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Narrative Postmemories. The Relationship between Postmemory and Narrative in *Kica Kolbe's Aegeans* and *The Snow in Casablanca*

Narrative Postmemories. The Relationship between Postmemory and Narrative in Kica Kolbe's *Aegeans* and *The Snow in Casablanca*. Starting from Marianne Hirsch's thesis that the notion of postmemory can be generalised in various contexts of traumatic transfer, this paper aims to examine the interpretive validity of this concept in relation to the so-called Aegean Theme in Macedonian literature, which encompasses collective trauma caused by the exodus of Macedonians from Greece during the Greek Civil War (1944–1949). The paper focuses on two works — *Egejci* and *Snegot vo Kazablanka* by Macedonian authoress Kica Kolbe, a member of the so-called postgeneration. Considering that both books are of different genres (an autobiography and a novel), the analysis is to offer a comparative presentation of the narrative conventions involved in the affirmation of their postmemorial dimension present in: the variant of postmemory, the elements of secondariness and of mediativeness of postmemory, as well as the postmemorial relation to the past through imagination, projection and creation.

Keywords: postmemory, memory, postgeneration, trauma, Aegean Theme

Нарративная постпамять. Основываясь на тезисе Марианны Хирш о том, что понятие постпамять можно обобщить в различных контекстах травматического переноса, в данной статье мы ставим перед собой цель дать обоснование для использования понятия постпамять, относительно, так называемой эгейской темы в македонской литературе, т.е. темы коллективной травмы, вызванной исходом македонцев из Греции во время Гражданской войны в Греции (1944–1949). Предметом анализа являются два произведения *Эгейцы* и *Снег в Касабланке* македонского автора

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Кицы Кольбе, принадлежащего к так называемому постпоколению. Принимая во внимание тот факт, что книги разные по жанру — автобиография и роман — мы предлагаем сравнительный анализ данных произведений на уровне именно аспекта постпамяти, присутствующего в данных произведениях в виде собственно постпамяти, во второстепенных элементах, так или иначе касающихся постпамяти к прошлому через воображение, проекции и творчество.

Ключевые слова: постпамять, память, постпоколение, травма, эгейская тема

Theoretical Contextualisations of Postmemory

The subject of interest of this text is the relation between literature, history, and memory, viewed through the lens of undermining the traditionally established distinction between history and literature, where certain types of memory, identified in a historical and literary context, also play a role. The prime focus is on the term 'postmemory' and its use in issues shared by both history and literature — the traumatic past and its representations. Although postmemory finds in the theme of the Holocaust its chief referential framework, yet it is undeniably relevant in terms of other contexts of traumatic transfer (such as the exodus of the Aegean Macedonians during the Greek Civil War, the traumatic experiences on Goli Otok, as well as those that ensued from the war conflicts and genocides on the territory of SFRY). Specifically, this article will explore the relationship between postmemory and narrative in Kica Kolbe's *Aegeans* and *The Snow in Casablanca*.

Marianne Hirsch, a member of the postgeneration, the generation of children of the casualties/survivors of the Holocaust, has introduced the term 'postmemory' in order to describe "the relationship of children of survivors of cultural or collective trauma to the experiences of their parents, experiences that they remember only as stories and images with which they grew up, but that are so powerful, so monumental, as to constitute memories on their own right"¹. As a "structure of inter- and trans-generational transmission of traumatic knowledge and experience" postmemory is specified by several traits: its "temporal and qualitative difference from survivor memory, its secondary or second-generation memory quality, its basis in displacement, its belatedness"². Considering that postmemory refers to the memories of the postgeneration, that is the generation that has not experienced or witnessed the traumatic events firsthand:

Postmemory thus would be *retrospective witnessing by adoption*. It is a question of adopting the traumatic experiences — and thus also the memories — of others as experiences one might oneself have had, and of inscribing them into one's own life story. It is a question, more specifically, of an *eth-*

¹ M. Hirsch, "Projected memory: Holocaust photographs in personal and public phantasy", [in:] M. Bal, J.V. Crewe, L. Spitzer (eds.), *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*, Hanover-London 1999, p. 8.

² M. Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory", *Poetics Today* 29:1, 2008, p. 106; idem, "Projected Memory...", p. 8.

ical relation to the oppressed or persecuted other for which postmemory can serve as a model: as I can 'remember' my parents' memories, I can also 'remember' the suffering of others³.

