Exile and the (im)possible nostos: Greek *autofiction* and politics in the 1970s

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This paper considers Vassilikos' *Γλαύκος Θρασάκης* (written in 1973–4) and Axioti's *Η Κάδμω* (written in 1971–2) as postmodern narratives of exile, against the politics of their time. What is essentially new about my reading is that it is informed by the theoretical discourse of *autofiction* — a term devised by Serge Doubrovsky in 1977. *Autofiction* encompasses fictional texts that are at the crossroads between the autobiography and the novel. Both texts oscillate between the two aforementioned writing tropes and are based on the authors’ experience of exile. I shall investigate why two politically engaged writers produced “autofictions” during the final years of the dictatorship. Building upon existing argumentation suggesting that the political condition in Greece encouraged postmodern literary modes (Papanikolaou, 2005), I shall argue that Axioti and Vassilikos formulated a Greek version of *autofiction avant la lettre* in order to articulate the identity of the writer in exile.

**Introductory comments**

On the back cover of his 1979 novel *Αντιποίησις αρχής*, Alexandros Kotzias referred to the period 1943–73 as “τριακονταετής πόλεμος”. During the Greek Thirty Years War the country plunged into full-scale civil war and democracy was destabilised; those events paved the way for the *coup d’ état* in 1967. The military Junta paralysed the country for seven years, while the regime’s frontman Georgios Papadopoulos insisted on the notorious metaphor of Greece as a patient that urgently needed a “plaster cast” (Mikedakis, 2001:71–72).

During those turbulent times, thousands of Greeks — including the two writers that are discussed in this paper — were forced to go to exile due to their political convictions.¹ As a member of the Communist Party, Melpo Axioti realised she could face prosecution and left for Paris in 1947. Following petitions by the Greek

¹ For an overview of exile and its impact on writers see the volume edited by Martin Tucker. More specifically see his definition of the political exile (Tucker, 1991:xvii).
government, the French authorities deported her in 1950. She then spent fifteen years in exile, mainly in Warsaw and East Berlin, before she was allowed to return to Greece in 1965 (Elegmitou, 1993:40 and Mathaiou & Polemi, 1993). Vassilis Vassilikos took the path of self-imposed exile when the news about the dictatorship reached him abroad. Shortly after, the regime’s censors banned his work Z (1966) as it paid tribute to the murdered MP Grigoris Lamprakis. Vassilikos engaged into antidictatorial action from abroad and returned in Greece after the restoration of democracy.

This paper discusses the literary representations of exile in selected works by Axioti and Vassilikos and aims to situate them in the context of Greek politics during the Junta. The originality of my approach lies in the choice of the theoretical framework; for the purposes of my analysis I shall be using the term autofiction. Autofiction was put forward in 1977 by the novelist and literary critic, Serge Doubrovsky in order to label his novel Fils whose narrative transgressed the boundaries between fiction and autobiographical reality. Far from being merely an autobiographical novel, Fils and Doubrovsky’s subsequent texts are at the crossroads between the autobiography and the novel and refuse to abide by the conventions of a single genre (Doubrovsky, 1988:61–79). Doubrovsky distinguishes autofiction from autobiography by highlighting the retrospective nature of the traditional autobiographical narrative (Doubrovsky, 1977: back cover). He accentuates at the same time the preponderance of the fictional element and claims an innovative approach with regard to language and syntax, which tries to reflect the unconscious. Doubrovsky challenges autobiography’s pretensions to provide a definitive and all-embracing version of a person’s life. Instead of a coherent account of the individual’s past, he proposes fragmentation. Moreover, in the place of the single authoring subject, he places a disunified writing consciousness that articulates multiple identities.

In a broader sense, autofictional texts feature a narrator/protagonist who is a writer by profession and preoccupied with the composition of the text at hand. The biographical data that are disclosed by the narrator/protagonist allow us to identify the fictional writer with the real-life author and therefore read the text as fiction that draws attention to the way it appropriates autobiographical reality and articulates the identities of the writing subject (Ioannidou, 2013:41–42).

The emergence of Greek autofiction amidst troubled political waters

Greek autofiction appeared at a very specific time during the seven-year dictatorship. Both Axioti’s Η Κάδμω and Vassilikos’ Γλαύκος Θρασάκης were written after the lifting of pre-censorship (November 1969); an event that broke the writers’ protest of silence and triggered the production and publication of many texts (Douli, 2011:95–130).

