

**‘Watch the World  
Spinning / Gently Out of  
Time’<sup>1</sup>: Wanderlust,  
Counter-Spaces, and a  
Political Praxis for Gen  
X in Angela  
Dimitrakaki’s Works**

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**« Regarder le monde en  
train de tourner en rond/  
et sortir doucement du  
temps » : Wanderlust,  
contre-espaces et une  
praxis politique pour la  
génération X dans les  
travaux d’Angela  
Dimitrakaki**

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**Abstract**

*In the literary works of Greek author Angela Dimitrakaki, the idea of displacement as a contemporary Wanderlust is often found at the centre of the plot, acting both as a narrative mechanism and as an account of Gen X’s coming of age, growing older and experiencing life in an era of late capitalism. Dimitrakaki’s characters often reject what is socially and politically expected of them, including the pressure to work and/or to gestate. Their melancholy within a globalised world often contradicts with their individual privileges and academic knowledge, whilst events shape their outlook and conscious political praxis. This article intends to study the characters’ rejection of late capitalism*

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<sup>1</sup> Lyrics from the song “Out of Time” by Blur (*Think Tank*, 2003), a favourite band amongst Gen Xers, perhaps including Dimitrakaki’s characters. I would like to express my gratitude to the anonymous peer reviewers who suggested changing the original title and provided valuable feedback on this article, as well as to Alina Iorga for everything; I am sure that her hard work and dedication will lead to a compelling publication.

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*as a conscious choice realised through the state of being on the road, the construction of alternative spaces, and mental exercises in three of Dimitrakaki's novels, written in three different periods: Antarctica (1997), The Manifesto of Defeat (2007), and Aeroplast (2015). More specifically, I wish to examine the political praxis of these characters in relation to escapism, Boym's concept of "diasporic intimacy", Benjamin's "Angel of History", and Foucault's heterotopias, with an emphasis on episodes stressing the collective trauma of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the threat of the far-right.*

**Key words:** Greek literature, Contemporary Novel, Diasporic Intimacy, History, Heterotopias

### Résumé

*Dans les travaux littéraires de la romancière grecque Angela Dimitrakaki, l'idée du déplacement comme un Wanderlust contemporain se trouve souvent au centre de la narration, fonctionnant à la fois comme un mécanisme narratif et comme le récit de la génération X, de sa jeunesse et âge adulte aussi bien que de ses expériences au sein du capitalisme tardif. Les personnages de Dimitrakaki rejettent d'ailleurs les attentes sociales et politiques, y compris la pression de travailler et/ou d'avoir des enfants. Leur mélancolie dans ce monde globalisé se met souvent aux antipodes de leurs privilèges personnels et connaissances académiques, alors que des événements sculptent leurs opinions et leur action politique consciente. Cet article entend étudier les manières dont les personnages rejettent le capitalisme tardif à travers leur décision d'être toujours en mouvement, la construction des autres espaces et certains exercices mentaux dans trois romans de Dimitrakaki, composés pendant trois périodes différentes : Antarctique (1997), Le manifeste de la défaite, et Aéroplast (2015). Plus spécifiquement, je souhaite examiner l'action politique de ces personnages par rapport à leur fuite du réel, le concept d'« intimité diasporique » proposé par Boym, l'Ange de l'Histoire tel qu'il fut conçu par Benjamin, et les hétérotopies foucaaldiennes, tout en mettant l'accent sur certains épisodes qui explorent le trauma collectif du 20<sup>ème</sup> siècle et la menace de l'extrême droite.*

**Mots-clés :** littérature néo-hellénique, roman ultracontemporain, intimité diasporique, Histoire, hétérotopies

*Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.  
Without her you wouldn't have set out.  
She has nothing left to give you now.*

C. P. Cavafy, "Ithaka", *C.P. Cavafy: Collected Poems*,  
translated by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard

In this car, a bad batch Land Rover Discovery with oil leaks and a constant need for tire alignment, I crossed Europe all the way from Newcastle to Ancona. Saw zero monuments. The three of us took turns at driving, day and night, even Ralph, who didn't actually know how to drive. We ate chips and cheese-tomato sandwiches prepared somewhere in northern England. We stopped to pee at gas stations and then quickly ran inside the car again [...]. We tried to get a glimpse of Europe, passing before our very eyes outside the car windows, with a speed that made us dizzy. (Dimitrakaki, 1997, p. 18-19)<sup>2</sup>

This passage, taken from Angela Dimitrakaki's debut novel *Antarctica* (1997), maps out a road trip across continental Europe undertaken by members of Gen X, sometime in the early- or mid-1990s. Ever since, Dimitrakaki's literary works, which include mostly novels, are focused on the vast experiences of this generation that came of age in a rapidly changing world, sometime around the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the USSR. With globalisation becoming a reality, the Internet in its early stages, and a new millennium on the horizon, Gen X produced an extraordinary mosaic of artistic works, often unpredictable, as pointed out by director and journalist Peter

<sup>2</sup> The original text in Modern Greek: "Στο αυτοκίνητο εκείνο, ένα Λαντ Ρόβερ Ντισκάβερι κακής φουρνιάς που έχανε διαρκώς λάδια κι ήθελε ευθυγράμμιση κάθε τρεις και λίγο, διέσχισα όλη την Ευρώπη, από το Νιουκάστλ μέχρι την Αγκόνα. Από αξιοθέατα μηδέν. Οδηγούσαμε κι οι τρεις επιβαίνοντες εναλλάξ νύχτα μέρα, ακόμη κι ο Ραλφ που ήταν άσχετος. Σ' όλη τη διαδρομή τρώγαμε πατατάκια και σάντουιτς τυρί ντομάτα φτιαγμένα στη βόρεια Αγγλία. Κατουρούσαμε κυρίως σε βενζινάδικα κι ύστερα τρέχαμε να χωθούμε πάλι στο αυτοκίνητο. [...] προσπαθούσαμε να κοιτάμε την Ευρώπη που περνούσε έξω απ' το παράθυρο με ταχύτητα που μας έφερνε στα όρια του ιλίγγου" [our translation].

Hanson (2002, p. 8), reflecting a multifaceted social, cultural, and political background (Wilson, 2019), as well as all kinds of artistic influences and intra-art dialogues. Dimitrakaki's *Antarctica* captures the rhythm of this world, balancing somewhere in between the aftermath of the Cold War, the lasting mark of the 20th century's multiple collective transgenerational traumas, and a type of nostalgia difficult to confront, one that focuses simultaneously on the past and the future by "longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed" (Boym, 2001, p. xiii).

