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**IDENTITY, MEMORY AND OTHERNESS IN THE NOVELS OF RHEA
GALANAKI**

ABSTRACT

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Aim and Objectives of the dissertation

The main aim of this dissertation is to trace the treatment of the relationship between identity, memory and otherness in four novels by the contemporary Greek author Rhea Galanaki. With this in mind, significant figures and motifs that are part of the Greek author's poetics are explored. The aforementioned thematic common places appear to be of interest not only to contemporary Greek-language fiction, but also to various humanities disciplines, which shed light on different aspects of them, depending on the specificity of the research interest and the respective methodology. The partial overlap between fictional and academic discourse and the important differences between their features, occupy a central place in the present study, in view of the fact that the fictional text should not be thought of as an illustration of one theoretical thesis or another. Instead, the dissertation highlights the independent contribution that the literature can make to the adequate conceptualization of the phenomena in question.

Another aim of the dissertation is to situate Galanaki's work within the historical context of Modern Greek literature. Therefore, the study outlines the development of Modern Greek fiction since 1974, with a special focus on the presence and manifestations of postmodernism and highlights the main postmodernist tendencies in contemporary Greek fiction.

Closely related to the aforementioned task is the next one, which aims to highlight the specific character of postmodernism in Rhea Galanaki, defined in the study as *redemptive* and having a direct relation to the poetics of the Greek author. Last but not least, the dissertation aims to substantiate the role of literature in relation to the figures and motifs examined.

The subject of the dissertation

The object of this study is not Galanaki's complete works, but her first three novels, *The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha: Spina Nel Cuore* (1989), *I shall sign as Loui* (1993), and *Eleni or Nobody* (1998), as well as the novel *Fires of Judas, Ashes of Oedipus* (2009). They form a kind of corpus in which the themes of identity, memory and otherness are most fully present. In the trilogy, the themes develop through the layering and overlapping of motivic and structural elements, but also through the dissociation of identity from otherness within the confines of the self. In *Fires of Judas and Ashes of Oedipus* otherness transcends the subject and dissolves into the social

fabric of community. Memory is the foundation upon which personal and collective identity is built. It is the ability to remember and rethink past experience that is responsible for the cohesion of life and the reversibility, not of the past itself, but of its meaning (Meuter 2013: 35-36). The chronology of the novel's writing will be followed in the analysis.

The chosen method of studying the relationship between identity, memory and otherness in Galanaki's work consists in analysing and revealing the author's understanding of the problem through the interpretation of significant figures and the analysis of key motifs in her novels: the figure of the exile, the figure of the mother (the maternal), the motif of return, of memory and forgetting, the motif of loss and absence, of trauma, of grief and melancholy. Interpretation is made up of several layers that condition each other. The first relates to what treatment the relationship between identity, memory and otherness receives in the novels themselves. The second has to do with the way Galanaki constructs his characters and narratives, helping to weigh on the "scales" of collective memory the "benign memories", those that have "therapeutic and ethical value" (Assmann 2008: 54). The third level of interpretation refers us to the capacity that literature has to offer as an approach to making sense of the world in which we live.

In other words, through my study, I will try to find what answers Rhea Galanaki gives to the questions already asked by Tzvetan Todorov (Todorov 1996: 64), – How to approach the past so that its bitter taste can urge us to change rather than fueling dislike or triumphalism? How do we live in the present with the past without the latter being glossed over, embellished or forgotten? How does literature help us not so much to live better, but above all to be better with/in ourselves and with others - as individuals, but also as a community?

Exploring the relationship between identity, memory and otherness in Rhea Galanaki's novels *The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha: Spina Nel Cuore, I Shall Sign as Loui, Eleni or Nobody*, as well as the novel *Fires of Judas, Ashes of Oedipus*, I will focus on the diachronic and the common that lurks behind and serves as the basis for the synchronic¹ and the particular in them. In the author's own words, one of the main purposes of literature "is to elevate everything it touches (i.e. all of us, our thoughts, our feelings, our present and our past) with its magic wand, into a different realm: the realm of diachronic duration, of symbols and of an artful linguistic universe" (Galanaki 2011: 89).

¹ Although I use "synchronic" in the sense of "contemporary", I retained the Greek word *σὺγχρονος*, which means contemporary and simultaneous, to preserve both approaches to time.

Theoretical foundations of the dissertation

The approach I have chosen can be defined as orienting towards some fundamental postulates of so-called humanism, i.e. in my reading I consider literary characters as capable instances who suffer, remember, can (self) narrate and be responsible for their actions. For this reason, I intend to draw heavily on the writings of the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur, in which he reflects on the “capable man”. The choice of Ricoeur’s philosophical theoretical paradigm is motivated by the specific interests of this thinker. His searches in the field of phenomenology and anthropological hermeneutics deal with the problems of identity, memory, history, and forgetting, which also appear to be key to the work of the Greek author, which I examine in my study.

Ricoeur’s theory, however, contains universal-anthropological implications, while Galanaki’s, while again foregrounding universal human concerns, cannot ignore the gender nuances of identity. Her novels pose the questions “How does a man and a woman experience rebellion, loss, love?” Here the connection to postmodernist and feminist theory of the self, are understood as a combination of different kinds of identities: national, gender, racial, etc., becomes clear. Galanaki’s poetics cannot be analyzed without reference to these characteristics of the modern worldview, where, as mentioned, one should not lose awareness of the irreducibility of fiction to debates in the realm of contemporary humanities.

Furthermore, I will pay special attention to an aspect of Galanaki’s postmodernism that I would call *redemptive*, borrowing the definition from the American philosopher Mark Freeman. It is a postmodern thinking that problematizes rather than denies historical reference (Peterson 2001: 11), i.e. it does not place a mark of identification between the critical rethinking of a tradition and its denial and destruction. It is a postmodernism that does not consign the past to oblivion, but chooses to remember and reclaim, especially with the help of literature, not only the “official” knowledge sanctioned by the community, but also what has not become part of the collective memory of the Greek people. The result of all this is a significant attempt to reformulate Greek identity, which makes Galanaki’s novels valuable and worthy of literary analysis. As already stated, on the basis of this reading I also intend to reconstruct some of the possibilities that postmodern fiction possesses that allow it to become a full participant in discussions about the dimensions of identity, whether personal or collective.

The Introduction begins with a brief outline of the main points of Rhea Galanaki's biography. It examines the initial phase of her work, during which she emerged primarily as a writer of poetry, as well as her gradual orientation towards prose works more suited to the elaboration of those specific concerns that have been a persistent element of her poetics to the present day. This development is replicated by a shift of focus from personal, intimate experience to an awareness of distance from the object being narrated. Distance is also manifested in the fact that the Greek writer began to research various historical archives as part of her work of constructing a particular fictional narrative.

This creative path led to the publication in 1989 of the first of the four novels examined in this thesis, *The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha: Spina Nel Cuore*, which is also Galanaki's first text to belong to the genre of the novel, an aesthetic category to which the author will continue to adhere in the future. *The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha* received serious attention from the Greek literary community at the time of its publication. The text is essentially a historical novel, albeit of a postmodern kind, and marks the beginning of the writing of a series of similar works, two of which, as mentioned, will also be subjected to reading and interpretation in this study.

A key point of Galanaki's approach to the contemporary problem of identity is the construction of the latter not as conflict and exclusion, but as a unity of many, sometimes contradictory, elements and principles. This non-traditional perspective appears to be one of the main motives for the interest in the Greek writer's work that underlies the emergence of my research, and therefore the introductory part of the text devotes space and time to its reconstruction. The particular treatment of identity first as a conflict playing out in the inner world of the character in question, and then as an equilibrium and acceptance (of the other in the self), constitutes a vision of the essence of the individual that transcends the bipolar model of self-other. I believe that such a process of inner development is characteristic of the protagonists of the novels mentioned in my text, which is why I have focused on this general point, drawing attention to the particularities of the respective reading as I intend to do in each of the four individual cases.