However, postmemory does not necessarily and solely imply an autobiographical background and familial connection. Nor is it based only on ethnical and national identity.

Thus, although familial inheritance offers the clearest model for it, postmemory need not be *strictly* an identity position. Instead, I prefer to see it as an intersubjective transgenerational space of remembrance, linked specifically to cultural or collective trauma. It is defined through an identification with the victim or witness of trauma, modulated by the unbridgeable distance that separates the participant from the one born after⁴.

Postmemory is not an identity position, but a space of remembrance, more broadly available through cultural and public, and not merely individual and personal, acts of remembrance, identification, and projection⁵.

One of the defining aspects of postmemory relates to its mediated and textual nature — "its reliance on images, stories and documents passed down from one generation to the next"⁶. Indeed, the analyses of literary and film works that Dominick LaCapra performed, and those of family photographs, performed by Hirsch, highlight a "complicated set of relations among traumatic event, memory, and imagination"⁷ that is, the processes of "imaginative investment, projection and creation"⁸, on which the postmemory link with the past relies. Certainly, the temporal distance from the traumatic experience and the perishing of its participants and immediate witnesses pose new challenges and dilemmas to both memory and representation of the traumatic experiences. Hence, postmemory imposes itself as a complex and attractive subject of research as the temporal distance surpasses the restrictive perspectives of the immediate participants. More specifically, the literary works of second generation members render evident the shift away from a documentary-testimonial position (typical of the literary-artistic depictions of the Holocaust by first generation members), whereby their works create novel dimensions, chiefly towards "rewriting his own past in light of the knowledge that at the time he did not have"⁹.

³ M. Hirsch, "Surviving images: Holocaust photographs and the work of postmemory", *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 14, 2001, pp. 10–11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.

⁵ M. Hirsch, "Projected Memory...", pp. 9–10.

⁶ M. Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory...", p. 107.

⁷ D. LaCapra, *History and Memory After Auschwitz*, Ithaca-New York 1998, p. 180.

⁸ M. Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory...", p. 107.

⁹ M. Hirsch, "Projected Memory...", p. 8.

Interpretative Contextualisations of Postmemory

I will demonstrate the applicative capacity of postmemory, out of its primary framework of reference — the Holocaust, via a part of the oeuvre of Macedonian authoress Kica Kolbe (1951), thereby confirming the claim that postmemory is a functional descriptive-interpretative tool for every text that communicates traumatic experiences in a transgenerational context. The arguments for our selection are threefold. First, autobiographical: Kolbe descends from a family of which two generations (her parents and grandparents)¹⁰ have experienced the trauma of the Aegean exodus during the Greek Civil War (1946-1949). Kolbe herself emigrated voluntarily to Germany in the 1980s. Second, autoreferential: in her essays and interviews Kolbe states her views on her parent's traumatic experience, as well as develops her own postmemory projections of it in the wider socio-political and historical contexts where what she terms "historical trauma of Aegeanism" is situated¹¹. Third, literary: Kolbe has penned the documentary-autobiographical prose work *Егејци* (1999) and the novel *Снегот во Казабланка* (2005), which are illustrative in terms of postmemory: they confirm the manner in which genre conventions and narrative strategies participate in the narrative articulations of postmemory, i.e. in the narrative rendition of the relation towards the inherited, impersonally experienced past, which becomes part of her identity, collective as well as personal. "That other life of my parents had for a long time prompted contradictory feelings and contemplations in my idea of family heritage, of family identity"¹².

Both *The Snow in Casablanca*, which spins a fictional personal history based on historical traumas, and *Aegeans*, which chooses the non-fictional variety, tackle the inevitable dilemmas found in most approaches to the traumatic events: what forms (should) have priority in the representation of the trauma, and how much does narrativisation participate in the representation of the historical events marked by the trappings of trauma?

Genre-wise, *Aegeans* and *The Snow in Casablanca* are different articulations of the Aegean subject, presented from the viewpoint of a member of what Hirsch names the 'postgeneration'. Explicitly explaining the purpose of its writing on the Aegean theme, Kolbe is not only emphasizing the intimate, autobiographical dimension of writing, but she also suggests its mnemonic function considering the remembrance of a collective trauma:

¹⁰ Her mother, Leta Bardzieva, passed away in May 2016, while her grandmother lost her life during the migration.