Dimitrakaki's characters tackle these questions through theoretical concepts such as Benjamin's Angel of History, or mental exercises about the "Centre" and the "Periphery", which could in fact challenge Eurocentrism in its dominant, westernized form, and introduce new ways of being (as in *existing*) in communities. The latter play an extremely important role in Dimitrakaki's works, often occupying a central conceptual place in her novels, as is the case with "Centre" and "Periphery" in *The Manifesto of Defeat* (2007) or offering the backdrop for key moments in the plot, like the community of the "Magic Mountain" in *Aeroplast* (2015). Regarding their spatiality, the way they exist in space-time, these communities often take the form of "heterotopias" or "counter-spaces", a notion introduced by Michel Foucault to describe spaces that function both as "localised utopias" and as "the contestation of all other spaces"<sup>3</sup> (2015a, p. 1246). At the same time, these spaces emphasise the characters' need to escape from structures linked to late capitalism, including having a steady 9-5 job and a permanent address, or *contributing* to the well-being of the system, often at the expense of their own desires, both on a personal and on a communal level. Throughout her works, Dimitrakaki challenges the stereotypical representation of the rebellious youth that turns conservative, giving space to characters' arcs that question the systemic, heteronormative lives often deemed as "successful" within a capitalist society. The heterotopias in question are often

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<sup>3</sup> The original text in French: "*la contestation de tous les autres espaces*" [our translation].

presented as the physical and spatial contestations of this society, constructed as opposites to the capitalist experience, and allowing Dimitrakaki's characters to act as examples, *paradigms*, of rejection of late capitalism. This allows for a series of political reflections, often on a philosophical level which adheres to the characters' academic pursuits or interests. The fact that most of them are highly educated and yet reject the late capitalist societal system (often while being simultaneously rejected by it) stresses recurring questions in her works around collective (historical and experienced) memory, nostalgia, and politics.

This article intends to examine the ways collective memory, politics (both political theory and praxis), and nostalgia intertwine with the experiences of Dimitrakaki's characters, focusing more specifically on three of her novels, published in three different decades and, therefore, reflecting three different periods in time: *Antarctica* (1997), *The Manifesto of Defeat* (2007), and *Aeroplast* (2015). These three novels were chosen specifically because they manage to capture the way the idea of travelling, at first perceived as a means to escape societal pressure and expectations, is progressively transformed into a conscious rejection of late capitalism: *Antarctica's Wanderlust* becomes a political praxis in *The Manifesto of Defeat* which remains theoretical, and a fully realised political act in *Aeroplast*. However, it is important to note how all three forms of escapism/rejection constitute examples of a conscious political praxis within the line of Marcuse's idea of "productive imagination" (Tally, 2013, p. 15). Central themes in the character's arcs are, on the one hand, the acknowledgment (often difficult on a personal level) of a collective traumatic past, and on the other, the fear of a disastrous future, linked to the threat of far-right extremism and imperialism. The first part of the article will examine the concept of escapism in *Antarctica* and *Aeroplast* in regard to politics, nostalgia and globalisation, notably through Boym's concept of "diasporic intimacy", while the second will focus on the ways collective memory and trauma are addressed through the creation of alternative, heterotopic spaces and Benjamin's Angel of History in *Aeroplast*, and through the

concept of “Periphery” in *The Manifesto of Defeat*. What this article wishes to highlight is the multi-layered way in which politics, language, identity, and action in times of financial crisis and political instability are addressed in the works of Angela Dimitrakaki, often with an underlying tone of sarcasm, and melancholy.

### **Escaping, dropping one’s native language, and dancing to Britpop: *Wanderlust* as a form of nostalgia**

The quote “Not all those who wander are lost” (Tolkien, 1995, p. 170), originally part of a poem Gandalf quoted to Frodo in J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Fellowship of the Ring* (1954), has been circulating online for quite some time now, providing social media accounts dedicated to travel with inspiration for their bios and post captions. Often used in order to represent travel as a conscious choice or lifestyle – and not as something that happened by accident – this quote, as it is perceived within today’s social media context, couldn’t be any further from Dimitrakaki’s literary universe, starting with the protagonist and first-person narrator of *Antarctica*, Nora. Nora spends two years travelling around the US without a specific purpose in mind, wandering aimlessly amongst states, working shifts at Greek-American restaurants, getting to know all kinds of different people, and contacting old acquaintances from Athens who have immigrated to New York while looking for a sofa to spend the night. Throughout her story arc, Dimitrakaki masterfully distinguishes between travelling with a purpose (eg. to learn more about a country’s history, go sightseeing, visit specific areas of interest etc.), and travelling as a political act of rejection of the “totalized system of contemporary capitalism”, to quote Tom Moylan from his work on utopian imagination (2014, p. 50). Dimitrakaki’s characters reclaim time as their own, establishing a “temporal other-time” (Tally, 2013, p. ix), and distinguishing themselves from the demands of high productivity. They could be described as “purposeless” or “vagabonds”, since they refuse to adapt to societal demands, and

choose to exist in this state of “laziness”, that has been dubbed morally wrong by the socio-economic system of late capitalism, which values high productivity, achieved specifically through the alienation of workers from their own labour (Jameson, 2005, p. 150, and Marx, 1887, p. 184).

When Nora returns to Greece claiming that she has spent “a whole year”<sup>4</sup> travelling around the US, her mother corrects her, saying “You mean two years”<sup>5</sup> (Dimitrakaki, 1997, p. 30). Her daughter’s choice to live in the alternative time-space of constant travelling and, therefore, to reject the demands of late capitalism, make her a “black sheep”, along with her other ventures: she has abandoned her studies (a BSc in Biology), she is not interested in finding a job that would be considered valuable by society, she moves in at her best friend’s flat, used as a communal living and working space for people their age, and she gradually becomes estranged from her family, especially her father, even though she continues to look for her older twin sisters at gigs and underground parties. Her personal experiences seem to echo the collective experience of Gen X. Let’s take, for example, Irvine Welsh’s debut novel *Trainspotting* (1993), which went on to have a successful cinematic adaptation, and chronicles heroin use in Leith, Edinburgh through the perception of different characters. Michael Gardiner observes how Welsh’s narration style is linked to “a loss of faith in the configuring of space and time” which, in postcolonial theory, could be addressed through the representation of colonies as “atemporal ‘outsides’” in contrast to the “inside” of big metropolises like London, Glasgow, and Edinburgh (Gardiner, 2006, p. 93).

