



# Portrait of a Greek Imagination: An Ethnographic Biography of Andreas Nenedakis

*Michael Herzfeld*

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Anthropologist Michael Herzfeld first met Greek novelist Andreas Nenedakis in the drafty courtyard of a public library. This encounter led to an enduring intellectual relationship that prompted Herzfeld to reconsider both the contours of fiction and the nature of anthropology. *Portrait of a Greek Imagination*, part biography and part ethnography, is Herzfeld's contextualization of Nenedakis's life, as it was both lived and fictionalized.

Herzfeld explores how personal vision intersects with national cultures by examining the Greek author's novels and recollections as historical accounts. Bringing together the methods of the novelist and the anthropologist in their common concern with both social and lived experience, Herzfeld shows how different perspectives shape the historical record. Nenedakis has endured persecution, exile, imprisonment, and torture under Greece's military dictatorship, and his novels—excerpted here in English for the first time—offer an individual version of historical events. As one of his characters ask, "For was not his life, and are not the lives of all of us, a novel?"

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