¹¹ К. Колбе, *Егејци*, Скопје 1999, p. 36. Some of her views have been conveyed in her essay *The Trail of the Shadows*, penned on the occasion of the film *Mothers* by Milcho Manchevski, which also tackles the Aegeans issue.

¹² "Тој друг живот на моите родители долго време создаваше противречни чувства и сознанија во мојата претстава за семејното потекло, за семејниот идентитет". Ibid., p. 9.

This book is trying to expand and sharpen the view on one part of the unsurpassable trauma of my parents, of the generation of my grandfathers and grandmothers. The people of the generation of the oldest Aegeans slowly and silently disappeared long time ago from the general image of the everyday life in Macedonia. The members of the second generation of the past refugees are also slowly leaving. Unnoticeably for the others, the people like my father are leaving, whose death, in fact, is the specific occasion for writing this book. The book was actually written as an expression of gratitude and in the name of a feeling of connection which I, the first child born after the fleeing in a large group of widows and disintegrated family units, feel towards the members of the older generation of Aegean families¹³.

In Hirsch's theoretical investigations, postmemory is related to the memory of the second generation¹⁴, although subsequent proponents of this concept, such as Philip Codde, confirm its application to the third generation, too: "Postmemory is an obsession with the opaque and inaccessible past of one's parents or grandparents... In the third generation, the psychopathological condition of transgenerational trauma is transmogrified into a creative interest in the traumatic histories of the previous generation"¹⁵. Kolbe, too, suggests a dual belonging to both the second and the third generation:

We, the members of the third generation in the Aegean families, are becoming holders of a completely different identity from the people from the Aegean part of Macedonia because, after the older generation of Aegeans was gone, what remained from them as a chest of memories for the life before the Civil War, can survive, can become a permanent memory for the future generations, only if it is not erased from our consciousness¹⁶.

¹³ "Оваа книга се обидува да го прошири и изостри видикот врз еден дел од ненадминатата траума на моите дедовци и баби. Луѓето од генерацијата на најстарите Егејци одамна полека и тивко исчезнаа од општата слика на секојдневието на Македонија. Полека од животот си заминуваат луѓето како татко ми, чија смрт, всушност, е конкретниот повод да ја напишам оваа книга. Книгата впрочем е напишана како израз на благодарност и во знак на чувството на поврзаност кои јас, првото дете родено по бегството во големата група од вдовици и здробени семејни целини, ги чувствувам за припадниците на постарата генерација во егејските семејства". Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁴ There is a certain gradation of memory that relates to trauma — memory of the generation of survivors who were too young to remember, then the memory of postgeneration proper, then the memory of third generation which sometimes may be the real postgeneration, since the second generation is often skipped in familial narratives (in some testimonies the second generation becomes the second generation of postmemory very often at the deathbed of their parents). In theoretical terms, Susan Suleiman has also introduced the concept of '1.5 generation', which she uses to describe the "child survivors of the Holocaust, too young to have had an adult understanding of what was happening to them, but old enough to have *been there* during the Nazi persecution of Jews". S. Suleiman, "The 1.5 Generation: Thinking about child survivors and the Holocaust", *American Imago* 2002, no. 3, p. 277.

¹⁵ P. Codde, "Transmitted Holocaust trauma: A matter of myth and fairy tales?", *European Judaism* 2009, vol. 42:1, p. 64.

¹⁶ "Ние, припадниците на третата генерација во егејските семејства, стануваме носители на еден поинаков идентитет на луѓето од егејскиот дел на Македонија затоа што, по заминувањето на постарата генерација Егејци, она што остана од нив како ризница на спомени за животот пред Граѓанската војна, може да преживее, да стане траен спомен и за идните генерации, само доколку не биде избришано и од нашата свест". К. Колбе, *Егејци*, op. cit., p. 113.

Considering the disappearance of the generation who were part of the Aegeans exodus (the so-called ‘refugee children’), the second and third generations are particularly interested in preserving the memories of their parents and grandparents. In this sense, the second, and especially the third generation are more intensely confronted with the processes of mediation of the traumatic events, as well as their investigation and depiction.

The parting with my father a year ago woke not only in me, but in my whole family, the memory of my grandmother. But we do not have a direct memory of my grandmother. We only shared the memory of her through my father and his brothers... He only had his memories, which he did not want to forget at whatever cost. What we have left is his memories through which, after his death, we saw Ovcharani and Lerinsko Pole¹⁷.