In *Antarctica*, Dimitrakaki seems to follow the same trail, with an important exception, since her characters seem unable to accept the loss of their personal time. This difficulty is often linked to their refusal to adapt to the (mostly heteronormative) systemic norms around them (productive,

<sup>4</sup> The original text in Modern Greek: “ένας ολόκληρος χρόνος” [our translation] (Dimitrakaki, 1997, p. 30).

<sup>5</sup> The original text in Modern Greek: “Δύο χρόνια εννοείς” [our translation] (Dimitrakaki, 1997, p. 30).

reproductive, or other), to fulfil the societal functions that are expected of them and, as a result, to sustain the socio-economic system of late capitalism. Therefore, they embark on endless travels, without a specific destination in mind, practicing an escapism of sorts. And when Nora returns and is dragged into the same reality from which she once tried to break away, it is her best friend, Stephie, who decides to embark on the same type of travelling herself, booking a one-way ticket out of Greece; the novel ends with the following description, which seems to capture the “loss of faith” that Gardiner finds in *Trainspotting*:

She sends me a kiss without turning to look at me. I see its reflection on a large, tinted window. I also see myself standing next to the Samsonite. An airplane appears to be passing slowly above our heads, even though it's passing very quickly, I stare at it, and Stephie disappears into Departures. I think about the fact that I am inside an airport with a suitcase, and I'm not leaving, nor returning from anywhere. (Dimitrakaki, 1997, p. 153)<sup>6</sup>

The last word in the original Modern Greek, which I opted to translate with “anywhere” for the better flow of the text, is actually “πουθενά”, which means “nowhere”. The idea of nowhere, of no-space serving as a home or a base for Dimitrakaki's characters, could be part of a reflection around the author's generation, which feels lost while growing up in a world seemingly full of endless possibilities. Dimitrakaki's characters, as demonstrated in the passages from *Antarctica* cited above, often find themselves in-between situations, since they are unwilling to comply themselves with societal standards which, at

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<sup>6</sup> The original text in Modern Greek: “Μου στέλνει ένα φιλή με την πλάτη γυρισμένη. Το βλέπω ως αντανάκλαση σ' ένα μεγάλο φινέ τζάμι. Βλέπω και τον εαυτό μου δίπλα στη Samsonite. Ένα αεροπλάνο μοιάζει να περνάει αργά ενώ περνάει γρήγορα από πάνω μας, στρέφω τα μάτια μου σ' αυτό και η Στέφη εξαφανίζεται στις Αναχωρήσεις. Σκέφτομαι πως βρίσκομαι σ' ένα αεροδρόμιο με μια βαλίτσα, χωρίς ούτε να φεύγω για κάπου αλλά ούτε και να έρχομαι από πουθενά.” [our translation] (Dimitrakaki, 1997, p. 153).



the same time, they are expected to perform. Many of them, like Nora and Stephie, often decide to travel without a specific destination, defying both the conception of “labour time”, namely the “socially necessary” time of work within a capitalist society (Harvey, 2018, p. 55), and patriarchal expectations about cisgender women or, as Judith Butler puts it, “the institution of motherhood as compulsory for women” (1999, p. 118).

This dimension of travel in Dimitrakaki’s works is perhaps seen more clearly in her later works, such as *Aeroplast* (2015), a polyphonic novel about the financial crisis in Europe. The first of the five narrators, who could also be described as the protagonist of the novel, Antigone, is a woman in her early forties who abandons her young child with their father. Her refusal of societal norms and, more specifically, of the expectation of cisgender women to gestate and to care for the child up until adulthood, creates a rupture between what is socially expected and accepted of her (to become what society calls a “good wife and mother”) and what she really wants to do (escape from these norms). The choice of her name is also interesting, since it recalls another female character who challenged societal norms, Antigone, a mythological figure and the titular heroine of Sophocles’ tragedy (c. 441 BC), who defied King Creon’s order and went on to bury her brother Polynices. Contrary to the mythological Antigone, Dimitrakaki’s heroine has the possibility to escape from societal punishment, the disapproval and hinted estrangement of her family, and the reaction of her partner, so she flees to Barcelona.

Antigone’s decision also reflects her own Greek identity within a globalised world, constructed by both internal (national) and external (European and global) discourses, while constituting, as Alexis Radisoglou describes it “a radical transgression of one of the fundamental laws of the heteronormative matrix” (2021, p. 583). The novel itself is set at the peak of the financial crisis, during which countries of the European South, Greece amongst them, experienced an unprecedented attack by the Northern European and international press, including the construction of the derogatory and racist

acronyms PIGS (Portugal, Italy, Greece, Spain) and GIPSI (same countries, plus Ireland), and extremely politicized, if not spiteful, magazine covers and journal front-pages, including the infamous *Focus* one with Aphrodite of Milos giving the finger. Thus, the Gen Xers fleeing society in *Aeroplast* experience a different social and political context than the ones in *Antarctica*. Most of them are highly-educated individuals, often holding PhDs in the humanities, who refuse to occupy the position of organic intellectuals within societal and political institutions<sup>7</sup>.

However, this refusal is not only the result of free-will: at the time when *Aeroplast* is set, the humanities had already been devalued and affected by neoliberal university politics (Costa, 2019). This conception of knowledge as being constructed, distributed, and created for profit and for the creation of yet another war machine, recurring in Dimitrakaki's works, also points to Foucault's analysis of the order of discourses and their relation to power structures within a given society (Foucault, 2015b, p. 228-229). It could also explain Antigone's mostly pessimistic worldview; she is a novelist and holds a PhD in the humanities but finds herself pressured within the life of a housewife and a mother, refuses to adhere to heteronormative family dynamics, and arrives penniless in Barcelona. There, she sublets an acquaintance's room at a shared flat, and she quickly develops a sexual relationship with her new Catalan roommate, Iker, another one of *Aeroplast*'s narrators; at one point, she says to him:

“We’re the most foolish of all, the theoretically privileged exception to the rule, the dead-end of the European development plan. We’re the super educated kids of the lower-middle class, and your case is even worse than mine, because your parents were workers at the factory, why on earth would you go to study for a doctorate in anthropology, you’d better go and become a plumber, if there are educational institutions for that kind of thing. What I mean to say, Iker, is that we don’t

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<sup>7</sup> For more details around intellectuals' role during the financial crisis in Greece, see Lakka and Papadopoulos, 2020.

