Perkins) with scars on his face screaming at the Greek landscape

In conclusion, I would return to Alexis's final words, which in a sense close the circle. As his love for Phaedra proved to be detrimental to his reconnection with Greece (and his father), the classical archetype emerges again in an explicit manner, with Alexis's

reference to "the good old days." Liberaki goes beyond the visual and performative references to antiquity and has one of the protagonists openly address the classical undertext – Phaedra loved him just like 'in the good old days', but, in the tragic context of Alexis's and Phaedra's imminent death, the reference to the *good* old days seems somewhat ironic and out of context, suggesting again a shift of perspective from the domestic to the foreign, according to which Greek antiquity generally represents the apex of Greek culture indeed.

With *Phaedra*, Margarita Liberaki represents Greece of the 1960s from an international perspective, which she had gained through her own diasporic position. This allows her to challenge notions of Greekness and *nostos* inherited from the modernist tradition that George Seferis exemplifies. The archetypical function of myth is surely acknowledged, but also contested at the same time, while wondering whether Greece can accommodate a *nostos* for this 'new' category of Greeks based outside its borders.

The issue of *nostos* is further complicated in a later play that Margarita Liberaki wrote during the years of the military dictatorship, returning to the myth of Odysseus and imbricating it with the social transformations that the 1960s brought about. It is to this play, *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι ή Τηλέγονος*, that I now turn.

4.2 THE REVERSED ODYSSEY

In *Phaedra*, written at the very beginning of the 1960s, I have identified how the mythical text is used in relation to the diasporic and hyphenated subjectivity and their complicated *nostos*, revealing the complex relationship with the homeland and expanding the Seferian idea of Greekness. Towards the end of the decade, in her play *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι ή Τηλέγονος*, these threads return in a different constellation, further expanding on the

experience of self-exile and diaspora and foregrounding the female perspective. Liberaki's change of medium, from cinematic language to theatre plays, signals also a different attitude towards the mythical sources: while in *Phaedra* the myth (and classical material culture) functions as a palimpsest for a contemporary story, in her plays Liberaki brings on stage the mythical characters directly, harking back to the original sources and, as I will explore, using the gaps of classical reception to recover the female and diasporic voice, central in Liberaki's poetics.

Inserted in the framework of her "mythical theatre," *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι ή Τηλέγονος* was written during the difficult years of the military dictatorship towards the end of the 1960s, which Margarita Liberaki spent mostly in Paris. The play was, in fact, originally written in French in 1967-68, under the title *Bain de mer*/*Θαλασσινό λουτρό*, and eventually translated into Greek in 1971-72 with the final title that we have today. *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι* does not appear to have ever been staged in theatres, but it was published in the Greek version in 1980 alongside two previous plays of mythical content, *Η γυναίκα του Κανδαύλη* and *Οι Δαναΐδες*, written respectively in 1954 and in 1963. The change of title is particularly interesting as it reveals Liberaki's feminist stance against the mythical sources. In her personal notes,[105] Liberaki records the reasons for this change, arguing that the different options would highlight different aspects of the story: the first option, *Bain de mer* or *Θαλασσινό λουτρό*, would be too centred on the figure of Odysseus and on his *désir de mort*, desire to die, whereas the final (double) title of *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι ή Τηλέγονος* underlines fate and the sexual secret transmitted from father to son, through Penelope, the woman, "ορμή της ζωής." The final choice of the latter

[105] They are part of the *Margarita Lymberaki Papers*, held at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, collection GR ASCSA GL ML 117.

title, therefore, highlights Liberaki's continued preference for the female voice and the female perspective, main features of her literary output since her first novels.

Despite the play revolving around Odysseus and the drama concerning his sons and his death, Liberaki's focus on Penelope allows for a reconfiguration of the myth and of its thematic threads, first and foremost the concept of *nostos*. This reconfiguration is further facilitated by the lost sources – in line with a metamodernist concern with the critical moment of transition and with the perceived absence of a cultural centre, I contend that Liberaki's *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι* engages with the gaps left in classical reception, not only providing a possible reconstruction of the source(s), but also using them to portray new reconfigurations of contemporary Greek culture.

4.2.1 The creative gap

The play *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι ή Τηλέγονος* enters, to some extent, in conversation with the previous chapter on Stelios Xefloudas's novel *Odysseus*. Written both in the second half of the 1960s, they centre around the post-*Odyssey* adventures of Odysseus, staging however two different traditions. The starting point should always be traced back to the ambiguous Homeric phrase "ἐξ ἁλός" (*Odyssey* 11.134), that Tiresias uses to prophesise Odysseus's death, and the divergent traditions that emerged from its interpretations. In the previous chapter, I have shown that Xefloudas inserted himself in the Dantean tradition, albeit in a troubling way, depicting Odysseus in a definitive journey away from Ithaca; Margarita Liberaki, on the other hand, takes a different route, much less popular, that is that of the now lost epic poem *Telegony*.

Due to his education in Paris in the late 1920s and to his role in the School of Thessaloniki in the 1930s, Stelios Xefloudas was influenced by the European modernist

trends of his time, and James Joyce is a natural interlocutor with his work. Xefloudas spins an original variation of the myth, without clear classical sources (other than Homer), setting the scene in his contemporary world of the 1960s; however, contrary to Joyce, his protagonist is the classical Odysseus in person, who has gained immortality by escaping the Underworld and now roams the streets of the present. Odysseus's contemporary consciousness fills the pages of the novel, bringing to the surface the contradictions of being a classical 'hero' in the violent present of the Cold War.

The 'real' Odysseus is also the main character of Margarita Liberaki's play, which however relies more consistently on classical sources. Liberaki is fully immersed in the classical world, as she stages the death of the protagonist in Ithaca at the hands of his son Telegonus. In her setting the story in the original antiquity, Liberaki seems to depart from her contemporaries, who were in turn readapting Odysseus for the modern world (see for instance James Joyce, Stelios Xefloudas, and Iakovos Kambanellis). At a closer look, however, Liberaki's play incorporates cultural and social concerns of the time, taking advantage of the considerable gaps of the classical sources. I would suggest, indeed, to read *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι* through the lens of these 'creative gaps', drawing in part from Wolfgang Iser's (1974) important essay on reception and reader response. According to the German theorist, the reading and interpretation of a text relies on the reader's imagination to fill the "unwritten" parts of the literary text, promoting therefore the creative participation of the reader in the 'creation' of said work. In the case of Liberaki's mythical play, the 'unwritten' text corresponds to lost works of the classical tradition. It is exactly the loss of the original sources in the reception chain and the large gaps between the surviving fragments that allow Liberaki the creative act of reconstruction. Reading her play through the lens of metamodernism reveals that Liberaki recovers and rebuilds the referential centre of the classical sources, so as to highlight the 'transness',

or the in-betweenness, of the socio-economic moment of the Greek 1960s, and she achieves this via her two voices: the diasporic one and the female one.

In order to understand this operation, it is necessary to take one step back and overview the fragmentary sources that Margarita Liberaki employed to build her play. First and foremost, *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι* is based on the *Τηλεγονία*, a long poem of the epic cycle, composed around the 6th century BCE. According to the Neoplatonist philosopher Proclus, the poem should be attributed to Eugammon of Cyrene, and it centres around the figure of Telegonus, the unknown son that Odysseus had with Circe.[106] Following West's (2003; 2013) reconstruction, the *Telegony* contained two plots – in the first one, probably titled *Θεσπρωτίς*, Odysseus fulfils Tiresias' prophecy, travelling far inland to the population unaware of the sea. There, he would marry a queen, rule until their son would be old enough to take over, and finally return to Ithaca. In the second part, the proper *Telegony*, Circe's son Telegonus arrives in Ithaca, searching for his father; however, exchanged for a pirate, he engages in a duel with Odysseus, unaware of his relation to him, and kills him with a poisonous stingray spine. The poem ends with Telegonus accompanying Penelope and Telemachus to his homeland Aiaia, where Telemachus marries Circe and Telegonus marries Penelope.

The myth of Odysseus's death later featured also in Greek tragedy, namely in one or two, according to some critics, plays by Sophocles, the *Ὀδυσσεύς ἀκανθοπλήξ* (Odysseus Wounded by the Spine). Similarly to the *Telegony*, this play has not survived in full form, but only in fragments, sparking a debate among scholars about its content (see Sutton 1984; Wright 2018). From later Latin sources, such as Cicero (*Tusculanae Disputationes* 2, 49), it emerges that Sophocles stages Odysseus's return to Ithaca and his death at the

[106] For a discussion of the authorship and a close reading of the fragments attributed to this lost epic poem, see Tsagalis (2015).

hand of the unbeknown son Telegonus. Diverging from the lost epic, Sophocles does not appear to retell the hero's second journey to Thesprotia, focusing instead on developing Telegonus' plot. The fragments of the tragedy mention a prophecy from the oracle of Dodona, different from Tiresias' ones. According to this prophecy, Odysseus would be killed by his son, therefore making him afraid of Telemachus. Back in Ithaca, however, Odysseus, thinking of fighting against pirates, is fatally wounded with a stingray spine by Telegonus. It is during his agony that the *anagnorisis* between father and son must have taken place, thus revealing to the dying hero the real meaning of the Dodona prophecy.

Eugammon of Cyrene and Sophocles' *Ὀδυσσεύς ἀκανθοπλήξ* are not the only sources for Margarita Liberaki, who, in the first months of writing, actually indicated in her personal notes different classical referents. Specifically, she noted Aeschylus' tetralogy on Odysseus's return to Ithaca (*Ψυχαγωγοί, Πηνελόπη, Ὀστολόγοι,* and the satyr-play *Κίρκη*) and another tragedy by Sophocles, the *Εὐρύαλος*.[107] All these plays have only survived in fragmentary form or are completely lost and only mentioned or summarised in secondary sources.

In his tetralogy, Aeschylus represents different episodes of Homer's *Odyssey*, spanning from the *nekyia* to Penelope's recognition of the returned hero, and the uprising that followed the killing of the suitors (Aeschylus 2008; Wright 2018). From the few lines that have been transmitted, Odysseus's death does not seem to feature, except for Tiresias' prophecy in *Ψυχαγωγοί*: "For a heron in flight will strike you from above with its dung when it opens its bowels; and from this the barb of a sea-creature will rot your aged, hairless skin" (fr. 275, in Aeschylus 2008, 273).[108] Aeschylus removes completely

[107] GR ASCSA GL ML 117, series II, box 10, folder 1b, fol. 6 (7 July 1967).

[108] "ἑρῳδιὸς γὰρ ὑψόθεν ποτώμενος | ὄνθῳ σε πλήξει, νηδύος χαλώμασιν · | ἐκ τοῦδ' ἄκανθα ποντίου βοσκήματος | σήψει παλαιὸν δέρμα καὶ τριχορρυές."

the figure of Telegonus, but he maintains the barb of the stingray as the weapon that kills Odysseus, suggesting that by then this element had already become part of the tradition and he could not do without it.

In contrast, Sophocles fully embraces the Telegonus tradition, featuring him in *Ὀδυσσεύς ἀκανθοπλήξ*, but also in *Εὐρύαλος*, although he is not openly mentioned. The plot of the latter tragedy was reported by Parthenius of Nicaea in the first century BCE, in his *Ἐρωτικά παθήματα* (Γ' 'Περί Εὐίππης'): after killing the suitors, Odysseus travels to Epirus "because of some oracles,"[109] where he conceives a son, Euryalus, with the local princess Euippe. Once grown up, Euryalus goes to Ithaca to be recognised by his father; Odysseus however is temporarily away, and Penelope, knowing the situation, tricks Odysseus into killing Euryalus, accusing him of invading before discovering that he is his son. "Not long after doing this [Odysseus] was wounded by the prickle of a stingray, and died at the hands of his own flesh and blood."[110] We see here some recurring motifs, such as the oracles in Epirus –most likely in Dodona– and the fatal wound with a stingray spine, as well as the failed *anagnorisis* and its tragic consequences. As anticipated, Telegonus is not openly mentioned, even though Parthenius seems to refer to him when he describes Odysseus's death "at the hands of his own flesh and blood" – Telegonus here is only a passing reference, whereas the main plotline is about Euippe and her son Euryalus, victim of Penelope's revenge.[111]

[109] "χρηστηρίων τινῶν ἕνεκα" (Parthenius 1999, 312).

[110] "καὶ οὐ μετὰ πολὺν χρόνον ἢ τόδε ἀπεργάσασθαι πρὸς τῆς αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ γενεᾶς τρωθεὶς ἀκάνθῃ θαλασσίας τρυγόνος ἐτελεύτησεν" (Parthenius 1999, 312).

[111] For a discussion on Parthenius' reliability and alternative interpretations, see Wright (2018, 90-1).

As it appears, the Telegonus plotline is considerably varied, alternatively stemming from different prophecies (Tiresias' or Dodona's) and even questioning the active role of Circe's son. The fragmentary way in which it was transmitted further complicates and multiplies the possible interpretations and variations, and results in the emergence of numerous gaps and questions in the Telegony tradition. It is exactly within these gaps that Margarita Liberaki finds space to move and pull the various threads of this plotline together, so to present a reconstructed myth for the (diasporic) Greek 1960s. Indeed, in *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι*, Liberaki synthesises the various editions of Telegonus' myth and creatively employs the gaps in the transmission in order to 'modernise' the plot for her present concerns. From a metamodernist perspective, the lost classical source could be read as a lost centre in need of rebuilding, and Margarita Liberaki operates precisely in that direction, filling the gaps and making sense of the fragmentary pieces of the plot.

Margarita Liberaki's *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι* is composed of 16 scenes of different length and is set in and around Ithaca's royal palace, immediately after Odysseus has returned from his second journey, the one that took him to Thesprotia. In the opening scene, in the nuptial bedroom, Odysseus is delirious, haunted by Tiresias' prophecies, the memory of his second journey among the people who do not know about seafaring and, more importantly, by the Dodona prophecy. Penelope, still unaware of this prophecy, patiently tends to Odysseus, calming him down and reminding him of the secret of their bed, i.e., that the bed is deeply rooted on the ground, having been carved from the trunk of an olive tree.

In the following scenes, Odysseus is ever more restless around Penelope and Telemachus, therefore he decides to reveal the Dodona prophecy to his wife (scene V) and to exile Telemachus (scene VI). He later gives in to Penelope's request to spare their

son (scene VII), but Telemachus, afraid that the prophecy would be fulfilled, takes the decision to leave Ithaca (scene VIII). As the son prepares to leave the island, Odysseus continues to dream of the dead and of Tiresias, while also trying to convince Telemachus to stay (scenes IX and X). The following day, as Odysseus goes to the beach with the dogs for a walk (scene XI), Telemachus prepares the ship on the shore, where he meets Telegonus, who has just arrived in search of his father Odysseus (scene XII). Mistaken for an invader, however, Telegonus engages in a duel with Odysseus and kills him (scene XIII). Telemachus, having heard the sound of the battle, reaches Telegonus and, in front of the dead body of the shared father, the *anagnorisis* takes place (scene XIV). While Telemachus sets sail towards Circe in the West, Telegonus breaks the tragic news to Penelope, who is attracted by the young unknown stepson and invites him into the palace and, then, into the nuptial bedchamber, where she shares with him the secret of Odysseus's bed (scenes XV and XVI).

