History, Fidelity and Time in Rhea Galanaki's Novels

Angie Voela, *University of East London*

Abstract

Rhea Galanaki's novels Ο αιώνας των Λαβυρίνθων *(*The century of the Labyrinths*) (2002),* Φωτιές του Ιούδα, Στάχτες του Οιδίποδα *(*Fires of Judas, Ashes of Oedipus*) (2009) and* Θα υπογράφω Λουί *(*I shall Sign as Loui*) (1993) lend themselves to a re-examination of the past from the point of view of the present and for the sake of the present. The past must be accepted as an "impassable truth". One can arrive at such a liberating interpretation after dismantling constructions of racial superiority, misogyny, the haunting of personal, collective or national traumas, and even the legacy of revolutionary idealism. Such an interpretation might prove helpful in dealing with contemporary challenges to identity at a time of new geo-political tensions, mass migration and rising neoliberal populism.*

Keywords

Galanaki; Greece; history; women; society; psychoanalysis.

"What is a century?" asks Badiou as he embarks on an exploration of the twentieth century through art and literature.[1] "When does a century begin and end?" asks Andreas Papaoulakis in *Ο αιώνας των Λαβυρίνθων* (*The century of the Labyrinth*s).[2] If the length of a century is to be determined by historical and political standards, such as war and revolution, then the twentieth century is articulated around two World Wars and the rise and fall of communism. If a century is the site of apocalyptic events, then counting the dead becomes the measure of our judgement. If the criteria are economic, then the twentieth century is definitely the century of the triumph of capitalism and the global markets.

In this paper I draw on three of Rhea Galanaki's novels, *Ο αιώνας των Λαβυρίνθων* (*The century of the Labyrinths*), *Φωτιές του Ιούδα, Στάχτες του Οιδίποδα* (*Fires of Judas, Ashes of Oedipus*), and *Θα υπογράφω Λουί* (*I shall Sign as Loui*) in order to examine ways in which the impossibility of precise historical determination makes room for philosophical, political, ideological, and aesthetic explorations of subjectivity in our time. "Our time" is roughly the twentieth century. Its boundaries are elastic, starting, as it does in *Ο αιώνας των Λαβυρίνθων*, in 1878; harking back to the earlier decades of that century in *Θα υπογράφω Λουί*; and extending well into the new millennium in *Φωτιές του Ιούδα, Στάχτες του Οιδίποδα*. The relaxation of chronological conventions, a staple trope in Galanaki's toolbox, brings into focus repetitions, cycles, trends, patterns, tensions, and actions which intersect with one another, forming a dense nexus of interdependent events and quasi-causalities; a labyrinth.

Galanaki is a child of the twentieth century and bears witness to her time from a progressive ideological position that entails a genuine concern for the future. Her aim, it seems to me, is similar to Badiou's: "Not to judge the century as an objective datum, but rather to ask how it has come to be subjectivated."[3] Non-judgement and emphasis on subjectivation lead to the possibility—or better, the *responsibility*—to re-examine the past in order to act politically in the present. I consider Galanaki's voice a European voice which is uniquely Greek in its idiomatic specificity.[4] By emplacing her work in the European context, I do not seek to establish close literary parallels or direct influences. Rather, I use the European century as a broad socio-political and historical frame of reference.[5]

Badiou argues that the European twentieth century is characterized by the following trends: first, an appetite for the new and the absolute—absolute art, perpetual peace, ultimate truth, ideological victory, and universality; second, an intense *historicity*—that is, the conviction that the new century

1 Alain Badiou, *The Century*, trans. Alberto Toscano (London: Polity Press, 2007), 1.

2 Rhea Galanaki, *Ο αιώνας των Λαβυρίνθων* (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Καστανιώτη, 2005), 92. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

3 Badiou, *The Century,* 5.

4 For an overview of Greek literature in the post-dictatorship era, see Roderick Beaton, *An Introduction to Modern Greek Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

5 For Greek Literature in the European context, see Peter Mackridge and Eleni Yannakakis, *Contemporary Greek Fiction in a United Europe: From Local History to the Global Individual* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). For Galanaki's novels in an international context, see Annabel M. Patterson, *The International Novel* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

would make possible what the nineteenth had only promised;[6] third, a view of war as an inevitable form of violence that would, paradoxically, bring an end to violence. The Second World War, for instance, would settle the scores of the "bad" First World War.[7] The century starts with polymorphous creativity and the promise of change, but hope is immediately followed by something resembling a long tragedy (the era of 1914-28) and "the unfeeling manipulation of human material."[8] Badiou is keen to add that the relationship between hope and violence in the twentieth century is not a dialectical one, but takes the form of disjunctive synthesis. The failure of dialectical resolution characterizes the century *from beginning to end*, whilst "end" and "beginning" remain unreconciled and in tension. The prevalent law of the twentieth century, then, is not the *one* or the *multiple* but the *two*, which excludes unanimous submission and combinatory equilibrium.[9]

Let us take the irreconcilable tension between end and beginning and the law of the Two as our point of departure. In the three novels below, the tension between end and beginning materializes as a question of memory and allegiance to historical collective ideals. Allegiance often pitches one group against another and threatens to re-open the rifts of political division. Greek history, as we know, is replete with examples of bitter divisions between the Left and the Right and a long memory of catastrophes and disasters. Yet memory always inheres its opposite; forgetting and oblivion.

Ο αιώνας των Λαβυρίνθων starts in 1878 with the forgotten archaeological excavation of Knossos by the local άρχοντας (grandee) Minos Kalokairinos. The venture is superseded by the massacre of the citizens of Herakleion in 1898 and the disappearance of Kalokairinos's niece, Skevo. The memory of the two events is disseminated by Kalokairinos's assistant, the teacher Christos Papaoulakis, who passes them on to others. His son, Andreas, is particularly affected by this legacy, especially the disappearance of Skevo; a woman he never met. The novel then narrates the life of the Papaoulakis family from approximately 1918 to 1978. The mystery of Skevo's disappearance and the rumors surrounding her fate are transmitted by Andreas to his niece Ariadne, who is keen to know more.

Seen from the point of view of "human material," *Ο αιώνας των Λαβυρίνθων* is a testimony of the frailty of human life. Seen as a narrative of memory, it invites us to consider the imperative of remembering and the necessity of forgetting. In psychoanalytic terms, oblivion is a necessity both to society and to the individual,[10] while memory is living matter and constantly assumes new forms.[11] Some events are truly forgotten, creatively dismantled and absorbed into the unconscious. Other events are merely suspended from consciousness returning all the more powerful and haunting.

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6 Badiou, *The Century*, 32.

7 Ibid., 34.

8 Ibid., 37.

9 As Badiou writes: "In the twentieth century, the shared law of the world is neither the One nor the Multiple: it is the Two. It is not the One, because there is no harmony, no hegemony of the simple, no unified power of God. It is not the Multiple, because it is not a question of obtaining a balance of powers or a harmony of faculties. It is the Two, and the world represented by the modality of the Two excludes the possibility of both unanimous submission and combinatory equilibrium. One simply must decide." Badiou, *The Century*, 37.

10 Marc Augé, *Oblivion*, trans. Marjolijn de Jager and James E. Young (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2004).