exist. We're not even a footnote in a statistics paper of a ministry of Labour. No one takes any responsibility for us, no one pities us. It's also our age. We're not young, we're not retired, we are not those we were supposed to be, and we're screwed because of that". (Dimitrakaki, 2015, p. 163-164)<sup>8</sup>

It could be this condition precisely that urges Dimitrakaki's characters, some of whom identify as Marxists, to find comfort in nostalgia, both for a socialist past that did not exactly exist due to power abuse, and for a home that no longer exists. After their travels all across Europe these characters experience what Boym describes as "diasporic intimacy", which occurs "in a foreign language that reveals the inadequacies of translation" but, at the same time, demonstrates that a single home no longer exists and, therefore, is a dystopic condition rooted "in shared longing without belonging" (2001, p. 252). It is important to note here that this condition, in the case of Dimitrakaki's characters, does not strip them of their privilege, since none of them comes from a country outside the European Union, no one is an asylum seeker, no one is a refugee forced to leave their homeland behind. This element adds a reflective, even sarcastic, dimension to the lives of these individuals; their Eurocentric worldview is only ever challenged at rare occasions, when they feel the urge to work with rescue missions, with groups like *Doctors Without Borders*, pushed by their white saviour complex, and by a feeling of emptiness which could also be a product of late capitalism, another type of alienation.

<sup>8</sup> The original text in Modern Greek: "Είμαστε οι γελοιότερες των περιπτώσεων, οι θεωρητικά προνομιούχες εξαιρέσεις, η τρύπα του ευρωπαϊκού πλάνου ανάπτυξης. Υπερμορφωμένοι γόννοι μικροαστικής καταγωγής, κι εσύ χειρότερος από μένα γιατί οι γονείς σου ήτανε στη φάμπρικα, τι δουλειά έχεις να κάνεις διδακτορικά στην ανθρωπολογία, καλύτερα να υπήρχανε σχολές για υδραυλικούς και να 'χες βγάλει μία. Αυτό που θέλω να πω, Ικέρ, είναι ότι δεν υπάρχουμε ούτε ως υποσημείωση στατιστικής μελέτης ενός υπουργείου Εργασίας. Κανείς δεν αναλαμβάνει καμία υποχρέωση απέναντί μας, κανείς δεν μας οικτρίζει. Είναι κι η ηλικία μας. Δεν είμαστε νέοι, δεν είμαστε συνταξιούχοι, είμαστε αυτοί που δεν ήταν αυτό που θα έπρεπε να είναι, και την πατήσαμε [our translation] (Dimitrakaki, 2015, p. 163-164).

Language is another central theme in Dimitrakaki's works, especially *Aeroplast*. Speaking in a language that is not their own could also be seen as a means of escaping a capitalist society facing multiple crises, but, at the same time, resonates with Gen X's coming of age in a world full of Britpop tunes. Most of Dimitrakaki's heroines have studied in the UK for their graduate degrees and possess a deep knowledge of the British musical scene of the 1980s and the 1990s, titles of songs and bands often being referenced throughout her works. As Claudia Leuders observed in her PhD thesis, nostalgia as a mechanism was crucial in Britpop's success, since its "retro-aesthetics with its heavy use of cultural references created a strong sense of nostalgia and played a significant role in Britpop's success in the UK as it deliberately connected the contemporary culture of the younger generation with the cultural heritage of older generations which strengthened Britain's image as a great pop nation" (2017, p. 28). Leuders's analysis showcases, amongst other things, the instability of a globalised world, in which nationalistic rhetoric (even if hinted in the case of the construction of a "national pop music", as was the case with Britpop) often comes to deconstruct the illusion of free travelling and *Wanderlust* present in Dimitrakaki's works.

The deconstruction of the illusion of free travelling, along with the impossibility of nostalgia, as seen in Boym's diasporic intimacy, are not unrelated to the geopolitical reality of globalisation experienced by Dimitrakaki's characters. Within such a socio-political context, full of people that grew up bilingual and became polyglots, the question of one's native language can be examined from various perspectives; in the novel *Inside a Girl Like You* (2009), focused on a Greek-American doctoral student's spontaneous arrival in Athens, Dimitrakaki takes on the question of language as follows: "I am the person without a language, alingual instead of bilingual, as mom wanted" (Dimitrakaki, 2009, p. 198)<sup>9</sup>. While presented with

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<sup>9</sup> The original text in Modern Greek: "Είμαι ο άνθρωπος χωρίς γλώσσα, άγλωσση αντί για δίγλωσση, όπως επιθυμούσε η μαμά" [our translation] (Dimitrakaki, 2009, p. 198).

the question of why she herself continues to write in Modern Greek while she has lived a substantial part of her life in Edinburgh, where she teaches Art Theory at the University of Edinburgh, Dimitrakaki herself answered: “Up until now I have resisted [the urge to write fiction in English], because writing in Greek is something of a privilege, [...], a connection to a large part of myself, my friends, my child”<sup>10</sup> (Giannopoulos, 2017). However, we could also view her choice as a political one, an effort to preserve the specific kind of nostalgia Boym examines, at a time of frenetic geopolitical changes, political corruption, and multiple crises, as well as a commentary in favour of Southern European and Eastern European identities. This brings us to another substantial element in Dimitrakaki’s works related to both nostalgia, language and escapism: space.

### **The an(g)e(l)nts of history and historical existence as a political experiment**

“The second time I took a train to Portbou, I was a different person” (Dimitrakaki, 2015, p. 13)<sup>11</sup>. This is the opening of Dimitrakaki’s *Aeroplast*, the polyphonic composition about the 2010s in which every single one of the five protagonists takes subsequently the role of the narrator. Through this structure, Dimitrakaki manages to offer to the reader five distinct viewpoints on politics, power dynamics, language, families, and gender. The first and largest account of the novel belongs to Antigone, the Greek novelist and PhD holder, whose rejection of nuclear family structures led her to a continuous movement: first, she briefly returned to Athens, Greece, her hometown, where she was violently beaten by the police during a protest against the country’s austerity measures and translated a

<sup>10</sup> The original text in Modern Greek: “Έχω αντισταθεί ως τώρα, γιατί το να γράφω λογοτεχνία στα ελληνικά είναι κάτι σαν προνόμιο [...], κάτι σαν ύστατη σύνδεση με ένα μεγάλο μέρος του εαυτού μου, με τους φίλους μου, το παιδί μου” [our translation] (Giannopoulos, 2017).