Of course, individual identity as a problem that not only literature but also contemporary humanities is concerned with cannot be conceptualized without reference to studies on community, including collective memory, a point I make clear in the first chapter of my dissertation (where I discuss various theoretical approaches to the above) and in my analysis of the novel *Fires of Judas, Ashes of Oedipus*. As has already been said, the particularities of Galanaki's poetics constitute the starting point in seeking to answer

questions of a more abstract nature, such as that of the place and functions of contemporary, postmodern fiction in the context of various debates taking place in Greek society in recent years and decades. In this case, the author's active public presence is crucial, since she is a commentator not only on her own work, but also on various important social and cultural issues and problems that are part of life in Greece.

This accessibility, complemented by the considerable literary critical and scholarly interest in Galanaki, was also one of the reasons why I made her the object of my research; I mention this point in the introduction of my dissertation.

As a next step, the introductory section presents an overview of various studies of Galanaki's poetics. Not surprisingly, most literary scholars advocate, in one form or another, the postmodern (including feminist) perspective on the texts. The reconstruction of what has been said so far is grouped into four parts, according to the four novels I examine in my work.

With regard to *The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha*, the focus of the readings so far has been the comparison between the historical narrative taking place on different levels – individual and cultural – with the identity of the protagonist as its subject. Entirely in a postmodern key, the very possibility of constructing an “objective” – that is, independent of the particular perspectives of its participants – narrative of one's own past is discussed here, whether the latter is thought of in personal or collective terms. It is the nuanced approach to this problem, which I believe is characteristic of Galanaki and which has not always been realised by her various interpreters, that appears as one of the main motivations for writing the present text.

In the case of *The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha*, the discussion of whether and to what extent this novel is an example of so-called “historiographical metafiction” is obviously central, and I therefore focus on this point in the relevant part of the introduction. Whether the novel problematizes the positivist conception of history or offers an alternative view of the historical narrative already present and socialized in Greek society is a question that has not yet found a definitive answer. It is certainly indicative of the fact that the work is rightly considered postmodern. My contention, which in the given part of my thesis I put forward in thesis form only, is that Galanaki does not reject but enriches the collective historical narrative – further evidence that the author should not be inertly subsumed under abstract and undefinable genre and aesthetic categories such as ‘postmodernism’. Here I see an opportunity to add to

developments such as that of the English literary scholar Roderick Beaton, who offers a catalogue of characteristics (also set out by me in the introduction) by means of which he fixes the postmodern in Galanaki's text. *The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha* is also the subject of readings aimed at demonstrating how the novel deconstructs stereotypes in the construction of national ("own/good-foreign/evil") identity and identity relating to gender ("masculinity-femininity"). The reading of the novel I propose draws on previous research but focuses primarily on the constellation of the concepts of *memory-promise* and *identity-idem* and *identity-ipse* analyzed in Paul Ricoeur's *Oneself as Another* and *The Course of Recognition: Three Studies*.

Regarding the novel, *Eleni or Nobody*, I discuss interpretations that draw on some theoretical developments by Jacques Lacan and Michel Foucault. The thematization of the binary opposition "male-female" proceeds, according to the British scholar Angie Voela, in a mode of rethinking and even rebellion against the established symbolic order reproduced in the ascription of fixed social identities to both sexes. The problematization of traditional thinking that Galanaki's heroine achieves through her choice of artistic profession illustrates, according to Voela, Foucault's concept of the so-called *heterotopia* – a quasi-space that appears external to the established and inherited perspective of perception and interpretation of the world. But it is not the refusal to speak of "genders" but its liberation from ideological layering that this study sees in the novel. This is the reason why I present what Voela said in my introduction, because I also aim to construct an interpretation that illustrates the "constructive" moments in the identity (including feminist) issues raised and discussed by Galanaki.

Contemporary Greek scholar Mary Mike is also included in the introduction, since her reading of *Eleni* discusses the very possibility of a stable identity beyond the processualism that characterizes the transgression of the social and cultural dimensions of the feminine that the novel's heroine performs.

In my reading of the novel, I draw on the research presented, but highlight one other problem that has remained in the shadows, the problem of memory and grief.

The question of the place of women in traditional, but also in contemporary Greek society, has been raised and debated by various literary scholars who have devoted their attention to the novel, *Fires of Judas, Ashes of Oedipus*. The German-based scholar Kyriaki Chryssomalli-Henrich, for example, traces the reproduction of patriarchal origins, but also the rebellion against them, which takes place on a purely linguistic level in the text in question. The already mentioned Angie Voela, in another of her studies, sees a parallel between the

historical material presented in the novel and today's problems in gender relations, a thesis that underlines the relevance of Galanaki's work and is an additional incentive for me to offer my own take on it in my dissertation.

The novel *I shall sign as Loui* is also the subject of literary studies, among which I have chosen that of the literary scholar Vangelis Athanassopoulos, who emphasizes the openness of this text to questions and problems of a universal human nature. This point again demonstrates the versatility of Galanaki's poetics and provides opportunities for analyses that avoid the univocal and labeling attribution of meanings. The introductory section concludes with a brief summary of the contents of the individual chapters and an appendix that make up the body of my study.

In chapter one, I present the relevant theoretical issues related to identity, memory and otherness. This problematic has a history, which is briefly traced in the opening pages of the chapter. It only makes sense to talk about identity and to explore the relationship between the individual and social dimensions of human existence in the light of a more broadly formulated theory of modernity and modern society. The problematization and even partial undermining of established value systems and behavioral forms, which in the language of sociology and philosophy are referred to as the "lifeworld", create the problem of the integration of the individual into the social community. This transition from traditional to modern forms of social communication is of course only the background against which, in this chapter of the dissertation, I reconstruct and critically examine some of the main theoretical paradigms thematizing the question of the dimensions of individual - but also collective – identity. The very construction of a theoretical approach, which as already stated should not be identified with the literary treatment of this problematic, also needs negotiation, which I address, again in the opening pages of the chapter. Following the observations of the American sociologist Jeffrey Alexander, I agree with his thesis that a definitive and comprehensive sociological theory of culture is not possible due to the fact that the two poles - individual and society – represent only idealized commonalities, with the focus of theoretical discourse gravitating to one or the other degree towards one of them, without, however, being able to overcome the contradictory unity of their coexistence as mental constructs. Because in her novels Rhea Galanaki also does not offer a definitive solution to the problem of identity, but illuminates it from unexpected angles, in the opening lines of the second chapter of my dissertation I

consider the theoretical pluralism described above to be an asset, since it resonates with the specificities of the subject of my research.

A central axis in the problem of identity is the essentialism-constructivism relation, being or becoming. I therefore begin with the psychosocial theory of Erik Erikson, who was one of the first to introduce the notion of “identity” as a category in its own right in humanities discourse. Erikson builds on Sigmund Freud’s classical psychoanalytic theory of the psychosexual development of the individual but complements and develops it in a direction that allows for a more flexible and comprehensive conceptualization of the moments of encounter between the individual and social reality, as well as opening the way to an innovative reconstruction of the different stages of personal development and growth. In Erikson, these phases are eight in total, and the moments of transition between them are described precisely as a “crisis of identity”, providing in turn an opportunity for more adequate adaptation to the social environment.

Erikson is important not only for elaborating on Freud’s views, but also for offering a new explanatory model according to which socialization has a processual character, which is also particularly valuable in my attempt to trace Rea Galanaki’s point of view in the course of her fictionally constructed path of self-discovery of the protagonists in her novels.

It is logical to transfer the talk of “identity” to the field of cultural studies, which throughout its history of development from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century has moved from the reconstruction of macro-social phenomena towards the interpretation and understanding of the symbolic and value hierarchies constituting the interaction of the individual with the relevant social, ethnic, etc. community.

At this point in the chapter, therefore, I go on to develop the issues outlined by Lawrence Grossberg and Stuart Hall in their cultural studies. As has already been said, the debate about the nature of identity plays a central role here - whether it should be thought of as an objective given or as a product of the interaction between different social forces, i.e. as a process whose development humanities scholarship should not only reconstruct but, on occasion, critically rethink. According to the British theorist Stuart Hall, there is in any case no objective, ahistorical view either of the social world or of the individual’s place in it, so that he arrives somewhat naturally at a binding of the topic of “identity” and “politics”, a bridge that is particularly valuable for my study because, as I have already said, Galanaki’s characters are as much subjects of their biography as they are products of the ethnic, cultural, and social codes available during the historical period in question.