11 Susannah Radstone, *The Sexual Politics of Time: Confession, Nostalgia, Memory* (London: Routledge, 2007).

Galanaki invites us to consider the dual nature of memory and forgetting, aware of the dimension of duty that often binds individuals and groups to certain forms of remembering. An important personal, political, and ethical question arises at the end of the twentieth century: what do we do with this labyrinth that is memory and non-origin?

The tension of the Two underlines the relationship between the individual and the group. The twentieth century saw the rise of individualism, the loss of tradition, and important gains in the field of women's rights,[12] but in *Φωτιές του Ιούδα* sexism joins forces with racism and social conservatism. At one point in the book, a young woman, Martha, arrives at a remote Cretan village to take up her post as a teacher. Martha is attracted to this village by her desire to know more about her maternal grandmother, after whom she was named; but the young Martha does not know that her grandmother—referred to as Marta, throughout this text—the old Marta had entered into an incestuous relationship with her cousin Zaharis, an "abomination" for which the village erased them from its memory. Martha, who is Jewish on her father's side and from Athens, is treated as ξένη (outsider, stranger) by the locals, and their negative attitudes are reinforced by the local male teacher, a racist-nationalist whose sexual advances Martha repels. The narrative culminates on Easter Sunday, with the custom of burning an effigy of Judas. In the local version of this story, Judas is not only a "traitor" but also αιμομίκτης (incestuous). Galanaki traces the provenance of this version of the story to two thirteenth century manuscripts which conflate the biblical Judas with the ancient Greek Oedipus.

In discussing this novel we will focus on the loss of collective memory and the descent into misogyny and racial prejudice. What does the retreat from sovereign reason and the amnesia of the villagers show? What kind of knowledge is denied and why? One of the fundamental tenets of psychoanalysis is that defensive behaviours, like racism and misogyny, have deep psychic roots, but scholars like Cornelius Castoriadis have noted the ways in which these defensive behaviours erupt under specific historical circumstances.[13] Galanaki approaches both racism and misogyny from the oblique angle of the unexamined way of life, allowing them to illuminate a community's impasses in the present. At the end of the twentieth century Galanaki invites us to re-examine the content of the concepts "woman," "individual," and "otherness," both in relation to *being* and in relation to history.

Such a project is both personal and political. Taken to its radical limits, it confronts one with permanent change, a goal always deferred and yet to be achieved: "Η Επανάστασις είναι ο νόμος της προόδου" (Revolution is the ordinance of progress) writes the young Andreas Rigopoulos, the historical figure behind the fictional Louis of *Θα υπογράφω Λουί*.[14] At the end of his life the same man still tries to determine whether one can indeed be faithful to a permanent revolution, to ruptures and breaks. Louis, who is born on the eve of the Greek Revolution (1821), is imbued with the spirit of the Enlightenment and the revolutionary idealism of the nineteenth century, but ends his own life in 1897. Written in the epistolary genre, the feminine genre par excellence, the novel is an apology, a love

12 Ulrich Beck and Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization: Institutionalized Individualism and its Social and Political Consequences* (London: Sage, 2002).

13 Helène Joffe, *Risk and the Other* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Cornelius Castoriadis, *World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis, and the Imagination*, trans. David Ames Curtis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 26.

14 Rhea Galanaki, *Θα υπογράφω Λουί* (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Καστανιώτη, 2005), 118.

letter, and a last will and testament addressed to his lover, Louisa.

A comment by Badiou chimes with the hero's strong convictions. The twentieth century, he writes:

> Is the project of rupture and foundation that sustains—within the domain of history and the state—the same subjective tonality as the scientific, artistic, and sexual ruptures the beginning of the century. Hence, it can be argued that the century has been *faithful* to *its prologue*. Ferociously faithful.[15]

It is this notion of fidelity that we focus on in *Θα υπογράφω Λουί*. What might it mean today, post-communism, post-modernity, post-feminism, post-truth? As Badiou asks: "What are our axioms?"[16] The twentieth century has been dominated by psychoanalysis as a mode of thinking about subjectivity. The introduction of psychoanalysis into political philosophy, especially its alliance with Marxism, sought to produce a better understanding of collective behaviours as *complex behaviours* encompassing *koinonia* (society), *polis* (city), *psyche* (soul) and *logos* (speech).[17] The relationship between the individual and the group is seen as a place that may produce uncertainty over how to act or proceed, as a site of irresolute tension: on the one hand, the individual is socio-politically determined; yet, one should always retain a modicum of difference from the other. This "other" is both external (e.g., the group to which one belongs) and internal or unconscious (e.g., the investments and affective links that tie one to symbolic ideas and ideals). At stake, therefore, is the concept of *difference* from the other as well as *from oneself.* The latter harks back to the philosophical notion of *being* qua irreducible to either the speaking subject or the cultural forms identity might take. It could be argued, therefore, that the conceptualization of individuality/subjectivity as fragmented and divided remains the most dominant theoretical conceptualization of the relationship between the individual, the group, and the abstract ideals or axioms by which they abide.

The re-examination of history from the present and for the present is a political, subjective, ideological, cultural and aesthetic endeavor.[18] Europe is in the throes of a divisive economic, political and

15 Badiou, *The Century,* 8. Emphasis mine.

16 Ibid., 164.

17 Koinonia, polis, psyche and logos are the four sections of Castoriadis's political-psychoanalytic volume, *World in Fragments*.

18 For Greek women writers' treatment of history see Tatiana Aleksic, "Making Patriarchal History Women's Own: Eugenia Fakinou's The Seventh Garment," in Sanja Badhun-Raunovic and Julie Rajan, *Myth and Violence in Contemporary Female Text: New Cassandras* (Bodmin: Ashgate, 2011), 143-160; Georgia Gotsi, "A Garment of One's Own: Eugenia Fakinou's re-imagining of the Greek Past," in *Mediterranean Historical Review* 15, no. 5 (2008), 91-110; Gotsi, "'Home Identity'? Immigrant Voices in Contemporary Greek Fiction," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 30, no. 2 (2012), 155-189; and Georgia Farinou-Malamatari, "The Representation of the Balkans in Modern Greek Fiction of the 1990s," in Dimitris Tziovas, *Greece and the Balkans: Identities, Perspectives, and Cultural Encounters Since the Enlightenment* (Bodmin: Ashgate, 2003), 249-61. For history and the past in Modern Greek literature see Dimitris Tziovas, "Centrifugal Topographies, Cultural Allegories, and Metafictional Strategies in Greek Fiction Since 1974," in Peter Mackridge and Eleni Yannakakis, *Contemporary Greek Fiction in a United Europe: From Local History to the Global Individual* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 24-49; and Vangelis Calotychos, "Thorn in the Side of Venice? Galanaki's Pasha and Pamuk's White Castle in the Global Market," in Dimitris Tziovas, *Greek Modernism and Beyond* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1997), 243-260; and Calotychos, "(Pre)occupied Space: Hyphens, Apostrophes, and Over-sites in the Literary Imagining of Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey," in Mehmet Yashin, *Step-Mothertongue: From Nationalism to Multicul-*

social crisis. The unchecked advance of capitalism; the changing relationship between supra-national economic institutions, the citizen, and the state; and the traumatic impact of austerity, especially in the South, seem to leave little room for optimism and hope.[19] Worse, they often give rise to conflicting reactions, from unreserved self-blame to misdirected aggression, nationalism, sexism, racism, and even narratives that history is repeating itself, society having fallen again into the hands of old "enemies."[20] To be able to distinguish between new and old crises; between new and old ideals and duties; between what is worth keeping and what should be jettisoned; and even between what is "ours" and what is "theirs" without exacerbating imaginary rivalries requires a perspective on history which starts with axioms. Crises and revolutions seem to break out all of a sudden, but their incubation takes time. In Galanaki's work, which spans decades, we find a fine record of this long and often unseen process, rooted in uncertain obligations that come back to haunt us as unredeemed debts and unsettled accounts with the past. Addressing these challenges, approaching history in a critical manner, means dealing with ghosts and vulnerability whilst finding the strength to traverse, transgress, and interpret. To welcome vulnerability and haunting is a sign of "health," both individual and collective. Galanaki's concept of the Labyrinth, I wish to argue, is an expression of such a disposition; a much needed one in the current historical moment.