The first drafts of the play, found in her archive,[112] show how Liberaki initially intended to divide the play into two sections: πρώτος γυρισμός and δεύτερος γυρισμός, opening with Telemachus' return from Pylus and Sparta, where he went to find out about his father. Although the final edition of the play included only the 'second return', the themes of exile, diaspora, and longing are still pervasive throughout the play. Moreover, from the summary of the plot, Penelope's role at the centre of the play already emerges, managing the male characters (Odysseus, Telemachus, and Telegonus) and their movements/travels.

In the following sections, I will highlight these two crucial threads: first, I will analyse the male protagonists and their *nostoi*, which, with Ithaca as a common pole, follow

[112] GR ASCSA GL ML 117, series II, box 10, folders 2 and 4.

different directions. In her reconstruction of a fragmentary and lost mythical text, therefore, Margarita Liberaki reveals how issues of displacement and belonging have always been a feature in Greek culture. Lastly, I will zoom in on the figure of Penelope, the woman put at the centre of the play, whose desires and strength emerge as the real fixed point of the play, around which everything and everyone moves. Through the troubling of Oedipal structures, Liberaki seems to project on Penelope the anxieties as well as the responsibilities of a homeland that, during the 1960s, explored new social balances. In a nutshell, in *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι*, Margarita Liberaki foregrounds the two voices that represented for her new emerging social groups: that of the émigrés and that of women.

4.2.2 MULTIDIRECTIONAL *NOSTOI*

Margarita Liberaki's play *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι ή Τηλέγονος* is located at the junction of three factors that shape it, as I will analyse here, as a *nostos*-play, where homecoming and exile intersect to create a work that reflects and speaks to the contemporary social reality of the Greek 1960s. Firstly, the author writes (mainly) from overseas, herself a member of the Greek diaspora. Secondly, she grafts her story in the *nostos* par excellence, that of Odysseus. Lastly, the play was originally written during the first years of the military dictatorship in 1967-8, when the country turned into a hostile homeland for many persecuted people who experienced political exile or went into self-exile abroad. It is therefore inevitable that the issue of one's relationship to the homeland, as well as the issue of return, not only plays a central role in this play by Liberaki, but it also represents a key element in the metamodernist framework that I suggest for the Greek 1960s.

In order to discuss the modalities whereby Margarita Liberaki unhinges the *nostos*-theme within the play as a reflection of the profound transformations that Greek society was undergoing in that period, it is beneficial to quickly overview the semantics around the term νόστος and its verbal counterpart νέομαι. In her accurate philological study of this concept, Anna Bonifazi (2009) reconstructs the etymological history of the word, tracing the synchronic semantic variations of *nostos*/*neomai*. The default meaning of the term refers to the Achaean heroes, indicating a) their return voyage from Troy; b) the sea routes they followed in their return; and c) the poetic genre that narrates these journeys. Hence, Homer's *Odyssey* represents the *summa* of the *nostos*-theme, narrating the journey and the meandering itinerary of a Troy survivor. Surely, the *Odyssey* is only one example of such *nostos*-poems, whose narratives had been widely circulating already when the Homeric poems were composed. It suffices here to mention the now lost epic poem *Νόστοι*, retelling the returns of a number of Achaean heroes, such as Agamemnon and Menelaus, Diomedes and Nestor.[113] Another poem that testifies the popularity and the large dissemination of these stories is the Hellenistic poem *Ἀλεξάνδρα*, attributed to Lycophron of Chalcis, in which the Trojan princess-prophetess Cassandra foretells the Trojan War and the consequent returns of the Greeks, adding however the perspective of Trojan survivors, such as Aeneas.[114]

Despite the lack of a home to come back to, it would not be contradictory to speak of *nostos* also in the case of the exiled Trojans. Stemming from the Indo-European root **nes*, *nostos* and *neomai* carry a core meaning of 'saving oneself.' Indeed, through a close reading of the Homeric instances, Bonifazi demonstrates that the verb *neomai* "does not presuppose any specific orientation per se, that is, it can be used to convey different

[113] See West 2003 (152-63); 2013 (244-87).

[114] See McNelis and Sens 2016.

orientations and different points of view" (Bonifazi 2009, 491), connected as it is to the idea of *safely* reaching a destination, be it home or foreign land. *Nostos*, therefore, implies two motions, one centripetal (returning home, e.g., Achaeans *nostoi*) and one centrifugal (safely reaching a destination, e.g., Trojan *nostoi*). As it appears, then, the association of *nostos* with the Greek heroes' homecoming from Troy is only a later semantic development of a much more nuanced idea: "Coming is also going, returning home is also heading for somewhere other than home, homecoming is also having survived death, and, finally, experiencing is also telling or singing" (Bonifazi 2009, 506).

The *nostos* literary trope in Archaic and Ancient Greece reflected the historical and social context of the time. The experience of men travelling by ship away from their homeland was frequent and common, while the women (mothers, sisters, wives) had to stay behind in an agonising wait and in the hope to see their male family members return. Not only warfare reasons pushed men to travel by sea, as the case of the Trojan War exemplifies; other reasons were related to commercial trade or political links with other areas, as well as religious or touristic ends, such as the *theoria* towards the oracles or festivals (e.g., Delphi or Olympia). Finally, people would venture at sea for colonisation purposes, or because exiled or ostracised (Alexopoulou 2009).

It is the close association with the idea of 'return' that made *nostos* a relevant structure for modernist art following the First World War, "a critical juncture in the history of homecoming" (Riley 2021, 2). After the shocks of the Great War, the soldiers who had survived returned to a transformed world, for which a *nostos* was impossible at that point. It is not surprising, then, that European modernist authors were preoccupied with what Jeffrey Perl (1984) called "the process of return," in which the Greek and Roman antiquity acts as a model to hark back to. Thus, Homer's *Odyssey* returns in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Ezra Pound invokes to "Make it new," Marcel Proust monumentalises

memory in order to recover 'lost time:' "For the modernists, the process of return was not only a means of understanding history and not only an artistic technique, it was a condition of the psyche and (perhaps the same thing) a world view" (Perl 1984, 14). In other words, the historical and cultural rift caused by the tragedy of the First World War facilitated the 'metaphorisation' of *nostos*, transposed from the physical to the psychological level and becoming an emotional state of the 'travelling' protagonist, no matter if the journey was spatial or temporal.

This discussion of the multi-layered meaning of *nostos* and of its modernist transformation informs my reading of Margarita Liberaki's play *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι*, which emerges as an exemplary case of metamodernist dynamics. As already explored, with the expansion of the Greek economy first and the political crisis determined by the Colonels' *coup* in April 1967 then, the experience of diaspora and exile characterised the transformation of Greek society throughout the long 1960s. Liberaki herself was a prominent intellectual of this generation of Greeks abroad. In this social and cultural context, the concept of *nostos* largely maintained the metaphorical dimension inherited from modernism, which introduced the temporal semantic hue of 'return', thinning the division between past and present, while also questioning and challenging the idea of return itself: Is a physical return to the Greek homeland possible or desirable? In what ways can the ancient cultural models return in the present?

Margarita Liberaki's play seems to address these questions, showing the different possible answers. She takes the ancient model, despite its absent or fragmentary form, bringing on stage the 'original' characters, i.e., Odysseus and his extended family, and at the same time she shifts the *nostos* perspective. If the default definition is centred mostly on the experience of the travelling male subject, here *nostos* pertains mostly to the homeland, the fixed locale, highlighting the core multidirectional meaning of the term. In

other words, through the different characters, the *Telegony* becomes for Liberaki an opportunity to portray the challenges and issues interwoven in the fabric of Greek society of the 1960s and to represent the diverse variations of exile and *nostos* of that specific social and cultural moment, keeping at the centre the homeland itself. Hence, Odysseus is the man caught up with the shocks of the recent tragic past of wars; Telemachus is the new emerging generation that needs to escape Greece to thrive; and, finally, Telegonus is the generation that returns to transition Greece towards a new future.

A closer look at the figure of Odysseus in Margarita Liberaki's play shows that his *nostos* is never fully realised or resolved. Since the very beginning, the reader is aware of the hero's two earlier travels (to Troy and to Thesprotia), from which he has physically returned and whose experience reverberates throughout the play in his conversations with his son Telemachus and the prophet Theoclymenus. On a first level, Liberaki's Odysseus is thus faithful to the original Homeric model, prime example of *nostos* and of nostalgia for the homeland: "Σε καίει η επιθυμία να ξαναγυρίσεις. Είναι κάτι που σε πιάνει σαν πόνος στα σωθικά, σαν φοβερή σύσπαση, έτσι δεν είναι;" (scene IV, Liberaki 1980, 146), Odysseus articulates in scene IV in a private exchange with Theoclymenus, himself exiled from his native Pylus and unable to return. Odysseus knows very well what it means to be stranded away from one's homeland and the intense nostalgia that affects the body and the mind of the exilic/diasporic subject. This returns later in scene X, right before Telemachus' departure, in which Odysseus attempts to make his son understand the challenges of living and invites him to be brave: "Να ζεις στα ξένα. Σαν ξένος. Να φθίνεις στα ξένα… […] Όταν θέλει κανείς να πετύχει, ιδίως στα ξένα, πρέπει νάναι τολμηρός, θρασύς μάλιστα […] Η αγάπη της πατρίδας, ο πόθος να την ξαναδείς, είναι φωτιά που σου καίει τα σωθικά" (scene X, Liberaki 1980, 168). Odysseus has travelled twice, he has returned twice, and consequently he is in the position to share his

experience with the next generation(s) and warn them of the painful difficulties that living abroad entails.

However, a closer reading of Liberaki's play brings to the surface a much different portrait of the hero and of his *nostos*, more in line with modernist preoccupations. Already scene I of the play frames Odysseus's homecoming in another light – it is his first night back in Ithaca, but the hero is still restless, almost delirious, haunted by his most recent journey through Epirus and Thesprotia and, most of all, by Tiresias' ghost that appears in his dreams and prophesises his death. "Απόψε, μπροστά σ' αυτό το κρεβάτι, μου μιλάς για τον Τειρεσία; Τους νεκρούς συλλογίζεσαι;" (scene I, Liberaki 1980, 132), Penelope replies, in her attempt to calm him down and understand the reasons of his delirium. Liberaki's Odysseus, contrary to the traditional image of the ever curious and lively hero and even contrary to Stelios Xefloudas's immortal protagonist, is obsessed by his journey in the underworld and by his own prophesised death. Despite being physically present in Ithaca with Penelope, Odysseus appears mentally absent, absorbed by the dead and his recent journeys. In other words, Liberaki questions Odysseus's *nostos*, which consequently appears as a failed *nostos*, or as a non-*nostos*. As Penelope strives to bring his mind back to his present in Ithaca, Odysseus continues his mental journey:

> ΠΗΝΕΛΟΠΗ: […] Το νήμα αυτό του Τειρεσία πρέπει να το κόψεις. Να το κόψεις.
>
> ΟΔΥΣΣΕΑΣ: Θάθελα να το τραβήξω, να το πάω όσο παίρνει, μέχρι το τέρμα του. (*Σιωπή*.) Ο θάνατος θάρθει από τη θάλασσα; Ή μακριά απ΄ τη θάλασσα; Στο όνειρο πάντα μια λέξη μού ξεφεύγει, η ίδια λέξη. […] Κάποιος που μου μοιάζει θα με χτυπήσει. (*Αρχίζει άξαφνα να βαδίζει προς την Πηνελόπη απειλητικά*.) Από πού θάρθει ο θάνατος; Από τη θάλασσα ή μακριά απ' τη θάλασσα; Και ποιος θα με χτυπήσει;
>
> (scene V, Liberaki 1980, 148)

Whereas his physical travels have terminated, it is Odysseus's mind to keep still wandering and to continue enquiring the meaning of Tiresias' words. His *nostos*, therefore, becomes internalised and entraps him in his nightmares and fears. This representation echoes the interwar figures of shell-shocked soldiers returned from the Great War, such as the character of Septimus Warren Smith in Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs Dalloway*, who, as Riley (2021, 3) puts it, "cannot fully return home, [living] in an internal state of exile."

> ΟΔΥΣΣΕΑΣ: Είδα πάλι στον ύπνο μου το Τειρεσία. […]
>
> ΠΗΝΕΛΟΠΗ: Πάντα σ' αυτό το κρεβάτι μού μιλάς για τους νεκρούς.
>
> […]
>
> ΟΔΥΣΣΕΑΣ: […] Με κουράζουν οι νεκροί. Χαθήκανε κάμποσοι και τους νιώθω γύρω μου, παρουσιάζονται άξαφνα τη στιγμή που δεν το περιμένω, που νομίζω πως τους έχασα.
>
> (scene IX, Liberaki 1980, 166)

Liberaki's 'shell-shocked' Odysseus shares in fact the alienation from the familiar surroundings and the frequent hallucinations of the dead – he is "embodied absence" (Strom 2009, 36). The nuptial bed, whose secret relates to the life-giving roots of the olive tree, becomes for Odysseus a place where the dead are summoned, depriving him of his own life energy. The contrast between Odysseus's "désir de mort"[115] and Penelope's "ορμή για ζωή,"[14] as Liberaki points out in her notes, is therefore stark. What begins to emerge is a representation of the Greek homeland from the perspective of a diasporic émigré individual, whereby Odysseus represents an agonising state that strives to avoid the demise, while facing the trauma and the ghosts of the Postwar years and of the harsh

[115] GR ASCSA GL ML 117, series II, box 10, folder 7.

civil conflict, and whereby the woman takes centre stage in the transition of the country into the future, the latter symbolised by the two sons, Telemachus and Telegonus.

If Odysseus's *nostos* is not fully realised and exiles him in his mind, the *nostoi* of the two stepbrothers reach their destinations, but move towards opposite directions. Telemachus consciously leaves his homeland to settle in the West, while Telegonus 'returns' from the West and settles in Ithaca, taking his father's place. Through them, Liberaki represents two different ways in which the émigré and the diasporic subjects relate to their homeland and that, throughout the long 1960s, characterised the social fabric of the country.

On the one hand, Telemachus experiences a strong conflict against his father – at first, Odysseus's presence deprives him of purpose. After many years spent travelling in the hope to fill the absence of his father, Telemachus feels lost and worthless with his father finally present at home: "Τώρα είσαι εδώ. Μπροστά μου. Δεν έχω πια να σε ψάχνω. Δεν έχω τίποτα πια να κάνω. Και περιμένω" (scene III, Liberaki 1980, 136). This becomes a generational conflict between father and son, the former accusing the latter of laziness and the latter struggling to meet his parents' expectations: "Τι μπορώ να κάνω; Να ξαναπάρω την Τροία; […] Να ξανασκοτώσω τους μνηστήρες σου;" (scene VIII, Liberaki 1980, 160). The atmosphere in Ithaca becomes even more suffocating for Telemachus once Odysseus shares the message of the prophecy and the son is identified as the possible patricide: "Τον φοβάμαι [τον Οδυσσέα] και με φοβάται. Τον δηλητηριάζω με την παρουσία μου […] Δεν αντέχω πια. Ο αργός αυτός θάνατος του πατέρα μου μού έγινε αφόρητος." (scene VIII, Liberaki 1980, 163). There is only one solution for Telemachus: self-exile.[116] Telemachus' *nostos*, therefore, defies the default meaning of the term, as his

[116] "… Και πρέπει εγώ να πάρω την απόφαση. Θα φύγω. Για να μη τον σκοτώσω" (scene VIII, Liberaki 1980, 165)

'homecoming' is an centrifugal movement away from Ithaca. Going into exile becomes necessary for him to survive and thrive.