<sup>11</sup> The original text in Modern Greek: “Τη δεύτερη φορά που πήρα το τρένο για το Πορ’ Μπούν ήμουν ένας άλλος άνθρωπος.” [our translation] (Dimitrakaki, 2015, p. 13).

theoretical work for her publisher, because she was in need for money. She afterwards moved to Catalonia, first to Barcelona, where she shared a flat with her roommate and later sexual partner Iker, and then to the “Magic Mountain”, an autonomous, self-organized, ecological community somewhere in the mountain Montserrat.

This community, along with the general importance of space, both on a (meta-) textual and on a narrative level, will be this part’s main focus. Let’s start with Portbou, a small coastal town near the Spanish-French border, mostly known for being the resting place of philosopher Walter Benjamin, a “*lieu de mémoire*” (Radisoglou, 2021, p. 572). While on the train with the four other narrators of the story, Antigone remembers her first visit there with Iker:

We went on our first trip to Portbou alone, when we were a couple [...] It was our only trip and the worst place we had ever been to. A wuthering coastal village. Frozen codfish for lunch. Water the shade of ash. Natural elements that forced us to walk hand-in-hand, which was against our idiosyncrasy, at least when we were at the centre of a city. Iker couldn’t hold himself and had peed on Benjamin’s monument, claiming that it was the most isolated and best-preserved site in the whole village. (Dimitrakaki, 2015, p. 22-23)<sup>12</sup>

Benjamin’s works, introduced constantly in the narration through Antigone’s PhD and Iker’s ongoing doctoral research, seem to provide an intellectual context that surpasses limits and borders and is mainly European, therefore hinting at a shared European identity between the five narrators. While examining Portbou, a place that “has little to do with Benjamin”, as she observes,

<sup>12</sup> The original text in Modern Greek: “Το πρώτο ταξίδι στο Πορ’ Μπού το είχαμε κάνει οι δυο μας, όταν ήμασταν ζευγάρι. [...] Ήταν η μόνη μας εκδρομή και το χειρότερο μέρος που είχαμε βρεθεί ποτέ. Ένα χωριό ανεμορδαμένο, παραθαλάσσιο. Μεσημεριανό κατεψυγμένου μπακαλιάρου. Νερό σε απόχρωση στάχτης. Στοιχεία της φύσης που μας υποχρέωναν να περπατάμε χέρι χέρι, που ήταν αντίθετο στην ψυχροσύνησή μας, τουλάχιστον όταν δεν βρισκόμασταν στο κέντρο μιας πόλης. Ο Ικέρ δεν είχε κρατηθεί κι είχε κατουρήσει στο μνημείο του Μπένγιαμιν, με το επιχείρημα ότι ήταν το πιο απομονωμένο και προστατευμένο σημείο του χωριού.” [our translation] (Dimitrakaki, 2015, p. 22-23).

and yet, is his resting place, Boym ponders on the very concept of the “European writer”, perfectly embodied by the philosopher (2001, p. 31). She also interprets Benjamin’s concept of the Angel of History, along with Nietzsche’s eternal return and Baudelaire’s love at first sight, as examples of “scenes of reflective modern nostalgia” (Ibidem, p. 22). Another famous scene of reflective modern nostalgia is the one in *Search of the Lost Time* (1913), where the Proustian narrator recalls Combray, the village of his childhood, through the taste of madeleines (Proust, 2009, p. 144-145). These examples illustrate that nostalgia, whether evoked by the senses or by knowledge, as in Antigone and Iker’s case, functions also through the acceptance of finitude, of the fact that the object of nostalgia cannot be reproduced in the present. Antigone herself ponders on these questions:

How much time has passed since something. I was well aware that western literature was full of nostalgia for distances related to time. For lost times, that disappeared like accidents at the side of the road that you pass by at the peak of your immorality. You leave them behind, driving to the opposite direction, just because you can. You think you can. You think about it, but, even if you change your mind, you know that there’s no use turning back. The road will have been cleaned up by the time you arrive. Like the time seen by the Angel of History, as described by Walter Benjamin, an image I had studied thoroughly as a doctoral student. (Dimitrakaki, 2015, p. 54)<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The original text in Modern Greek: “Πόσος καιρός περνάει από κάτι. Γνώριζα ότι η δυτική λογοτεχνία ήταν γεμάτη νοσταλγία για χρονικές αποστάσεις. Για χαμένους χρόνους, οι οποίοι εξαφανίζονταν σαν ατυχήματα στην άκρη του δρόμου που τα προσπερνάς στο απόγειο της ανηθικότητάς σου. Τα αφήνεις πίσω σου οδηγώντας στην αντίθετη κατεύθυνση, επειδή μπορείς. Νομίζεις ότι μπορείς. Το σκέφτεσαι, αλλά κι αν αλλάξεις γνώμη, γνωρίζεις ότι δεν έχει νόημα να επιστρέψεις, ο δρόμος θα έχει καθαριστεί. Ή σαν τον χρόνο που ατένιζε ο Άγγελος της Ιστορίας, όπως τον είχε περιγράψει κάποτε ο Βάλτερ Μπένγιαμιν, εικόνα που είχα μελετήσει ενδελεχώς ως διδακτορική φοιτήτρια” [our translation] (Dimitrakaki, 2015, p. 54).

In this passage, Antigone seems to experience a shift in her Eurocentric perception discussed earlier; even though she comes from one of the countries that suffered the most during the financial crisis, she is still privileged enough to hold a European passport and to experience the emptiness of a non-stop *Wanderlust*, like other members of her generation. Dimitrakaki masterfully observes her relation to politics, her experience with systemic racism against Southern European and Eastern European countries, and her need to escape from that condition, as well. As she comes to address her privilege and its connection to societal norms she wishes to deconstruct, the Angel of History offers insight regarding nostalgia for a shared past.