The Labyrinth as "Impassable True" and Imagination

At the beginning of *The Century of the Labyrinths*, Minos Kalokairinos has a fine Arabian horse.[21] When he rides in the narrow streets of Herakleion, the blind beggars think he is Saint Minas, the local saint, on horseback. Kalokairinos is rich and lives in a big fine house by the harbor (13). On the eve of the excavation he lays awake, conscious of the importance of his endeavor and as nervous as a man about to take holy communion (17). His excavation turns up 365 pieces, one for every day of the year, as the local teacher, Christos Papaoulakis, says, but is unexpectedly stopped twenty days later by the local Turkish authorities. Soon the venture is forgotten, finally superseded by Evan's discovery of the Minoan palace. Christos Papaoulakis, however, preserves that memory of the excavation, narrating it to his children, his pupils, and the men in the *kafeneion* (café). He feels that the story ought to be transmitted orally, as "letters" are not good for everything (27).

A momentous event that did not quite materialize is a deferred beginning.[22] In other words, it is an origin which is comprised of *deferral and delay*—a (non)event that is destined, by its very nature, to be enveloped in forgetting; and forgetting is fertile, and almost always a beginning of sorts. Such a beginning has nothing to do with the assertive narratives of origin often deployed by nations or

turalism: Literatures of Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey (London: Middlesex University Press, 2000), 49-69.

19 Wolfgang Streek, *How Will Capitalism End?* (London: Verso, 2016).

20 D. M. Knight, "Cultural Proximity: Crisis, Time, and Social Memory in Central Greece," *History and Anthropology* 23, no. 3 (2012), 349-374.

21 Galanaki, *Ο αιώνας των Λαβυρίνθων*, 9.

22 Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, trans. Richard Beardsworth and George Collins (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 188.

groups to boost the legitimacy of their claims on land, time or a specific course of action.[23] Deferred beginnings are fragile, supported by a sense of awe and guilt: "Who would forgive the resurrection of the dead" and "Who would grant a mortal the authority to resurrect them?" wonders Kalokairinos on the eve of the first excavation (41).

The thread of deferred beginnings is often picked up by men and women sensitive to the affinities between the dead, the missing, and the living. Andreas Papaoulakis, the teacher's son, is one of them. His nickname is "αποθαμένος" (the dead one), having been presumed dead during the Asia Minor Disaster (1922) and mourned by his family. Andreas is fascinated by the fate of the niece of Kalokairinos. He feels he has obscure ties to the Kalokairinos family, through his father's friendship with Minos, and to Skevo through their mutual experience of deferred *thanatos* (death). It is rumored that Skevo was killed in the basement of her own house, where she was hiding with her child, until a woman in Islamic dress (an old employee of the family) turns up in Herakleion years later claiming to have witnessed Skevo's abduction by a Turkish officer (99). A soldier later claims to have spoken to Skevo in a village in Albania (109), and the woman, who was "τουρκεμένη" (became a Turk/ Islamised), identifies herself as the Cretan lady (113). However, an investigator, who is sent by Skevo's family to make further inquiries, reaches the conclusion that the story was false (119).

Andreas does not actively look for Skevo. Rather, her disappearance haunts him. He sees similarities between the missing Skevo and a French woman, Angele, with whom he had a fleeting affair that was interrupted by his decision to join the Greek army and fight for the Great Idea. Other rumors surface: that Skevo was rescued by a Turkish officer and now lives in Athens or Salonika. In 1958, Andreas, his wife Stella, his brother Sifis, and his wife Paraskevi, whom Andreas insists on calling Skevo, visit a monastery in Chania. An old nun asks him if Skevo is still alive, throwing Andreas into confusion and making him think of the folk tale question, "Is king Alexander alive?" The nun is the same woman who came ashore in Herakleion several decades ago. In 1978, Ariadne, Andreas's niece, asks about the Kalokairinos family, impressed, as she says, since childhood by his mythic name. Andreas wants Skevo remembered, especially since "she must be dead by now" (341). He admits having chosen the name Ariadne for his niece as a symbolic reference to the death and rebirth of nature and to Skevo's αφάνεια (invisibility) (342). In the Cretan version of the myth of Persephone, who was abducted by Hades, the former is also known as Ariadne.

Haunting is history in fragments—the opposite of a definite beginning, as well as the opposite of a definite end: "There is no definitive ending" the Teacher (the Cretan author Kazantzakis) tells Andreas in his dream. This is the reason, he adds, why we throw ourselves to the flames of war, love, or poetry (270). This is the reason, we might add, that we are tormented by the possibility of failure and forgetting.

In his work, *Hauntings: Psychoanalysis and Ghostly Transmission*, Stephen Frosh notes that a ghost is not a missing person, but a social figure. If followed, he argues, it will lead you to a dense site

23 Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (London: Verso Press, 1997). Throughout the book, Žižek discusses the narrative construction of inaugural moments, first times, and other points of origin upon which national mythologies usually thrive, as a manipulation of time and an artificial separation of "our" law and "our" right from "theirs."

of social life.[24] Isn't Skevo such a ghost? Isn't she the representative of the vanishing upper class of Herakleion, and of an epoch coming to an abrupt end? Frosh further notes that the return of ghosts is sometimes motivated by injustice.[25] Isn't there a horrible suspicion that Skevo's family gave up on her too soon, after her husband remarried (263)? And didn't Saint Minas save her father's illegitimate offspring, a little boy named after him, instead of the beautiful Skevo and her own son? Pity and envy are inextricably linked in the human psyche.