The emphasis on processes, as opposed to invariant structures, makes it imperative to mention and briefly reconstruct the concepts (presented by Grossberg as “mental figures” because with their help the multidimensional phenomenon of identity can be integrally captured) of *difference*, *fragmentation*, *hybridity*, *liminality*, and *diaspora*. By implication, these should direct the researcher’s focus to the places and moments where identity is “produced”, although this is probably not evident in the context of ordinary, everyday language use. It is the notion of the self as made up of discrete, often contradictory fragments that plays a central role in the course of this scholarly reflection, since the very postulation of an “authentic” subject situated beyond the centrifugally disparate, functionally differentiated spheres of (modern) social communication can and should be subjected to critical rethinking. Modern thinking should thus be freed from the utopian search for an autonomous point of persuasion, on account of which it is precisely the understanding – imposed by the Indian theorist Homi Bhabha – of individual and cultural identities as dynamic, “hybrid” formations of a temporary and therefore perishable nature that comes on the scene.

A discussion of the theoretical paradigm outlined here would not be complete without also pointing out some problematic points arising from the fundamental point mentioned above, which is that theorizing in the field of culture is by presumption unable to encompass the entire spectrum of phenomena whose explanation we seek. For this reason, I dwell on a classic objection that accompanies the pathos of problematizing established codes of identity and culture: if everything is a construction, and if there is ultimately no abstract position that is not subject to private (i.e. political) interests, how is it possible to sustain Enlightenment ideals of seeking equality, emancipation, justice, etc., when these can themselves become the object of critical deconstruction? At the appropriate place in my text, I mention this discussion to illustrate the fact that no humanitarian theory should be thought of as definitive and internally uncontroversial. In this sense the reconstruction of the debates around identity do not so much offer answers as outline a problematic framework within which further attempts to reconcile the opposing positions of essentialism and constructivism should be situated. It is with this in mind that, as a next step, I devote a key place to the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur’s theory of the three modalities of identity: *idem* identity, *ipse* identity, and *narrative* identity, as well as to his study of memory, history, and forgetting. According to Ricoeur, personal identity is

characterized by the particular unity of a tendency toward persistence over time, on the one hand, and the anthropologically embedded function of narrative in the human species, by means of which a retrospective perspective on one's own past is constantly constructed and rethought. The ever-changing fabric of experience, in the broadest sense of the term, is complemented by the drive to organize individual events, which presumably appear external to the sequence of what has been experienced so far, into a coherent narrative structure. This is how the projection of the self into the future, in acts of an ethical nature (a promise, for example, is a speech act that comes into view in Ricoeur's philosophical reflection precisely as a capacity for sustaining the self forward in time), is counterbalanced by an understanding of the uniqueness of the other, what in the Anglo-Saxon humanities context is called *personhood*, and which de facto expresses itself in the plasticity of the narratives of which we are the authors, is able to capture, in my view, the contradictory and multifaceted nature of identity – hence the central place given to his theoretical views in the second chapter.

Exploring the views of the American philosopher Mark Freeman, who relates the different logics of the passage of individual time to forms of mythic, historical and narrative thinking, as a next step I move on to studies of memory: “personal”, “collective” and “cultural” memory, as well as so-called “postmemory”, drawing on the works of Jan and Aleida Assmann, Marianne Hirsch, and Stephen Frosch. As already mentioned, in her novels Rhea Galanaki is interested in processes of collective identity construction, the results of which can be traced back to the particularities of contemporary Greek society. This makes it inevitable to look at theories that attempt to explain precisely the dynamic and constructed nature of cultural and ethnic value systems and codes.

A breakthrough in the theory of memory is represented by the work of the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, who, again in dispute with Sigmund Freud, shifts the focus from the individual to the community, while changing the understanding of the functions of memory - in Halbwachs' view, it is not a repository of memories/information, but an active tool that we use not least to be able to navigate our social and cultural contemporaneity. Hence, theorizing on memory has become the focus of further cultural studies, among which first and foremost mention should be made of husband-and-wife team Aleida and Jan Assmann, who have contributed significantly to the establishment of the “cultural memory theory” they developed.

In this part of my paper, I reconstruct some of the basic premises of this research paradigm, especially the distinction between communicative and proper cultural memory, which plays a central role here. Whereas communicative memory refers to a relatively distinct

period of the past about which we share common memories with others, cultural memory refers to the past in general, constituting in its present version the identity foundations of a social community. Closely tied to the existence of cultural memory are the processes of canonization whether of texts or artifacts – through which the collective past is recreated and instrumentalized for various purposes.

The discussion on memory should not ignore the term “postmemory”, coined by Marianne Hirsch in the late 1990s. In effect, what we have here is an elaboration of some of the main points made so far, which is why I focus on Hirsch as the next step in the chapter. The talk of ‘post-‘ in this case should draw attention to the role of the imagination, individually and collectively, which is that faculty of ours that allows us to identify with the complexes and configurations of shared memories transmitted to us by other members of the community, thus becoming co-authors of our collective identity.

Focusing on Ricoeur’s views on memory, which in its capacity as a narrative told by different instances is able to become the starting point of an ethical conception that acknowledges and respects the presence of the Other, I conclude the chapter with a brief discussion of the figure and the problem of otherness.

Traditionally, the other is that which is excluded from the world of the known – whether in terms of values, culture or language – but not least thanks to the theoretical developments such as those of Julia Kristeva, the structures of this thinking have been progressively dislodged in the direction of a recognition that the self and the other form a psychological and ontological unity. The debate about how this amalgam should be thought and whether there is a potential for constructing an ethical theory that would be able to overcome the axiom of the irreducibility of the individual to the reality external to him or her, embedded in modern thinking, takes many forms. In briefly examining the various positions, I mention the views of Emmanuel Levinas, Stephen Frosch and Tzvetan Todorov on this issue.

In chapter two I outline the trends in contemporary Greek literature, particularly in fiction since 1974 – acting as a historical caesura due to the fall of the military regime and the general democratization of Greek society in the decades since. Understandably, these processes are also reflected in literary discourse, something that the eminent contemporary Greek literary scholar Dimitris Tziiovas has addressed. The chapter therefore begins with a review and reconstruction of his main observations and generalizations concerning the history of literature in Greece over the last fifty years.

It is perhaps not surprising that Tziovas focuses on the disintegration of traditional social communities, urbanization, and the general tendency toward individualization and atomization of ways of life, phenomena that increasingly provoke the interest of contemporary Greek writers. Traditional political themes, which have become the focus of modern Greek fiction, are gradually giving way to the depiction and problematization of moments of a cultural nature, which, according to this scholar, also constitute a stable indicator of the transformations referred to here.

Naturally, the postmodern problematic does not bypass Greek literature, which is why Tziovas also pays attention to meta-fictional common places, such as the so-called “crisis of representation”, i.e. the notion that language stands between the subject and what we traditionally call “objective” reality, performing the function not of reflection but of an independent and self-contained reality, only seemingly referring beyond the dimensions of the individual. In the context of this conceptual horizon, tendencies emerge in contemporary Greek fiction, such as, for example, the increased interest of many authors in the use of the narrative technique of “text within text”, emphasizing precisely the mediation of experience and the fictive construction of plots and interpersonal conflicts.

All in all, the very transition from writing poetry to producing prose texts, which marks the entry of postmodern tendencies into contemporary Greek literature, constitutes a very appropriate background for the historical positioning and analysis of Rhea Galanaki’s novels, which have found a place in the historiographical paradigm thus outlined by Tziovas. I see my work as building on, but also elaborating what the Greek literary scholar has said. In view of the range of themes and issues elaborated by Galanaki, in the next part of this chapter I address the trend of so-called “feminine” literature, which also appears to be characteristic of the state of fiction in contemporary Greece. On the one hand, this term is used to refer to novels written by women, whose increase in number can be ascertained purely statistically by looking at the literary production of recent years and decades. But the thematic focus also seems to possess a certain stability in this case: the interest of contemporary Greek women authors is mainly directed towards narratives that depict the development and emancipation of the individual/hero, and more generally towards the figure of the artist.