The association of Telemachus with the many Greeks who emigrated from their country during the 1950s and 1960s is inevitable, especially if seen through Margarita Liberaki's own perspective as an émigré. In her handwritten notes, dated 28 June 1967, she describes (in French) the conflicted relationship between Greece and its "sons":

> The voluntary exile of the Greek sons. The father does not dare send them into exile, but he creates an unbearable climate. The sons have no choice. In order to find themselves and to recreate themselves, they have to leave the homeland and betray their language. The glory of a distant past and its weight.[117] (my translation)

It is therefore easy to correlate Telemachus' experience to that of the "Greek sons," who find their homeland (Odysseus) to be oppressive, forcing them to leave it behind. Despite his love for Ithaca and his mother, Telemachus is driven to leave the island due to the father's non-*nostos* and his paranoia. "Πρέπει να δοκιμάσω αλλού την τύχη μου. Ίσως στη Δύση. Ανάμεσα σε μένα και την Ιθάκη τα πράγματα έγιναν δύσκολα" (scene X, Liberaki 1980, 167), Telemachus announces to his parents. In the dialogue that follows between him and Odysseus, Telemachus' voice is closely entangled with Liberaki's personal experience as a Greek in Paris, making it very difficult to differentiate between the two.

> ΤΗΛΕΜΑΧΟΣ: Η ζωή μου θα ξαναρχίσει σε τόπους καταπράσινους,
> με πράσινα μονοπάτια, με πόλεις που τις διασχίζει ποτάμι
> αληθινό […]

[117] "L'exil volontaire des fils grecques. Le père n'ose pas les exiler, mais il crée un climat irrespirable. Les fils n'ont pas le choix. Pour se trouver et se créer, ils doivent quitter le sol natal, et trahir leur langue. La gloire du passé lointain et son poids" (GR ASCSA GL ML 117, series II, box 10, folder 2, subfolder 5, page 8).

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΑΣ: Τότε να είσαι τολμηρός. Όταν θέλει κανείς να πετύχει, ιδίως στα ξένα, πρέπει νάναι τολμηρός, θρασύς μάλιστα […] Και μην ξεχνάς, Τηλέμαχε, δεν σε διώχνει η Ιθάκη. Εσύ τη διαλέγεις την εξορία.

ΤΗΛΕΜΑΧΟΣ: (*με πικρό χαμόγελο*) Η Ιθάκη δεν μου αφήνει την εκλογή. Η Ιθάκη ανοίγει για μένα την βασιλική οδό της εξορίας. Την ευχαριστώ. […]

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΑΣ: Η αγάπη της πατρίδας, ο πόθος να την ξαναδείς, είναι φωτιά που σου καίει τα σωθικά.

ΤΗΛΕΜΑΧΟΣ: Εμένα με καίει ο πόθος της ξενητιάς. Αγαπώ ό,τι μου είναι ξένο. Αντίο πατέρα.

(scene X, Liberaki 1980, 168)

At this point, the inevitability of the exile is connected to a much-softened condemnation of the homeland, and Telemachus' imminent *nostos* becomes a reversed desire of the unknown and of new destinations, away from Ithaca. While Odysseus insists that "δεν [τον] διώχνει η Ιθάκη," it is Telemachus to confirm that he is at peace with his decision to move towards the West, to a city that strongly recalls Paris, crossed by the river Seine and the many tree-lined boulevards. An essential element in the construction and conservation of Greek identity, the language also features in Telemachus' nostalgia, intended here as his deep desire to leave the island:

ΤΗΛΕΜΑΧΟΣ: Θα προδώσω την Ελληνική γλώσσα, τη μητρική μου, τη γλώσσα που αγαπώ, δε θα μιλάω πια Ελληνικά, δε θ' ακούω Ελληνικά. Ίσως μάλιστα μια μέρα να εκπλαγώ όταν ακούσω να προφέρουν λέξεις Ελληνικές άξαφνα στο δρόμο. Αντίο.

(scene X, Liberaki 1980,169)

Despite his declared love for the Greek language and the warm association of it with home, he finds himself pushed to "betray" it and repudiate it, echoing Liberaki's own linguistic choices of writing in French since her move to Paris. While in the film *Phaedra*, the Greek language is a performative act that the characters of Alexis and Phaedra employ

to reconnect the diasporic subject to his Greek identity, in *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι* Liberaki shows the different attitude of the émigré, who laments the forced-yet-necessary detachment from it, perceived as a betrayal indeed.

Overall, Telemachus appears to embody the conflicted relationship of the diasporic/émigré subject with their homeland: he represents a younger generation grappling with the challenges inherited by their fathers and mothers' generation, challenges that emerged in the Greek Postwar, both at an economical and at a socio-political level. In what they feel as a stifling context, they feel forced to migrate in order to find space to develop. Indeed, material conditions surely represented a fundamental reason for many migrants (especially working-class migrants) to leave Greece after the war in search of work and a better future in the West. However, I would also suggest that Liberaki here seems to articulate also an ideological and intellectual decision to 'betray' Greece, a decision rooted in the metamodernist awareness of trans-ness, of historical and cultural transition, which provokes uncertainty and anxiety.

As counterpart to Telemachus, Liberaki posits Telegonus, son of Odysseus and Circe, who is coming from the West on a *nostos* opposite to his stepbrother's. Although he appears only at the end of the play, in the last five scenes (XII-XVI), Telegonus plays one of the most central roles, alongside Penelope, which is reflected in the final title of the play itself. At first, he is presented as an anonymous traveller, coming from "[τα] πέρατα της Δύσης" (scene XII, Liberaki 1980, 172), who meets Telemachus on the shore about to sail away. After a friendly exchange with Telemachus (he shows him the way to reach Circe's island), the fatal encounter with Odysseus happens:

> ΟΔΥΣΣΕΑΣ: Η Ιθάκη δεν είναι πια λεία για τους πειρατές. Το είδα το καράβι σου. Η Ιθάκη δεν είναι πια ανυπεράσπιστη. Εγώ είμαι εδώ.

[…]

ΤΗΛΕΓΟΝΟΣ: Μ' ακούς; Τι κάνεις; Τι θες να κάνεις; Να με σκοτώσεις; Μη με σκοτώσεις, Είμαι ο γιος του Οδυσσέα. Κι' έρχομαι απ' τα πέρατα της γης για να τον βρω. Θέλω να δω τον πατέρα μου, θέλω να τον γνωρίσω, είμαι ο γιος του Οδυσσέα, και κρατώ μαζί μου σύμβολα αναγνώρισης, αποδείξεις που μούδωσε η μάνα μου. Είμαι ο γιος του βασιλιά αυτού του τόπου. Μη με σκοτώσεις.

(scene XIII, Liberaki 1980, 174)

In the battle that ensues, Telegonus defends himself and wounds Odysseus, killing him and, thus, replicating the mythical trope of the son who kills the father without recognising each other (see Oedipus and Laius). This crucial passage is characterised by the impossibility of communication between the two characters, who come to personify two generations confronting each other – while Odysseus acts based on wrong assumptions about the person in front of him, Telemachus attempts to connect with the other, but he fails and needs to defend himself from Odysseus's attack. In his quest for Ithaca and his father, Telegonus complicates the relation between Greekness and nostos. His 'return' to the paternal homeland corresponds to a remaking of his own identity. Liberaki, through Telegonus, therefore, invites us to rethink Greekness under non-geographical terms. Coming from the West, Telegonus represents the new ideas flooding into the country, also thanks to the diasporic subjects who call for a re-evaluation and a remaking of Greekness and of their relationship to the homeland. Although these ideas enter in contrast with previous models (Odysseus), they manage to establish themselves and ferry the country towards a new cultural and historical phase.

The renovating vitality that Telegonus embodies is highlighted in the final two scenes of the play and accounts for Penelope's troubling reaction to the news of Odysseus's death. Indeed, neither Telemachus nor Penelope lament or grieve the hero, strongly contrasting with the emotional landscape of the Odyssey tradition. Telemachus connects

the gaps of the now-fulfilled prophecy,[118] concluding with a handshake and leaving Telegonus to break the tragic news to Penelope. Penelope, on the other hand, is in total admiration of the young Telegonus, in her words more handsome than Telemachus and reminiscent of a young Odysseus: "Ο Οδυσσέας νέος. Ένα παιδί που ξαφνικά μεγάλωσε, φύτρωσε από τη γη, βγήκε στο φως, ξαναγεννήθηκε. Ένα ον καινούριο. Ένα νεογέννητο. Είμαι θαμπωμένη" (scene XV, Liberaki 1980, 176). For Penelope, Telegonus embodies the miracle and the strength of life, in stark opposition to Odysseus's obsession with the dead: "Εσύ είσαι ολοζώντανος. Είσαι ολοζώντανος. Ζεις. Τι θαύμα…" (scene XV, Liberaki 1980, 177). Liberaki, thus, increases the opposition between Telegonus and Odysseus, represented throughout the play in the latter's consuming obsession with the dead. In the very last scene, Penelope takes Telegonus into the nuptial bedroom and reveals to him the secret of the bed, transmitting it from the father to the son. It signals the beginning of a new era.

Looking at the triangle constituted by the three male characters of the play – Odysseus; Telemachus; and Telegonus – it appears clearly how Margarita Liberaki translates her own identity and experience of diasporic and émigré subject into the gaps of the Telegony tradition, showing the complexity of the concept of *nostos*, problematising it. In her play, Odysseus is presented as a shell-shocked veteran, stuck inside his memories and obsessions, making his homecoming incomplete, a non-*nostos*. Telemachus, on the other hand, looks for another kind of *nostos* that reverses the traditional, default definition of it, as he willingly chooses to leave Ithaca in search for a new homeland in the West. Finally, Telegonus' *nostos* summarises the centripetal and the

[118] "Το φαρμακωμένο βέλος ήρθε λοιπόν από τη θάλασσα. Σαν κι' εσένα" (scene XIV, Liberaki 1980, 175).

centrifugal: he leaves his home with Circe in search for his other home, in Ithaca with his father. In Liberaki's play, therefore, the *nostoi* are multidirectional, troubling not only the inherited classical model, by uncovering the diverse meanings of the concept, but also the modernist model, by focusing on the personal experience of detachment and exile, rather than on the actual journey home.

At the centre of this masculine triangle, there is Penelope, emerging as the element that keeps everything together. In relation to Odysseus, she appears grounded and strong, lamenting his absent-mindedness and claiming that she had already stopped mourning for him when he returned the first time. It is not surprising, then, that she is not devastated by the tragic news of his killing. On the contrary, towards Telegonus, she is comforting and attracted to him, eventually initiating him to the nuptial secret and, thus, integrating him in Ithaca. As for Telemachus, she plays the part of the caring mother, trying to convince him to stay in Ithaca and yet feeling relieved to know that his departure ensures his innocence *vis-à-vis* the Dodona prophecy.

Penelope is the only character who does not partake in the experience of exile. In fact, she embodies the secret of the bed, i.e., she is deeply rooted in Ithaca like the nuptial bed, and she is responsible for the transmission of such a secret. As I am going to explore in the next and final section, I will suggest that Margarita Liberaki does not conceive this as a passive, archaic understanding of a homeland associated with motherhood and womanhood. Instead, she puts Penelope in charge of *managing* the men's *nostoi*. Rooted in Ithaca, she leads the motherland's transformations, the workshops of belonging, identity, and movements that constitute not only Ithaca as past, but the mother/land as also a kinship and ethical positionality arrangement for the future. Through Penelope's acts, the motherland becomes the very space where the (metamodernist) transition from

one epoch (Odysseus) to another (Telegonus) is enacted, with Telemachus caught in this transition and forced to leave in order to survive.

4.2.3 PENELOPE'S CLAIM

The figure of Penelope in *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι* deserves a separate reading, considering the peculiar position she holds within the play. First and foremost, of the five characters of the play, Penelope is the only woman to appear and speak on stage, while other female characters such as Circe, Nausicaa, and Helen are only mentioned in the men's dialogues. Secondly, alongside Odysseus, she is the character with the most presence on stage, both featuring in 12 scenes out of the total 16;[119] however, she is the only one to appear throughout the whole play, opening it and closing it. Although she may initially appear as a supporting character, Penelope turns out to be central in the plot and her gender role further highlights her specification in an otherwise all-male cast.

I suggested a correlation between Margarita Liberaki's life experience as a female Greek expatriate and her reconstruction of the lost *Telegony*. My analysis has so far focused on the diasporic/émigré aspect through the reading of the multidirectional *nostoi* that the male characters embark on. Bringing Penelope into the picture, on the other hand, complicates further this play and throws into sharper relief Margarita Liberaki's particular handling of the (lost) classical sources, especially when placed within the analytical framework of metamodernism. Through her gendered perspective as a woman and a mother, the character of Penelope indeed invites us to reconsider the homeland

[119] In comparison, Telemachus appears in seven scenes; Telegonus in five scenes; and the prophet Theoclymenus in just four scenes.

and, just like in the *Phaedra* screenplay, to challenge the idea of Greekness. The fragmentary nature of the ancient source allows Margarita Liberaki to restructure the pieces of the myth, especially the traditional depiction of Penelope as the faithful, passive wife who eagerly waits for Odysseus to return. In this play, Penelope emerges as an active player, who, through her interactions with the male characters, determines not just a restructuring of the political structures, but she also puts into question the traditional geographical terms of Greekness. In fact, rooted as she is to Ithaca —her homeland— I suggest that Penelope is to be identified with the very secret of the nuptial bed and, by extension, to the motherland Greece.

This identification allows me to read Liberaki's play as an allegory for the socio-historical moment of her country, in which Penelope stands as a problematised representation of the nation caught in its efforts to reinvent itself in order to move towards the future. Drawing from Judith Butler's 2000 seminal reading of Sophocles' *Antigone*, I finally venture to explore how Penelope *claims* a pivotal active role in restructuring the critical political structure and how Liberaki herself, in turn, re-works in a metamodernist fashion the mythical method, by operating on the gaps of the ancient sources to rebuild and re-root the myth.

Assuming the modernist Eliotic-Joycean standpoint whereby mythology contributes to making sense of the chaotic, critical, present, Margarita Liberaki seems to do just that. As she writes *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι* during the first harshest years of the military dictatorship, her play assumes the outline of an allegory for the critical political moment in Greece's long 1960s — the play not only stages the domestic political instability that led eventually to the Colonels' coup; it also anticipates the processes that would take the country out of the dictatorship into the new political phase of *metapolitefsi*.