Dead ends and fruitless inquiries are also an integral part of that psyche, since the psyche lives in fragments, not in totalities. For Heidegger, the journey of being though time is like a wood path, a foray into *being in the world* where one's gaze should be fixed on infinity, not on specific answers.[26] "Am I alive?" wonders Andreas Papaoulakis, the one marked "dead" (141, 142). This is not a simple question of historical selfhood, but a question of *being* through time. For Andreas, thinking in numbers, in calendar time, leads nowhere. He marks time by his periodic returns to his birthplace (128); by the ongoing symbolic reconfiguration of knowledge and memory—"in the dark kaleidoscope of time the norm is restructuring and reconstitution rather than the normal flow of things," he says (133); by the knowledge that he and his brother are "outside time"; by reminiscence triggered through fleeting similarities between people, situations and forms; by feeling that there is an outside of language—like an old love reduced to a scream before succumbing to "aglossia" (162). The secret of keeping time in motion, then, is to postpone answering the question "am I alive?" and, by extension, not to be preoccupied with the end. Thus, Andreas feels awkward when his niece Rodanthi asks him to entertain the family gathering with "that story that ends well." "How does a story end?" he wonders (205). Human time is thanatology, but it is the deferral of death—in fact, the forgetting of the end—that creates time.[27]

This rather private experience of time is counter-balanced by the time of others, the social and historical time. The socio-historical determination of subjectivity, far from being an expression of helplessness in the face of the sweeping forces of history, is a condition of responsibility and care.[28] Andreas Papaoulakis knows this well: one has an obligation to transmit memories to younger generations—not necessarily complete stories, but a legacy of curiosity and care. In that context, Andreas's attachment to the ghost of Skevo and Patouchonikos's memories, which are as random as 'a pack of shuffled cards' (246), are just as important as the "real" historical events that gave rise to them. Such transmissions form the necessary network of *secondary retentions* that resist the commodification of time typical of consumer societies.[29] These repeated transmissions, especially when families gath-

24 Stephen Frosh, *Hauntings: Psychoanalysis and Ghostly Transmission* (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2013), 44.

25 Ibid., 45.

26 R. Polt, Heidegger: *An Introduction* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1999), 25.

27 Stiegler, *Technics and Time*, 187.

28 For the notion of care Stiegler draws on Heidegger's *sorge* (concern of one's own) and *besorgen* (care of something or someone) as modes of concern for the self and the other. Stiegler borrows Heidegger's definitions in order to emphasize the relational and plural (we) nature of becoming, as the Heideggerian concept relies not so much on formal knowledge as on informal know-how. Michael Inwood, *A Heidegger Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 35-37.

29 What "I" retain, argues Stiegler, constitutes my present and my sense of time. Secondary retentions which comprise part of the "we" are characterized by reciprocity: "received, selected, projected and lived by myself and others." For

er, create periodicity. Calendarity, argues Stiegler, the simplest way of marking of time, defines the rendezvous of the "we" and makes possible diachronic possibilities.[30] Preserving diachronicity and the rich fabric of memory is an act of becoming, and becoming is always social and collective. This is exactly what the Papaoulakis family does in their regular gatherings.

At this point we should ask: what is a labyrinth? It is a locus of diachronicity and a very complex object. It is the city of Herakleion and its narrow streets (45); the place from which one must escape, either for love or money (77); the sensations and colours experienced by the living (110); time as it unfolds, twists and turns (120). It is Skevo as Ariadne and Persephone guiding her teenage love, Federico (160); life in death and death in life (168); a calendar year which opens with a brother's murder, and the truce with the labyrinth around Christmas (224). It is all things that come to pass in a cycle, teaching people not be too proud or vain (225); the nun's inquiry about Skevo, which acts as a thread (μήτος) (257); and blood meandering (που κουλουριαζόταν) in the labyrinth (299). It is invisibility (αδιαφάνεια) and secrets—the existence and possible reversal of which might offer an exit from the labyrinth (346). It is the thread of an unexamined and unexaminable century (ανεξερεύνητος αιώνας) (387).

Why "ανεξερεύνητος"? Because it is lived and inexhaustible. The labyrinth, hypothesized Minos Kalokairinos, was a quarry near the place of Knossos. Found and not found, the Labyrinth is supported by the certainty that the earth is rich with treasures, but gives only fragments. In trauma studies the locus of a secreted trauma is often called a "crypt." Might we then propose that the Cretan Labyrinth is the local version of a crypt, a powerful locus of elision and certainty that "something" should be there? The crypt/labyrinth is not an addendum to history; it is history that constantly reproduces itself.[31] A century of labyrinths compels us to think about the concepts of temporality and being differently, embracing the opacities of subjectivity and memory. The Labyrinth contains the desire to remember and its opposite, the desire to forget—although the latter, at times, feels like a betrayal. Paraskevi knows this well. Despite being happily married to her second husband, she keeps a picture of Sifis in her bag, checking it regularly to see if it has changed. Love and ambivalence mean that the dead must be missed but also laid to rest. One day she finally decides she no longer cares if the picture changes or stays the same (386). The preservation of memory has been linked to melancholia, especially in the context of national literatures. In Freud's terms, melancholia is a refusal to give up the dead, and despite being widely accepted as indispensable to cultural memory, is a pathological state.[32] In mourning, the lost object is gradually given up. In melancholia, it is preserved whole in its

Stiegler the individual and the group cannot be thought of without one another. Any process affects both, the two changing *with* one another. This is because the group and the individual look up to the same pre-individual funds, "woven of the expectations shaping and configuring secondary and collective retentions" and "constituted by collective secondary retentions." Stiegler, *The Decadence of Industrial Democracies: Disbelief and Discredit, Volume 1*, trans. Daniel Ross and S. Arnold (London: Polity Press, 2011), 112-13.

30 Bernard Stiegler, *Acting Out*, trans. David Barinson, Daniel Ross, and Patrick Crogan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 50.

31 Frosh, *Hauntings*, 44.

32 Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholy: On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement," in *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 14: Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works*, trans. and ed. James Stratchey (London: Hogarth, 1991), 237-258.

absence, with potentially catastrophic consequences. As Frosh points out, the foreclosure of mourning as a possibility enables a dynamic of regret which often takes the shape of a messianic secularism, leading to the violent resurgence of nationalism.[33] The eighty-year old Andreas seems to be making this connection when he finally decides that some ghosts must to be laid to rest, among them his patriotic ideals and the ghost of Skevo. Upon doing so, he is no longer afraid that her "death" would mean his own death (262). He is no longer afraid of the lack of resolution that this significant step incurs: "What do I know?" he wonders. "I do not even know my brother's killer?" (336).

Badiou speaks of the century's obsession with absolute beginnings, absolute ends, and absolute clarity. From the other end of the century, Andreas Papaoulakis proposes embracing the lack of origins and secure knowledge and the fluidity of the Labyrinth as alternatives. The uncertainty of the labyrinth thus parallels what Badiou calls the "impassable true."[34] This should not be confused with political, social or financial uncertainty devised by dominant ideologies as a way of keeping the masses on their toes. Rather, the impassable true is a psychic disposition of living an *affected* life,[35] which means caring for oneself and others and resisting the stupidity and the impoverishment of the intellectual life effected by polarizing ideologies.[36] The Labyrinth, then, is not a counter-history or a locus of political and historical melancholia, but history as a nexus of entanglements, regressions, repetitions, repudiations, forgetting, revisions, resurfacing, defenses, misrecognitions, symbolic amendments, aporias, and fragments, which resists the *orthos logos* of final interpretations. Andreas Papaoulakis concludes: "Our only legacy is imagination" (368). The Labyrinth must be imagination—living substance that cannot be owned or appropriated by any single cause.