By default, Rhea Galanaki also fits into this context, although in her public appearances she tries to distance herself from labels such as “feminist literature” or “women’s writing”, examples of which I provide at the relevant point in my text. As has already been argued, it is the slippage from fixed genre and value labels that makes this author’s work so valuable and that ultimately motivated the writing of this dissertation. After this excursus, I

turn explicitly to the problematic of postmodernism in contemporary Greek fiction, to which the remainder of the second chapter of the study is devoted. The term itself does not seem to have been in circulation until very recently, sometime in the 1990s, which, among other factors, can be explained by the perception of such conceptual and theoretical constructs as external to one's own national and, consequently, artistic tradition, which is typical of the Greek (the same, by the way, can be said of the Bulgarian...) cultural context. Thus, the entry of new trends is always refracted through the prism of the question to what extent the local is able to "catch up" and be in tune with the cosmopolitan – an interesting point in itself, testifying to the fact that even in the age of so-called globalization, the peculiarities of "local" thinking are far from being as easy to overcome as it may seem at first glance.

According to some contemporary scholars, it is problematic to speak of "postmodernism" in Greek literature in view of the ambiguity about the existence and persistence of phenomena/periods such as Modernism or the Avant-Garde, which are both historical precursors, as we know, but also conditions for the emergence of postmodern art in the so-called "North Atlantic" context. The structural discrepancies between Greek and Western societies identified by Gregory Jusdanis problematizes the drawing of parallels in the historiography of the respective national literary traditions. According to this researcher, "Modernism" in the case of Greece can only be spoken of in the 1930s, which means a delay in relation to Western European trends. Added to this is the fact that modern Greek literature did not seek a radical break with artistic and aesthetic traditions, not least because of the lack of a corresponding enlightened bourgeois culture in the era in question, which could have provided a social and cultural context for the penetration of such tendencies in a backward society at that time.

The absence of relevant stages in the development of literature in the decades prior to the Second World War is the reason that other scholars point to as an argument in favor of their claim that it is in fact very problematic to speak of postmodernism in Greece. Against this background, the position of Dimitris Tziovas, already mentioned, who develops an unconventional approach to the issues thus outlined, should again be highlighted. According to Tziovas, whose views I outline in my text, postmodern aesthetics should be thought of not as a historical phenomenon, but as a specific focus that allows for the thematization of issues and problems traditionally absent from the literary canon. In the case of Greece, the postmodern, understood precisely as a

strategy, consists in a shift of the gaze from public, i.e. collective, common places and figures, such as national identity, to the dimensions of the individual person and his or her idiosyncratic experience of reality.

Seen from this angle, the history of Greek literature in the last century can be fully identified with a shift of interest towards the private, which, according to Tziovas, can be seen in the context of the famous definition of the postmodern worldview by the French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard, proclaiming “the end of grand narratives”. At this point, I focus on the problem of history and identity addressed by Tziovas to illustrate not only the place Galanaki occupies against this background, but also the fact that discussions on the dimensions of the postmodern are extremely complex and should not be reduced to the use of generalizations.

Another Greek scholar, Vangelis Chatzivasileiou, dates the penetration of postmodern tendencies in Greek literature to the early 1990s. At this point in my text I also mention an alternative perspective on the issues at stake, advocated for example by the famous English sociologist Anthony Giddens, cited by Chatzivasileiou: that “postmodernism” does not really exist, at least in the form of a separate historical epoch, on account of which we should speak of modern tendencies that have reached a degree of development that clearly distinguishes them from examples of “classical” Modernity – at this point I use this expression with the clear awareness that we are talking about an oxymoron. Against this background, Chatzivasileiou makes an interesting attempt to classify the various Greek novels that have emerged in the last 35 years or so into those that tend towards meta-reflexive linguistic and narrative experiments, on the one hand, and others that tend towards an obliteration of the traditional value opposition between “high” and “low” literature, as well as towards a parodic appropriation of structures and techniques from popular genres. This approach is interesting, among other things, for the role that Chatzivasileiou assigns to the historical novel, since it is in this genre that Rhea Galanaki, the subject of my dissertation, appears. The Greek literary scholar, however, is inclined to see reactionary tendencies in the revival of interest in historical material, i.e. in this case he finds a nostalgia for the past, which at this point in my text I challenge, intending to reconstruct precisely the innovative treatment of the type of writing in question as it is present in Galanaki’s work.

Next in my exposition stands the research of the Greek scholar Anastasia Natsina, who dates the emergence of postmodernism in Greek literature to the historical year 1974. The liberalization not only of the political process but also of the social and cultural dynamics in Greek society resonates, according to the author, with the entry of precisely postmodern

tendencies in Greek literature. This renewal is expressed primarily in the appropriation of perspectives such as self-referentiality and irony, as well as in the problematization of the notion of language (including literary language) as an instrument for the representation of reality, a point that clearly appears to have a common place in the postmodern paradigm and has already been mentioned in this capacity above. A direct link can be established here with the discussion on the dimensions of identity discussed in the previous chapter of my thesis, given that Natsina refers to the contradictory unity between “faces” and “masks” as a central motif in contemporary Greek postmodern literature. The cultural conditioning of identity and the impossibility of distinguishing between the surface layer and the authentic deep core of the subject constitute a persistent topic in the samples of fiction she examines written in Greek in recent decades.

Against the backdrop of the debate on the dating of the entry of postmodern tendencies into the Greek context, at this point in chapter two I return once again to the research perspective of Dimitris Tziovas, who conceptualizes at second order the claims and positions of the various participants in the discussion. Tziovas distinguishes between different varieties in the treatment of postmodern thinking and postmodern aesthetics, speaking of binary oppositions such as that between relativists and rationalists, or between theorists of modernization and modernity on the one hand, and proponents of so-called postcolonial theory on the other. The brief excursus to this classification is important, in my view, not least because it illustrates the fact that the phenomenon of postmodernism constitutes an object of interest for a multilayered and multidimensional humanitarian discourse taking place both within academic communities in contemporary Greece and in the broader context of Greek society itself.

As a conclusion to the chapter, I focus on the main thematic and poetic varieties characteristic of the contemporary Greek postmodern novel: magical realism, a renewed interest in history, and an interest in the feminist perspective. With all the necessary qualifications, especially with regard to the third point presented above, I believe that their reconstruction is helpful in the analysis and interpretation of Galanaki’s novels. “Magical realism” in the Greek context should be spoken of primarily in cases where the literary narrative instrumentalizes figures and themes from myth for the purpose of its specific, in this case of course postmodern, aesthetic strategies. In this, apparently broader, usage, the term is certainly applicable to

Galanaki's work, a point that becomes apparent when once reads her texts that I have deployed in the third chapter of this dissertation.

The second point, that of the return to the historical past, is made by the aforementioned Vangelis Chatzivasileiou, who, however, makes the important distinction between the past as a source of pride and as an object of critical rethinking – making it clear that the latter approach characterizes the postmodern treatment of the literary genre in question. Like the individual, national identity is presented in its capacity as a product of cultural processes, i.e. as constructed – a point emphasized by Dimitris Tziovas, whose research has been cited many times so far.

The interest of postmodern Greek writers in the problematics of feminism is explored by Vangelis Anatasopoulos, who discusses not only the specific narrative techniques and motifs in the work of the ten female authors he examines (from Greece but also from other countries), but also highlights the increasingly prominent assertion of women in the contemporary Greek-language literary “field”.

The second chapter of the dissertation concludes with a summary of the place of Greek literature in recent decades in the context of the trends that are taking place globally. The aforementioned Roderick Beaton very adequately identifies the tendency towards an opening towards the cosmopolitan, which is countered by the opposite tendency of favouring themes of a national nature. For this researcher, it is the postmodern development of Greek literature that is the way to go in order to overcome this seemingly contrasting binary opposition. This potential for revealing not only new themes and motifs, but for asserting its own unique place among the multitude of national literary traditions, actually speaks in favor of the view expressed by Beaton that marginality and backwardness cannot really be spoken of in this case. This is why I conclude by arguing that instead of “postmodernism in Greek literature”, we should use the expression “Greek postmodernism”, in which the epigonal is minimized.

Rhea Galanaki is the author of postmodern novels thematizing both the dimensions of personal identity and the collective mythologies formed in the past that continue to influence contemporary thinking. I mention these points at the very end of chapter two in order to move on to the actual reading of the novels, which is done in the third part of the study.