The entry point to unpack the political allegory of the play is the relation between Penelope and the other male characters. As I mentioned above, Odysseus, Telemachus, and Telegonus, they are all involved in some form of physical movement, each in a *nostos* of their own. Penelope, on the contrary, does not move from Ithaca, she is a static figure in the play as the others move around her. This is further highlighted by her role as the repository of the secret of the bed, symbol of the authority of Ithaca: "Και κανείς δεν ξέρει το μυστικό του [κρεβατιού], εκτός από μας τους δυο" (scene I, Liberaki 1980, 133), Penelope tells Odysseus, thus reassuring him of her faithfulness and of his continued authoritys over the nation island. At the end of the play, however, after Odysseus's death, Penelope reveals that secret to Telegonus:

> Κοίταξε αυτό το κρεβάτι. Είναι καρφωμένο στη γη. Ριζωμένο στη γη. Είναι κορμός ελιάς. Ο Οδυσσέας δεν θέλησε να κόψει το δέντρο αυτό που φύτρωνε στην αυλή όμορφο και δυνατό. Έτσι έχτισε τους τοίχους της κάμαράς μας γύρω από την ελιά. Έκοψε το φύλλωμά της, τα κλαδιά, ένα μέρος του κορμού και κράτησε το άλλο σα βάση. Ο ίδιος διακόσμησε τη βάση του κρεβατιού με ασήμι και φίλντισι. Κι' από την μια άκρη στην άλλη τέντωσε λουρίδες από πετσί κόκκινο χτυπητό. Ήταν το μυστικό μας. Τώρα το ξέρεις.
> (scene XVI, Liberaki 1980, 177)

It is by this linguistic act, i.e., the verbal transmission of the secret, that Penelope grants Telegonus his place of authority next to her, a place that used to be his father's. She emerges, at the end of the play, as a manager of sorts, who, by controlling the transmission of power, restructures the political landscape of her island.

The identification of Penelope with the island and, metonymically, with the Greek nation goes exactly through the secret of the bed: just as the bed is built on the living trunk of an olive tree, still alive and rooted in the soil of Ithaca, Penelope too is rooted to the homeland, never leaving it and, actually, administering it and ensuring some form of stability, be it familial or political. At the centre of this discourse, there is *life*: while the

roots give life to the nuptial bed, the bed is also the *locus* where life is generated, and indeed Penelope welcomes Telegonus into her court because of his 'vitality:' "Αγαπώ τα ζωντανά σκυλιά, και τα πουλιά τα ζωντανά, και τ' άλογα, και τα έντομα, και τους ζωντανούς ανθρώπους. Εσύ είσαι ζωντανός" (scene XV, Liberaki 1980, 177). For Penelope, Telegonus' life and vitality put him in stark contrast to Odysseus, entrapped among the dead even before his actual death, and ensure his right to succeed her husband. Penelope, the rooted bed, and Ithaca are deeply interwoven within Margarita Liberaki's play, eliciting, by extension, Penelope's allegorical association with the Greek homeland.

Having established the identification of Penelope with the motherland, it is possible to appreciate the full extent of the socio-political allegory that Liberaki puts in place in *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι*. First to appear on stage and main character of the play,[120] Odysseus stands for the old system, an older generation of Greeks particularly haunted by the ghosts of the tragic recent past they faced first-hand. The horrors of the German occupation during the Second World War and the social rift that the Civil War caused left open questions, which Odysseus and the generation he represents attempted to understand and solve, without however succeeding.[121] Following Liberaki, this older generation seems to have lost a future perspective – despite the end of the troubles, Odysseus cannot leave the past behind, obsessing over the obscure prophecy that continues to haunt his present. Even after Telemachus' departure, when Odysseus can

[120] In opposition to Ulysses, Telegonus will be the last character to speak at the end of the play. Both Ulysses and Telegonus are in conversation with Penelope, further highlighting the centrality of her role.

[121] Margarita Liberaki's representation of Ulysses as a man confused and lost in the horrors of his previous experiences of the war echoes Stelios Xefloudas, who already in the late 1950s described the generation of veterans as "Ulysses without Ithaca": "Πλανιόμουνα μέσα στους γνώριμους δρόμους ζητώντας να βρω τη συνέχεια της ζωής μου που την είχε διακόψει ο πόλεμος, να εξακολουθήσω αυτό που ονόμασα εσωτερική οδύσσεια […] Νομίζω, αγαπητέ μου Κύριε, ότι η ιστορία της ζωής μας είναι μια Οδύσσεια χωρίς Ιθάκη" (Xefloudas 1957, 75).

finally start to speak in the future tense,[122] the sense of relief is eclipsed by the foreshadowing of Odysseus's imminent death: "Γιατί αυτό το φιλί;" Penelope asks her husband, "Είναι αποχαιρετιστήριο" (scene XI, Liberaki 1980, 172).

In relation to Odysseus, Penelope stands as the nation that takes care of itself, that finds a way to move forward, no matter the historical contingencies. While she is relieved for the averted threat that Telemachus represented to her husband, she is also aware of the historical patterns, awareness that allows her to perceive turning points and to get an insight into future developments, such as her husband's imminent final 'departure,' as scene XI shows.[123]

The relation between Penelope and Odysseus undergoes a transformation throughout the whole play, starting from a more conventional and traditional representation of the wife who can cherish the return of Odysseus, to an overturning of the Homeric Penelope, finally represented in Liberaki as a widow that does not lament nor grieve the tragic loss of her husband. On the contrary, she is open to the renovating forces that, as we will see, Telegonus comes to represent. An important step in this transformation is Penelope's admission, in the middle of the play, that she had already stopped mourning for Odysseus when he first returned and killed the suitors:

> Ναι, το είπα. Το δήλωσα. Δεν πενθούσα πια, ο πόνος μου είχε ξεθυμάνει. Ξυπνώντας ένα πρωί ένιωσα μια αλλαγή μέσα μου. Η αναπνοή μου είχε γίνει εύκολη, κάθε μέλος του σώματός μου λειτουργούσε στην εντέλεια, τεντώθηκα σα νεαρό ζώο, όπως άλλοτε πριν γεννήσω τον Τηλέμαχο, όταν ήμουν ένα ζωάκι γεμάτο δύναμη, έτοιμο την κάθε στιγμή να ορμήσει. […] Είμαι κατάκοπη. Κ' ευτυχής. Δεν πενθώ πια. Το δηλώνω.

[122] "Απόψε, Πηνελόπη, θα βρεθούμε μόνοι μέσα στο μεγάλο μας σπίτι σα νιόπαντροι που δεν απόκτησαν ακόμη παιδί. Θα κολυμπήσω μέχρι τη δύση και θάρθω ύστερα να σε βρω στην κάμαρά μας. Θα πεινάω λίγο, και σίγουρα θάμαι διψασμένος. Κι' όλας διψάω, αλλά μ' αρέσει να περιμένω. Ετοίμασέ τα όλα στην κάμαρά μας. Επί τέλους, χαμογελάς…" (scene XI, Liberaki 1980, 170. My emphasis).

[123] "Δυό φορές μ' έχεις φιλήσει έτσι. Την πρώτη όταν έφυγες για τον πόλεμο. Την δεύτερη όταν ξανάφυγες για να φυτέψεις το κουπί" (scene XI, Liberaki 1980, 172).

(scene VI, Liberaki 1980, 152-3)

In this passage, in which Odysseus's first return is narrated from Penelope's perspective, she appears as a particularly strong woman, refusing to continue lamenting her absent husband and, instead, imposing her will and desires. By letting Odysseus go and stopping mourning him, Penelope looks towards the future and to the new possibilities for her homeland. This development climaxes at the end of the play, when Penelope does not react to the tragic news of Odysseus's death as one would expect from the Homeric character: Odysseus was stuck in his past among the ghosts; Penelope, in turn, chooses life and the future represented by Telegonus.

Opposed to the older generation embodied by Odysseus, Telemachus, the son who spent years in his own personal journey shaping his identity around the absence of his famous father, personifies a younger generation in contrast with the previous one. With Odysseus back from his travels, Telemachus finds himself in need to re-define his identity and to shape anew his relationship with his father. What happens, however, is that he feels oppressed by the expectations projected on him.[124] In Telemachus, therefore, two distinct social sentiments converge: on the one hand, the acute feeling that a change is needed, considering the detachment of the older generation from the present; on the other, the need to emancipate themselves from a conflicted system and to shape a new social identity. When the social conflict between this youth and their country becomes unbearable, the best solution is expatriation. So, what is the role of Penelope in the opposition between father and son, between older and younger generations?

In this context, Penelope assumes the partially intersecting roles of the mother and of the mother/land – also in relation to her son, Penelope's attitude changes, being at first

[124] Cf. Yannis Ritsos's dramatic monologue 'Φιλοκτήτης' (1963-65).

a protective mother and, later, welcoming his departure and substitution. Penelope claims some form of power over Telemachus, attempting to control, to manage his movements. Appalled by Odysseus's initial insinuation that their son would be a patricide, she reacts with an act of denial: "Όχι. Δεν μοιάζεις του πατέρα σου" Penelope claims of Telemachus, "Θάλεγε μάλιστα κανείς πως… πως είσαι ξένος. Πως δεν ανήκεις στην Ιθάκη" (scene VI, Liberaki 1980, 154). This is a first act to protect him from the unjust punishment of exile, trying therefore to prevent him from leaving the island. She is the one responsible, in the next scene, to tell him that the father allows him to stay, despite the prophecy; again, the mother appears to be in charge of her son's movements, or at least her desires initially determine Telemachus' direction. When the pressure becomes unbearable and Telemachus eventually decides to leave, Penelope throws herself at him in a final attempt to keep him on the island, only to finally admit her relief:

> ΠΗΝΕΛΟΠΗ: Κι΄ εγώ άξαφνα νιώθω ανακούφιση… Λες κι' απλώθηκε μπροστά μου ο χώρος, λες κι' η Ιθάκη πλάτυνε από τη μια στιγμή στην άλλη. […] Νιώθω ανακούφιση που έφυγε ο γιος μας. Παράξενο δεν είναι;
>
> ΟΔΥΣΣΕΑΣ: Ήσουν βουτηγμένη στην αγωνία, Πηνελόπη, στο φόβο μη βγει η προφητεία αληθινή. Έκανες πως δε την πίστευες, αλλά στο βάθος…
>
> ΠΗΝΕΛΟΠΗ: Ναι, ίσως.
>
> (scene XI, Liberaki 1980, 170-1)

Penelope's relief for her son's departure seems to contradict her role as a mother in the first half of the play; however, in the development of the plot, her relief represents a turning point. Up until this moment, the fear of the prophecy that affects both Odysseus and Penelope is very tangible and is, in fact, the main motor of the action of the play. With Telemachus' departure, the prophecy seems to be averted – the prophecy empties, creating a metaphorical hollow space. If, at a first reading, this space allows Penelope's

island to expand and thus reduce the sense of suffocation ("αγωνία") that all characters had perceived until then, at a deeper level it is the prerequisite for Penelope to replot her own myth. Here is where the 'other' son enters the stage. Penelope-as-motherland, then, mirroring what Liberaki does with the fragmentary ancient sources, reorganises the political structure by incorporating Telegonus, the diasporic subject, within the system, filling the gap left by Odysseus's death and Telemachus' departure.

Telegonus, the son of Odysseus and Circe, belongs to the same generation as his stepbrother Telemachus, the postwar youth grappling with the socio-political inheritance of their seniors. In the play, the two stepbrothers, despite not knowing the respective identities, recognise each other as companions of the same group: "Μου θυμίζεις έναν παιδικό φίλο" (scene XII, Liberaki 1980, 172), Telemachus tells Telegonus as soon as they meet, and just like good friends, they have a positive exchange in which Telegonus brings new information and shows the way to Circe's island. The fundamental difference between the two lies, of course, in their relationship to the father and to Penelope. If Telemachus, the natural son of the two, opts for self-exile to escape the suffocating atmosphere of Ithaca, Telegonus shakes the traditional kinship relations, as he is the 'illegitimate' son of Odysseus and eventually the new partner of his stepmother Penelope. This troubling of kinship also reflects the radical transformation of the political structure in Ithaca that he brings about, by murdering his father and, mediated by Penelope's verbal act, taking his place as a ruler. Therefore, the figure of Telegonus bears a double nature: while being related to the homeland via kinship ties (he is after all a son of Odysseus), he is also a foreigner who comes from the West and who is finally incorporated fully within the social and political texture of the nation.

In this complex representation, Telegonus embodies an important metamodernist moment, that is one of transition and transformation of the cultural and political spheres

in Greece. The former (cultural) aspect indexes the generation of younger intellectuals, such as Nanos Valaoritis (see chapter 1), who after spending formative years in the West, brought to Greece new perspectives aimed at renovating what was felt as an agonising and stagnant cultural landscape. The latter (political) aspect has to do with the difficult political scene of the time, especially under the military dictatorship; indeed, Telegonus could be seen as anticipating and allegorising figures such as Konstantinos Karamanlis and Andreas Papandreou, whose return from exile in 1974 signalled the start of the *metapolitefsi* and of a new season in Greek politics, dominated by the parties they had founded, respectively Νέα Δημοκρατία and Πανελλήνιο Σοσιαλιστικό Κίνημα (ΠΑΣΟΚ).[125]

Zooming in on the relation between Telegonus and Penelope, it is possible to appreciate the full dimension of Penelope. I have already explored how her cold reaction to Odysseus's death and the transmission of the secret are closely related to Penelope's allegorical role within the play — if Odysseus embodies the oppressive, death-oriented, unstable political system of the 1960s (including the dictatorship), it is Penelope-as-the-the mother/land to determine the political restructuring of the nation, by transmitting the secret to Telegonus. Immediately recognised by Penelope as "γιός […] ωραιότερος απ' τον Τηλέμαχο" (scene XV, Liberaki 1980, 176), Telegonus is incorporated at once within the royal house and, therefore, within the political structure of the island, supplanting the 'rightful' heir to the throne Telemachus. This process of 'domestication' of the foreign passes again through the figure of Penelope, who leans towards Telegonus' vitality (as opposed to Odysseus's imbrication with death) and desire to stay (as opposed to

[125] For an overview of the political processes in Greece during the 1960s and the *metapolitefsi*, see Clogg 1987. For an updated and more comprehensive analysis of Greek politics up to present day, see Featherstone and Sotiropoulos 2020.

Telemachus' centrifugal tendency). Penelope, in sum, emerges again as the central woman who manages *nostos*, actively choosing who stays and who leaves: the news of Odysseus's death passes basically unnoticed, without any comment or lament from Penelope, who, instead, is committed to ensure political continuity.

What Liberaki stages in her play, then, appears to be a radically new representation of Penelope, a woman and a wife that rejects the position predetermined by her traditional myth and that, conversely, claims for herself a central position of power. This reading parallels the one Judith Butler makes in her seminal text *Antigone's Claim* (2000) of the famous Sophoclean tragedy. Reading Penelope and Liberaki's play alongside Sophocles' *Antigone* (and Judith Butler's analysis of it) should not appear strange. Indeed, the spectre of Oedipus and his family's tragedy haunts Liberaki during the writing of *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι*.

Her notes from June 1967 report Oedipus as the "model of a true modern tragedy, that is, not of a tragedy of violent death, but a tragedy of a slow death,"[126] which she first employs for "Telemachus' anguish until his voluntary exile"[127] and also for Telegonus, seen as a modern Oedipus.[128] Indeed, in his conflicted reckoning with the Dodona prophecy in the play, Odysseus openly mentions Oedipus' myth to Penelope, taking it as a model of his own condition and for the parallelism with his own prophecy; however, he discards it:

> Ίσως όλα αυτά νάναι ψέμματα. Κι' ο Λάϊος τι κέρδισε που εξόρισε το γιο του; Μια ωραία μέρα ξαναγύρισε και τον σκότωσε. Κι' εγκαταστάθηκε στη Θήβα για τα καλά. Ούτε τυφλώθηκε με τα ίδια

[126] "Œdipe, modèle de vraie tragédie moderne, c'est à dire pas une tragédie de la mort violente, mais une tragédie de la mort lente" (GR ASCSA GL ML 117, series II, box 10, folder 2, subfolder 4, page 16).