Racism, Misogyny and Hatred of the Self

At this point I wish to take a thread from the *Ο αιώνας των Λαβυρίνθων* and transplant it to *Φωτιές του Ιούδα, Στάχτες του Οιδίποδα*: "The souls of women are not allowed to return even from involuntary sin."[37] I wish to set this ostracization in the context of another haunting, and an observation by Castoriadis regarding religious hatred and racism: "True racism," argues Castoriadis, "does not permit others to recant… Racism does not want the [religious] conversion of the other but his death."[38] This desire for the death of the other is a desire to abolish difference, to regress to a mythical state of being prior to encountering the other. In psychoanalytic terms, racism, xenophobia and misogyny mobilize paranoid defenses, seeking to project outwards any threats to an Ego that is insecure and unwilling to deal with its own vulnerability. Such a broad explanation, however, does not mean

33 Stephen Frosh, *Hauntings: Psychoanalysis and Ghostly Transmission* (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2013).

34 Badiou, *The Century*, 89.

35 Bernard Stiegler, *What Makes Life Worth Living: On Pharmacology*, trans. Daniel Ross (London: Polity Press, 2013), 41.

36 Stiegler, "Doing and Saying Stupid Things in the 20th Century: Bêtise and Animality in Deleuze and Derrida," in *Angelaki* 18, no. 1: 159- 175.

37 Rhea Galanaki, *Φωτιές του Ιούδα, Στάχτες του Οιδίποδα* (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Καστανιώτη, 2009), 258.

38 Castoriadis, *World in Fragments*, 27.

much on its own and needs to be studied within specific historical parameters.[39] In this section I discuss the racism and misogyny in *Φωτιές του Ιούδα* as a *symptom of our time*. More specifically, I focus on how racism and misogyny concentrate around two poles: the non-recognition of the individuality of (the) woman and what I would call, for the moment, the (dis)organization of knowledge into forgetting and blindness.

Galanaki has a long-standing interest in women encountering the limitations of their own epoch. In *Ελένη ή ο Κανένας* (*Eleni or Nobody*), for instance, she examines femininity as evading the strict boundaries of time and place.[40] In traditional terms, women, especially of an older age, are often taken to be guardians of memory, like the old Angeliko in the present novel. This tender timelessness, however, turns toxic in the hands of the hateful. An indiscriminate attribution of knowledge to "the woman" as "the one who is supposed to know" quickly slips into conceiving of her as "the one who had always known," and then as both the one who "knew in advance" and "the one to blame." To put it in mythic terms, it is as if Eve always knew, and so did Jocasta. The investment of the other (woman or *xenos*) with absolute knowledge immerses the community in a labyrinth of ignorance and forgetting, producing a web of quasi-causalities, the dynamics of which must be comprehended in their contemporary historical setting.

Near the beginning of the novel, Martha arrives at a mountainous Cretan village shortly after her mother's death. The latter was no longer capable "to put words into the right order," to bequeath her daughter a coherent life story.[41] Instead, the story was left incomplete, suspended "at a three way crossing" (21, 24). This oblique reference to *Oedipus Rex* makes the young woman the tragic originator and addressee of her own inquiry.[42] To a certain extent we are all guilty of a similar desire: we expect to know what our name means, since a proper name assigns one a place in the network of symbolic relations. A xenos, however, is emplaced in an existing community bereft of such context.

Martha's first encounter with the village is at the *kafeneion*, where she stops to ask for information in order to find her bearings. The men are reserved in their welcome and surprised the politicians did not appoint a "local teacher" to their village (28). It is election time. The first woman she meets is the old Angeliko, a maternal woman who considers her lodgers to be her children. Angeliko is intrigued by Martha's first name but says nothing. The novel combines different narrations: Martha's interior monologue addressed to her dead mother; the story of Kimbourea, Juda's mother; the memory of

39 Ibid., 26.

40 Angie Voela, "Patterns and Scripts: The Revision of Feminine Heterosexuality in Feminist Theory and Literature," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 18, no. 1 (2010): 1-12; Voela, "Heterotopia Revisited: Foucault and Lacan on Feminine Subjectivity," *Subjectivity* 4, no. 2 (2011): 168-182.

41 Rhea Galanaki, *Φωτιές του Ιούδα, Στάχτες του Οιδίποδα* (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Καστανιώτη, 2009), 20.

42 Like Oedipus, Martha takes it upon herself to investigate the past of others (her grandparents) without realizing the tragic impact this will have upon her own life. She is totally innocent of social blame and a victim of racism and misogyny. Lacan, however, speaks of another "guilt," the very desire that drives one to seek knowledge in the first place. A subject becomes "guilty" from the moment that the desire of the Other becomes his or her desire. A good example is Hamlet who tries to pay the dead father's symbolic debt. Oedipus, who "does not know" in advance, must pledge his word to the investigation of the Theban plague, offering himself as guarantee in an act of anticipation. This is what seals his fate and makes him a hostage to his word. Alenka Zupančič, *Ethics of the Real* (London: Verso Press, 2000), 182; 191. This is how Martha, and all of us, take it upon ourselves to investigate the "past" of ourselves and others.

Marta and Zaharis guarded by old Angeliko, and the narration of present events unfolding between a spring time election campaign and Easter Sunday. The local teacher, nicknamed Harakas (ruler) for being fond of the old-fashioned implement of chastisement, instantly dislikes Martha because of her Jewish surname (43).

The village seems to have forgotten Marta and Zaharis. Angeliko remembers their wedding, which took place at the peak of the civil war, and the αντάρτες (guerillas) taking the bride to the mountains. Marta and Zaharis were cousins, and she was eight years his senior, "old enough to be his mother" (59). "Who ever dared marry their own mother, who else apart from the lawless, wretched Judas?" the villagers used to exclaim, but Angeliko does not quite remember where the poem Judas the incestuous came from (60). Angeliko also recalls that the village did not blame Zaharis as much as Marta, because he was a man and could do as he pleased (61). The couple was never seen again. The locals "offloaded" them with all the sins of the mind and the body, real and imaginary, and proceeded to exorcise and exile them (να τους εξορκίσει και να τους εξορίσει) by deleting them from their memory (66).

Power precipitates events. The xenophobic tendencies of the local community are exacerbated by the teacher, who is said to be well-connected with politician on both sides of the ideological spectrum and writes for an Athenian newspaper (72). Harakas is a nationalist who urges Cretans to keep their island clean of immigrants, dirty tourists, Jews and Muslims (73). The villagers are not directly racist but complacent and stagnant. This complacency is challenged by Petros, Angeliko's favorite nephew, whom Martha first meets on election Sunday. The old ways, Petros argues in the *kafeneion*, are a façade for a life of corrupt money which is abated by the local politicians and, occasionally, by the judiciary and the press. The men are openly hostile to his views and tell him that they have no time for preachers and amateur leftist politicians (87).

The regressive tendencies of the village are summed up by the custom of burning the effigy of Judas on Easter Sunday—regressing to the Dark Ages, as Petros says (89). Harakas uses this custom to imbue and normalize racism. All the school children are involved in its long preparation, gathering wood and helping build the effigy, and in the process, a young child, whom everyone calls "the little Albanian" instead of using his first name, is bullied into providing the clothes for Judas and beaten by the other kids for failing to do so (145). The custom, muses Martha, is the children's initiation to social discrimination and power relations. It is preserved both in *symbolic* form, the so-called "catharsis" of the village, and in *essence* by perpetuating discrimination and violence against the weak (147). The children look forward to the big fire that will burn Judas the traitor, the slave, and the αιμομίχτης (incestuous) (149).