The third chapter represents the core of the dissertation. In it I offer my own reading of each of the selected novels, following the chronological principle. The starting point for the interpretation is the triadic relationship between identity, memory and otherness. I approach the subject by focusing on key figures and motifs in the novels: the figure of the exile, the figure of the mother, the motifs of memory and forgetting, of return, of trauma and of loss. At

the beginning of the chapter, I comment on a short story by Galanaki,² in which she, as hostess, invites the characters of the first three novels - Ismail Ferik Pasha, Andreas Rigopoulos (Loui in the literary version) and Eleni Boukoura-Altamura - to an imaginary lunch. The feast is on the occasion of Clean Monday, the beginning of the Easter fast in Greece. The meal service is puppet-like, and the narrator herself plays with time – moving from the present to the past, both of her characters and her own, of her childhood years. The narrative is interesting not only because of the idea of an imaginary scene of conversation between the four, but also because it provides key characteristics about each of the interlocutors that assist in revealing more fully the characters and their creator, taking us literally “into the kitchen” of the author. The features that stand out during the conversation are: the longing for a return to the homeland and the realization of the impossibility of return in Ismail the unattainability of the ideal and the relationship between memory and hope in Loui, the passion for art and the vulnerability of the soul in Eleni.

Before proceeding to an analysis of each of the novels, I turn my attention to the treatment of identity in Galanaki’s trilogy, emphasizing in the light of what has been said so far in the study that the focus is not on some immutable core self, but on the journey its characters take to reach a conscious reconciliation between the two existences. In addition to the characters’ dual identities, I also highlight the special relationship they have with time. It does not flow in the usual way, from past to present to future, but seems to have all spilled into the past. The past is the time in which they reside and through the recollection of which they try to rethink their lives. Memory, on the one hand, is the fabric that makes up the individual narratives, and on the other, it is the link between them, thus constituting otherness as part of identity. In each of the characters the reason for residing in the past is different, as is the path to “releasing the times”. Martha, the heroine of the fourth novel, also embarks on a journey into her family’s past in order to discover old, silenced wounds and heal them.

The next sub-chapter of the third part is devoted to *The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha*. The novel recounts the life of the Crete-born Emmanuel Kambanis Papadakis, who was captured as a child by the Ottomans, probably during the liberation uprising of 1821, subsequently converted to Islam and managed to rise, now as Ismail Ferik, to

² *Καινούργιο γεύμα σε παλιό σερβίτσιο. Αντίδωρο στους δειπνοσοφιστές*. Γαλανάκη, Ρ. Ένα σχεδόν γαλάζιο χέρι. Αθήνα: Καστανιώτης, 2004, 67-77.

the post of Minister of War in Egypt. After a long stay in Egypt, travels in Europe and military campaigns in Syria with Sultan Muhammad Ali's eldest son, Ibrahim, Ismail returned to Crete at the head of the Egyptian army to put down another uprising on the island (1866-68), which, ironically, was financed from Athens by his elder brother Andonis Kambanis Papadakis. On returning to his birthplace, this time as a conqueror, Ismail found his death. The reasons for the end of his life are unclear. There are three versions of the hero's death, as there are three versions of his mother's fate after the burning of the Lasithi plateau in 1821.

After briefly introducing the novel's story, I turn to its structure, which compares myth with history. Drawing attention to the different opinions of literary scholars on the construction of myth and history in question, I offer my own interpretation, namely that in the first part the recourse to myth aims at idealizing the images of the lost homeland, at turning them into "icons" and at their zealous preservation in memory by the hero, which in the second part, upon his return, are gradually debunked. The aforementioned transition from the mythologization of images of the native to their gradual demythologization upon Ismail's return is essential to my analysis, which unfolds around two manifestations of memory: memory as trap and memory as bridge. I pay special attention to the duality of the hero, generated by a specific manifestation of the memory trap as a fusion between memory-imagination-nostalgia, and for this purpose I outline the poetics of nostalgia as presented by the French philosopher Vladimir Jankelevitch.

According to Jankelevitch, the sufferer of nostalgia is never and nowhere present, nor completely absent; he moves forward, but has his eyes fixed backwards, on what is lost – temporarily or forever (Jankelevitch 2011: 346). I pay special attention to Jankelevitch's statement concerning the real problem of nostalgia, which "is not absence in opposition to presence, but the past in relation to the future. The real cure for nostalgia is not going back to space but going back in time" (Jankelevitch 2011: 368).

In Galanaki's novel, the duality described by Jankelevitch becomes a key feature in the construction of the character's identity and narrative. Throughout the first part, Ismail, torn between the memory of the lost homeland and the acquired foreign one, between the boy he was and the man oriented to live in the "orbit of the knives", between the longing for return and the fear of disappointment, inhabits, like the exile, "a nostalgic nowhere" (Fadel, 2005). However, Galanaki's text adds another nuance concerning the impossibility of return. Ismail's disillusionment upon his return to Crete is due to the fact that he returns to his birthplace as an enemy and conqueror, not to the discrepancy between the dreamed and the

real due to the interference of time, nor to the impossibility of returning to childhood as presented by Yankelevitch.

The next part of the analysis is devoted to the motif of return. After tracing the gradual demythologization of idealized images due to the fact that Ishmail returns to the homeland as an enemy, I seek an answer to the question “How is an internal world organized around an impossible return possible?” referring to Paul Ricoeur’s concept of *idem* and *ipse* identity presented in chapter one. This time, however, I place it in the context of the problematics of (self-)recognition, mutual recognition, and appreciation developed by the French philosopher in his book *The Course of Recognition: Three Studies* (2006).

According to Ricoeur, (self-)recognition as identification refers to the *idem* identity, in which the self recognizes or is recognized (identified) as the same regardless of the changes that have occurred over time, and (self-) acknowledgement concerns the *ipse* identity. The self is not merely recognized by certain enduring characteristics or marks, but recognizes responsibility for its actions, including the capacity for promise. In my analysis, I trace how the above stages unfold in the novel, focusing particularly on the recognition/acknowledgement by the shadows of Ishmail’s parents, especially by his dead father.

Upon leaving the island as a captive, the hero makes a promise to himself to dedicate himself to memory. Thanks to keeping his promise not to forget his first life, he is recognized and acknowledged by the shadows of his dead parents. Here is what Ishmail’s father says when they meet:

To know that again I would prefer slaughter to dishonor. Another thing is the life that has fallen to you. You’ve thrived, and that’s good, but you’ve lost the connection, the continuity. And with yourself, you broke me. Your redemption is that you never wanted to, and never succeeded in, sending us into oblivion (Galanaki 1998: 129).

Memory in this case is seen as a bridge that connects father and son, past and future, and at the same time “gives rise to a continuity of self in time” (Teichert 2004:187). By withholding the promise not to forget his first life, Galanaki’s hero, who after the captivity becomes not just another – with another name, another religion, another language, but a polar opposite other – maintains his *ipse* identity.

The last part of the analysis concerns the return death and the hero's self-knowledge. In the epilogue of the novel, the Greek author offers her literary version of Ishmail's death and her interpretation of the return motif. In the house, after the *Nέκνια* ritual³ and after being recognized and acknowledged by the shadows of his parents, the hero expects "to meet his lost innocence", but his hopes are belied. Ishmail realizes that all along he has suffered and longed for something he thought was lost but which did not really exist. The realization of the illusion, painful as it is, leads the hero to catharsis. This moment could be said to mark the transition from melancholy, which in the novel is a particular kind of nostalgic melancholy, to grief, as analysed by Ricoeur, as "reconciliation with the lost object and with oneself" (Ricoeur 1998: 42).

In the conclusion to the novel, I draw attention to the ethical implications of the character's identity, as well as the way Galanaki constructs his character. By bringing the conflicts into the field of the soul and creating a character who lives with contradictions and who faces the vicissitudes of fate with dignity and humanity, the Greek author does not simply go beyond the stereotypes of *We-Others* and *Good-Evil*, but contributes to weighting the scales of collective memory not with "malignant memories that perpetuate resentment, hatred and violence" but with "benign memories" that have "therapeutic and moral value" (Assmann 2008: 54).

The third sub-chapter deals with an analysis of the novel *I Shall Sign as Loui*, dedicated to the life and work of the novelist Andreas Rigopoulos (1821-1889), a well-known orator, politician, and playwright in his time, who helped shape the modern image of Greece through his work, but was completely forgotten by his followers.