[127] "Les angoisses de Télémaque jusqu'à son exil volontaire" (GR ASCSA GL ML 117, series II, box 10, folder 2, subfolder 4, page 29).

[128] GR ASCSA GL ML 117, series II, box 10, folder 7, subfolder 7, page 4.

> του τα χέρια. Αυτά είναι παραμύθια για τον κόσμο, για να φοβάται ο κόσμος την τιμωρία.
>
> (scene VII, Liberaki 1980, 156)

Fate, for Odysseus, is therefore inescapable: no matter whether he exiles his son or not, the prophecy would come true anyway. He then decides to let Telemachus stay, reassured by Penelope that the son would not kill his father. Telemachus, on the other hand, becomes obsessed with Oedipus' fate: "Ο αργός αυτός θάνατος του πατέρα μου μού έγινε αφόρητος" (scene VIII, Liberaki 1980, 163),[129] he confesses to Penelope, and immediately after he adds that he had imagined killing his father:

> Μια μέρα, στα στενά της Μεσσήνης, οραματίστηκα πως τα καράβια μας διασταυρώθηκαν, πως θέλησα να περάσω πρώτος και πως τον χτύπησα. Χωρίς να ξέρω ποιος ήταν. Δεν κοιμόμουν. Ήμουν όρθιος στη γέφυρα, ο ήλιος μόλις είχε δύσει, κι' ο ουρανός ήταν κατάλευκος. Είδα τον εαυτό μου να σκοτώνει τον πατέρα μου. Στο ξύπνιο μου.
>
> (scene VIII, Liberaki 1980, 165)

Feeling therefore all the pieces of this tragic puzzle coming together, Telemachus takes the final decision to leave Ithaca into self-exile: "Θα φύγω. Για να μη τον σκοτώσω" (scene VIII, Liberaki 1980, 165). The Oedipal structure of the plot is, however, indeed unavoidable, but Liberaki, in what I consider a typical metamodernist move, shakes the tradition, and introduces Telegonus, the other unknown son, who eventually kills his father unwittingly and, unlike Oedipus, unites with his *step*mother.

Penelope finds herself entangled in this Oedipal, complex kinship structure unintentionally, trying on the other hand to preserve her family. She parallels, in a sense, Antigone, who, born from the incestuous union of Oedipus and Jocasta, is also unwittingly imbricated in this complex kinship system, and strives to defend her family with her

[129] Cf. Liberaki's notes in footnote 126.

defiant actions and her opposition against her king and uncle Creon's impositions. In *Antigone's Claim*, Judith Butler offers an interpretation of Antigone's character that has interesting reverberations on Margarita Liberaki's Penelope.

While traditional scholarship (Hegel at the forefront) would have Antigone and Creon opposed, representing kinship ties and state authority respectively, Butler suggests a correlation between the two, demonstrating how Antigone's defiance and Creon's law imposition mirror one another: "if the one [Antigone] represents kinship and the other [Creon] the state, they can perform this representation only by each becoming implicated in the idiom of the other" (Butler 2000, 10). In other words, in order for her to be able to resist Creon's authority and perform the funeral rites for her brother, she needs to transgress and thus re-arrange both gender and kinship norms.

In the first instance, Antigone's repeated act of burial and her verbal opposition to the king are not suitable for a woman, and indeed they "become the occasions on which she is called 'manly' by the chorus, Creon, and the messengers" (Butler 2000, 8); it is exactly because she does not conform to her gender role that Creon finds himself at a loss, almost emasculated by Antigone's 'unexpected' masculinity. In the second instance, "Antigone represents not kinship in its ideal form but its deformation and displacement" (Butler 2000, 24), herself coming from a family where kinship ties are confused because of the original incest (Oedipus is, at the same time, her father *and* brother). In such complicated familiar context, Antigone constructs her personal kinship ties, according to which she is ready to defy the law for her brother, but not for her potential husband or child, on the base of reproducibility (Butler 2000, 9-10) In this sense, Butler's Antigone claims new, different, 'queer' structures of kinship, moving against her gender to revolutionise them.

Judith Butler's reading of Antigone provides a hermeneutical key to understand, from a gender perspective, the radical movement that Margarita Liberaki does with her Penelope and, by extension, with mythology in *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι*. Penelope (re)claims an active role during the crisis of power that Odysseus's death and Telemachus' departure set forth, a role that the mythological tradition since Homer had, until then, denied her. Similarly to Antigone, she does so through what Butler refers to as 'speech acts.' While the Sophoclean protagonist employs language to oppose Creon, through double negations and linguistic ambiguities, Penelope exercises her control over political authority through the transmission of the secret of the nuptial bed, thus sanctioning the transmission of power from her husband to her stepson. In this process, also Penelope disrupts normative kinship, refusing to grieve her husband, feeling relieved at her natural son's detachment, and eventually welcoming her stepson into the nuptial bed in an almost-incestuous move.

Moreover, what Antigone does with kinship and gender, Margarita Liberaki (through the figure of Penelope) does with mythology: making use of the possibilities left open by the empty gap of the missing original source, she contests the mythological tradition by rewiring its connections and structures. She employs Oedipus' myth as a palimpsest and superimposes the *Telegony* material, which, because of its fragmentariness, allows the author to rewrite it and, in *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι*, put the woman, Penelope, at the centre of the action.

Bringing together the Butlerian reading of Penelope and the allegorical meanings of the characters in Margarita Liberaki's play, two conclusions can be drawn: firstly, the author highlights the central role of the woman, both in society and in history. Penelope has a much more central role in this play, compared to her Homeric counterpart, emerging as a pivot of the family, around whom all other characters move; at the same

time, she is also a 'political' pivot, encouraging Odysseus to be aware of the present, trying to resolve the contrasts between father and son, and promptly replacing Odysseus after his death.

Lastly, Margarita Liberaki is also a Greek woman living overseas in the late 1960s, when her homeland is under a tragic dictatorial rule and the political landscape has experienced many turbulent years. I argue, then, that in her play *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι* she recurs to mythology also to address and represent allegorically the tensions and contrasts characterising the socio-historical moment of uncertainty and transition of the Greek 1960s. Through a dialogue with what, in this thesis, I have described as a metamodernist cultural framework, Liberaki is able to provide a feminist revision of the myth, a textually radical incorporation and reframing of sources, as well as a sexually and socially novel vision of Greek society. If in *Phaedra*, the ancient story was forced to confront modern-day Greece and this 'return' to the homeland was shown as an impossible journey, in *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι*, it is now the homeland (and thus, modern-day Greece) that is confronted with an urgent need: to be replotted.

4.3 CONCLUSIONS

The case of Margarita Liberaki's minor works, *Phaedra* and *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι ή Τηλέγονος*, contributes to explore the 'in-between' aspect of the metamodern literary practice of the Greek 1960s. What I mean by this is that at the centre of the screenplay and of the play under analysis there is the concept of border crossings, intended not only in the geographical sense of moving between nations, but also in a more temporal or political sense, that is, referring to the change of times and political systems (from dictatorial rule to *metapolitefsi*). Possibly inspired by her own personal experience,

Liberaki discusses issues of border crossing via the representation of diasporic and exilic subjects, who either decided to leave Greece or were born outside, and the complexities that these subjectivities entail. In this regard, Liberaki's works offer two different perspectives: while *Phaedra* adopts the international point of view of the diasporic/exilic subject attempting to return to the homeland, the play *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι* adopts the domestic perspective of the nation re-assimilating the diasporic element.

The mythological framework that Liberaki employs to tell her stories connect her to modernist models. Indeed, mythology (and antiquity, more generally) work as an archetype for the contemporaneity, but the in-between positionality of Liberaki brings to the surface the complexities inherent in this archetype in a 1960s Greece where emigration is at its highest and new hyphenated identities emerge. The modernist substratum is palpable and still productive, but Liberaki brings us forward. Concepts such as Greekness and *nostos*, and indeed motherland, become contested sites, which the diasporic/exilic subject has to navigate through.

What it means to be Greek is one of the main threads that Liberaki's works explore, especially in the case of *Phaedra*, a film produced mainly for an international audience. Beyond the stereotypes about Greece that the cinema of those years was constructing, such as the Aegean landscape, the archaeological heritage, and the 'exotic' elements of Greek popular culture, I highlighted a deeper questioning and desire about Greek identity that pertained to the diaspora, attained through performative acts addressed to the non-Greeks, performativity that hides however frustrated desire to reconnect with one's Greekness. On the other hand, Telemachus, in *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι*, moves in the opposite direction, rejecting a homeland that has become inhospitable and, with it, a whole culture and language.

Interwoven with Greekness, the concept of *nostos*, of homecoming, is initially explored in *Phaedra* with Alexis's denied return, and further problematised in the later play, in which I showed the different declinations of the concept that the three male characters embody. While the Seferian approach to the question would be one of resilience and adaptation, Liberaki demonstrates that *nostos* entails many and different directions, dislocating Greece (and its culture) from its centrality. In other words, the motherland Greece itself comes into question. It is the intensity of this discursive move (which would have been unthinkable for, say, Seferis, while also being in conversation with a certain Seferian poetics) that makes Liberaki's work so deeply metamodernist.

In *Phaedra*, Liberaki shows a toxic motherland, that desires the diaspora back and attempts to reconnect with those subjectivities; however, it eventually results in an unliveable reality that rejects them and from which they attempt to escape. *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι*, on the other hand, probably influenced by the difficult political context in which it was written, portrays the two faces of the motherland: one that pushes its people to leave and one that welcomes them back and assimilates them in order to redefine itself towards a different future.

My analysis of Liberaki's works enters into conversation with the previous two case studies of the present thesis, enriching the panorama of Greek metamodernism. I argued that Yannis Ritsos's collection *Τέταρτη διάσταση* addresses the metamodern condition of the boundary, exploring what it means to be situated in a physical liminal space, as well as in a moment of transition and transformation. Liberaki, on the other hand, adopts a more dynamic perspective, portraying in her scenario and in her play the actual moment of crossing, of transition, especially from the perspective of the diasporic subject, the first product of such transformations. In the second case study, Stelios Xefloudas's novel *Οδυσσέας* revealed the affordances of a metamodernist mythical method, which in its aim

to provide a structure to the present, actually exposes the ongoing 'state of emergency' in which Greece is engulfed throughout the transformative 1960s. Margarita Liberaki does indeed make the most of these affordances, employing mythology and the classical material culture as an archetype, a palimpsest, but also taking advantage of its gaps and fragments to reconstruct a different mythology, more in tune with her contemporary cultural concerns.

CONCLUSIONS

The journey of this research does certainly not end here. In fact, this thesis set out to offer an alternative framework for reading Greek culture of the 1960s in the future, departing from the traditional reading of literary generations, that would have the 1960s as the literary space of the 'Postwar Generation(s).' Already Dimitris Tziovas (2011) moved beyond this tradition in his seminal work on the Generation of the 1930s and the myth around it, breaking the correspondence between that 'Generation' and Greek modernism and reaching the following conclusion about the 1960s:

> Τη δεκαετία […] του 1960, με το «Χαμένο κέντρο» του Λορεντζάτου, τη στροφή του Θεοτοκά στην Ορθοδοξία ή τον ιδιότυπο ελληνοκεντρισμό του Ελύτη, φαίνεται να ατονεί η ιδέα του γόνιμου πολιτισμικού διαλόγου με την Ευρώπη και να κλονίζεται η πίστη στον πολιτισμικό ρόλο της Δύσης. Έτσι, τη δεκαετία του 1960 φαίνεται πως ολοκληρώνεται ένας κύκλος που άνοιξε τη δεκαετία του 1930. (Tziovas 2011, 549)

From representing the 1960 as the "culmination" (Tziovas 1997, 30) of Greek modernism and of the Generation of the 1930s, Tziovas shifted his argument, speaking of a wider cultural process that "ολοκληρώνεται" in the 1960s. With the idea of 'completion,' the literary critic seems to hint at the end of the modernist aesthetics, manifested in the loss of interest in the European models and in the turn towards domestic elements, be they the orthodox religious traditions or the Aegean natural elements.

However we look at Greek modernism, it is undeniable that it maintained a central role during the Greek long 1960s, and my research aimed at exploring exactly this 'last modernist wave,' problematising the category of modernism in such a late historical phase and delineating its changes. In order to achieve this, I applied the emerging concept of *metamodernism*, intended not as a fixed cultural or literary category, but as a much

broader structure of feeling dominating this 'long' decade in Greek history. One of the basic tenets of this research is, in fact, the assumption of the 1960s as a historical and cultural period that goes beyond its temporal limits, covering the period between 1956 and 1974. Adopting this position allows to elicit the tight connection between historical developments and cultural debates, a connection which is fundamental to understanding Greek metamodernism.

With the ongoing tensions inherited from the Greek Civil War, the political instability, and the radical economic and social transformations, Greek culture of the 1960s witnessed a peculiar interaction between the older intellectuals that had led the modernist 'revolution' of the 1930s and the younger generation, often educated abroad during the critical years of the 1940s and critical of the perceived cultural stagnation that followed the wars. I adopted the concept of metamodernism to discuss this peculiarity of 1960s Greek culture, throwing into relief how modernism maintained its centrality throughout this period and, more importantly, recording the shifts it underwent so as to still be relevant in a highly fluid and transforming landscape.

Surely, this thesis can only be a partial exploration of the affordances of the metamodernist theory in the Greek context, but the case studies I focused on (Yannis Ritsos, Stelios Xefloudas, and Margarita Liberaki) illustrate some of the most relevant features, challenging the very conceptualisation of Greek modernism and drawing a much more layered picture of 1960s Greek culture. Ritsos, Xefloudas, and Liberaki show the pervasiveness of the metamodernist climate of the 1960s in Greece, which affected different generations of intellectuals with different backgrounds, and in different genres. Moving from poetry, to novel, to cinema and theatre, metamodernism is shown as a transformative force, felt by older (Ritsos and Xefloudas) and younger (Liberaki)

intellectuals alike, by authors within the Athenian (Ritsos) and the Thessaloniki (Xefloudas) circles alike, and even by those based outside the national borders (Liberaki).

The case of Yannis Ritsos and of the long gestation of his famous collection *Τέταρτη διάσταση* discusses the metamodernist ontology of the 'boundary,' referred to as the 'condition of the boundary' throughout the thesis. This ontology is reconstructed through the cultural debates of the time, taking Zissimos Lorentzatos's essay *Το χαμένο κέντρο* as a starting point, rather than an end point as in Tziovas's reading. From Lorentzatos's essay in 1961 until William Spanos's suggestion of Greece as a country of the boundary in 1973, the boundary surfaced in the debates under different shapes, such as the 'poetry of defeat' and the feeling of losing ethical and cultural references. Moving from a literal spatial interpretation, the boundary, I argued, became an affect, deeply engrained in the culture of the 1960s and, in fact, playing a central role in the long history of Ritsos's famous collection. In *Τέταρτη διάσταση* specifically, the boundary is tightly interconnected with the issue of time, represented as a Bergsonian *durée*, which Ritsos calls 'fourth dimension.' From a purely modernist perspective, this is a space of negotiation between present and past, imbricating in the mythical personae of the monologues. The metamodernist boundary-affect, however, highlights the deep connections between the Bergsonian temporality and the transitional nature of the 1960s, a decade marked by radical social and economic transformations. In other words, the case of Yannis Ritsos shows the full extent of modernism's ongoing relevance, and yet how modernism becomes readjusted, in dialogue with the long 1960s.

