

as two different writers: the single-opus poet of *Amorgos* and the far more prolific song-writer. In 1992 (the year he died), however, the lyrics Gatsos wrote for music were issued as a printed collection, *Φύσα, άεράκι, φύσα με, μή χαμηλώνεις ίσαμε* (Athens: Ikaros), implying that they could be read as poems.

The other poets represented here are George Vafopoulos, Nikiforos Vrettakos and Miltos Sachtouris. Chambers translates them all with sensitivity and style.

This brief review cannot do justice to Marjorie Chambers' lasting achievements. I will close with a few haunting lines from her translation of Ritsos' 'The Moonlight Sonata' (p. 58):

I know that each of us walks alone in love,
alone in glory and in death.
I know it. I've tried it. It's not enough.
Let me come with you.

Sarah Ekdawi
University of Oxford

Vangelis Hatzivasiliou, *Η κίνηση του εκκρεμούς: Άτομο και κοινωνία στη νεότερη ελληνική πεζογραφία 1974–2017*. Athens: Polis, 2018. Pp 910.
DOI:[10.1017/byz.2020.36](https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2020.36)

Here at last is the long-awaited life work (to date) of a renowned Greek literary critic whose reviews and essays have closely followed, analysed and monitored the literary production, and in particular the prose fiction, of post-dictatorship Greece. Despite the time-frame of the title, the present substantial volume, comprising ten chapters, an Introduction and an Index, not only examines extensively and meticulously the period 1974–2017 but also provides useful observations about the preceding thirty years, the prose fiction of which is closely linked to what followed in both ideological and aesthetic terms; thus, this book represents a survey of Greek fiction from the end of World War II until very recently.

Attempting to define the precise genre of the present volume in the Introduction, H. describes it as a 'type of critical autobiography'. This is because, in essence, he has been working on it – although certainly not in the same format - throughout his forty-year career as a literary critic. Accommodating different views and reviews, as well as attempts at classification and periodization of his younger self as a critic of specific literary works, in the present study seems not to have posed a serious problem: most of these (older) views have been adjusted in line with accumulated experience and in particular the dynamics of the changing society and culture to which he has been exposed. Such later adjustments notwithstanding, the decision to include particular works and exclude others, on the basis of personal value judgements, must have been a difficult one, not least because of the absence of a pre-existing bibliography (the

present author was the first to write a reference book on the fiction of this particular period: 1974–2017). The problem was more acute when it came to the most recent literary production of the period under consideration: H. is aware that he lacks the benefit of hindsight to define and consolidate his views; for all these reasons, he tentatively characterizes the present study as ‘in the making’.

H.’s book is not just another history of Modern Greek literature. Although it follows the basic chronological order of the individual literary works and trends under discussion, its aim is to provide a critical appraisal of selected works and define their contribution to and place within the cultural and historical setting from which they emerged and of which they formed a part, rather than to offer an exhaustive list of the works (and their authors), an ‘objective’ and finite map of published fiction, during the period covered. The present book seems to record the personal ‘aftertaste’ with which a professional critic has been left after so many years of continuously reading and assessing thousands of works of fiction. Having said this, the readings and, in many cases, the value judgements expressed about individual works and authors and the delineation of trends do not appear simply to follow the writer’s personal taste (or aftertaste), as he is clearly well versed in literary theory, aesthetics, cultural politics and the relevant academic discourses and debates as well as in the sociology and history of the period in question. Moreover, in most cases, and in a type of dialogic mode, the writer presents in footnotes the views of other critics, whether they agree or disagree with his, so that prospective readers can form their own opinions.

As the title suggests, the thesis, convincingly developed, is that there seems to be a pendulum swing between a sense of the collective and individualism in the ideology and thematics of the fiction from these years, and that is often reflected in discourse type as well as genre. To be more precise – and herein lies the relevance to the preceding post-war writers – the collective atmosphere found in the fiction of the immediate post-war period, in which social and public benefit are valued above individual benefit (arguably due to the closeness in time to the Occupation and the Greek Civil War, which inspired feelings of togetherness in the authors born during or soon after these historical events) gave place to a more individualistic perspective soon after 1974. This tendency, which culminated, according to H., around the end of the 1980s and in the 1990s, viewed the personal and the private as more important than the public and the political. In a certain sense, the personal became the new political at this point, and everyday life took the place of historicity. Interestingly, the pendulum seemed to swing back towards collective ideals in 2010 and after, as a consequence of the Greek financial crisis and resultant social problems. During the period examined, and even at times when the private perspective was the dominant one, two genres (‘renewed’ historical and detective fiction), seem to H. to have favoured collectivity and society, for different reasons in each case but with realism as the dominant narrative mode in both.

A major strength of this book, in my opinion, is that it does not treat literature as an independent entity, a higher intellectual activity cut off from the lower workings of

society and everyday life, and as such to be examined in its own terms, but as a cultural process like any other, which not only reflects, however distortedly, society and the historical momentum of the age, but is also a direct product of these. H. places each work or group of works in a socio-cultural context and approaches them in the light of this context; needless to say, some genres, like detective fiction or the 'renewed' historical novel (to both of which this book devotes significant space) are more closely and directly linked to their contemporary culture than more self-referential or formally experimental types of fiction, for example, the intentions of which are often parodic or allegorical.

This is a work of singular importance not only for the wealth of information provided on the literary production and reception of the period but also because it relates literature to culture and society, in other words to contemporary history, without being, in my view, a conventional work of literary history. It functions as a panopticon, permitting current and future readers (students and scholars of Modern Greece or anyone with an interest in literature and culture) a bird's eye view of what was happening to literature through culture and history at a certain time and, conversely, what was happening to these through literature. It also allows readers to look more closely at the particular areas or individual authors and works that interest them, without having to read them from cover to cover – and it is this freedom that the lack of a concluding chapter, in my view, hints at. All in all, an excellent reference volume for contemporary readers and future generations.

Eleni Yannakakis
Oxford