2 See the back cover of Fils. According to the French dictionary Le Grand Robert, autofiction is “a narrative that combines fiction and autobiographical reality”.

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The anthology Δεκαοχτώ κείμενα (1970) is a milestone for the publication activity during the dictatorship since it abounded with indirect references to the regime and mocked its discourse (Papanikolaou, 2002:444–460).

My analysis presupposes the correctness of Dimitris Papanikolaou’s contention that the military regime and its censorship policies fostered manifestations of Greek postmodernism in the early 1970s (Papanikolaou, 2005:127–145).3 Papanikolaou establishes a link between the progressive writing (within which autofiction should be inscribed) during the Junta and the issue of “subjectivity” in order to explore the role that the writing or the performing “subject” assumes in the cultural environment of the dictatorship. He argues that these progressive performances and writing should be examined in view of the development of critical thought in Greece from 1969 onwards, which was profoundly influenced by the international theories that dominated the 1960s, namely structuralism and psychoanalysis (Papanikolaou, 2010b:193–196).4 He suggests that at that specific moment the subject takes center-stage and that the writers, the artists and performers claim “responsibility” over their work. This means that by producing a text, writers not only engage in political action but more crucially, place emphasis on their presence by claiming responsibility for their writings.

The self-exiled Vassilikos produced fiction that targeted the dictatorship and disseminated it abroad through 81/2 Editions, a small publishing house that he set up. Axioti on the other hand, did not produce any overtly political texts even though she had been politically active in the past. Nevertheless, they both sought to articulate an identity that would be marginalised by the regime; that of the exile writer. Furthermore, Η Κάδμω and Γλαύκος Θρασάκης are texts that despite being written before 1977, fit the description of autofiction: both feature two intratextual authors as their protagonists, who are mere refractions of the narrators and clearly identifiable with the extra-textual authors based on the biographical data provided. I shall examine these two texts in detail in order to argue that in their attempt to fictionalise the experience of exile and fulfill their linguistic nostos, Axioti and Vassilikos formulated a version of autofiction avant la lettre at the very end of the thirty-year period.

Η Κάδμω: An exiled writer’s return to language

Published just a year before the author’s death, Η Κάδμω has been described by critics as a “requiem” (Karvelis, 1992:270) and a “swan song” (Mike, 1996:79).5 The text is not only named after, but also voiced by Kadmo the fictional persona of an ageing

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3 A similar argument is presented by Karen Van Dyck (Van Dyck, 1998:12–27).
4 The thought of Julia Kristeva and her understanding of the subject as a work “in process” is central to Papanikolaou’s argument (Kristeva, 1977:55–69).
5 Axioti was prompted to begin writing Η Κάδμω in 1971 by her close friends Yiannis Ritsos and the publisher Nana Kalianesi. This is the only work she wrote in its entirety after her repatriation in 1967 and while suffering from progressive amnesia.
female writer and a former exile, which Axioti first introduced as her alter ego in her penultimate work entitled Το Σπίτι μου (1965).

Mike makes an important connection between the real-life author and fictional Kadmo by arguing that the name Κάδμω mirrors linguistically that of Μέλπω (Mike, 1996:51).6 Kadmo is Axioti’s fictional projection in the sense that her life mirrors that of Axioti. Like Axioti, the repatriated narrator has to come to terms with ageing, and the loss of her memory. Autobiographical material is drawn from Axioti’s life, namely from her childhood in Mykonos and from the various stops in her itinerary of exile. Furthermore, this highly self-referential text is full of references to Axioti’s own literary production. In the textual space of Η Κάδμω works such as Δύσκολες Νύχτες are attributed to Kadmo and fictional characters that appear in those texts, are again credited to the writer in the text with the use of the possessive pronoun.

However, Kadmo is not simply a fictionalised version of the name Melpo; it is crucially a feminised and mythologised projection of the writer. The female name “Κάδμω” points to the male name Cadmus, the mythical founder of Thebes (Grimal, 1986:83) and the myths about Cadmus provide us with a key for reading the text as Saunier rightly suggests (Saunier, 2005:168). The affinity between Καδμο and Cadmus can be attributed to the fact that Cadmus wandered for years in search of his sister, Europa, when the latter was abducted by Zeus. Cadmus stands out as a symbol of people that went abroad and settled in various parts according to William Holwell (Holwell, 1793:125). In the context of the myth, Cadmus does not remain passive — he follows the abducted Europa, who is driven away from her home — even “exiled” by Zeus. Ironically, in the case of Axioti, Europe becomes the place of exile for Kadmo.