Driven by the historical specificities of the period, the very concept of history was affected, transforming one of the most discussed features of modernism: the mythical method. Such is the case for Stelios Xefloudas's novel *Οδυσσέας*. Despite being largely disregarded by cultural and literary criticism, it assumes a paradigmatic position in the

theory of Greek metamodernism, both for its open dialogue with the European modernist model of James Joyce and for its deep sensitivity to the contemporary tensions of the Cold War, an opposed position to the "ελληνοκεντρισμός" discussed by Tziovas. While maintaining a clear intertextual conversation with the Joycean model, Xefloudas adopts the mythical method and twists it to better suit the contemporary challenges of a new era. Through the figure of a Odysseus who denies his traditional heroism and acknowledges his crimes in Troy, Xefloudas exposes the chaos of the 1960s, the loss of moral values, and the risks posed by technological advancements. Resonating with Walter Benjamin's philosophy of history, in the process of reconfiguring Greek mythology, Xefloudas questions his contemporary world, bringing to surface the cyclicality of history with the mythical Trojan War as a mould for all subsequent wars, and the violence inherent in historical progress. Xefloudas's *Οδυσσέας* exemplifies Greek metamodernism exactly in its use of Joyce's and Benjamin's modernist models in order to create a new model of cultural and political critique.

The last case study of Margarita Liberaki and her cinematic-theatrical works brings into focus the internationalising aspect of the Greek 1960s and of the metamodernist theory. As a Greek woman living abroad, Liberaki returns to the question of Greekness, a much-debated issue in Greek modernism, and challenged by the internal strife of the Greek Civil War and by the large waves of migrations in the postwar period. In fact, Liberaki's own diasporic perspective shows how Greekness intersects with and complicates the desire of homecoming or, in Homeric terms, *nostos*. Already in 1960-2 in Jules Dassin's film *Phaedra*, Greekness is detached from its modernist Seferian conceptualisation, highlighting the performative aspect of it. Facing the rapid development of tourism and the inevitable confrontation with the outside world, Greekness becomes more of a performance for the non-Greeks, thus complicating the

homecoming. As Liberaki's later play *Το μυστικό κρεβάτι ή Τηλέγονος* stages, the concept of *nostos* transforms from the diasporic subject's frustrated desire of homecoming into multiple forms: *nostos* is unaccomplished or rejected altogether, transferring the desire from the diaspora to the Greek homeland. In this transformational process, the figure of the woman takes central stage, as the managing force that ensures a stable point of reference at a time of political turmoil and transitions.

One element that emerges as a staple in all these case studies is *time*, an issue central in modernist accounts of subjectivity. All the works I analysed in this thesis are the fruit of more or less long processes that intersected, and in a sense engulfed long periods in the 1960s. These texts developed through time and folded it in, containing the transformative time of the 1960s within their pages. The modernist time of the narrated-about subject somehow becomes in these examples the metamodernist time of the narrating authors, of their archives, and of their life experiences. Metamodernist theory throws into relief this intersection of modernism and historicity, and mythology constitutes the ideal meeting ground. As the case studies showed, when the 'ordering structure' of myths encounters the challenging transformations of the 1960s, it is inevitable for it to be reconfigured, dismantled, troubled, and restructured. The myths as inherited from the classical tradition are fundamentally unsuitable to make sense of the tensions inherent in the 1960s – for Ritsos, the old myths are agonising, for Xefloudas the hero is a criminal, and for Liberaki the old fragments are reshuffled in a new structure.

By introducing the concept of metamodernism in the analysis of the Greek 1960s and its culture, this thesis inevitably problematised questions of Greek modernism, such as the issue of Greekness and of the classical cultural inheritance, showing the peculiar condition of the 1960s where modernism had large relevance and yet started to be deconstructed. In this sense, this thesis also intervenes in the ever-changing field of

Metamodernist Studies, providing a localised interpretation of the concept, usually applied to the Anglosphere and to the global West in general. This thesis stretches and expands the emerging metamodernist theory, exploring its affordances beyond the contemporaneity of the 21st century or, rather, exploring its applicability to different historical realities, such the Greek long 1960s. Not only this adaptation of the concept to the Greek context yields interesting new insights into a major work of the Greek canon, as Ritsos's *Τέταρτη διάσταση* is, but it also enables the rediscovery of works left in the shadows of literary criticism, such as Xefloudas's fascinating *Οδυσσέας* and Liberaki's mythical theatre.

As already mentioned, this is not the end of this research, and it is not all about Greek metamodernism. This thesis set out to open a different path of analysis of an incredibly transformative and intriguing decade in modern Greek history and culture, made of an intricate intellectual network that expands beyond the literary field. While the present research focused on the written word, metamodernism appears to be a fruitful instrument to also read other art forms, such as cinema and music. The case of Liberaki's screenplay for *Phaedra* already discussed in some ways metamodernism in cinema, but other cases such as Michalis Cacoyannis's films *Ηλέκτρα* (Electra, 1962) and the international blockbuster *Zorba the Greek* (1964), or Takis Kanellopoulos's *Εκδρομή* (Excursion, 1966), and *Παρένθεση* (Parenthesis, 1969), could have been taken into account. They all engage with issues of temporality, classical reception, and Greekness, and can be fruitfully analysed in the terms proposed by this thesis. This framework promises to be productive also in the slightly later case of Theo Angelopoulos's work, aptly called "the last modernist" (Horton 1997), whose first film *Αναπαράσταση* (Representation, 1970) returns to the metamodernist intersection of classical mythology and contemporaneity.

Next to literature and cinema, the case of Greek music in the 1960s is also fertile ground to explore the applicability of Greek metamodernism, with the works of Manos Hatzidakis and Mikis Theodorakis, who revolutionised their field in those years. Alongside Nanos Valaoritis and his efforts in the journal *Πάλι,* they also exemplify the interaction between the new generation of intellectuals and the modernist influences of the Generation of the 1930s, contributing actually to their establishment and ongoing influence throughout the 1960s, but in a decisive new mode.

Throughout the 1960s, (Greek) modernism was not only a literary archive, but it could actually be seen as an open box. A box from which all arts could draw to address tensions, preoccupations, and to recreate cultural points of reference in an ever-changing and thus destabilising moment. Metaphorically, Greek metamodernism could be imagined as Yannis Ritsos's Stranger, in the last poem of *Τέταρτη διάσταση*: unrecognised and unrecognisable, the Stranger is familiar nevertheless, encompassing in his being the doubts and uncertainties of the present, positioned at the boundary of past and future: "όλα πορεύονται κάπως κυκλικά, επιστρέφουν | σ'ένα πιο πάνω επίπεδο, τα ξανασυναντούμε" (Ritsos 1978, 323), the Stranger says.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AESCHYLUS. 2008. *Fragments.* Edited by Alan H. Sommerstein. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press.

ALEXIOU, Christos. 2008. "Μια απόπειρα ανάλυσης της "Τέταρτης διάστασης" του Γιάννη Ρίτσου [A Tentative Analysis of Yannis Ritsos's "Fourth Dimension"]." In *Ο ποιητής και ο πολίτης Γιάννης Ρίτσος: Οι εισηγήσεις* [The Poet and Citizen Yannis Ritsos: Introductions], edited by Aikaterini Makrynikola and Stratis Bournazos, 149-177. Athens: Benaki Museum and Kedros.

ALEXOPOULOU, Marigo. 2009. *The Theme of Returning Home in Ancient Greek Literature: The Nostos of Epic Heroes.* Lewiston, NY, Queenston, ON, and Lampeter, UK: The Edwin Mellen Press.

ALIGHIERI, Dante. 2021. *The Divine Comedy.* Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Oxford: Benediction Classics.

ALTER, Robert. 2005. *Imagined Cities: Urban Experiences and the Language of the Novel.* New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press.

ANDERSON, Perry. 1998. *The Origins of Postmodernity.* London: Verso.

ANONYMOUS. 1945. "Τι ετοιμάζουν οι συγγραφείς μας [What Our Writers Are Working On]." *Ελεύθερα γράμματα* [Free Letters]Α' (13): 15.

ARDOIN, Paul, S. E. GONTARSKI, and Laci MATTISON, eds. 2013. *Understanding Bergson, Understanding Modernism.* New York and London: Bloomsbury.

ARENDT, Hannah. 1965. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil.* 2nd. New York, NY: Viking.

BASEA, Erato. 2011. *Literature and the Greek Auteur: Film Adaptations in the Greek Cinema d'Auteur.* PhD thesis, University of Oxford.

BEATON, Roderick. 1999. *An Introduction to Modern Greek Literature.* 2nd. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

—. 2003. *George Seferis: Waiting for the Angel. A Biography.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

—. 2011. "Greece." In *The Cambridge Companion to European Modernism*, edited by Pericles Lewis, 234-46. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

BEGNAL, Michael, ed. 2002. *Joyce and the City: The Significance of Place.* Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

BELL, Michael. 2010. "Primitivism: Modernism as Anthropology." In *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms*, edited by Peter Brooker, Andrzej Gąsiorek, Deborah Longworth and Andrew Thacker, 354-68. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

BENAS, Takis. 2011. *Το ελληνικό '68: Συμβολή στην ιστορία του ΚΚΕ Εσωτερικού* [The Greek '68: A Contribution to the History of the KKE Interior]. Athens: Themelio.

BENJAMIN, Walter. 1999. *The Arcades Project.* Translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press.

—. 2003. *Selected Writings (1938-1940).* Edited by Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings. Vol. 4. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

BERGSON, Henri. 2004. *Matter and Memory.* Translated by Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications.

—. 2013. *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness.* Translated by F. L. Pogson. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

BERLIS, Aris. 1993. "Στέλιος Ξεφλούδας [Stelios Xefloudas]." In *Η μεσοπολεμική πεζογραφια: Από τον Πρώτο ως το Δεύτερο Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο (1914-1939)* [Prose Writing of the Interwar: From the First to the Second World War (1914-1939)], vol. 7, 268-93. Athens: Sokoli.

BIEN, Peter. 1980. *Αντίθεση και σύνθεση στην ποίηση του Γίαννη Ρίτσου* [Antithesis and Synthesis in Yannis Ritsos's Poetry]. Athens: Kedros.

BLANCO, María del Pilar, and Esther PEEREN, eds. 2013. *The Spectralities Reader: Ghosts and Haunting in Contemporary Cultural Theory.* New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic.

BOLETSI, Maria. 2018. *The Futurity of Things Past: Thinking Greece Beyond Crisis.* Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam.

—. 2024. *Specters of Cavafy: Haunting the Future Through Poetry.* Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan University Press.

BONIFAZI, Anna. 2009. "Inquiring into Nostos and Its Cognates." *American Journal of Philology* 130 (4): 481-510.

BOURNAZOS, Stratis, and Aikaterini MAKRYNIKOLA, eds. 2008. *Ο ποιητής και ο πολίτης Γιάννης Ρίτσος: Οι εισηγήσεις* [The Poet and Citizen Yannis Ritsos: Introductions]. Athens: Benaki Museum and Kedros.

BOYLE, A.J. 1987. *Seneca's Phaedra: Introduction, Text, Translation and Notes.* Liverpool: Francis Cairns.

BRADBURY, Malcolm, and James MCFARLANE. 1991. "The Name and Nature of Modernism." In *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890-1930*, edited by Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane, 19-55. London: Penguin Books.

BROOKER, Peter, Andrzej GĄSIOREK, Deborah LONGWORTH, and Andrew THACKER, eds. 2010. *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

BUTLER, Christopher. 2010. *Modernism: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

BUTLER, Jeremy G., ed. 1991. *Star Texts: Image and Performance in Film and Television.* Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press.

BUTLER, Judith. 2000. *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death.* New York: Columbia University Press.

CAMPBELL, J. K. 1964. *Honour, Family and Patronage: A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a Greek Mountain Community.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

CAVAFY, Constantine P. 2003. *Άπαντα τα ποιήματα* [*All Poems*]. Edited by Sonia Ilinskaya. Athens: Narkissos.

CHASAPI-CHRISTODOULOU, Efsevia. 2002. *Η ελληνική μυθολογία στο νεοελληνικό δράμα: Από την εποχή του Κρητικού Θεάτρου έως το τέλος του 20ού αιώνα* [Greek Mythology in Modern Greek Theatre: From the Period of the Cretan Theatre to the End of the 20th Century]. Vol. 2. Thessaloniki: University Studio Press.

CHATZINIS, Yannis. 1975. "Οδυσσέας [Odysseus]." *Νέα εστία* [New Hearth] 97 (1147): 557-8.

CHILDS, Peter. 2017. *Modernism.* 3rd. Abingdon: Routledge.

CLOGG, Richard. 1987. *Parties and Elections in Greece: The Search for Legitimacy.* London: C. Hurst & Company.

DANGAS, Alexandros, and Giorgos LEONTIDIS. 2009. *Το κομματικό αρχείο. Διαδρομές, εμπλοκές* [The Party's Archive. Trajectories, Involvements]. Athens: Epikentro.

DELFIS, Foivos. 1978. *Στέλιος Ξεφλούδας: Ο Συγγραφέας κι' ο Στοχαστής* [Stelios Xefloudas: The Writer and the Thinker]. Athens: To Elliniko Vivlio.

DERRIDA, Jacques. 1994. *Spectres of Marx: The State of Debt, The Work of Mourning and the New International.* London: Routledge.

DIAMANTOPOULOS, Thanasis. 2017. *Η «σύντομη» δεκαετία του 1960: Από το όνειρο στον εφιάλτη (ή ο Γεώργιος Παπανδρέου ως διαιρετική τομή)* [The 'Short' 1960s: From Dream to Nightmare (or George Papandreou as a Divisive Juncture)]. Athens: Epikentro.

DYER, Richard. 1998. *Stars.* London: BFI Publishing.

ELIOT, Thomas Stearns. 1923. "Ulysses, Order, and Myth." *The Dial* 75 (3): 480-3.

ETHERINGTON, Ben. 2018. *Literary Primitivism.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

FEATHERSTONE, Kevin, and Dimitri A. SOTIROPOULOS, eds. 2020. *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Greek Politics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

FOX, Maria Stadter. 2001. *The Troubling Play of Gender: The Phaedra Dramas of Tsvetaeva, Yourcenar, and H.D.* Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press.

FRIEDMAN, Susan Stanford. 2015. *Planetary Modernisms: Provocations on Modernity Across Time.* New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

FURLANI, Andre. 2002. "Postmodern and After: Guy Davenport." *Contemprary Literature* 43 (4): 709-35.

GĄSIOREK, Andrzej. 2015. *A History of Modernist Literature.* Chichester: Wiley Blackwell.