One of the determinants of postmemory specifies its mediating dimension. According to Hirsch, the descendants’ scientific and art works confirm that even the most intimate family knowledge of the past is mediated through the widely available public images and narratives. “The image I have created of my direct ancestors is just an unclear mosaic of another’s collected memories, fragments from the narration of those we know”¹⁸. Considering the mediated availability of the traumatic family past, to the members of the second generation “memory consists not of events but of representations”¹⁹.

Postmemory is a powerful form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through representation, projection, and creation — often based on silence rather than speech, on the invisible rather than the visible²⁰.

This means that there is always that mediation which has already interpreted the traumatic events and experiences. On the other hand, the temporal distance enables insights that have been impossible for the first generation due to its immediate participation in the described events. Hence the domination of the interpretative-commentarial views in the postmemory narratives, too. “That is exactly why the memory of my childhood in the Aegean circle of life inevitably means memory of ‘the memory’ of my parents of their origin from that side of the border”²¹. Since the members

¹⁷ “Разделбата од татко ми пред една година го разбуди не само кај мене, туку и кај сето мое семејство споменот баба ми. Но, непосреден спомен на баба ми немаме. Ние го делевме само споменот на неа преку татко ми и неговите браќа ... Нему му преостануваа само спомените, кои по никоја цена не сакаше, не можеше да ги заборави. Нам ни преостанаа неговите спомени низ кои ние по неговата смрт го видовме Овчарани и Леринско поле”. Ibid., p. 30.

¹⁸ “Сликата што си ја создадов за моите предци е само нејасен мозаик од прибрани туѓи спомени, фрагменти од раскажување”. Ibid., pp. 71–72.

¹⁹ M. Hirsch, “Surviving Images...”, p. 8. This does not imply that the memory of the survivors is unmediated, but rather that it is related to the past in a chronologically more direct way.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 9.

²¹ “Токму затоа споменот на моето детство во егејскиот круг на живеење неминовно значи и спомен на споменот на моите родители на нивното потекло од онаа страна на границата”. Ibid., pp. 52–53.

of the second and third generation of writers exert a significant influence on the ways of transmission of the stories to the following generations, the manner of narration is an important aspect of the postmemory narrative. "Narration is a manner of speaking as universal as language itself, and narrative is a mode of verbal representation so seemingly natural to human consciousness"²². Even though memory itself does not take only narrative form, most recollection that acts as sense-making does seem to assume narrative form, because of the arguments given by Hayden White:

Narrative might well be considered a solution to a problem of general human concern, namely, the problem of how to translate knowing into telling, the problem of fashioning human experience into a form assimilable to structures of meaning that are generally human rather than culturally specific... To narrativize reality, to impose upon it the form of a story²³.

Hence, the narrativised traumatic experience plays an exceptionally important role in the formal shaping and conceiving and transferring of a certain traumatic reality. If narrative, according to White is "so natural to human consciousness", then narrative postmemory is an acceptable form of representation of the ancestors' 'refugee stories'. The narrative constructions of memory appeared as crucial not just because they showed that we are "storytelling animals" who prefers the satisfaction of a well-crafted narrative to the mere truth, but because they showed that the unity and coherence that narrative logic brings to autobiographical remembering are the main mechanisms for overcoming the unintelligibility of pain, suffering and trauma. Not only do writers of subsequent generations focus on the depiction of the first generation's stories in order to preserve them, but they also centre on their personal implication in them, on the manner in which these stories have been transmitted to them and in which they will be transmitted to future generations. Consequently, narrative postmemories sustain a balance between the stories of the survivors and one's own stories, compounding one's own perspectives on trauma with those of the first generation²⁴.

The endless storytelling and memories of my mother and father begin in our home about the world on the other side of the present one, about the world 'home'. My father could tell stories for endlessly long time, supplementing the stories of my mother about Bapchor, with the memories of Ovcharani. In the period of our childhood, I, my two sisters and my brother, were attentively listening to every word of the incessant and endless stories of my father, my great grandmother, my grandmother

²² H. White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, London 1990, p. 26.

²³ Ibid., pp. 1–2.

