

Paper

Mamalos, Nikos
Ionian University, Greece

Nikos Demetrios Mamalos was born in Corfu in 1981. He studied Theology at the University of Athens and History at the Ionian University. He received his MA in «Methodology and Critical Edition of Historical and Sources» in 2016 at the Ionian University. The subject of his thesis was an unknown «Guide to Confession», dates back to 19th century, from an Eastern Orthodox monastery of North Corfu. He is a PhD student of DFLTI Department at Ionian University. His doctoral thesis investigates the life and work of the greatest Greek traveler of Asia and Africa Panaghiotis Potagos. He often writes articles in the local press and he is chief editor of the local history and culture magazine «Portonis».

The Island of Time: the infamous Pontikonisi of Corfu as self transcendence limit

[GR]

Strange as it may sound, the symbol par excellence of Corfu, one of the most photographed places in Greece, the Pontikonisi (Mouse Island) has not been studied historically: not even one monograph highlights the symbolism and the imaginary all around it. In fact we do not know anything about it! Although, it has influenced arts in a unique way.

The presentation utilizes the unique cultural background of Corfu and through the analysis of the picturesque island outlines a unique history of the relationship of man and the natural environment: starting from the mythical narrative about the petrified ship of Odysseus, the esoteric aspects of his visit in the island of Feakes and the interpretation of the lone visits of Queen Elizabeth are combined with the famous work «Island of the Dead», of symbolist Arnold Böcklin, and two other inspired works: the Rachmaninoff's symphonic poem and the American horror b-movie (1945) with Boris Karloff. Besides these, will be presented the «unknown» psychedelic, transcendental and metaphysical avant-garde story of the American poet Hilda Doolittle with the title «Pontikonisi» (Mouse Island) written in 1932 after a visit to Corfu. The poet was in psychoanalysis with Sigmund Freud in Vienna during 1933-1934 and expressed her Corfu experience. Her visions also used during the theoretical and applied pioneering involvement with the cinema (1930's film *Borderline*).

A famous tourist attraction, known mainly only for its natural beauty, is studied as self transcendence limit. It is like the Room in the Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker*: it fulfills not just the wishes of a visitor, but the true unconscious desires of those that come in.

Keywords: Corfu, Pontikonisi, Hilda Doolittle, Arnold Böcklin, Sigmund Freud, Odysseus, esoterism, occult, transformation, cinematography, avant garde, stalker, transfiguration.