The ritual burning of Judas the incestuous traitor is not a mere custom but *a cause unto itself which lacks rational justification*. It is subtended by a compulsion to repeat, characterized by the main operations of the unconscious, namely, condensation and displacement. Condensation conflates slavery—"is slavery a sin?" wonders Martha—with incest and betrayal. Displacement projects onto the non-Greek (xenos) the Greek mythical *hamartia* (sin) par excellence (Oedipal incest) and subsequently receives all as coming from outside of both the self and the community.

The above logic of equivalences allows us to see how racism, as an expression of inferiority and evil (xenos, slave), becomes tinted with sexuality and knowledge. The moment racist fixations occur,

argues Castoriadis, the others are not only excluded as individuals or a collectivity, but are endowed with a series of attributes—first among them an evil and perverse essence justifying *in advance* everything one might propose to subject them to.[43] A woman is by definition vulnerable and hence violable, much as a migrant child is vulnerable and violable. Woman, xenos, and slave must know their position. How can the slave not recognize the master? How can the xenos not accept her inferiority? How can a mother (Jocasta, Kimbourea) not recognize the son she is taking to her bed? How can a woman not accept the sexual advances of a man? A woman is supposed to know her place—that is, her place as a sexual object. This latent sexual knowledge exceeds individuality and erases the person. In the village memory, all relationships are intensely sexualized and racialized. And it is this excessive affect, this intense sexualization, that the village guards against and forgets. This is the origin of all knowledge and sin. It places *woman* out of time, in a perilous position of omniscience. It splits *women* into two: old women who know and are not in the cycle of reproduction, and younger women who must be hemmed in and kept under surveillance. At the same time, such an irrational demand (to know her place) addressed to any woman and xenos illustrates the perverse desire of the racist/misogynist to be recognized as master.

Such gestures, argues Castoriadis, often conceal an unconscious self-hatred. In the recesses of the egocentric fortress, a voice says: "Our walls are made of plastic, our acropolis of papier-mâché."[44] This attitude inaugurates a different kind of "haunting," a relentless refusal of reality which eventually become detestation "of the individual into which the psychical monad has had to be transformed and which it continues, phantom like, to haunt."[45] The secure self can bear both truth and lies without being destroyed; hatred of the self, then, nourishes the most driven forms of hatred and a monstrous psychical displacement, by means of which the subject defends against affect by changing the object.[46] This psychic attitude erupts in violent aggression, in gratuitous and uncalled for acts.[47] This is why the other-woman-xenos must always be guilty of knowing and cannot recant: the psychic demand behind racism and misogyny is irresolute. Seeking the absolute resolution of death and abolition of the other is a way to lulling the fragile mythical ego.

Not recognizing the individuality of the other/woman does not reinforce the group. On the contrary, it turns the group into a herd, promulgating stupidity,[48] which is represented in this novel by the lack of historical and poetic/aesthetic knowledge. For Stiegler any regression from rationality always constitutes a political issue, leading directly to a regression from the democratic imperative of examining received laws in order to determine whether they are still appropriate for us or not. The ancient Greek polis, argues Stiegler, was democratic precisely because it practiced the examination and transgression-interpretation of the Law. Failure to do so is a failure of democracy, but such an

43 Castoriadis, *World in Fragments,* 26.

44 Ibid., 29.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Frosh, *Hauntings*, 40.

48 Bernard Stiegler, "Doing and Saying Stupid Things in the 20th Century: Bêtise and Animality in Deleuze and Derrida." *Angelaki* 18, no. 1 (2013): 159- 175.

operation can only be carried out when the community has faith in the Law as an abstract-noetic entity. Stiegler considers that contemporary control societies are *war societies*, where *polemos* (conflict) is being replaced by *evil*. The war Stiegler is talking about is internal and inherent to capitalist culture. It concerns the decline of judgment and *hermeneia* (interpretation), and the failure of the political to produce pacification in a public arena (agora). As the civic values of *philia* (friendship), justice, and shame subside, we are left with a war without rules, in which the *contract* replaces the Law.[49] This is why Petros's words jar with the villagers when he accuses them of profiting and enjoying at the expense of the Law. In that context, the problem of misogyny and racism as adherence to historically transmitted (unexamined) principles belies the fraying of the communal bonds and demonstrates the loss of their symbolic elasticity. Galanaki, then, lays her finger on the difference between έθιμο (custom) as a way of punctuating time and έθιμο as a pseudo-event, a mock-important moment. As a pseudo-event the burning of Judas expresses the insignificance and messianism of a community lacking in self-determination and scope. At that point history ends and retreats into myth, becoming a regressive history without *parousia* (presence).[50] When the myth is no longer told, when it establishes its fable as axioms, it loses is "magnificent indefiniteness,"[51] producing obsession with historical fidelity and an implacable fidelity to "a particular scene of the past."[52] Viewed through a psychoanalytic lens, the immigrant and the woman, vulnerability inflicted upon them, are too similar to the self, and remind the self of its intolerable weakness. Contemporary philosophers like Stiegler do not hesitate to attribute such phenomena to the "proletarianization" of groups and individuals, to being deprived of means of creativity, expression and self-determination. Badiou echoes this concern when he observes that the new norms are definitely regressive: money, family, and elections—in other words, material profit, care limited to one's own, and the synchronization/reduction of democracy into an event that is fast becoming pseudo-political—have come to dominate.[53] The elision of "woman," the outbursts of racism, the cultural *léthe* and the political proletarianization of groups that feel increasingly powerless and marginalized leave us with an aporia and the end of the century: How do we re-negotiate our fidelity to the ideals of democracy and individual autonomy?

"Je signerai Louis": Rationality, Fidelity, Singularity

Rebellion is its own justification says Badiou.[54] The significance of this statement comes into relief when rebellion chimes with Eros and Thanatos—not love, not the sexual relationship, and not the emotions deemed admissible by the social body. In *Θα υπογράφω Λουί (I Shall Sign as Loui*) it amounts to examining one's life and admitting that one would not have done anything essentially different, even when running the risk of hurting their addressee, the lover to whom one entrusts their life's work.

49 Bernard Stiegler, *Uncontrollable Societies of Disaffected Individuals: Disbelief, Discredit*, trans. D. Ross (London: Polity Press, 2013).

50 Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 34.

51 Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, trans. Ian Hamilton Grant (London: Sage Press, 2004), 152.

52 Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 47.