The novel is epistolary, consisting of nine letters that Loui writes to his imaginary lover Louisa eight days before he plunges into the waters of the Aegean Sea and finds his death, and an exodus in which he speaks to Louisa, eight and a half years after his disappearance into the "extreme anonymity of the waves" (Galanaki 2005: 233). In his letters, Loui narrates his life, starting from the very beginning – his birth in 1821, the year of the outbreak of the Greek liberation uprising – "insisting on the logic of life and the logic of narrative" (Galanaki 2005: 17), yet at the same time aware of the vulnerability of such a straightforward thread. Through writing, he attempts to rethink his life, to embody it in word

³ *Nέκνια* (comes from Ancient Greek *νέκνυς* – dead, dead man). This is the title of the eleventh song of Homer's *Odyssey*, *Nέκνια* is a ritual in which the living descend into the underworld and commune with the shadows of the dead to learn the future.

and thus to re-create it, giving it permanence. The image of Louisa as addressee adds a new, additional dimension to Loui's life, that of love.

Here, as in the first novel, "the presentation-explanation of the personality is built on the split of the protagonist" (Athanasopoulos 2003: 412). In this case, however, it is a split between the protagonist's total commitment to the revolutionary idea (and all the activities associated with it) and his not-so-devoted love for Louisa (Athanasopoulos 2003: 412). Drawing on this split, as well as on the male-female-writing triad, in my reading of the novel I examine the transition from male to female perception of the world, from publicity to intimacy, from celebrity to pseudonymity⁴ and anonymity. In addition to presenting said transition and the meanings it leads to, I pay attention to how Galanaki's text makes us empathize with the way a man and a woman experience and reimagine themes of revolution, rebellion, poetry, and love.

In order to interpret the transition from publicness to intimacy, I resort to the tools of C.G. Jung's analytical psychology. Jung's concept of *persona*, *animus* and *anima*. According to Jung, the *persona* is the mask that each person "puts on" in front of society; it is his or her visible, "compromising", conscious image that helps to make socialization painless. The *animus* is the unconscious, masculine dimension in every woman, and the *anima* is accordingly the unconscious feminine dimension in man. It could be said that Loui's choices so far, prior to the letters addressed to Louisa, are in favour of the *persona*. As an illustration of the above assertion, I provide the example of Galanaki's story "A New Lunch in an Old Dining Service", discussed at the beginning of Chapter Three. Speaking of Ishmail and Loui, the narrator says the following:

[...] *hiding as always – and forever – their true face behind some post. Hiding the unspoken in the publicly preached, the trauma like an old, folded letter under their austere clothes* (Galanaki 2004b: 72-73).

Louisa's appearance helps to realize the transition from public to intimate, to erase asymmetry (at least as a desire to do so), and to achieve a delicate balance between external and internal images.

⁴ The title of the novel derives from the first letter that Andreas Rigopoulos writes to Edgar Quinet, in which he says: "Instead of my name, I will sign myself Loui" (Au lieu de mon nom je signerai Loui, Galanaki 2005: 235)

After tracing the transition from *persona* to *anima*, I note that Galanaki's novel prompts the reader to reflect on vital questions about love, poetry, revolutions, and the differences in the way they are experienced by a man and a woman. While Loui is part of the great events of his time and is "visible" throughout, Louisa is on the periphery, invisible. She is drawn into the story through the activities of her husband who, as a prosecutor, fights the crime that has run rampant since the Greek uprising, as well as that of Loui. The events reach her somewhat laterally and are significant insofar as and as they affect her relationship with Loui. According to Galanaki's text, the woman is the guardian of the heart, her rebellion is in the realm of the intimate. It can be described as a rebellion because Louisa is giving herself over to an extramarital affair, and more importantly to a love doomed and held in exile, without a future – not only as a continuation but as a visual unfolding in the present. She does not rearrange the map of the world with ideas and actions but changes and expands the emotional map of the heart.

On the basis of the above, I conclude that in Galanaki's text we witness a return to archetypal images of man and woman and to a treatment of identity in which the latter is presented not as a construct but as a preservation of essence.

At the end of the analysis, I pay special attention to the transition from pseudonymity to anonymity that occurs in the protagonist. I interpret anonymity in the novel not only as an abstraction of identity (seen this time as fidelity to the past that gave rise to ideals of the future) from sameness, but also as an act of symbolization.

The word Maremma is present as a constant element in the novel. It is only at the end, in the exode, that it receives its explanation. (The spirit of) Loui, summoned by Louia, who reads his biography, explains the motto of the book, a paraphrase of a verse from Dante.⁵ Galanaki's character modifies Dante's words as follows:

Do thou remember me
unmade me maremma

Loui "made" a mistake by spelling the toponym Maremma⁶ with a lower-case letter. In this way, maremma becomes a symbol of the stagnation and stultification that occurs almost

⁵ It refers to the following verse from Purgatorio: "Do thou remember me who am the Pia; Siena made me, unmade me Maremma" (Alighieri 1975:178).

⁶ Maremma is a marshy area in Tuscany and, according to Dante, the site of the death of Pia de Tolomei.

imperceptibly in the hero's life and also imperceptibly affects all spheres of life – the maremma of revolutions, of ideas, of love, of writing, of forgetting.

However, the replacement of the capital letter of maremma with a lower case one has another meaning. It has to do with Loui's desire to have “absolutely no capital name, neither his own, nor that of a place, nor that of another person” (Galanaki 2005: 228). This way, the protagonist strives: “[...] to touch the ultimate, the ideal symbolism, that which exists only in anonymity” (Galanaki 2005:228).

In the novel's conclusion, I draw attention to the fact that Loui manages to gain catharsis not by serving the idea of freedom, but by acknowledging the intimate. With the woman's help he achieves the immortality he so desires, to abide in the memory of future generations. By dedicating the novel (to the life) of Andreas Rigopoulos (Loui), Galanaki plucks him from oblivion and takes him to the realms of eternity, through “the mediation of art, from the end of time, the only resurrection” (Galanaki 2005: 231).

While the first two novels are androcentric, **the third**, which is the subject of the analysis of **the next subchapter**, retells the story of the first educated Greek woman painter, Eleni Boukoura-Altamura (1821, Spetses - 1900, Spetses), who “put on” men's clothes to study painting in Italy. Her life was filled with many vicissitudes, twists and turns, and an overwhelming sadness. In Italy, in addition to acquiring the knowledge she craved, Eleni met the love of her life, the Italian painter and rebel Saverio Altamura (1822-1897), by whom she had three children. Their marriage did not last long. Not long after, Saverio leaves her, taking their youngest child with him. After the separation, Eleni returned to Athens, where she practiced her profession as a painter for twenty years. Eventually, she retired to her native house on the island. Spetses, where, with few exceptions, she did not leave until her death. There he lost his two children, originally illegitimate: his daughter Sophia and the promising painter Ioannis Altamuras, who died quite young, stricken with tuberculosis.

After Ioannis's death, Eleni burns her paintings and shuts herself away in her seaside house, surrounded by rumors that she practices magic to summon the spirits of her deceased loved ones, that she has exhumed the bodies of her children and tried to revive them, that she is not fully in her right mind. She died early in the new century and was gradually forgotten by her followers.

Although the novel unfolds, as Galanaki points out in an interview, on the basis of oppositions – light/darkness; reason/madness; memory/forgetfulness;

innocence/guilt; pleasure/grief; creation/destruction of creativity; closed, private female space/open; public male space, and so on – the interaction between these antinomic pairs is not one of opposition but of complementarity (Mike 2001: 345). The focus and expression of the aforementioned mogospectrality is the novel's heroine, Eleni, where the leading and main pair around which the others are spread is the female/male pair.

Before proceeding to the analysis of the novel, I juxtapose the heroine's image with that of Odysseus, posing the question of whether, like Homer's hero, Galanaki's Eleni is given a return. I seek an answer by outlining the fulcrums on which Eleni's story is built, which are those of hubris, punishment and mercy, which are set as thematic nuclei at the very beginning of the text and relate to the architectonics of the novel. In my reading, I focus particularly on the middle, most voluminous section of the novel, which is devoted to the multiplicity of the past and its incessant recall by Eleni, and which, according to literary scholar Lizzie Tsirimokou, "constitutes the backbone of the book" and has been called by her "an exercise in memory" (Tsirimokou 2000:356).