“Να οδοιπορείς διωγμένη, ανάμεσα στις ξιφολόγχες, μ’ ένα σακούλι στο χέρι, να παραπλέεις ένα σημαντικό κομμάτι της Ευρώπης μέσα στροχοφόρο της αστυνομίας, και να κρατάς βιβλία!” (p. 67).7 In this way the myth of the abducted Europa undergoes a contemporary transformation and Kadmo experiences the violence of the mythical abduction in the shape of modern weapons used by the local authorities.

Another mythical parameter is the Phoenician belief that Cadmus created the alphabet. Kadmo herself is preoccupied with the power of writing — in a feminine way. Like her mythological archetype, who devised the alphabet in order to record human civilisation, Kadmo has to devise the words of her own language so as to start writing again. This is what she describes as “ο αγώνας με τη λέξη” (p. 12). Kadmo is therefore projected as a female, modern equivalent of the mythical Cadmus but she has stripped herself of the glory such a discovery entails. She has no other option but to retrieve the means of her profession in order to be able to overcome the trauma of exile and fulfill her nostos.

6 Mike illustrates that both are five-lettered names that not only have the same ending but also the same stress pattern. Both are spelled with two syllables, the first including three letters (a vowel between two consonants) and the second two letters.

7 I have used the original 1973 edition by Kedros. Hereafter, all quotations will be accompanied by the corresponding page number(s) in brackets.
In *Η Κάδμω*, exile is understood as a condition impairing the use of the mother tongue as a literary medium. Caren Kaplan notes that the main constructions of exile are “nostalgia for the past; for home; for a ‘mother-tongue’” (Kaplan, 1996:33). The experience of exile taints the memory of the language because it condemns the mother tongue to uselessness.

`Αλλά το πιο σημαντικό ήταν ότι ξεχνούσες τις λέξεις, εκεί στο εξωτερικό... Λησμόνησες τις λέξεις, τις έχασες. Έχασες τα βιβλία σου, τα λησμόνησες κι αυτά. Έγινες ένα αρχαίο πιθάρι. Αλλά σε τι θα μπορεί να σου χρησιμεύει, αφού τον έλειψε τώρα ο καρπός: το εσωτερικό του. (p. 63)

Language in the condition of exile is stripped down to the absolutely essential words and Kadmo’s verbal nudity is paralleled to a worm — “ολόγυμνη σαν το σκουλήκι” (p. 63). Kadmo relates the uselessness of the mother-tongue as an artistic medium to the loss of memories.

However, Axioti is not completely pessimistic. She therefore embarks upon a journey of regaining her lost memories by revisiting the previous books and eventually retrieves the sounds and the words of the language in a magical way. Γυμνή κάθε τόσο από λέξεις, όλο πιο περιορισμένες, κι εκεί που νομίζεις ότι στέρεψαν, ξαναφυτρώνουν κι έρχονται... Ήσαν να τον πλάνεψε νεράιδα... Έμαθες τώρα ότι με λίγες λέξεις ζεις και πεθαίνεις. Και γράφεις (p. 63–4). The actual experience of repatriation as well as the sense of returning to the fictional universe she created, enables her to recapture the memories and the language, and finally makes it possible for her to get back to writing.

*Η Κάδμω* begins exactly at the point that *Το σπίτι μου* (1965) stops; the latter ends with the termination of a period of violence and its follow-up opens with the attempt to restore life to its pre-exile state so that the psychological trauma of the ageing writer is healed. Axioti’s final text tells the story of moving into a new house, an act which is not fictional in itself. Therefore, the autobiographical story of Axioti as she moves into her last dwelling becomes metaphorical in relation to language since the repatriated individual attempts to rebuild her life not only by finding a new home but also by taking refuge in her mother tongue. In her previous work, the title *Το Σπίτι μου* signifies the author’s return to her linguistic medium, which she had lost during the years of her absence. The house is a metaphor for returning to the mother tongue and ultimately to the act of writing that Nazou described as salvational “σωτήρια” (Nazou, 2003:369).