A figure inspired by Klee's painting with the same name, the Angel of History serves foremost as a means to criticise the way philosophical tradition views history. When Benjamin states that the Angel of History only looks towards the past, seeing "one single catastrophe" (Benjamin, 1942) at a time, he echoes the work of philosophers like Hegel, whose concept of *Geist* served a similar purpose, namely, to reflect on the way human beings philosophise about history and come to represent their own existence and ideas through different genealogies and, in Marx and Engel's case, historical materialism. The five narrators of *Aeroplast* are no strangers to such philosophical concepts: their travelling through life could be seen as an effort to conceptualise the way historical context shapes their lives. While thinking about Benjamin, Antigone tries to apply his philosophical method to images, events and objects from the 2000s and 2010s:

It was part of an essay about Benjamin's suicide or assassination and the theories that claimed he had a suitcase with an unpublished manuscript with him. With Benjamin, you could never be sure (that much was true, his choices were unpredictable), such a manuscript could be about anything; everything could be conceived as an element of its historical moment: shop windows, bombs, bicycles, and the idea that the middle point, the



centre of his century, was like the centre of a typhoon  
(Dimitrakaki, 2015, p. 112)<sup>14</sup>

In this train of thought, with Benjamin's Angel of History as its starting point, Antigone comes to think of herself and of the people in her life, as political agents, individuals capable of making a change, of participating in a transformative political praxis. A Marxist conception of such praxis, and of the way human beings interact with history while witnessing their lives being shaped by it, is usually an important part of Dimitrakaki's works. Each story is situated within a specific socio-economic context, and the characters' decisions and arcs rarely have a didactic aspect, an element which makes them realistic. If they could serve as examples of any kind, it would be as *paradigms* of practically and actively rejecting capitalism.

In *Aeroplast* this rejection is realised in the "Magic Mountain", the autonomous, self-organized, ecological community somewhere in the mountain Montserrat, where the narrators practice an alternative form of living. Nature as a means of escape, reflection, or as a contestation of organised political systems has been explored as an intriguing possibility throughout literature and theory; in *Walden* (1854) Henri David Thoreau addresses the idea that being close to nature means dealing with "only the essential facts of life" (1899, p. 93). This conception of nature is shared by the members of the community of the "Magic Mountain", whose name evokes Thomas Mann's novel of the same name. In the *Magic Mountain* (1924) Mann explored the way time is transformed at the sanatorium in Davos, having protagonist Hans Castorp expressing his astonishment that he ended up staying there for seven years (Mann, 1971, p.

<sup>14</sup> The original text in Modern Greek: "Ανήκε ωστόσο σ' ένα δοκίμιο για την αυτοκτονία ή δολοφονία του Μπένγιαμιν και τις εικασίες που έλεγαν ότι είχε μαζί του μια βαλίτσα μ' ένα αδημοσίευτο χειρόγραφο. Με τον Μπένγιαμιν ποτέ δεν ήξερες (αυτό ήταν αλήθεια, οι επιλογές του ήταν απρόβλεπτες), το χειρόγραφο θα μπορούσε να 'ναι για το στιδιάποτε – στιδιάποτε θα μπορούσε να εκληφθεί ως στοιχείο της ιστορικής του στιγμής: βιτρίνες, βόμβες, ποδήλατα, και η ιδέα ότι το μέσο του αιώνα του ήτανε πράγματι ένα μέσο, αλλά το μέσο μιας δίνης." [our translation] (Dimitrakaki, 2015, p. 112).

706). However, despite its conception as an alternative community which favours escaping from late capitalism, Dimitrakaki's "Magic Mountain" still has network coverage; Melanie, one of the five narrators, describes the following scene in a letter to her boyfriend, Martí, the owner of the space where the "Magic Mountain" community lives and works (Dimitrakaki, 2015, p. 279):

With Antigone we walked holding each other all the way to the sunflower meadow. While I was freely breathing their beauty, Antigone didn't seem interested at all, instead she looked at Marta, who had abandoned the hoe and texted on her phone. She was staring at her from a distance, but so piercingly, that, despite her concentration, Marta was forced to lift her eyes from the screen. The hat shaded her eyes, but her expression was clear, Martí. She felt guilty. Antigone smiled sarcastically. "Well, it's a good thing the magic mountain's got reception", she said. (Dimitrakaki, 2015, p. 301)<sup>15</sup>

Despite the alternative community model it offers, the "Magic Mountain" cannot exist entirely outside societal norms and standards. Like Mann's magic mountain, it is a "heterotopia", a space that contests the way societies are structured but, at the same time, is in a dialectic relationship with these structures. This stresses even more how Antigone's decision to flee was ill-fated, since the society she despised continues to haunt her; she ends up leaving this

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<sup>15</sup> The original text in Modern Greek: "Οι μέρες μας στο Πορ' Μπόου, το πιο παράξενο ταξίδι της δικής μου ζωής, μπορούσαν να ερμηνευθούν ως μια ευκαιρία αναίρεσης ενός όλο και λιγότερο αμυδρού σχεδίου της Αντιγόνης και της Μέλανι: απόρριψη, καθολική, οριστική, αμετάκλητη. Μόνο που η Αντιγόνη και η Μέλανι δεν ήθελαν πραγματικά μιαν ευκαιρία αναίρεσης. Δεν την ήθελαν γιατί αν την ήθελαν, θα την είχαν. Δεν ήμασταν οι χειρότεροι άνθρωποι του κόσμου, δεν ήμασταν ο εχθρός, δεν ήμασταν η προσωποποίηση της αδράνειας, της απελπισίας, του ακαταλόγιστου. Δεν ήμασταν τα τελευταία δείγματα αυτού που ήθελαν να απορρίψουν. Δεν ξέραμε τι ήμασταν, αλλά συλλογικά είχαμε μετατραπεί στην τελευταία περίοδο της ζωής ενός ανθρώπου." [our translation] (Dimitrakaki, 2015, p. 388-389).

community as well. Kay, another one of the five narrators, a sailor born in East Germany, and captain of the ship “Realidad”, which he now repairs, makes the following observations:

Our days at Portbou, the weirdest trip in my life, could be interpreted as a chance of undoing the unclear project of Antigone and Melanie: rejection, global, definitive, decisive. But Antigone and Melanie didn't really want a chance to undo their plan. They didn't want it, because if they did, they would have it. We weren't the worst people in the world, we weren't the enemy, we weren't the personification of boredom, despair, irresponsibility. We weren't the last of whatever they wanted to reject. We didn't know what we were but, all together, we had become the last period in a person's life. (Dimitrakaki, 2015, p. 388-389)<sup>16</sup>

Reading Kay's account of events, it becomes clear that Antigone's efforts of escaping to an ecological community, an alternative to the gloomy world of late capitalism, have failed, being nothing but “an escapist fantasy” (Levitas, 2010, p. 1). More than the political and economic system she lives in, Antigone seems unwilling to conform to the idea of a structured routine, even if it takes place within an ecological community created precisely due to the financial and climate crises. Bertrand Westphal's characterization of “laboratories of the possible” for such spaces (2007, p. 189) seems in tune with Kay's thoughts on Antigone who, when Melanie is killed in a humanitarian mission to Syria, goes missing and is nowhere to be found. He claims that they “need to keep the possibility of Antigone alive” (Dimitrakaki,