Before that, however, I proceed to "capture" the "volatile" image of the heroine through Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's interpretive model of the *rhizome* and of *lifeline* types.

According to the concept of Deleuze and Guattari, a life is composed of at least three types of lines. The first is "the line of rigid segmentation, where everything seems calculable, foreseen, the beginning and end of a segment, the passage from one segment to another" (Deleuze, Guattari 2009: 268). This line permeates all of life, affecting not only "large molar aggregates" but also small personal ones. With its predictability, sense of security and smooth passage through the different segments of life, it contributes to controlling and containing personal and collective identity, to maintaining the notion of life as connected. The second line, "a line of flexible, or molecular, segmentation, where segments are like quanta of deterritorialization" (Deleuze, Gattari 2009: 269), is superimposed on the first. It does not deal with solidified, established and reproducible segments, but with hard-to-define, elusive flows and particles, where pairs become doubles, multiply and turn into subtle similarities and differences. The two lines are in constant interaction, stratifying and modifying each other. The third line, "a line of flight, is like an explosion of the two segmentary series, [...] like an absolute deterritorialization" (Deleuze, Guattari 2009: 271). It has reached the end without being an end itself, it has crossed it without carrying it with it and in its wake. It is beyond. "It is a pure, abstract line" (Deleuze, Guattari 2009: 271).

In the analysis that follows, I consider how these lines cut across the life of Eleni. The molar line refers to Eleni's pre-determined life as a woman, to her fitting into the social roles predetermined by the patriarchal order – to be a wife and mother. Referring to various places in the novel, I point out that the heroine, because of her passion for painting, does not fit into this line from the start, unlike her mother, her sisters and her classmates. Because of this, she is ostracized. By linking the molecular line to Eleni's disguise as a man and her becoming a Nobody, I pay special attention to the role of travesty, understood as “an attempt to disguise the ‘true’ image with the determining help of a change of clothes and the emission of another image of the self” (Mike 2001: 15). Significantly, in Eleni, travesty is not an exclusively external event in the heroine's life that she resorts to temporarily in order to accomplish specific goals, but is another touch in her multidimensional self, as literary scholar Mary Mike points out.

After examining travesty and its relationship to identity, I turn to the role of love, noting that it leads to a clash between Eleni and Nobody and explaining why it has disastrous consequences for the heroine.

In the next part of the analysis, I consider the motif of return. The conclusion I reach is that Eleni, despite returning to the image of the ordinary woman, remains once again within the confines of otherness within the traditionally accepted roles of man and woman – of exclusive and excluded femininity.

Following literary critic Alexis Ziras' assertion that it is memory through which the novel takes shape and unfolds, I continue the analysis by outlining the various mnemonic layers that are spread throughout the text and the function of memory in relation to identity and otherness. I turn to the notion of grief as formulated by the British philosopher Peter Goldie. According to Goldie, grief is “not a feeling, sensation, or mental state occurring at a particular moment in time, but a process of activity and passivity that lasts a long time. For this reason, the model of grief is most fully rendered through narratives with powerful explanatory, revelatory and expressive functions” (Goldie 2011: 136-137). I also draw attention to the distinction made by Vladimir Yankelevitch regarding the difference between remembrance and remorse. I make special mention of the poetic function of memory, as represented by Mark Freeman. I conclude that the heroine, through recounting the past as facts and feelings, as well as through the aforementioned function of memory to reclaim and transform

the past, and the healing power of forgiveness, is able to mitigate remorse to less bitter memories.

The last part of the analysis is devoted to the presentation of what Rhea Galanaki calls the “an inner experience” of *the after-life-life-of-women*. It is a life that emerges when pain and suffering reach their highest point and explode the conventional boundaries of existence. After this explosion of bitterness, what remains is pure cognition – the inward gaze in which outside-in, life-death, joy-pain are simply different manifestations of a whole. *The after-life-life-of-women* is like a return from that world where you resided with your eyes open. This life, according to Rhea Galanaki’s novel, is the domain of women alone, since it is feminine affection in which “the dead lives alongside the living” (Galanaki 2004a: 259) and in whose power is contained the promise of resurrection.

Finally, Eleni, after the death of her children, humbles within herself the poles of her identity, Eleni and Nobody, and comes to their painless co-existence. She becomes other without being visibly other. “Becoming is neither one nor two, nor a relation of the two, but is between the two, a limit or line of flight, of falling, perpendicular to the two” (Deleuze, Guattari 2009: 405).

In the conclusion to the novel, I draw attention to the fact that Eleni always inhabits otherness and that until the very end her identity remains fluid, thus not fitting unconditionally and completely into Deleuze and Guattari’s model according to which there is always a return to “rigid segmentarity”.

The last sub-chapter of the third part is devoted to a reading of the novel *Fires of Judas, Ashes of Oedipus*, which poses in subtle nuances the problem of the relation between identity, memory and otherness. Unlike the so-called trilogy, in this novel otherness is not located within the confines of the self-seeking to reconcile the two disparate manifestations of its identity, but is externally located, whereas an internal, unconscious or unwilling to be conscious otherness is always present. The focus of the analysis is on the persistence of myths and their (mis)-use in the contemporary world (especially the myth of the scapegoat) on the one hand, and on the mother figure on the other.

The novel is a “double” book, woven from two stories, ancient and modern. The first retells a particular myth from the eastern Mediterranean, preserved in an anonymous Cretan religious poem of the late fifteenth – early sixteenth century, which correlates the image of Judas with the myth of Oedipus. The second story, woven into and interwoven with the mythological narrative, follows the life of a young Greek woman with a Jewish father who, after her mother’s death, travels to a remote Cretan village whose name she learns from her

mother in her dying hours. Martha Matsa, the protagonist of this story, arrives in the village to fill the vacant position of second teacher, but her choice is mostly dictated by a desire to trace the thread of her lineage and uncover the secrets of her mother's side of the family history. Her stay there is filled with many peripetias, confrontations (even bloody ones) and revelations.

Initially in the analysis I focus on the problem of otherness, referring to the Irish philosopher Richard Kearney's study *Strangers, Gods and Monsters: Interpreting Otherness*. Kearney, with the help of diacritical hermeneutics, distinguishes two kinds of otherness – as an essence and as a way of being perceived by others. “The ‘other’ is that which should be respected and accepted, whereas the ‘alien’ is associated with discrimination, suspicion, scapegoating, as in xenophobic, racist, anti-Semitic practices” (Kearney 2003: 70). By subjecting the Other to a critical reading, without diminishing the contributions of Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida on the rehabilitation of the Other in relation to the self, Kearney postulates that it is not enough simply to be open to the other outside or within us, given that this is of great importance, but we need to remain alert and critical in order to be able to distinguish between different kinds of otherness. In short, the Irish philosopher proposes that at critical moments the other in the alien and the alien in the other can be distinguished (Kearney 2003: 67). Building on what Kearney has said, in the next step of the analysis I trace how Martha as other is gradually perceived as alien. There are several reasons for this, the heroine comes from another place, Athens, but she also seems to come from another time, in which women have more or less left the constraints of the home and joined the public sphere, in contrast to the androcratic, conservative society of the village, in which the so-called “roles of life have remained separate and unchanged” (Galanaki 2009: 28). Above all, however, Marta becomes a real threat when she begins to see, with the help of her beloved Petros, the dark side of the village and tries to change the order. She then turns in the eyes of the villagers from other into an alien, into “a woman-Judas” (Galanaki 2009: 262) whose place is in the scapegoat fire.

As a follow-up, I focus on the myth of the atoning sacrifice and its contemporary manifestations, such as the Easter custom of burning an effigy of Judas, presented in the novel. I address the important issue of the contemporary misuse of myths, again analyzed by Paul Ricoeur. According to Ricoeur, the approach to myth should not be naïve but based on critical rethinking. We should be extremely vigilant

towards myths that are not universal, i.e. “To the extent that the myth is seen as a foundation of a particular community, to the absolute exclusion of all others, the possibilities for perversion [of the myth] – chauvinistic nationalism, racism, etc. – are already present” (Kearney 2004: 121). To prevent the distortion of myth, Ricoeur argues, it is necessary to critically evaluate both the content of each myth and the underlying intentions that animate it. Accepted uncritically by the villagers, the custom of Judas’ burning, which should have been a ritual of purification and redemption, became a means that “intensified the blind violence of racism, of bigotry, of extreme conceptions” (Galanaki 2009: 187) and activated the dark side of the community. Galanaki’s novel, however, does not only focus on the distortions and perversions in the use of myths and customs, but outlines an alternative to violence.