For Axioti, the act of writing *Η Κάδμω* assumes the act of reading her previous works. Life cannot be separated from the act of writing; her life memories are attached to the memories of writing. “Μέσα σ’ εκείνες τις σελίδες έζησες, μεγάλωσες” (p. 106). This double process of rereading and rewriting has special importance in the final section entitled “Τυρισμός” (Homecoming), where Kadmo says: “Εγύρισες λοιπόν στα βιβλία σου — κάπου κατόρθωσες ν’ ανακαλύψεις κανένα — κι ένωσες ας να είχες ξαναγεννηθεί” (p. 106). This pessimistic tone is overshadowed in the final pages by an unexpected realisation that the process of regaining lost memories and
therefore retrieving her writing skills by creating the book in hand has been success-
fully completed.

Beginning to write again does not however herald a new lease of life in Axioti’s
drwriting career. Her life is near the end but her “fictional” and “linguistic” nostos is
accomplished. The book in hand renews the previous works of the author by evoking
the characters she devised and by recalling through reading the memories of writing
and language. This renewal makes it possible to write this final farewell text as the
afterword of the nostos.

**Fictionalising the writer’s exile in Γλαύκος Θρασάκης**

Vassilis Vassilikos’ novel Πλαύκος Θρασάκης was written in the final years of the Junta
(1973–74). The novel follows the ambitious project of an unnamed biographer, who
is at the same time the narrator and the protagonist of the text. The biographer has
undertaken the task of producing the biography of a deceased émigré writer, Glafkos
Thrasakis, through an exhaustive analysis of the latter’s manuscripts. The readers
are told that Glafkos Thrasakis is the pen-name the biographee adopted, in order
to conceal the different names he was known by, namely Pavlos Pavlogiannis and
Lazaros (or Lazos) Lazarides. The main issue throughout the text is the complex
relationship between the elusive biographee and the biographer, who is troubled and
frustrated by the degree of identification with his subject. Nevertheless, towards the
end of the novel, it is revealed that the fictional biographer created the persona of
Glafkos Thrasakis in order to disguise his autobiographical narrative as a fictional
biography and view himself from the viewpoint of the “other” (Farinou-Malamatari,

The name Glafkos alludes to Athena’s owl (γλαύκα) as well as to the sea-daemon
Glaucus. According to the myth, Glaucus was a mortal fisherman, who was trans-
formed into a sea divinity and was depicted as a man with a fish tail from below the
torso (Grimal, 1986:42). The mythical Glaucus was also thought to possess a protean
nature, as he was able to change shapes and adopt different faces. The protean qual-
ties of Vassilikos’ Glafkos can be attested by the different names he is also known by
(Lazos and Pavlos), while the dual nature of the sea-daemon encapsulates the two

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8 The work was initially presented as a sequence of three novels under the titles Πλαύκος Θρασάκης,
Πλαύκος Θρασακής, Η επιστροφή and Πλαύκος Θρασάκης, Μπερλίνερ ανσάμπλ. The first instalment
was published in 1974 and the rest came out in 1975.

9 Thrasakis is a recurring figure in Vassilikos’ work and usually identified as Lazaros Lazarides’
pen name. See Λούνικ II (1969), Η Ωραία του Βοσπόρου (1973) and Τα Φρύγανα του έρωτα (1997). On
the redoubling of the names see Saunier’s article (Saunier, 2007:122–123).

10 The name Glafkos appears to have a unique place in Vassilikos’ work. It appeared for the first time
in Vassilikos’ work Κατεφενιν Εμνερκές (Ο Άγιος Κλαύδιος), where the anonymous exiled men that
frequent a Parisian coffee shop refer to Glafkos as a person being searched for by the Greek police as
dangerous instigator. The elusive Glafkos manages to avoid arrest and the police arrest another man
with the same name.
principal refractions of the writing consciousness in Vassilikos’ text: that of the biographer and the biographee.