²⁴ Process of producing meaning by recalling the past is complex, because what comes to our mind from the past is not an event, a thing, or a person, but a representation, an image, or even a fable, which is loaded with meaning but which includes many invented elements. And of course this applies, often to an even greater extent, when memories are turned into text. Operating in the form of a representation of things that once happened, memory is shaped not so much by reality itself as by the rules of representation, which imply various expressive devices (such as displacement, confabulation, figurative speech).

about the life 'home,' because we received it the way a story is accepted, we received with the impatience and admiration with which every word of someone's tragic life story if received²⁵.

Kolbe's narrative postmemories are, among other things, an attempt at envisioning "the lost whole" of the biographies of the family members:

In the families of emigrants, where fleeing the original dwelling was connected with complete break, the lost continuity can be established only in ideal sense, namely in the form of family remembrances. Therefore, the stories of the Aegeans of the oldest generation become most significant. Few have a clear conscience that maybe never will it be possible to fill certain vacant spaces in the history of a family unless the memories of the oldest family members are remembered²⁶.

In her narrative postmemories, Kolbe filters interpretatively the traumatic experience her father has had as a 'refugee child', which he harboured on within himself, torn between two worlds: "To live in two worlds — the one of the everyday life and the one of memory... It becomes clear to him that, as a refugee, he carries all his lived story everywhere. It legitimizes him, determines him, but also burdens him with weight"²⁷. Kolbe paints the image of the refugee father as a figure torn between his belonging here and now (in Skopje) and his memories of there and then/once (in Ovcharani, Bapchor), home and 'home'. "The word 'home' for my parents, as well as for all Aegeans, still signifies even today, fifty years since the end of the war, a deep trauma. 'Home' for them is associated with profound pain, ban, inaccessibility, unreachability, endless distance"²⁸. The emotional correlate of this dividedness, of the yearning for the true 'home' is found in melancholy. In LaCapra's view, "two crucial psychoanalytical concepts for any attempt to relate history and memory in aftermath

²⁵ "Во нашиот дом започнуваа бескрајните раскажувања и сеќавања на мајка ми и татко ми за светот од онаа страна на сегашниов, за светот 'дома'. Татко ми бескрајно долго можеше да раскажува дополнувајќи ги раскажувањата на мајка ми за Бапчор, со своите сеќавања за Овчарани. Во периодот на нашето детство, јас, моите две сестри и брат ми, го впивавме секој збор од непрекинатите и бескрајни раскажувања на татко ми, на прабаба ми, на баба ми за животот 'дома', оти го примавме онака како што се доживува сказна, го примавме со нетрпеливоста и восхитот со кој се слуша и се впира секој збор од нечија трагична животна приказна". К. Колбе, *Егејци*, op. cit., pp. 53–54.

²⁶ "Во семејствата на емигранти, каде бегството од првобитното живеалиште било поврзано со целосен прекин, изгубениот континуитет може да се воспостави само во идеална смисла, имено во формата на семејно сеќавање. Отаде стануваат најзначајни раскажувањата на Егејците од најстарата генерација. Малкумина имаат јасна свест дека можеби никогаш не ќе можат повторно да се исполнат некои празнини во историјата на едно семејство, доколку не се запомнат спомените на најстарите членови на семејството". Ibid., p. 108.

²⁷ "Да живее во два света оној на секојдневието и оној на сеќавањето ... Нему му станува јасно дека, тој, како бегалец, сета негова одживеана приказна ја носи насекаде. Таа него го легитимира, го одредува, но и го товари со тежина". Ibid., p. 23.

²⁸ "Зборот дома за моите родители, како и за сите Егејци, означува и денес, педесет години од крајот на војната, длабока траума. Дома асоцира за нив длабока болка, забрана, недостапност, недофатливост, бескрајна далечина". Ibid., p. 20.

of traumatic limit-events are mourning and melancholia"²⁹. Not coincidentally, then, Kolbe describes the state of melancholy experienced by the novel's character, while also portraying it as a post-traumatic condition of the first generation members: "Precisely those who thought they were fleeing in order to save themselves did not save themselves, for they faced a burden heavy one human life, since by fleeing they were condemned to encounter the profound pain of melancholy for 'home'"³⁰.