GIANNIKOPOULOS, Panos. 2001. "Προλεγόμενα στην «Υπόθεση Ν. Ζαχαριάδη» [Foreword to "The Zachariadis Question"]." In *Υπόθεση Ζαχαριάδη: Απόρρητα ντοκουμέντα. Καταδίκη και αποκατάσταση του κομμουνιστή ηγέτη* [The Zachariadis Question: Confidential Documents. Conviction and Rehabilitation of the Communist Leader], 9-20. Athens: Filistor.

GILLIES, Mary Ann. 1996. *Henri Bergson and British Modernism.* Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

GILLOCH, Graeme. 1996. *Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

GOLSAN, Richard J., and Sarah M. MISEMER, eds. 2017. *The Trial That Never Ends: Hannah Arendt's 'Eichmann in Jerusalem' in Retrospect.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

GREGG, Melissa, and Gregory J. SEIGWORTH. 2010. "An Inventory of Shimmers." In *The Affect Theory Reader*, edited by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, 1-25. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

GUERLAC, Suzanne. 1997. *Literary Polemics: Bataille, Sartre, Valéry, Breton.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

GÜTHENKE, Constanze. 2008. *Placing Modern Greece: The Dynamics of Romantic Hellenism, 1770-1840*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

HENDERSON, Linda Dalrymple. 2013. *The Fourth Dimension and non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

HERZFELD, Michael. 2016. *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics and the Real Life of States, Societies, and Institutions.* 3rd. London and New York: Routledge.

HORTON, Andrew. 1997. *The Last Modernist: The Films of Theo Angelopoulos.* Trowbridge: Flicks Books.

ISER, Wolfgang. 1974. "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach." In *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*, by Wolfgang Iser, 274-94. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkinks University Press.

JAMES, David, and Urmila SESHAGIRI. 2014. "Metamodernism: Narratives of Continuity and Revolution." *PMLA* 129 (1): 87-100.

JAMESON, Fredric. 1984. "Periodizing the 60s." In *The 60s Without Apology*, 178-209. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

—. 1991. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

JEFFREYS, Michael J. 1994. "Reading in the Fourth Dimension." *Modern Greek Studies (Australia and New Zealand)* 2: 61-105.

JOLLIVET, Servanne. 2018. "La réception de Bergson en Grèce pendent l'entre-deux-guerres [The Reception of Bergson in Greece in the Interwar Period]." In *Le double voyage: Paris-Athènes (1919-1939)* [The Double Journey: Paris-Athens (1919-1939)], 351-358. Athens: École française d'Athènes.

JONES, Polly, ed. 2006. *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era.* London and New York: Routledge.

JUSDANIS, Gregory. 1987. "Is Postmodernism Possible Outside the 'West'? The Case of Greece." *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 11: 69-92.

KAKAVOULIA, Maria. 1997. "Interior Monologue: Recontextualizing a Modernist Practice in Greece." In *Greek Modernism and Beyond*, edited by Dimitris Tziovas, 135-49. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

KAMBOURI-MASAOUTI, Anastasia. 2017. *Τα αρχαιόμυθα θεατρικά έργα της Μαργαρίτας Λυμπεράκη* [Margarita Liberaki's Mythical Theatre]. Master's dissertation, University of Patra.

KAPSOMENOS, Eratosthenis G. 2008. "Παράδοση και πρωτοπορία στην ποίηση και την ποιητική του Γιάννη Ρίτσου [Tradition and Avantgarde in Yannis Ritsos's Poetry and Poetics]." In *Ο ποιητής και ο πολίτης Γιάννης Ριτσος: Οι εισηγησεις* [The Poet and Citizen Yannis Ritsos: Introductions], edited by Aikaterini Makrynikola and Stratis Bournazos, 395-414. Athens: Benaki Museum and Kedros.

KARALIS, Vrasidas. 2012. *A History of Greek Cinema.* New York City: Continuum.

KARATASOU, Katerina. 2014. *Λανθανών διάλογος: Ο δραματικός μονόλογος στη νεοελληνική ποίηση (19ος-20ός αι.)* [Latent Dialogue: The Dramatic Monologue in Modern Greek Poetry, 19th-20th c.)]. Athens: Gutenberg.

KASTRINAKI, Angela. 2003. *Η λογοτεχνία, μια σκανταλιά, μια διαφυγή ελευθερίας: Αφηγήσεις και δοκίμια* [Literature, a Mischief, an Escape to Freedom: Tales and Essays]. Athens: Polis.

KAYALIS, Takis. 2007. *Η επιθυμία για το Μοντέρνο: Δεσμεύσεις και αξιώσεις της λογοτεχνικής διανόησης στην Ελλάδα του 1930* [The Desire for the Modern: Commitments and Claims of the Literary Intellectuals in Greece in the 1930s]. Athens: Vivliorama.

KAZAMIAS, Alexander. 2022. *Greece and the Cold War: Diplomacy and Anti-Colonialism in the Aftermath of Civil Conflict.* London: Bloomsbury.

KAZANTZAKIS, Nikos. 1912. "H. Bergson." *Δελτίο Εκπαιδευτικού Ομίλου* [Bulletin of the Educational Club] B' (4): 310-34.

—. 1938. *Οδύσεια* [Odyssey]. Athens: Pyrsos.

KAZANTZIS, Tolis. 1991. *Η πεζογραφία της Θεσσαλονίκης (1912-1983)* [Prose Writing in Thessaloniki (1912-1983)]. Thessaloniki: Vanias.

KERSTEN, Dennis, and Usha WILBERS. 2018. "Introduction: Metamodernism." *English Studies* 99 (7): 719-22.

KOLOCOTRONI, Vassiliki, and Olga TAXIDOU, eds. 2018. *The Edinburgh Dictionary of Modernism.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

KOLOCOTRONI, Vassiliki, Jane GOLDMAN, and Olga TAXIDOU, eds. 1998. *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

KORNETIS, Kostis. 2013. *Children of the Dictatorship: Student Resistance, Cultural Politics, and the "Long 1960s" in Greece.* New York and Oxford: Bergahn Books.

KOTTI, Angeliki. 2009. *Γιάννης Ρίτσος: Ένα σχεδίασμα βιογραφίας* [Yannis Ritsos: An Overview of his Life]. Athens: Ellinika Grammata.

LAMBRAKIS, Christos. 1964. "Κρίση ή φυσιολογική επανεκτίμηση; [Crisis or Physiological Reassessment?]." *Εποχές* [Epochs] 15: 11-7.

LAMBRINOU, Chrysa [Chrysa Prokopaki]. 1964. "Για την τριλογία του Γιάννη Ρίτσου [On Yannis Ritsos's Trilogy]." *Επιθεώρηση τέχνης* [Art Review] 110: 159-72.

LAMBROPOULOS, Vassilis. 1988. *Literature as National Institution: Studies in the Politics of Modern Greek Criticism.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

LEONDARIS, Vyron. 1960. "Ιδεολογικοί προσανατολισμοί της μεταπολεμικής ελληνικής ποίησης [Ideological Directions of Greek Postwar Poetry]." *Κριτική* [Critique] 7-8: 1-18.

—. 1963. "Η ποίηση της ήττας [The Poetry of Defeat]." *Επιθεώρηση τέχνης* [Art review] 10-11: 520-4.

LIAKOS, Antonis. 2019. *Ο ελληνικός 20ός αιώνας* [The Greek 20th Century]. Athens: Polis.

LIAKOS, Antonis, and Nicholas DOUMANIS. 2023. *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, 20th and Early 21st Centuries: Global Perspectives.* Edinburgh: Edinburh University Press.

LIBERAKI, Margarita. 1980. *Η γυναίκα του Κανδαύλη, Οι Δαναΐδες, Το μυστικό κρεβάτι ή Τηλέγονος* [Candaules' Wife, The Danaids, The Secret Bed or Telegonus]. Athens: Ermis.

—. 1994. *Φαίδρα: Σενάριο* [Phaedra: Screenplay]. Athens: Kastanioti.

LIDDELL, Henry George, and Robert SCOTT. n.d. "Μετ-αίχμιος, ον." *A Greek-English Lexicon.* Accessed 09 06, 2023. http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0

057%3Aalphabetic+letter%3D*m%3Aentry+group%3D47%3Aentry%3Dmetai%2Fxmios.

LINDEMANN, Charlotte. 2020. *Star Texts: A Case Study in Harper's and Vogue.* 7 February. Accessed February 6, 2023. https://litlab.stanford.edu/Star-texts/.

LIPSTADT, Deborah E. 2011. *The Eichmann Trial.* New York, NY: Nextbook/Schocken.

LLOYD, Michael. 2005. *Sopohocles: Electra.* London: Duckworth.

LORENTZATOS, Zissimos. 1994. *Το χαμένο κέντρο* [The Lost Centre]. In *Μελετήματα* [Essays], vol. 1, 331-419. Athens: Domos.

LÖWY, Michael. 2016. *Fire Alarm: Reading Walter Benjamin's 'On the Concept of History'.* London: Verso.

LYKIARDOPOULOS, Gerasimos. 1965. "Η ποίηση και το αδιέξοδο [Poetry and the Dead-End]." *Εποχές* [Epochs] 32: 30-6.

MAKRYNIKOLA, Aikaterini, ed. 1981. *Αφιέρωμα στον Γιάννη Ρίτσο* [In Honour of Yannis Ritsos]. Athens: Kedros.

—. 1993. *Βιβλιογραφία Γιάννη Ρίτσου - 1924-1989* [Bibliography of Yannis Ritsos - 1924-1989]. Athens: Etairia Spoudon Neoellinikou Politismou kai Genikis Paidias.

MANDEL, Ernest. 1975. *Late Capitalism*. London: NLB.

MARWICK, Arthur. 1999. *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

MASSUMI, Brian. 1987. "Notes on the Translation and Acknowledgments." In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, translated by Brian Massumi, xvi-xix. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

—. 2021. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation.* Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press.

MAYAKOVSKY, Vladimir. 1947. "Σύγνεφο με παντελόνια: Τετράπτυχο (Αποσπάσματα) [A Cloud in Trousers: Quadriptych (Excerpts)]." Translated by Aris Alexandrou and Yannis Ritsos. *Ελεύθερα γράμματα* [Free Letters] Β' (6): 157-9.

McNELIS, Charles, and Alexander SENS. 2016. *The Alexandra of Lycophron: A Literary Study.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

MERCOURI, Melina. 1971. *I Was Born Greek.* London: Hodder and Stoughton.

MICHELAKIS, Pantelis. 2013. *Greek Tragedy on Screen.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

MOURELOS, Yorgos. 1965. "Henri Bergson: Η ενότητα της φιλοσοφίας του [Henri Bergson: The Unity of his Philosophy]." *Εποχές* [Epochs] 30: 84-100.

NATSINA, Anastasia. 2012. "Για τα όρια του μεταμοντερνισμού στην ελληνική πεζογραφία κατά το τελευταίο τέταρτο του 20ού αιώνα [On the Borders of Postmodernism in Greek Prose Around the Last Quarter of the 20th Century]." In *Για μια ιστορία της λογοτεχνίας του 20ού αιώνα: Προτάσεις ανασυγκρότησης, θέματα και ρεύματα* [On the History of Greek Literature in the 20th Century: Proposals of Reconstruction, Issues, and Currents], edited by Angela Kastrinaki, Alexis Politis and Dimitris Tziovas, 387-401. Irakleio: Panepistimiakes Ekdoseis Kritis and Benaki Museum.

NATSINA, Anastasia, Angela KASTRINAKI, Yannis DIMITRAKAKIS, and Keli DASKALA. 2015. *Η πεζογραφία στη μακρά δεκαετία του 1960* [Prose Writing in the Long 1960s]. Athens: Syndesmos Ellinikon Akadimaikon Vivliothikon.

NIKOLAKAKIS, Michalis. 2017. *'Μοντέρνα Κίρκη': Τουρισμός και ελληνική κοινωνία την περίοδο 1950-1974* ['Modern Circe': Tourism and Greek Society between 1950-1974]. Athens: Alexandreia.

NIKOLAKOPOULOS, Ilias. 2001. *Η καχεκτική δημοκρατία: Κόμματα και εκλογές 1946-1967* [The Incomplete Democracy: Parties and Elections 1946-1967]. Athens: Patakis.

OIKONOMOU, Maria. 2016. *Κουπιά και φτερά: Ο μύθος της Οδύσσειας στη λογοτεχνία και στον κινηματογράφο του μοντερνισμού* [Oars and Wings: The Odyssey Myth in Modernist Literature and Cinema]. Athens: Nefeli.

PALAKTSOGLOU, Maria. 2003. "Στέλιος Ξεφλούδας - Γιώργος Θεοτοκάς: Ανέκδοτη Αλληλογραφία (1929-1930) [Stelios Xefloudas - George Theotokas: Unpublished Correspondence (1929-1930)]." In *Greek Research in Australia: Proceedings of the Fourth Biennial Conference of Greek Studies*, edited by Elizabeth Close, Michael Tsianikas and George Frazis, 431-77. Adelaide: Flinders University Department of Languages - Modern Greek.

—. 2005. "Σκιές, αντικατοπτρισμοί και αναδίπλωση: Η μυθοπλαστική "περιπέτεια" του Στέλιου Ξεφλούδα [Shadows, Reflections and Folding: Stelios Xefloudas's Myth-Making "Adventure"]." In *Greek Research in Australia: Proceedings of the Biennial International Conference of Greek Studies, Flinders University April 2003*, edited by Elizabeth Close, Michael Tsianikas and George Frazis, 755-76. Adelaide: Flinders University Department of Languages - Modern Greek.

PALEOU, Maria. 2005. “Constructing the Poet's Image in Ritsos's Δώδεκα ποιήματα για τον Καβάφη.” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 29 (1): 53-69.

PAPADIMITRIOU, Lydia. 2022. “Tourism, Cinema and the Branding of Greece.” In *Motherland, I See You: The 20th Century of Greek Cinema*, edited by Afroditi Nikolaidou and Dimitris Papanikolaou, 69-73. Athens: Nefeli.

PAPANDREOU, Chrysa [Chrysa Prokopaki]. 1968. *Yannis Ritsos.* Paris: Seghers.

PAPANIKOLAOU, Dimitris. 2005. “Greece as a Postmodern Example: *Boundary 2* and its Special Issue on Greece.” *ΚΑΜΠΟΣ: Cambridge Papers in Modern Greek* 13: 127-145.

—. 2007. *Singing Poets: Literature and Popular Music in France and Greece.* London: Legenda.

—. 2009. “Εθνική κουλτούρα, πολιτισμική ιδιαιτερότητα και πεζή μοναδικότητα [National Culture, Cultural Specificity, and Banal Exceptionalism].” In *Παγκοσμιοποιήση και εθνική κουλτούρα* [Globalisation and National Culture], edited by Dimitris Plantzos, 138-58. Athens: Alexandreia.

—. 2010. “"Κάνοντας κάτι παράδοξες κινήσεις": Ο πολιτισμός στα χρόνια της Δικτατορίας ["Doing Some Absurd Moves:" Culture under the Greek Dictatorship].” In *Η στρατιοτική δικτατορία 1967-1974* [The Military Dictatorship 1967-1974], edited by Vangelis Karamanolakis, 175-96. Athens: Ta Nea.

—. 2017. “Archive Trouble, 2017.” In *Culturescapes Greece: Archaeology of the Future*, 38-51. Basel: Christoph Merlan Verlag.