The surname Thrasakis is a result of the narrator’s admiration for Thrasos Kastanakis, the 1930s generation novelist. He thus borrowed the name of the real-life author and transformed it into a surname with the addition of “-άκης”, a typical patronymic suffix for Modern Greek names (mainly Cretan). Moreover, the name Thrasos approximates phonetically the name Thasos, Vassilikos’ native island. The biographer’s choice of using Thrasos Kastanakis as a model figure for creating Thrasakis is not arbitrary; both Kastanakis and Thrasakis were writers of the diaspora. On a primary level, this diaspora connection attests the link between Kastanakis and Thrasakis, yet, on a secondary level, we can argue that the relationship between Vassilikos and Thrasakis mirrors that between Vladimir Nabokov and Sebastian Knight, the protagonist of his 1941 novel *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*, the novel that Vassilikos has acknowledged as his main source for Thrasakis (Vassilikos, 2010). In the case of Nabokov and Knight we have a real and a fictional Russian émigré writer and in the case of Vassilikos and Thrasakis we have two professional writers born in 1934, who share a leftist political background. Moreover, the trauma of exile connects Vassilikos and Thrasakis since Vassilikos travelled as much as Thrasakis travels in the text and lived in the same cities as his fictional creation: Rome, Paris, Berlin. The notion of exile is introduced subtly in the foreword, when the biographer refers to Thrasakis as a writer “in residence”. The definition “in residence” (that appears in English) should be interpreted in a highly ironical manner; Thrasakis is actually a writer without residence and in search of residence.

From the foreword already, the reader is informed that Thrasakis is led to exile due to an outbreak of plague (επιδημία χολέρας). This specific reference targets the Colonels’ regime since it could be understood as a parody of the medical vocabulary employed by Junta’s front man and the aforementioned “plaster cast” metaphor. The attack against the military regime is carried out through parody alone; the biographer discusses openly his resentment at the anticommunist declaration of political beliefs and ridicules the notorious δήλωση φρονημάτων that the Tigers’ club obliges him to sign in order to be eligible for USA funding. The references to the politics of the period include a discussion of one of the short stories written by Thrasakis after 1973, which refers to the uprising in the Polytechnic School of Athens in November. It is also interesting that the biographer draws a parallel between the Colonels’ regime and similar regimes in South America. Thus, he appears to be in step with some of the writers involved in the publication of the politically subverting volume Δεκαοχτώ Κείμενα (notably Th. D. Fragkopoulos with his short story “Ελ Προκουραδόρ”).

Thrasakis’ exile is presented by the unnamed biographer as a blessing in disguise:

Ο Θρασάκης ζώντας αναγκαστικά μακριά απ’ την πατρίδα του πλούτισε τη λογοτεχνία μας με το θέμα της εξορίας. Νοσταλγώντας, έγραψε σελίδες γεμάτες λυρισμό

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11 Kastanakis spent the greatest part of his life in Paris, where he taught in the School of Oriental Languages like the fictional Thrasakis.
The biographer stops short of introducing Thrasakis’ work as the Greek equivalent of what is known in German as Exilliteratur, the “exile literature” or “literature of exile” that was produced by dissident writers as a reaction to the Nazi regime (Palmier, 2006:383). The use of “αναγκαστικά” on the one hand suggests that Thrasakis’ exile was inevitable and forced, and on the other, that it triggered the production of texts exploring the writer’s nostos.

Thrasakis comes across as a nomad writer, who wanders from one place to another and ultimately benefits as an artist by distancing himself from Greece. In this sense he adopts a popular stance of modernist writers, who welcomed exile as an opportunity to detach themselves from their homeland’s reality, and more importantly as a means to free themselves from confining literary traditions (Kaplan, 1996:38; Olsson, 2007:735–736). The biographer explains Thrasakis’ decision to become an expatriate:

‘Η σχέση μου με την πατρίδα, γράφει, ‘είναι η ίδια με της γης και του μικρότερου πλανήτη: ό,τι εκεί, στον πλανήτη ζυγίζει 0,04 του κιλού σε μένα φτάνει στα 2,5 κιλά, γιατί έχω άλλη στρατοσφαιρική δομή, αλλιώς βαραίνει σε μένα η ατμόσφαιρα.’ (p. 103)

The biographer then discusses the alienating position he has put himself into: “ζω λυτρωμένος από την ελληνική καθημερινότητα που αποπροσανατολίζει από την ουσία του προβλήματος που είναι: μια γλώσσα, ναι, αλλά που ανταποκρίνεται σε ποια γηγενή προϊόντα;” (p. 79). The biographer’s question mark on the issue of language echoes to a certain extent Kadmo’s troubled relationship with language: here too, the exiled writer risks losing his linguistic medium as he is no longer exposed to the environment in which the language is being spoken on a daily basis. The reference to “γηγενή προϊόντα” could be understood as a cryptic comment on the language, the literature and the native/nationalist culture in general that was promoted by the Colonels’ regime. The intratextual writer implicitly points out that language mirrors the cultural scene. The official language of the regime was katharevousa, which the dictators wished to revive by fostering the pride of a glorified past to the masses. Therefore, the regime’s cultural capital — its “γηγενή προϊόντα” — was articulated in an artificial language, which the writer deems as equally alienating as the condition of exile.