53 Badiou, *The Century*, 66.

54 Ibid., 143.

Let us indulge in a generalization: having failed to realize the aspiration of the nineteenth century, the twentieth develops a preference for bringing to light the untrue and the misrecognized.[55] This passion for the unseen and the unconscious, in essence, tries to maintain fidelity to a cause which, like a revolution, must remain an (in)complete project. A small error sums up the fragility of this pursuit: quoting Dante, Louis writes "maremma" (lower case) instead of Maremma (upper case). Is this a deliberate move or an unlikely oversight by a man renown or his learning? Truth, argues Žižek, arises from misrecognition.[56]

In the long love letter that is his address to Louisa, Louis embarks on the retelling of his story, which the other knows in advance. In it, Louis is born aboard the ship that brings the family to safety and exile on the eve of the Greek revolution.[57] Being born at sea marks him as displaced and diasporic from birth, and the adult Louis looks west, to revolutionary Europe, for intellectual inspiration. Looking back, speaking from the moment of death, the "I" recounts the absence of origin at birth, both for himself and the nation with which he is contemporaneous. The letters to Louisa, written from *the end*, speak of human time as deferral and thanatology. But even from this definitive ending, one can only speak the failure of totalizing the self and the gap between the formation of knowledge and the limits of self-knowledge.[58] A similar distance opens up in the field of love—be that the love of an ideal (revolution) or a woman. Louis renounces the imaginary mastery of the male and does not wish to "own" Louisa. The latter must remain elusive—μακρινή και για τούτο η ίδια (distant and because of this the same)—even after her husband's death (202). This peculiar love (101), which has something of the medieval courtly love, is also inspired by the ethos of the Enlightenment, and the plea for the emancipation of sentiment.[59] Louis writes:

> Η ήττα της αγάπης μ' εδίδαξε τι θα σήμαινε ο θρίαμβός της. Η ήττα των επαναστάσεων προσπάθησε κι αυτή να με διδάξει για το θρίαμβό τους. Όμως, Λουίζα, πόσο μπορούν να μας παρηγορούνε διδαχές και θρίαμβοι ανέφικτοι; [...] Ώσπου να σου ξαναγράψω αύριο, Λουίζα, δεν απαρνούμαι τον ρομαντισμό μου. Μιλώ για την απόρριψη των παλαιών συμβάσεων, την παρατήρηση της φύσης και την ταύτιση μαζί της, την πνοή του απείρου στο τετελεσμένο, την φαντασία που ενοικεί την ύλη μας, τις χαώδεις αντιφάσεις, την εξιδανίκευση του έρωτα και του θανάτου. (101)
>
> The defeat of love has taught me what her triumph would stand for. The defeat of the revolutions also tried to teach me about their triumph. However, Louise, how much can the unattainable teachings and triumphs console us? […] Until I write to you again, Louise, I do not deny my romanticism. I speak of the rejection of old norms, the observation of nature and me identifying with her, the breath of infinity to that

55 Ibid., 49.

56 Slavoj Žižek, "The Truth Arises from Misrecognition," in *Lacan and the Subject of Language*, ed. Ellie Ragland-Sullivan and Mark Bracher (London: Routledge, 1991), 188-225.

57 Galanaki, *Θα υπογράφω Λουί*, 18.

58 Judith Butler, *Giving Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 19.

59 Paschalis Kitromilides, *Enlightenment and Revolution: The Making of Modern Greece* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 205.

> which has been determined, the imagination that resides in our matter, the vast contradictions, the idealization of love and death.

By the same token, and because he remains faithful to the promise of a better world, Louis refuses to profit from his public office, unlike the new bourgeois governing elite. He remains a "servant" of the new Greek state and eventually becomes poor, having lost his status and paternal inheritance. Love and revolution are thus maintained in *failure and deferral*. They produce Louis as an eccentricity or a remainder, radically other to the historical becoming of the nation and his contemporaries. He writes: "Ο έρωτας μας υπήρξε μια μορφή συνωμοσίας, μια μικρή ιστορία μέσα στην ανεξιλέωτη μεγάλη" ("Our love existed as a form of conspiracy, a small story within an unredeemable large one") (33). To redeem is, among other things, to elicit value, to surrender to the capitalist-bourgeois mentality of use and profit here and now. In psychoanalysis, the delay of gratification constitutes the first step towards psychic maturity. The child learns to wait, "holding in" the frustration and aggression this might cause and gradually building the necessary mental space to accommodate higher order representations.[60] Capitalism promises instant gratification through the availability of commodities and objects. It strives to annul the delay which essentially supports Desire and, by extension, the aspiration to higher ideals. The intellectual Louis sees this loss of aspiration everywhere, from the neglect of public spaces in Patras to the erosion of the standards in entertainment (50-51). This is not just bourgeois elitism, but a profound concern at witnessing the advent of popular culture qua erosion of distinction and difference. The same faith to the ideal makes Louis adhere to Law and Justice as abstract principles of civic life, as opposed to the concrete rule of law which is relentlessly applied by Louisa's husband when chasing the bandits of Western Greece. For the intellectual, aesthete, revolutionary, politician, and lover, none of these aspects can be subsumed by a single field, by one priority.

So why is this man of clear vision held back down by the maremma, entwined, in Louisa's fragrant hair, with the Maremma (126)? Maremma is the failure of the European revolutionaries (140); Louisa's mourning for the assassination of her husband and the anxiety provoked when the object of love unexpectedly appears available (163); the town square built on marsh land and the sea of Patras (168, 91). They all echo Louis's youth, his visit to the Italian Maremma and his first attempt to get into the Comedia Divina (να εισχωρήσω) (84). Maremma is, finally, the impossibility of a firm interpretation when it comes to the meaning of revolution:

> Σκέφτομαι, σκέφτομαι και ματασκέφτομαι μήπως καθε διατύπωση για την επανάσταση οφείλει να περιέχει την προοπτική της εκτροπή της... Και ποιος, αλοίμονο, θα το κρίνει; Ιδού και πάλι η Maremma. (182)
>
> I am thinking, I am thinking and rethinking if every enunciation about the revolution ought to include the perspective of its deflection… And who, alas, will judge it? Behold once again the Maremma.

Might the word "διατύπωση" provide a lead to what is at stake in this statement? The error (of the pen or the typesetter's hand) that reduced Maremma to maremma captures the fall of the lofty ideal into the incredibly mundane reality of all endeavors and, at the same time, the minute distance that

60 Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. David Nicholson-Smith (London: Karnac Books, 1988), 114. This is also known in Kleinian psychoanalysis as the depressive position.

separates the sublime from the ordinary. In that sense, an inadvertent error does not sum up this man of exquisite taste, but shows, to him above all, the ironic limits of one's endeavors.

Louis asks: "Υπήρξα άνθρωπος της εποχής μου;" (Was I a man of my time?) (197). We grow up twice: first, when we remove ourselves from the shadow of our parents, and second, when we see clearly that our lives, our ideas, our system of beliefs, and even our views of history, are symptoms of the times in which we live. Louis speaks of error:

> το λάθος που διαφέντεψε τη ζωή μου, εάν μπορώ να επικαλεσθώ κάτι ως λάθος, είναι ότι δεν μπόρεσα να αποφασίσω αμετάκλειτα τη θέση μου είτε προς τον έρωτα, είτε—τολμώ να πω—ως προς την Ιστορία, είτε κυρίως ως προς το αναμεταξύ τους θέατρο. Ήμουν ερμηνευτής, ήμουν θεατής, ήμουν δημιουργός; (135).
>
> The mistake that governed my life, if I can cite something as a mistake, was that I was not able to irrevocably decide my position either towards love, or—I dare say —towards History, or mainly towards the play between them. Was I an interpreter, was I a spectator, was I a creator?