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<sup>16</sup> The original text in Modern Greek: “Με την Αντιγόνη περπατήσαμε αγκαλιασμένες στο περιβόλι με τα ηλιοτρόπια, αλλά ενώ εγώ ανάσαινα ελεύθερα την ομορφιά τους, η Αντιγόνη δεν έδειχνε ιδιαίτερο ενδιαφέρον, χαζεύοντας τη Μάρτα που είχε παρατήσει την τσάντα κι έγραφε μηνύματα στο κινητό της. Την κοιτούσε από απόσταση, αλλά τόσο έντονα που, παρά την απορρόφησή της, η Μάρτα αναγκάστηκε στο τέλος να σηκώσει το βλέμμα. Η ψάθα σκίαζε τα μάτια της αλλά η έκφρασή της ήταν τόσο ξεκάθαρη, Μαρτί. Ενοχή. Της Αντιγόνης της ξέφυγε ένα ειρωνικό χαμόγελο. «Ευτυχώς που το μαγικό βουνό έχει καλή σύνδεση», σχολίασε.” [our translation] (Dimitrakaki, 2015, p. 301).

2015, p. 390)<sup>17</sup>. The exact same phrasing could be used for communities like the one of the “Magic Mountain”, where political praxis meets the conscious act of rejecting capitalist societal structures.

Also structured around the idea of escaping and sharing collective historical traumas is the novel *The Manifesto of Defeat* (2007), although different in many regards from *Aeroplast*. There, the question of one’s ability to approach themselves as a historical subject and/or object is seen through a drastically different lens. By sending her characters to a remote island in the Aegean Sea for carnival season, which in Greece takes place at the end of winter, before the start of the Great Lent, Dimitrakaki questions the younger generations’ ability to understand the collective trauma of the Shoah and empathise with it. The first-person narrator, who introduces herself to us as “Marylee”, is of Jewish heritage, having a great-aunt who survived the Holocaust by hiding. She also claims to be the sole survivor of a violent art experiment that took place on that remote island, during which she found herself locked inside a basement, and filmed, along with a group of friends coming from different parts of Europe. Since it was carnival season, the character who orchestrated the violent experiment and locked the others inside the basement, Katerina, forced Marylee, a person of Jewish heritage, to wear a Nazi uniform; here is Marylee’s account:

The first thing I did was to get all the parts of the uniform and place them on the floor. They had to be kidding me; it looked like the real thing. I mean, it had to be real, even though I had never seen a uniform of a Third Reich’s officer in stores with carnival costumes to tell for sure. Or they could rent such type of uniforms now, anything was possible. It was possible that we had already reached that stage and that I hadn’t realised it, such things had happened to me before. I could still get surprised. And it wasn’t exactly a bad surprise. I mean, I was kind of excited, staring at the empty presence on

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<sup>17</sup> The original text in Modern Greek: “να κρατήσουμε τη δυνατότητα της Αντιγόνης ζωντανή.” [our translation] (Dimitrakaki, 2015, p. 390).

the floor. I had heard that a rockstar in the 1970s used to give interviews dressed as a Nazi for fun. I couldn't resist. (Dimitrakaki, 2007, p. 200)<sup>18</sup>

Inside the basement, the power dynamics between the characters slowly change, as they have to deal with being starved, psychologically tortured, and physically abused by Katerina and her complicities. Even though it is impossible to physically escape, they try to do it mentally, through their collective visits to the "Periphery", a mind game focusing on the way individuals experience historical events as they unfold, affecting their lives without their consent. As Marylee puts it: "For us, History was a type of power that others exercised upon us without having our permission" (Dimitrakaki, 2007, p. 387)<sup>19</sup>.

As the narration unfolds, and all the characters inside the basement die, we find out that "Marylee" does not exist and that the narrator is in fact Katerina, who orchestrated this tragic mass-murder in order to be accepted to an elite neo-Nazi organisation. However, even at the end of the novel, the reader has no way to be sure as of Katerina's/Marylee's reliability. The structure of the novel echoes the same mechanisms described during the mental exercise of the "Periphery"; by making her characters reflect upon their own relation to History, Dimitrakaki criticises the society of late capitalism, stressing the impossibility of establishing an alternative, more solidary, political model in light

<sup>18</sup> The original text in Modern Greek: "*Το πρώτο που έκανα ήταν να βγάλω όλα τα μέρη της στολής, να τ' απλώσω στο πάτωμα. Δεν υπήρχε περίπτωση, πρέπει να ήταν αυθεντικά. Δεν γινόταν να μην είναι αυθεντικά, αν και δεν είχα ποτέ πετύχει στολή αξιωματικού του Τρίτου Ράιχ σε μαγαζί με αποκρίατικά. Ή μπορεί και να νοικιάζανε πλέον, όλα ήταν πιθανά. Ήταν πιθανόν να είχαμε φτάσει σ' αυτό το στάδιο και να μην είχα πάρει χαμπάρι όπως με τόσα άλλα. Να που μπορούσα ακόμη να εκπλήσσομαι. Η έκπληξη δεν μου ήταν δύσκολη. Θέλω να πω ότι μ' έπιασε ένας μικρός ενθουσιασμός με το θέαμα της οριζοντιωμένης, ξεφουσκωμένης παρουσίας. Είχα ακούσει κάπου πως στη δεκαετία του '70 ένας ροκ σταρ εμφανιζόταν στις συνεντεύξεις τύπου ντυμένος ναζί για πλάκα. Δεν μπορούσα ν' αντισταθώ.*" [our translation] (Dimitrakaki, 2007, p. 200).

<sup>19</sup> The original text in Modern Greek: "*Η Ιστορία ήταν για μας μια μορφή εξουσίας που ασκούσαν κάποιοι πάνω μας χωρίς να τους έχουμε δώσει το πράσινο φως.*" [our translation] (Dimitrakaki, 2007, p. 387).

of a far-right threat. A few years after the publication of *The Manifesto of Defeat*, the Greek neo-Nazi criminal organization Golden Dawn gained access to the national parliament, placing third in the 2015 elections (Hellenic Parliament, 2015).