Caren Kaplan suggests that the individual in exile due to political infringement “can be viewed as doubly estranged” (Kaplan, 1996:38). She explains that whether exiled people stay at home and become internal exiles, or resettle abroad, they experience alienation on a double basis. In this sense, the intratextual writer in Πλαύκος Θρασάκης

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12 I have used the original 1974 edition by Pleias. All quotations are taken from the first volume of the trilogy and will be hereafter accompanied by the corresponding page number(s) in brackets.

13 See the two articles on culture during the military dictatorship by Dimitris Papanikolaou (Papanikolaou, 2010a:24–25; Papanikolaou, 2010b:175–196).
is “doubly estranged” since he experiences the feeling of alienation within Greece, which leads him to self-exile. Exile is perpetuated in a new space and the writer finds himself exiled from both his homeland and his mother tongue. This double exile is a key concept for the anonymous biographer here, as the latter experiences the agony of being exiled from Greece and Greek, through a double lens: his personal viewpoint and that of his fictional persona.

I believe that Thrasakis, the biographer and of course Vassilikos exemplify a crucial shift from exile, along the modernist paradigm, to postmodern émigré literature (Mardorossian, 2009:16). The narrator/protagonist shifts his status from exiled to émigré, and readresses his identity as well as normalises the experience of exile. In his preface to the French translation, Jacques Lacarrière described Γλαύκος Θρασάκης as Vassilikos’ testimony for the contemporary Greek diaspora, the so called – émigrécs (Lacarrière, 1974:i–xv). The experience of exile is not fictionalised in order to talk about politics in the period of the dictatorship solely, but it is ultimately elevated to a key element for the production of Vassilikos’ autofiction. The emergence of the émigré writer in Vassilikos’ text shows how the nostos concept is reinterpreted in Γλαύκος Θρασάκης. As in the case of Η Κάδμω, nostos remains physically unattainable and is realised only through the return to the maternal language. Nevertheless, the émigré identity does not simply point to a trauma, but also to a complex process of shaping the identity as a reaction to imposed exile. The act of writing in the text is central as it reconciles the two projections of the writing self and moreover, it offers the sole possibility of homecoming to the émigré writer. Thrasakis becomes an emblematic figure of the émigré writer (or émigréc as the word pun that the title Καφενείον Εμιγκρέκ suggests), who is in search of residence and can realise nostos exclusively in the context of autofiction.

Conclusions

To sum up, both Axioti and Vassilikos seek to fictionalise their own experience of exile and articulate the identity of the exiled though their experimentations with autobiographical fiction. While Axioti makes cryptic references to the regime and Vassilikos is pretty straightforward and employs parody, both construct two fictional alter egos, writers by profession and explore issues of writing and literary language in times of exile. Therefore, these texts should be read as an attestation for the emergence of a new postmodern subgenre in the 1970s, autofiction, at the time when Greece was under the Colonels’ regime. Through this avant-garde writing Axioti and Vassilikos seek to regain “απ’ την αρχή τις λέξεις που τις εξευτέλισε μια χούντα” as a Vassilikos wrote in Καφενείον Εμιγκρέκ (Vassilikos, 1975:59).

Kadmo and Thrasakis become two fictional figures that personify the identity of the writer in exile by mythologising ancient names that become metaphors for the exiled individual. Both Axioti and Vassilikos filter their individual exilic experiences through their fictional avatar, Kadmo and Glaflkos Thrasakis respectively, and by
doing so, they are assuming responsibility for the role as writers at a time when any dissident voices and exiles would be marginalised and suppressed by the Junta. Their preoccupation with language and the way the individual becomes alienated from it in the conditions of exile could be interpreted as a response to the regime and a reaction to the politics of censorship. The state of exile is ultimately read as a metaphor for the writer’s banishment from language and literary creation under an oppressive regime. Those are the factors that drive them towards inventing a kind of *autofiction* before the term was coined in French.

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