Hirsch's theoretical elaborations also suggest the association between postmemory and the issue of "temporal and spatial exile", regarding the fact that the victims of the traumatic experience are forced to dislocate. *Aegeans* stresses the inability of the family to visit their birthplace long after the exodus. Yet, the author also points at another dimension of the exodus — the alienation of the refugees in the new environment: "The Aegeans got used to living tolerating the image that others had of them"³¹. "All those clichés of unaccepting and apprehension, stigmatizing and creating taboos are still contained in this word that 'those here' formed of the refugees from Aegean Macedonia — 'Aegeans'"³². Yet, she expands the subject of the exodus, situating it not only in an autobiographical context (she further experiences her parent's exile through her own voluntary exile), but also in a broader, philosophical-literary context. "I needed to leave far from Macedonia's borders, to live in the environment of 'cosmopolite' Europe, in order to see the true character of the trauma of the family I come from"³³.

The interest in the literature and philosophy that deals with the problem of exile allowed me one type of identification with this issue, but in an indirect way. It could serve simultaneously as a compensation for the impossibility to examine in the same way the past of the family I come from. In this way I could 'hide' behind the generally accepted dignity of the great themes of European exile, so that I do not have to 'discover' in the general personal interest for the others too much of my 'personal and biographical' interest³⁴.

²⁹ D. LaCapra, op. cit., p. 183.

³⁰ "Токму оние што мислеа дека бегаат за да се спасат, не се спасиле, дека навлекле на себе бреме тешко еден човечки век, оти со бегство беа осудени да ја запознаат длабоката болка на меланхолијата за дома". Ibid., p. 116.

³¹ "Егејците се навикнуваа да живеат толерирајќи ја сликата која другите ја имаа за нив". Ibid., p. 35.

³² "Сите тие клишеа на неприфаќање, стигматизирање и табуизирање се уште се содржани во оној збор кој тукашните го формираа за бегалците од Егејска Македонија - Егејци". Ibid., p. 9.

³³ "Требаше да заминам далеку од границите на Македонија, да живеам во средината на космополитска Европа, за да го согледам вистинскиот карактер на траумата на она семејство од кое потекнувам". Ibid., p. 212.

³⁴ "Интересирането за литературата и филозофијата којашто се занимава со проблемот на егзилот, ми дозволуваше еден вид идентификација со оваа проблематика, но на посредуван начин. Таа истовремено можеше да послужи и како компензација за невозможност на истиот начин да го истражам минатото и на семејството од кое потекнувам. Така можев да се скријам зад општоприфатеното достоинство на големите теми на европскиот егзил, та да не морам во општиот личен интерес да разоткријам за другите премногу од мојот личен биографски интерес". Ibid., p. 216.

Kolbe's first novel, *The Snow in Casablanca*, can also be read through the lens of postmemory. This fictional representation of the Aegean theme versus autobiographical-factual representation in *Aegeans*, ultimately confirms two key theses: first, that historical reality is mediated available only through the multitude of different (literary and non-literary) representations; secondly, the thesis that all these representations are „competing narratives”³⁵. „But narrative accounts do not consists only of factual statements (singular existential propositions) and arguments, they consists as well of poetic and rhetorical elements by which what would otherwise be a list of facts is transformed into a story...thus one narrative account may represent a set of events as having the form and meaning of an epic or tragic story, and another may represent the same set of events with equal plausibility and without doing any violence to the factual record — as describing a farce”³⁶. The ‘trauma of Aegeanism’ is given secondary importance in the novel, that is, it is implied through the broader theme of exile: the narrative revolves around young novelist Dina Asprova, depicted as a voluntarily exiled character: her parents belong to the generation of children-refugees from the Greek Civil War, who emigrated to Canada in 1993, following the breakdown of SFRY [Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia]. Later Dina too moves to Europe from Canada, describing herself as an “authoress in exile”. In the novel, the presence of the parents (first generation) is mediated, although there is a continuous reference to the traumatic experience of the double exile and the ensuing state of melancholy. “The three of us are loaded, as Christmas trees with New Year decorations, with all kinds of unsurpassed syndromes of victims and executioners”³⁷. The novel depicts in parallel the fate of the Jewish family members (David and his mother), who emigrate from SSSR [Soviet Union] as victims of the anti-Semitist pogrom by the Stalinist regime. What connects the two generations is the shared state of exile: Dina deems herself a nomad: “modern nomad. Everywhere and nowhere constantly”³⁸. She follows the migrant tradition both of her people and her family, for her father is convinced that, once uprooted, the refugee remains a refugee forever: “His hysterical panic! To run away! Is it because of the Civil War trauma?”³⁹. Simultaneously, each character creates his/her own mechanism of coping with the traumatic experience (direct or mediated), seeking various modes of communication with the world and his/her own ways of remembering the pre-exile life and world: “My mother loves to use folklore archaisms. They are her relationship with the spirit of the native land. It used to be Kostur, now it’s