As for the “Periphery”, a concept based on the theme of escaping, recurring in Dimitrakaki’s works, it seems to echo Foucault’s conception of the discontinuity of History, eminent in all of his works and useful in his studies of the distance/rupture between power structures and individuals. More specifically, the concepts of *biopolitics* and *biopower*, both to be found in the first volume of his *History of Sexuality* (2015c, p. 719), can be applied to the way Katerina, a personification of the far-right, exercises power on the bodies of her friends, the individuals facing the consequences of historical events without having the power to change them (or so they think). Their relationship dynamics could also be seen as an allegory of genocide, with Dimitrakaki examining the corruption of power and the dehumanisation of the people that are mass-murdered. Katerina’s nostalgia for the Shoah, from which her own great-aunt managed to escape, is a twisted nostalgia for power and control, while, on a meta-textual level, it functions as a warning from Dimitrakaki, that the idea of a linear, teleological history is but a myth, denounced, amongst others, by Marcuse (Tally, 2013, p. 20). The “Periphery” is used as a means to escape, as a recreative drug that allows the characters to forget the historical reality affecting their lives and, as a result, drop any personal obligation or willingness for political praxis. Boym has described nostalgia as a tool through which individuals “escape the burden of historical time” (2001, p. 17), a description that could also be applied to the “Periphery”. In the passage below Marylee/Katerina describes the process of “visiting” the “Periphery”:

The Periphery [...] is a mental exercise using the new abilities of the human senses. According to tradition, it was invented by a group of artists in central Europe during the Interwar. [...] The participants believed that human senses evolve at the same time as the environment, that they have historicity. [...] The

Periphery is not an individual game; it is played by a group of people under specific circumstances. It's not exactly a game either, it is more of a special way to experience things, instead of just looking at them, touching them, hearing them, or smelling them. [...] It is called the Periphery because you find yourself wherever it takes you, you don't exist outside of reality, but you are linked to it in a different way. [...] Your consciousness becomes a border, or, at least, that's what you'll remember later, when you'll find yourself back at the Centre (Dimitrakaki, 2007, p. 472-473)<sup>20</sup>

While Dimitrakaki's characters seem to ignore physical borders, as they are holders of EU passports, both "the Periphery" and Portbou are defined by borders: the first one by the border described in the extract above, which could be relevant to a different way of conceiving history or, knowing Katerina's experiment, a way of becoming more obedient towards history, and the second one by the physical border between Benjamin's monument and the sea. The same physical border can also be found on the island where *The Manifesto of Defeat* takes place and, according to Foucault, it could be an indicator of a "heterotopia", that is a counter-space which seems to defy reality and to offer an alternative to it at the same time: such places are cinemas, theatres, islands, trains, boats (2015a, p. 1238-1247). The concept could possibly be applied to states of mind like "the Periphery", since Foucault stresses its

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<sup>20</sup> The original text in Modern Greek: "Η Περιφέρεια [...] είναι μια διανοητική άσκηση που χρησιμοποιεί τις νέες δυνατότητες των ανθρώπινων αισθήσεων. Σύμφωνα με την παράδοση, ήταν εφεύρεση μιας παρέας καλλιτεχνών της Κεντρικής Ευρώπης στον Μεσοπόλεμο. [...] Οι μετέχοντες ήταν της γνώμης ότι οι ανθρώπινες αισθήσεις εξελίσσονται με το περιβάλλον, πως έχουν δηλαδή ιστορικότητα. [...] Η Περιφέρεια δεν είναι ατομικό παιχνίδι, παίζεται από μια ομάδα σε συγκεκριμένες συνθήκες. Ούτε παιχνίδι όμως είναι ακριβώς αλλά ένας ιδιαίτερος τρόπος να βιώνεις τα πράγματα, αντί απλώς να τα κοιτάξεις, να τα αγγίζεις, να τα ακούς ή να τα μυρίζεις. [...] Ονομάζεται Περιφέρεια γιατί ενόσω βρίσκεσαι εκεί που σε φέρνει, δεν υπάρχουν εκτός πραγματικότητας αλλά σχετίζεσαι με την πραγματικότητα με τρόπο διαφορετικό. [...] Η συνείδησή σου γίνεται ένα σύνορο, ή έστω έτσι θα θυμάσαι τα πράγματα αργότερα, όταν ξαναβρεθείς στο Κέντρο." [our translation] (Dimitrakaki, 2007, p. 472-473).

linguistic dimension. More specifically, he argues that heterotopias are complete opposites to utopias, because they tend to be on the in-between separating things and words, namely physical objects and our ways of describing them, and, at the same time, the only form of utopia that could ever be realised within our world (2015d, p. 1038). The “Periphery” could also be seen as a political praxis against Katerina’s white supremacy, with the characters attempting to reconceptualise Europe beyond Eurocentrism.

## Conclusion

This paper examined the ways in which escapism, nostalgia, History, and political praxis are represented in the works of Angela Dimitrakaki. Through the experiences of Gen X, the author offers a piercing, reflective, and often sarcastic or self-questioning eye on the experiences of a “lost” generation, that gives in (or not) to nostalgia. Most importantly, she also experiments with different forms of political praxes, that all reject or challenge societal, productive, and power structures perpetuated by late capitalism. Even though the characters are rarely, if ever redeemed, their arcs showcase how different *paradigms* can be formed, within this political system and in times of crises.

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**Aikaterini-Maria LAKKA** est philologue classique et jeune docteur en littérature comparée, ayant soutenu sa thèse à Sorbonne Université en novembre 2022. Elle a publié des articles dans des revues et a présenté ses travaux à plusieurs colloques internationaux. Parmi ses articles récents il faut mentionner « Defying Space and Time Through Language: The Case of Kozani's Carnival, its Songs, and its Theatrical Productions in Kozani Greek » (*European Journal of Theatre and Performance*), « “L'action est-elle la seule vérité” ? La figure de Ponce Pilate chez Yiorgos Théotokas et Mikhaïl Boulgakov » (*Kathedra*) et « Le jardin comme (ré)solution dans le roman d'Alice Zeniter *Comme un empire dans un empire* (2020) » (à paraître dans *RILUNE – Revue des littératures européennes*). Ses intérêts scientifiques incluent l'œuvre de François Rabelais et son influence/ réception dans la littérature du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, la philosophie (notamment Kant, Foucault, Wittgenstein, Derrida) par rapport à la littérature et au cinéma et le roman ultracontemporain européen. Outre ses travaux de recherche, elle est aussi romancière et réalisatrice.