PARTHENIUS. 1999. *The Poetical Fragments and the Ἐρωτικὰ Παθήματα.* Edited by J.L. Lightfoot. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

PERISTIANY, John, ed. 1965. *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society.* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

PERL, Jeffrey M. 1984. *The Tradition of Return: The Implicit History of Modern Literature.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

PIERIS, Michalis. 2008. “Ρίτσος - Σεφέρης: Συγκλίσεις και αποκλίσεις στη "μυθική μέθοδο" [Ritsos - Seferis: Convergences and Divergences in the 'Mythical Method'].” In *Ο ποιητής και ο πολίτης Γιάννης Ρίτσος: Οι εισηγήσεις* [The Poet and the Citizen Yannis Ritsos: Introductions], edited by Aikaterini Makrynikola and Stratis Bournazos, 82-92. Athens: Benaki Museum and Kedros.

PLANTZOS, Dimitris. 2022. “Hollywood, Greek Antiquities and the Kindness of Stangers.” In *Motherland, I See You: The 20th Century of Greek Cinema*, edited by Afroditi Nikolaidou and Dimitris Papanikolaou, 81-86. Athens: Nefeli.

PREVELAKIS, Pandelis. 1981. *Ο ποιητής Γιάννης Ρίτσος: Συνολική θεώρηση του έργου του* [The Poet Yannis Ritsos: A Comprehensive Analysis of His Work]. Athens: Kedros.

PROKOPAKI, Chrysa. 1981. “Η πορεία προς τη Γκραγκάντα ή οι περιπέτειες του οράματος [The Road to Graganda or the Adventures of Vision].” In *Αφιέρωμα στον Γιάννη Ρίτσο* [In Honour of Yannis Ritsos], edited by Aikaterini Makrynikola, 276-372. Athens: Kedros.

PUCHNER, Walter. 2003. *Η σύγκρουση των φύλων στον αρχετυπικό κόσμο της Μαργαρίτας Λυμπεράκη: Ανθρωπολογικός και θεατρικός εξπρεσιονισμός στη γαλλική και ελληνική δραματουργία της* [The Clash of Genders in the Archetypal World of Margarita Liberaki: Anthropological and Theatrical Expressionism in her Playwriting in French and in Greek]. Athens: Diavlos.

RACINE, Jean-Baptiste. 1994. *Phèdre.* Edited by Edward James and Gillian Jondorf. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

RENTZOU, Efthymia, and André BENHAÏM, eds. 2020. *1913: The Year of French Modernism.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

RIGOS, Alkis, Serafim SEFERIADIS, and Evanthis CHATZIVASILIOU, eds. 2008. *Η «σύντομη» δεκαετία του '60: Θεσμικό πλαίσιο, κομματικές στρατηγικές, κοινωνικές συγκρούσεις, πολιτισμικές διεργασίες* [The 'Short' Decade of the 1960s: Institutional Framework, Political Strategies, Social Conflicts, Cultural Processes]. Athens: Kastanioti.

RILEY, Kathleen. 2021. *Imagining Ithaca: Nostos and Nostalgia Since the Great War.* Oxford: Oxford University PRess.

RITSOS, Yannis. 1958. *Quatrième dimension* [Fourth Dimension]. Translated by D. Beraha and A. Kataza. Paris: Seghers.

—. 1961-2007. *Ποιήματα* (Poems). 14 vols. Athens: Kedros.

—. 1962a. *Κάτω απ' τον ίσκιο του βουνού* [Under the Shadow of the Mountain]. Athens: Kedros.

—. 1962b. *Το νεκρό σπίτι* [The Dead House]. Athens: Kedros.

—. 1963a. *12 ποιήματα για τον Καβάφη* [12 Poems for Cavafy]. Athens: Kedros.

—. 1963b. “Τρια ποιήματα του Μαγιακόβσκι [Three Poems of Mayakovsy].” *Επιθεώρηση τέχνης* [Art Review] 106-107: 403-32.

—. 1974. *Μελετήματα* [Essays]. Athens: Kedros.

—. 1977. *The Fourth Dimension: Selected Poems of Yannis Ritsos.* Translated by Rae Dalven. Boston: David R. Godine.

—. 1978. *Τέταρτη διάσταση* [Fourth Dimension]. 2nd. Athens: Kedros.

—. 2020. *Λογοτεχνική απόδοση της Αντιγόνης του Σοφοκλή* [Literary Rendition of Sophocles's Antigone]. Edited by Maria Vamvouri. Athens: Kedros.

RITSOS, Yannis, and David HARSENT. 2023. *A Broken Man in Flower: Versions of Yannis Ritsos.* Hexham: Bloodaxe Books.

ROBINSON, Christopher. 1997. “Gender, Sexuality and Narration in Kostas Tachtsis: A Reading of Τα ρέστα.” *Κάμπος: Cambridge Papers in Modern Greek* 5: 63-80.

RUSSELLO, Claudio. 2017. “'Πια δε μας έμεινε παρά να κοιτάμε προς τα μέσα:' A Comparative Study of Modernist Time and Monologue in Virginia Woolf and Yannis Ritsos.” Master's dissertation, University of Oxford.

RUSSIAN INSTITUTE, Columbia University, ed. 1956. *The Anti-Stalin Campaign and International Communism: A Selection of Documents.* New York: Columbia University Press.

SANGIGLIO, Crescenzio. 1978. *Μύθος και ποίηση στον Ρίτσος* [Myth and Poetry in Ritsos]. Athens: Kedros.

SCIOLI, Emma. 2018. “Confronting the Ancient Greek Golden Age in Jules Dassin's *Phaedra* (1962).” In *Screening the Golden Ages of the Classical Tradition*, edited by Meredith Safran, 119-136. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

SEFERIS, George. 2014. *Ποιήματα* [Poems]. Athens: Ikaros.

SEFERIS, George, and Konstantinos TSATSOS. 1975. *Ένας διάλογος για την ποίηση* [A Dialogue on Poetry]. Edited by Loukas Kousoulas. Athens: Ermis.

SKOURA, Evangelia. 2006. “Το περιοδικό *Εποχές* (1963-1967): Ιδεολογικές αναζητήσεις και πολιτισμός [The Journal Epoches (1963-1967): Ideological Explorations and Culture].” Master's dissertation, Panteio University of Social and Political Sciences.

SOPHOCLES, and Hugh LLOYD-JONES (ed.). 1996. *Fragments.* Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press.

SPANOS, William V. 1973. "Romiosini: Style as Historical Memory." *The American Poetry Review* 2 (5): 18-22.

SPANOS, William V., and Robert KROETSCH. 1973. "Greek Writing and the Boundary: A Foreword." *boundary 2* 1 (2): 260-3.

SPENTZOU, Efrossini. 2014. "Modernist Revisions of Return: Home and Domesticity in Yiorgos Seferis and Yiannis Ritsos." In *Odyssean Identities in Modern Cultures: The Journey Home*, edited by Hunter Gardner and Sheila Murnaghan, 240-61. Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press.

SPIROPOULOU, Angeliki. 2010. *Virginia Woolf, Modernity and History: Constellations with Walter Benjamin.* Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

STANFORD, William Bedell. 1968. *The Ulysses Theme: A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero.* 2nd. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

STERGIOPOULOS, Kostas. 1964. "Από το αδιέξοδο στον οραματισμό του μέλλοντος [From the Dead End to the Vision of the Future]." *Εποχές* [Epochs] 14: 64-6.

—. 1966a. "Από τη θρησκευτική στην υπαρξιακή αγωνία [From the Religious to the Existential Anxiety]." *Εποχές* [Epochs] 33: 63-5.

—. 1966b. "Η πεζογραφία του Στέλιου Ξεφλούδα κι' ο εσωτερικός μονόλογος [Stelios Xefloudas's Prose Writing and the Interior Monologue]." *Εποχές* [Epochs] 43: 427-31.

STROM, James Harper. 2009. "Modernist Aesthetics of "Home" in Virginia Woolf's Mrs Dalloway and Rebecca West's The Return of the Soldier." *Thesis.* Georgia State University. Accessed 03 30, 2023. https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/english_theses/82.

SUTTON, Dana Ferrin. 1984. *The Lost Sophocles.* Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

TACHTSIS, Kostas. 1978. *Το τρίτο στεφάνι* [The Third Wedding]. 9th. Athens: Ermis.

—. 2021. *Τα ρέστα* [Small Change]. Athens: Psychogios.

TENNYSON, Alfred. 1991. *Alfred Lord Tennyson: Selected Poems.* Edited by Aidan Day. London and New York, NY: Penguin Books.

TERZAKIS, Angelos. 1964. “Η ηθική κρίση και η ηθική αξίωση [The Ethical Crisis and the Ethical Claim].” *Εποχές* [Epochs] 13: 25-8.

THEODORAKIS, Mikis. 1986. *Για την ελληνική μουσική, 1952-1961* [On Greek Music, 1952-1961)]. Athens: Kastaniotis.

TSAGALIS, Christos. 2015. “Telegony.” In *The Greek Epic Cycle and its Ancient Reception: A Companion*, edited by Marco Fantuzzi and Christos Tsagalis, 380-402. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

TSAKONAS, Dimitris. 1990. *Η σχολή Θεσσαλονίκης: Πεζογραφία, ποίηση, δοκίμιο* [The School of Thessaloniki: Prose, Poetry, Essay]. Athens: Liquid Letter.

TSAOUSIS, D.G., ed. 1983. *Ελληνισμός - Ελληνικότητα: Ιδεολογικοί και βιωματικοί άξονες της νεοελληνικής κοινωνίας* [Hellenism - Greekness: Ideological and Experiential Axes of Modern Greek Society]. Athens: Estia.

TZIOVAS, Dimitris. 1989. *Οι μεταμορφώσεις του εθνισμού και το ιδεολόγημα της ελληνικότητας στο μεσοπόλεμο* [The Transformations of Nationality and the Ideology of Greekness in the Interwar Period]. Athens: Odysseas.

—. 1997. “Mapping Out Greek Literary Modernism.” In *Greek Modernism and Beyond*, edited by Dimitris Tziovas, 25-39. Lanham and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

—. 2011. *Ο μύθος της γενιάς του Τριάντα: Νεοτερικότητα, ελληνικότητα και πολιτισμική ιδεολογία* [The Myth of the Generation of the Thirties: Modernism, Greekness, and Cultural Ideology]. Athens: Polis.

—. 2014. “The Wound of History: Ritsos and the Reception of Philoctetes.” In *Re-imagining the Past: Antiquity and Modern Greek Culture*, edited by Dimitris Tziovas, 297-317. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

VALAORITIS, Nanos. 1965. “Γύρω απ' την έκδωση του Πάλι [On the Publication of "Pali"].” *Pali* 4: 77-8.

—. 1975. “Μικρό Ιστορικό του «Πάλι» [Short History of "Pali"].” In *Ανάτυπο από το Πάλι* [Reprint of "Pali"]. Athens: Sima.

VALAORITIS, Nanos, and George SEFERIS. 2004. *Αλληλογραφία (1945-1968) και τριάντα τέσσερις επιστολές του Ν. Βαλαωρίτη στον Γ.Κ. Κατσίμπαλη (1947-1950)* [Correspondence (1945-1968) and Thirty-Four Letters from N. Valaoritis to G.K. Katsimbalis (1947-1950)]. Athens: Ypsilon.

VAN DEN AKKER, Robin, and Timotheus VERMEULEN. 2010. “Notes on Metamodernism.” *Journal of Aesthetics and Culture* 2: 1-14.

—. 2017. “Priodising the 2000s, or, the Emergence of Metamodernism.” In *Metamodernism: Historicity, Affect and Depth After Postmodernism*, edited by Robin van den Akker, Alison Gibbons and Timotheus Vermeulen, 1-19. London and New York: Rowman and Littlefield.

VAN DYCK, Karen. 1998. *Kassandra and the Censors: Greek Poetry since 1967*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

VAN STEEN, Gonda. 2014. *Stage of Emergency: Theater and Public Performance under the Greek Military Dictatorship of 1967-1974.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

VELOUDIS, Yorgos. 1977. “Εισαγωγή [Introduction].” In *Επιτομή: Ιστορική ανθολόγηση του ποιητικού του έργο* [Selection: Historical Anthology of his Poetic Work], by Yannis Ritsos, 9-48. Athens: Kedros.

—. 1981. “Ο καβαφικός Ρίτσος [The Cavafian Ritsos].” In *Αφιέρωμα στον Γιάννη Ρίτσο* [In Honour of Yannis Ritsos], edited by Aikaterini Makrynikola, 173-194. Athens: Kedros.

VITTI, Mario. 1979. *Η γενιά του τριάντα: Ιδεολογία και μορφή* [The Generation of the Thirties: Ideology and Form]. Athens: Ermis.

VOEGELIN, Eric. 1989. *Equivalences of Experience and Symbolization in History.* Vol. 12, in *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, edited by E. Sandoz, 115-33. Baton Rouge: Louisian State University Press.

VOURTSAKI, Marianthi. 2014. “Ο Στέλιος Ξεφλούδας της Θεσσαλονίκης και του Παρισιού (1927-1930) [Stelios Xefloudas in Thessaloniki and Paris (1927-1930)].” *Μικροφιλολογικά (Κύπρος)* [Microphilological Questions (Cyprus)] 36: 26-32.

VOYIATZAKI, Evi. 2002. *The Body in the Text: James Joyce's Ulysses and the Modern Greek Novel.* Lanham, MD, and Oxford: Lexington Books.

—. 2007. “Greek Modernism and Inner-Oriented Art.” In *Modernism*, edited by Ástráður Eysteinsson and Vivian Liska, 991-1007. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

WEST, Martin L., ed. 2003. “Telegony. Thesprotis.” In *Greek Epic Fragments from the Seventh to the Fifth Centuries BC*, edited by Martin L. West, 164-171. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press.

—. 2013. *The Epic Cycle: A Commentary on the Lost Troy Epics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

WOLLAEGER, Mark, and Matt EATOUGH, eds. 2012. *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

WOOLF, Virginia. 1948. *The Common Reader.* London: The Hogarth Press.

—. 1978. *The Diary of Virginia Woolf: Volume II, 1920-1924.* London: The Hogarth Press.

WRIGHT, Matthew. 2018. *The Lost Plays of Greek Tragedy: Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides.* Vol. 2. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

XEFLOUDAS, Stelios. 1935a. "Σχόλια [Comments]." *Μακεδονικές ημέρες* [Macedonian Days] Γ' (4): 159-63.

—. 1935b. "Απάντηση σε κάποιες συστάσεις [Response to Some Reccommendations]." *Μακεδονικές ημέρες* [Macedonian Days] Γ' (11): 423-5.

—. 1937. "Σχόλια [Comments]." *Μακεδονικές ημέρες* [Macedonian Days] Ε' (11-12): 276-7.

—. 1955. *Το σύγχρονο μυθιστόρημα* [The Contemporary Novel]. Athens: Ikaros.

—. 1957. *Οδυσσέας χωρίς Ιθάκη* [Odysseus Without Ithaca]. Athens: Difros.

—. 1974. *Οδυσσέας* [Odysseus]. Athens: Difros.

YANNOULOPOULOS, Yorgos. 2011. *Ο μοντερνισμός και οι Δοκιμές του Σεφέρη* [Modernism and Seferis's Essays]. Athens: Polis.

ZENG, Hong. 2010. *The Semiotics of Exile in Literature.* New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.