An error implies "un-truth" but is just as effective a signifier as any "truth" when it comes to representing a man for his contemporaries. In either case, one cannot determine one's own value in politics, in art, and, above all, in love. One is essentially at the merit of the Other as much as at the hands of a lover. Butler draws attention to the ethical dimension of the failure to encompass all of oneself in one's speech when addressing the other.[61] This ethical failure, we could argue, acquires an additional dimension when the speaking subject tries to position themselves vis a vis their axioms and history. To put it simply, in the context of Galanaki's work, what the simple folk of Crete perceive as forces upon which they cannot prevail, the intellectual, aesthete, lover, and revolutionary feels, in first person, as a *tremendous responsibility* in the Derridean sense—a duty of singularity.[62] This is not the singularity of the "special one" or the narcissist, but of the affected and the humble, like Andreas Papaoulakis. In Louis's case, however, humility stumbles on the tension between revolution as a radical break and interpretation as a tempering of the past. In reply to his own question "Was I a man of my time?" Louis adds:

> Νομίζω, ναι. Αυτό το οφείλω στο γεγονός ότι μελέτησα παλιότερες εποχές. Η ζωή μου είχε δύο αντικρυστούς καθρέφτες, το παρελθόν και το παρόν... Καταλήγω στο συμπέρασμα ότι η προβολή του έρωτα σε κάτι το πολύ παλιό υπήρξε για μένα πιο αναγκαία και απο την προοπτική του μέλλοντος. (198)
>
> I think so, yes. I owe it to the fact that I studied times long passed. My life had two opposite mirrors, the past and the present… I reach the conclusion that love's projection upon something very old has been for me more important that the outlook of the future.

61 Butler, Giving Account, 40.

62 This kind of responsibility is not simply performative. In order to be responsible it is necessary to respond to what being responsible means. One is never ready for it. Responsibility suggests deciding without knowledge or independently of knowledge. Derrida calls the decision taken by the name of "freedom." Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death and Literature and Secret*, trans. David Wills (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008), 27.

Lacan notes that truth (of being) and knowledge (*savoir*) are essentially incompatible. Truth as a living entity cannot be captured by a deterministic history, even less so by a "successful" revolution which reduces its result into savoir.[63] A suicide is a form of fidelity to a cause, albeit a destructive one. Essentially, at the end of his life Louis refuses the knowledge of the melancholic subject who will hold on to the failure of his cause. He chooses not to be haunted and not to remember. Suicide as a radical gesture of faith to the revolution goes all the way: first, one abolishes class, privilege and social relations, then the object of love itself—both love of the other and revolution. And since the rational self perceives itself as co-extensive to both, there is only one final gesture: to forego the self.

There is, however, another mode of fidelity. "The question of fidelity" writes Stiegler, "is an aporia."[64] We cannot remain faithful to what remains constant throughout. Thus, fidelity concerns how to remain fragile and faithful, as in love. Stiegler comments: "Only imbeciles do not change… And at the same time one must remain. Be and remain faithful to what remains."[65] Fidelity means that revolution should not congeal in romantic images of breaking one's bonds, but should also admit the opposite, the creation of bonds. This, in my view, is the point at which historical interpretation as a gesture of radical separation from the past transforms our attachments from frightful hauntings into what in-sists and remains.

Embracing the Labyrinth, Care, and the Law

In this paper I have taken the broad view that "society is self-creation deployed as history."[66] Our view of history proceeds from the desire to know what lies ahead and will be returning from the past, as eternal repetition of the same, as inescapable fate and the compulsion to repeat. The question is not so much "was there something that we could have done differently," as it is, "was there any tangible knowledge that could have resulted in a different present state?" The obsession with prior knowledge veils a different truth; namely, that there is no historical object or knowledge that could have served that purpose. "Discovering" and preserving such past objects promulgates a melancholic disposition which veils the fear of bringing an end to history.[67] It is this fear that often attaches us to the past. In that sense, pursuing history and memory as "labyrinth" is already a daring interpretation. This interpretation is pharmacological and futural. By pharmacological I do not mean both "positive" and "negative," but productive of difference and singularity—a *pharmakon* which dispels the binaries of unity and strife, and antagonisms of various kinds, race and gender included. Galanakis's Labyrinth, as a general attitude to history, is the rewriting, undoing and preservation of the past, minus determinism and closure. It encompasses oblivion as the not-all of history, as well as the impassable truth of being and time which defies the fascination with national beginnings and origins.

The Labyrinth challenges the future, the survival of the nation or the group, and the duty to some-

63 Jacques Lacan, "Radiophonie," trans. Jack W. Stone, Scilicet 2/3 (1970): 26, http://www.lacantokyo.org/img/Radiophonie_tr_en.pdf.

64 Stiegler, *Acting Out*, 33.

65 Ibid.

66 Castoriadis, *World in Fragments*, 13.

67 Frosh, *Hauntings*, 62.

how serve it as a collective obligation. The Labyrinth is the ability to tolerate fragmentation, content with the thought that fragments are sometimes all we need. The psychic ability to tolerate fragmentation and to survive catastrophe is essential; Bion considers catastrophe as an essential part of human experience.[68] To experience and tolerate catastrophe is different from knowledge and even from guilt. The capacity to deal with catastrophe requires something equally potent. Bion calls it faith. Winnicott calls it creativity and the capacity to idealize.[69] Psychoanalytically speaking, the latter is not the adherence to parental ideals or "mastery." It is in fact Galanaki's Labyrinth: a supple space in which imagination transforms and is transformed without falling into myth, without congealing into defensive ideals.

At times of crisis we often notice that difference and individuality come under attack, and people tend to tolerate infringements, settling for little, for the '"good enough" of what they are offered. A regression from individuality and singularity does not strengthen the community. On the contrary, it produces stupidity and herdishness. To ask, at that point, which axioms and which principles of times past we abide by, is not nostalgic, as it does not look back. Instead, it addresses the fundamental question: What now? Fidelity is a psychic disposition towards the future and *what remains*.[70] Points of dissonance and unbearable tensions in the present must be made apparent in order to determine "what remains." This is a political project and a tremendous obligation. What we hear from all sides, notes Badiou, is "the demand for the conservation of the old humanity and all the endangered species to boot."[71] In short, we live through the revenge of what is most blind and objective in the economic appropriation of technics over what is most subjective and voluntary in politics.[72] The century concludes with the impossibility of subjective novelty and the comfort of repetition, with the obsession of security and its irresolute reasoning: "It's not really that bad being what you already are, it is and has been worse elsewhere."[73] Castoriadis reminds us that the axiom of autonomy is maintained by a constant inquiry and a responsibility for the laws we make. We must ask "aloud," as he insists: "Why this law rather than another?" and "Is this law just?"[74] From a slightly different perspective, and as a means of resisting the coercive forces of history, the pseudo-individualism, and the adverse effects of hegemonic discourses, proposes being bold towards the past, opting for "what I adopt as my past"[75] while preserving symbolic creativity and sensibilization.[76] This amounts to caring and living an affected life; remembering, forgetting and welcoming the fragments of Knossos as fragments.

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68 Michael Eigen, *The Electrified Tightrope*, ed. Adam Phillips (London: Karnac, 2004), 18.

69 Ibid., 136.

70 Bernard Stiegler, *Acting Out,* trans. David Barinson, Daniel Ross, and Patrick Crogan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

71 Badiou, *The Century*, 9.

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid., 66.

74 Castoriadis, *World in Fragments*, 18.

75 Stiegler, *Acting Out*, 45.

76 Badiou, *The Century,* 45, 58.

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