The analysis continues by reconstructing the alternative to violence in the novel, focusing on the figure of the mother, specifically the maternal, not simply as a dimension of the feminine, but as a way of seeing the world and relating to the other. By looking at each maternal figure individually – Kimbourea, the mother of Judas-Oedipus from ancient history, Angeliko, Agapi, and Martha, who is about to become a mother, from modern history – I emphasize the other, maternal position, which is associated with an ethic of care and non-violence. I pay special attention to Martha’s journey into her family’s past and Angeliko’s role in her growth and dealing with the ghosts of her past.

In the conclusion to the section devoted to the novel, I refer to the literary scholar Chrysomali-Henrich, who points to the anti-patriarchal structure that can be found at various levels in the text as a unifying element between mythological and contemporary history (Chrysomali-Henrich 2020: 191), as well as to Carroll Gilligan’s claim stating that patriarchy with its codes of “masculine honour” and “feminine goodness” undermines the emotional intelligence of the individual, affects the core of democracy and from the outset produces wounded individuals.

Galanaki’s novel, with its notion of time as a man but with a woman’s face, facilitates the integration of “masculine” and “feminine” qualities – justice, retribution, love and care – and sets a new way of dealing with trauma and violence.

In the conclusion, I summarize what has been said so far and add new meanings to it by re-mediating the relationship between identity, memory and otherness, considering the figure of the exile, the figure of the mother (the maternal), the motif of memory and forgetting, of loss and trauma. In contrast to the exposition in the thesis, I follow the thematic rather than the chronological principle.

The first figure I consider is that of the exile. Drawing on the inherent duality of exile discourse analyzed by the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, and the distinction he makes between external and internal exile, I point out that exile in Ishmail is more of an “external” exile, whereas in Loui and Eleni it is an “internal” exile. After tracing the differences in exile in each of the three characters, I note that they can also be called “exiles” in another, broader sense. Ishmail, Loui, and Eleni inhabit the “outskirts” of official history.

Each of them, in his own way, left his mark on the turbulent 19th century, but was forgotten by his followers. Through the act of writing, the Greek novelist plucks the characters from oblivion, recovers their stories and “resurrects” them, providing them shelter in the field of literature and in the memory of future generations. I also note that in the novel *Fires of Judas, Ashes of Oedipus*, the figure of the exile is less distinct.

The second figure I dwell on is that of the mother (the maternal). Again, I consider how it manifests in each of the novels. I note that it is essential to the fourth novel, in which the focus is mostly on the maternal as a way of perceiving the world and relating to the other, or to borrow Adriana Cavarero’s words, as an *inclination*, referring not only to the mother-child relationship, but also to the maternal attitude towards the defenseless and rejected by society, in opposition to the uprightness and rectitude (rectitude) of the male position (Voela 2020: 8). In this regard, I note that the maternal in the novel is presented as an antidote to violence, to evil.

I continue the summary with the memory motif. I consider the treatment it receives in the novels, but also link it to the new politics of memory, which, according to Aleida Assmann, does not focus solely on the creation of a heroic image of the self, but also acknowledges the historical violence of suffering and trauma within a new framework of moral and historical responsibility (Assmann 2015:206). Last but not least, I dwell on the fact that both personal and collective identity are thematized in Galanaki’s novels.

In the penultimate section of the conclusion, I turn to Galanaki’s poetics, which I have defined as a *poetics of resurrection*, and the role of (postmodern) literature in giving voice to the unspeakable and the invisible (as consciously or unconsciously forgotten). I also specify that postmodernism in the Greek author’s trilogy “does not reflect the disappearance of the sense of history, as some postmodern theorists have

argued, but uses the tension between history and literature, between historical truth and narrative truth, as its ‘main source of narrative energy’” (Zamora 1997: 11).

The last subchapter of the conclusion is devoted to the issue of trauma. Considering the difference between melancholy and grief as presented by Sigmund Freud and further developed by Ricoeur, I address the reworking of trauma by quoting from the novel *Fires of Judas, Ashes of Oedipus*. It is of interest not only because of the unconventional way in which Paradise is represented, as a place of work, of the transformation of melancholy into grief, of hopelessness into hope, but also because of the way in which time and life are represented, and which fully overlaps with Rhea Galanaki’s treatment of identity. Seen as both rupture and connectedness, and as “the two together”, it is a process of continually rethinking and reaffirming the self, with the help of the external and internal Other and of memory.

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CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE THESIS

1. The dissertation is the first Bulgarian academic study on the contemporary Greek author Rhea Galanaki.
2. Galanaki's work is not presented per se but is situated in the context of the development of contemporary Greek fiction, which constitutes a contribution from a literary-historical point of view.
3. For the first time, a reading of Rhea Galanaki's trilogy *The Life of Ishmail Ferik Pasha, I shall Sign as Loui, Eleni or Nobody*, and the novel *Fires of Judas, Ashes of Oedipus* is proposed on the basis of the relationship between identity, memory, and otherness.
4. The interpretation of the novels in terms of the postulates of so-called humanism is beneficial.
5. Of a contributory nature is the questioning of postmodernism in literature beyond the usual opposition between modernism and postmodernism.

PUBLICATIONS ON THE STUDY'S TOPIC

1. Предрешване и предрешеност в романа на Реа Галанакис „Елени или Никой“ и новелата „La Velata“ на Емилия Дворянова [Disguise and Predestination in Rhea Galanaki's novel "Eleni or Nobody" and Emiliya Dvoryanova's novella "La Velata"]. *Studia Classica Serdicensia*. том III. Литература, култура, действителност. София, редактор/и: В. Герджикова, Н. Панова, Д. Илиев, издателство: СУ „Св.Климент Охридски“, 2014, стр.:193-202.
2. Опит за психоаналитичен прочит на романа на Реа Галанакис „Ще се подписвам Луи“ [An attempt at a psychoanalytic reading of Rhea Galanaki's novel "I shall Sign as Loui"], *Филологията - класическа и нова*, редактор/и: проф. Димитър Веселинов, издателство: Университетско издателство „Св. Климент Охридски“, 2016, стр.: 407-413.
3. Една забравена звезда. Прочит на романа „Елени или Никой“ на Реа Галанакис [A Forgotten „Star“. A Reading of the Novel "Eleni or Nobody" by Rhea Galanaki]. *Балканистичен Форум*, том:1, брой:1, 2017, стр.:175-182.
4. Присъствие и проявления на постмодернизма в съвременната гръцка проза [Presence and Manifestations of Postmodernism in Contemporary Greek Fiction], „Език и литература“, брой:3-4/ 2019, стр.:127-142.
5. „Лицето на времето“: прочит на романа на Реа Галанакис „Огньовете на Юда, пепелища на Едип“ [“The Face of Time”: a reading of Rhea Galanaki's novel "Fires of Judas, Ashes of Oedipus"], *Литература, етнос и култура*, редактор/и: Цв. Ракъовски, Ст. Стоянов, Т. Стоянова, Ел. Азманова, Б. Илиева, Ел. Калъпсъзова, М. Чорбаджийска, Ил. Недин, Н. Сотирова, В. Божинов, издателство: „Инфовижън“, 2021, стр.:117-126, ISBN:978-619-7442-65-6.
6. Ο λογοτεχνικός χαρακτήρας του γενίτσαρου στα μυθιστορήματα „Ο βίος του Ισμαήλ Φερικ Πασά: Spina nel cuore“ της Ρέας Γαλανάκη και „Ο Μανόλ με τα εκατό αδέρφια“ του Αντόν Ντόντσεφ [The literary character of the janissary in the novels "The Life of Ismail Ferik Pasha: Spina nel cuore" and "Time of Parting" by Anton Donchev], *Ελληνισμός και Βαλκάνια – αμφίδρομες σχέσεις: γλώσσα, ιστορία, λογοτεχνία, πολιτισμός (1453-2019) Πρακτικά 4ου*

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