³⁵ H. White, “Historical emplotment and the problem of truth”, [in:] S. Friedlander (eds.), *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the “Final Solution”*, Cambridge 1992, p. 38.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ “Тројцата сме натоварени, како новогодишни украси, со секакви ненадминати синдроми на жртви и целати”. К. Колбе, *Снегот во Казабланка*, Скопје 2008, p. 43.

³⁸ “Модерен номад. Насекаде и никаде постојано”. Ibid., p. 54.

³⁹ “Неговата хистерична паника! Да се бегаш! Дали е поради траумата од Граѓанската војна?”. Ibid., p. 41.

Skopje”⁴⁰. Dina insists on a sensory memory and connection of worlds, of times and spaces, of the individual and the collective, which intersect in her memories:

Odors, odors, in my mind, in my heart, in my nose. As if a little animal, I always search for the past with my nose. All is gathered in the odor. I am only supposed to come to the place where I find the true odor of the situation or the person. In that way, I shall find the place where the Aegean cottage was⁴¹.

Long after fleeing the SSSR, David’s mother suffers from grave psychosomatic disorders and develops selective amnesia as a defence mechanism of sorts: she lives in the world of her childhood/youth, substituting the people around her with characters from the past.

The Snow in Casablanca foregrounds the intergenerational and transgenerational markedness of postmemory, which is notable in the love story of Dina and David. Namely, Dina identifies with the boy she falls in love with — the Jewish artist who also belongs to the second generation, since his parents have emigrated from the SSSR, fleeing the oppression of Stalin’s anti-Semitism.

Finally, both of Kolbe’s works illustrate the typology of postmemory presented by Hirsch:

Between what I would like to refer to as familial and as ‘affiliative’ postmemory — we would have to account for the difference between an intergenerational vertical identification of child and parent occurring within the family and the intra-generational horizontal identification that makes that child’s position more broadly available to other contemporaries. Affiliative postmemory would thus be the result of contemporaneity and generational connection with the literal second generation combined with structures of mediation that would be broadly appropriable, available, and indeed, compelling enough to encompass a larger collective in an organic web of transmission⁴².

The former postmemory variant is portrayed in *Aegeans*, while affiliative postmemory is found in *The Snow in Casablanca*, for the novel illustrates the multiple connections of Dina’s character “with others of the same, of previous, and of subsequent generations, of the same and of the other — proximate or distant — cultures and subcultures”⁴³.

Conclusion

By applying the theoretical premises of postmemory to both these works by Macedonian authoress Kolbe, this essay has confirmed the hermeneutic potential of the theor-

⁴⁰ “Мајка ми љуби да употребува фолклорни архаизми. Тие се нејзината врска со духот на родниот крај. Порано тоа беше Костур, сега Скопје”. Ibid., p. 41.

⁴¹ “Миризми, миризми, во мојот ум, во моето срце, во мојот нос. Како да сум некое животинче, јас секогаш по минатото трагам со носот. Се собрано во миризмата. Треба само да се дојде на местото каде што ќе ја најдам вистинската миризма на ситуацијата или личноста. Така ќе го најдам и местото каде што беше егејската барака”. Ibid., p. 104.

⁴² M. Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory...”, pp. 114–115.

⁴³ M. Hirsch, “Projected Memory...”, p. 8.

etical concepts with the goal of interpretatively contextualising them, that is, of employing them in various (historical, cultural, literary) contexts and analytical material. Namely, our analysis confirms that postmemory serves as a functional interpretative tool in all contexts of traumatic transfer, i.e. all texts that communicate the traumatic experience in a transgenerational context — in this case, the trauma associated with the Aegeans exodus. This hermeneutic potential of postmemory gains particular importance nowadays, considering “the multiplication of genocides and collective catastrophes at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, and their cumulative effects”⁴⁴, and considering that “a generation of contemporary witnesses to some of the most terrible cries and catastrophes in the whole of human history is now dying out”⁴⁵.

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⁴⁴ M. Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory...”, p. 104.

⁴⁵ J. Assman, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*, Cambridge 2011, p. VII.